

**NEGOTIATING DESTRUCTIVE
PLASTICITY: A STUDY OF ONTOLOGICAL
METAMORPHOSIS IN ISHIGURO'S
FICTION**

B

Saima Anwar Dhamyal



**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES
ISLAMABAD**

February 2024

**NEGOTIATING DESTRUCTIVE PLASTICITY: A
STUDY OF ONTOLOGICAL METAMORPHOSIS IN
ISHIGURO'S FICTION**

**By
Saima Anwar Dharmyal**

M.Phil, English Literature, University of Gujrat (2012)

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In
English (Literature)

To

FACULTY OF ARTS & HUMANITIES



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

© Saima Anwar Dharmyal, 2024



DISSERTATION AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read the following dissertation, examined the defense, are satisfied with the overall exam performance, and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of Arts & Humanities for acceptance:

Dissertation Title: Negotiating Destructive Plasticity: A Study of Ontological metamorphosis in Ishiguro's Fiction

Submitted By: Saima Anwar Dhamyal

Registration #: 630/PhD/Eng/F-16

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan

Name of Research Supervisor

Signature of Research Supervisor

Dr. Inayat Ullah

Name of HoD

Signature of HoD

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan

Name of Dean (FAH)

Signature of Dean (FAH)

Maj Gen Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI(M), Retd

Name of Rector

Signature of Rector

Date: _____

CANDIDATE DECLARATION FORM

I, Saima Anwar Dhamyal D/O Ch Muhammad Anwar

Registration # 630/PhD/Eng/F-16

Discipline English / Literature

Candidate of Doctor in Philosophy at the National University of Modern Languages do, hereby, declare that the thesis **Negotiating Destructive Plasticity: A Study of Ontological Metamorphosis in Ishiguro's Fiction** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of PhD degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

Date

(Signature of Candidate)

NEGOTIATING DESTRUCTIVE PLASTICITY: A STUDY OF ONTOLOGICAL METAMORPHOSIS IN ISHIGURO'S FICTION

Abstract:

This study explores destructive plasticity in the selected fiction of Kazuo Ishiguro. Destructive plasticity designates a becoming without telos e.g., a change without a definite goal in view; it sets in motion an ontological metamorphosis driven by a sense of arbitrariness which is also the hallmark of traumatic experiences. The destructive plasticity results in a person's partial or complete memory loss and may even create an indifference to all pleasures and shocks. The metamorphic potential of traumatic experiences not only affects a person psychologically but may even modify the physical make-up of their brain. Catherine Malabou's theory of plasticity as described in her book *The Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity* has been taken as a framework to analyse the three texts of Kazuo Ishiguro namely *The Unconsoled*, *The Buried Giant* and *A Pale View of Hills*. This research analyses how the trauma-stricken characters in the selected texts of Ishiguro negotiate the destructive plasticity. The study brings behavioral neuroscience, trauma studies, and phenomenology together on the platform of literature (Ishiguro's fiction) to elaborate that literature and physical science are not epistemological opposites. In cases of significant brain damage, such as severe traumatic brain injury or advanced neurodegenerative diseases, the ability to fully regain one's previous sense of self may be limited. In such instances, the solution to the impacts of loss of selfhood may require a combination of medical interventions, rehabilitation therapies, and external support systems. However, it is important to note that the human brain does possess a degree of plasticity, allowing it to reorganize and compensate for certain types of damage. This neuroplasticity can facilitate some level of recovery and adaptation, leading to improvements in cognitive functions, emotional well-being, and overall quality of life. The present study contends that Ishiguro's fiction is alive to the native potential of the brain to emerge out of the trauma through destructive plasticity. The study investigates, character development, narrative flow and the thematic of memory loss to trace the patterns of destructive plasticity in Ishiguro's fiction.

Table of Contents

DISSERTATION AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM.....	II
CANDIDATE DECLARATION FORM.....	III
NEGOTIATING DESTRUCTIVE PLASTICITY: A STUDY OF ONTOLOGICAL METAMORPHOSIS IN ISHIGURO’S FICTION.....	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	VIII
ABBREVIATIONS	X
DEDICATION.....	XI
CHAPTER I.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 THESIS STATEMENT.....	12
1.3 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY	13
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	13
1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	13
1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	23
1.7 DELIMITATION.....	26
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY	26
CHAPTER II	29
LITERATURE REVIEW	29
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	29
2.2 INTRODUCTION TO CATHERINE MALABOU	30
2.4 NEUROSCIENCE AND PLASTICITY.....	31
2.5 TRAUMA AND MEMORY	40
2.6 TRAUMA AND PLASTICITY IN LITERARY WORKS.....	61
2.7 APPLIED PLASTICITY IN HEALTHCARE	64
2.8 CONCLUSION	65
CHAPTER III.....	68
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	68
3.1 CATHERINE MALABOU’S THOUGHT: PERSPECTIVES ON PLASTICITY.....	68
3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS	70
3.3. MATERIALITY AND FLUIDITY IN EXISTENTIALIST THOUGHT:.....	90
3.4 PHENOMENOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND BRAIN PLASTICITY:.....	92

3.5 PLASTICITY AND MODALITIES OF TRANSFORMATION OF THE SELF	94
3.6 DESTRUCTIVE PLASTICITY AND TRAUMA.....	95
CHAPTER IV	100
EXPLORING DESTRUCTIVE PLASTICITY IN ISHIGURO’S FICTION	100
4.1 CONSTRUCTIVE DESTRUCTION.....	100
4.1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	100
4.1.2 DISCUSSION IN THE CONTEXT OF DESTRUCTIVE PLASTICITY	104
4.1.3 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF NOVELS	116
4.1.3.1. THE UNCONSOLED	117
4.1.3.2. THE BURIED GIANT	131
4.1.3.3. A PALE VIEW OF HILLS.....	153
4.1.4 CONCLUSION	164
4.2 PLASTIC POSSIBILITIES	165
4.2.1 INTRODUCTION	165
4.2.2 CHANGE RELATED TO MENTAL DERANGEMENT	166
4.2.3 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS	171
4.2.3.1. THE UNCONSOLED.....	171
4.2.3.2. A PALE VIEW OF HILLS.....	175
4.2.3.3. THE BURIED GIANT	181
4.2.4 CONCLUSION	186
4.3 MENTAL DARWINISM /SELECTION AND ADAPTATION	189
4.3.1 INTRODUCTION	189
4.3.2 DISCUSSION IN THE CONTEXT OF MENTAL / SELECTION AND ADAPTATION	190
4.3.3 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS	202
4.3.3.1. THE UNCONSOLED.....	202
4.3.3.2. THE BURIED GIANT	205
4.3.4 CONCLUSION.....	207
4.4 APPLIED PLASTICITY	208
4.4.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	208
4.4.2 DISCUSSION IN THE CONTEXT OF MEDICAL HUMANITIES AND APPLIED PLASTICITY	212
4.4.3 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS	225
4.4.3.1 A PALE VIEW OF HILLS.....	225
4.4.3.2. THE UNCONSOLED.....	237
4.4.3.3 THE BURIED GIANT	244

4.4.4 CONCLUSION	256
CHAPTER V	259
CONCLUSION	259
5.1 CONCLUSION	259
5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	263
WORKS CITED	264

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise be to Allah, the most merciful and beneficent. I cannot thank the Almighty enough Who is Omni-powerful for “Kun fa ya Koon” for giving me the strength to complete this research endeavor and for all the blessings and bounties He has showered upon me.

I have always been and I will always be indebted to my supervisor Professor Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan for being an unflinching support for my research ventures. The transparency and clarity of his mind is contagious; it has never let me touch any cloud of confusion through all the journey of my PhD research. I am thankful to Dr Sibghatullah Khan for teaching me how to dive deep down the text and rise up with diamonds of novel and unique meanings of the word compositions. I would like to extend my acknowledgement to Mr. Umar Shehzad who introduced me to the theory of Plasticity and provided me a strong foundation for constructing my PhD research edifice. Dr Inayat Ullah Khatak, HOD, Department of English, NUML, deserves my special thanks as he provided me sufficient material on trauma studies that is a part of my research hypothesis.

I want to extend my special gratitude to Professor Dr. Catherine Malabou for giving me the first ever go ahead to my research on the theory of Plasticity. I am lucky enough to get the approval of the theorist whose theory I decided to take as the framework of my thesis. I am grateful to Professor Dr Gerald Moore from Durham University, UK for accepting me in his supervision and enlightening me to explore new directions in my research area. Special thanks to Dr Amaleena Damle for her valuable pieces of advice in proceeding with my research. I am extremely thankful to the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan for giving me opportunity to avail International Research

Support Initiative Programme (IRSIP) that proved to be a conspicuous turn in my life leading me to broaden my exposure, enrich my experience and get introduced to the new dimensions in my research.

I am under the heavy burden of favours from the University of Gujrat that gave me four years' study leave to carry out my PhD research with full convenience and dedication. May it prosper by leaps and bounds! I am obliged to Dr. Behzad Anwar for not only being a facilitating, supporting and inspiring figure in my life but for also being a light of guidance in capacity of the head of my (English) department at the University of Gujrat. May Allah's blessings be always with him. I am all praise for the literary and scholarly insight of Professor Rashid Butt from Zamindar College whose deep and erudite discussion have opened up new vistas of knowledge for me generally and my research work specifically. I owe special thanks to Dr. Ramzan Shahid who played a key role in completion of this research work through his motivating drive, and bringing in all possible ease to achieve my goal.

Special gratitude to Fehmeeda Amjad, my friend cum sister, and Syed Waqar ul Hassan, Atif Ghafoor, Muhammad Rizwan, Rida Tariq and Saba Bukharai, my very reverential students, for assisting me in whatever capacity they could whenever I was stuck during the course of my research. I pay special thanks to my cousins Moazzam Ishaq and Raza Akram for making my research journey easy in many ways.

Last but not the least, I am thankful to my PhD class fellows, Afshan, Fareeha, Khadija, Zain, Sheraz, Rashid, Amir, Hassana and Wajid for making this journey beautiful and unforgettable. All the best and God bless you all!

ABBREVIATIONS

The Buried Giant	<i>BG</i>
The Undisclosed	<i>TU</i>
A Pale-Yellow View of Hills	<i>PYVH</i>
The Ontology of the Accident	<i>OA</i>

DEDICATION

To

The Light in my Life----- Abbu Jee

The Peace in my Life -----Ammi

The Support in my Life ---Bhai Mazhar

The Care in my Life -----Baji Samia

AND

The Bliss in my Life ----- Yaqoob

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Plasticity, the ability to adapt and change in response to external and internal factors, is a fundamental characteristic of human existence. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term plasticity as “[t]he quality of being plastic; specially the ability to be easily moulded or to undergo a permanent change in shape”. Plasticity as a concept connotes different significations dependent upon the field of knowledge it is used in, and has gained significant attention across various fields, including neuroscience, psychology, philosophy, and literature. It encompasses the capacity for transformation and the potential for growth, shaping not only our psychological well-being but also the very structure of our brains. Understanding the dynamics of plasticity is crucial for exploring how individuals navigate the challenges posed by traumatic experiences and how they strive to regain a sense of self in the face of destructive forces.

Kazuo Ishiguro, a renowned contemporary writer, delves deep into the complexities of human experience, particularly the impact of trauma on identity and the process of self-reconstruction. His novels, such as *The Unconsoled*, *The Buried Giant*, and *A Pale View of Hills*, serve as rich sources for examining the complicated interplay between destructive plasticity and the survival strategies employed by traumatized characters. By drawing upon Catherine Malabou's theory of plasticity, as expounded in her influential work *The Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, this research seeks to shed light on the ways in which Ishiguro's fictional narratives engage with the concept of ontological metamorphosis.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze how trauma-stricken characters in Ishiguro's selected texts plot a course of destructive plasticity and its transformative effects. Through a meticulous textual analysis, I aim to uncover the emergence of ontological metamorphosis, tracing the intricate process through which characters grapple with the erosion of their sense of self and strive to reconstruct their identities. Moreover, I shall explore the ways in which Ishiguro intertwines elements of mental Darwinism within his fictional universe, examining the evolutionary aspects of characters' psychological dynamics.

In bringing together the disciplines of behavioral neuroscience, trauma studies, phenomenology, and literature, this research bridges the gap between scientific exploration and the world of fiction. By synthesizing these perspectives, I intend to elucidate the profound connections between physical science, literature, and the understanding of human experience. Additionally, this study seeks to highlight the relevance of philosophy in contemporary society, emphasizing its role in grappling with existential questions and enriching our understanding of selfhood and human nature.

By analyzing the dynamics of applied plasticity and investigating the potential benefits it holds for individuals in mastering their selves, this research endeavors to offer insights into practical implications. By uncovering the transformative power of plasticity, I hope to promote a sense of agency and self-mastery. Ultimately, this study aims to underscore the inherent resilience and adaptability of human beings, offering a deeper understanding of the human condition and our capacity to navigate the challenges of existence.

This research is originally concerned with devising a theory of change as ontological metamorphosis where Malabou trails through a dynamic idea of plasticity - the capability to give and receive form - which she has attempted through a decisive

interaction with contemporary neuroscience. The thesis aims to critically explore and evaluate the form of plastic characters in Ishiguro's literature. More specifically, this thesis intends to probe into the proceeding research question: can Ishiguro's characters be called plastic? If yes, the research will explore the destructive plasticity of the characters under emotional and psychological duress.

Ishiguro's fictional world provides fertile ground for this kind of research. His trauma-stricken characters provide rich and varied specimens of the kind of explosive plasticity envisioned by Catherine Malabou. Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant* is a study in dispersal. The giant of *The Buried Giant* is a giant failure when it comes to the stable formation of self. Therefore, it can be argued that *The Buried Giant* can be best read as a study in plasticity. The plastic subject is a volatile subject whose subjectivity is always tending to be elsewhere and fleeting. The same is true of Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled* which details the adventures of a splintered self. In this novel, Ishiguro masterfully presents a planet where characters have lost their memory after emerging from some cataclysmic event whose origin is only vaguely recounted in the subsequent narrative. Their trauma has given them an identity that is partial, and in some cases a complete break from the previous one. In an Interview, Ishiguro says, "Memory is this terribly treacherous terrain; ambiguities of memory go to feed self-deception" (23).

Many of us innately consider consciousness, it is illustrated in the same notion in the following lines: "human beings always find pleasure in the process of thinking, but they fall short of words when it is to verbalize what they really think. (LeDoux 190).

Consciousness and cognition (thinking) are dissimilar. A question arises here what consciousness is, or in other words, what we know or are aware of? What very fundamental cognitive processes produce can be called consciousness. We are aware of

the working of these processes. We are already aware of the matter upon which working memory works (LeDoux 191).

Karl Lashley, in the mid of the twentieth century, pioneered this neuroscientist's stance: human beings are unconscious of processing, and, are alive only to the results of processing (130). Akin to *The Wizard of Oz*, executive processes operate at the back of events. According to Joseph LeDoux's perspective, the development of language and working memory is essential in creating human consciousness. He draws a parallel between his view and his former PhD supervisor, Mike Gazzaniga, who proposes that the left hemisphere's explanatory system is responsible for the unique nature of human consciousness. This explanatory theory suggests that humans' conscious understanding of themselves is determined by their linguistic explanations, categorizations, and labels of their experiences throughout their lifetime. LeDoux notes that Gazzaniga's ideas influenced his work during his PhD, which involved studying a patient with split-brain syndrome, leading to LeDoux's focus on the emotional brain. Despite their divergent approaches, LeDoux and Gazzaniga's work converged, as emotions play a crucial role in consciousness theories (Gazzaniga198-9).

Gazzaniga's contributions to the study of consciousness and the brain are significant and well-documented in his numerous works. In his book *The Consciousness Instinct*, he argues that consciousness is a fundamental aspect of the human mind and explores the neural mechanisms underlying it. Similarly, in his earlier work, *The Split Brain in Man*, Gazzaniga delves into the effects of hemispheric specialization on human cognition and behavior. (18). The book *The Mind's Past* by Michael S. Gazzaniga explores the relationship between the brain and the mind, specifically how the brain constructs a "narrative self" to make sense of past

experiences (8). Gazzaniga argues that the brain creates a cohesive story based on fragmented memories, shaping our sense of self and understanding of the world.

This idea of the constructed self and the role of memory in shaping it can be linked to Malabou's work on neuroplasticity and the idea that the brain is constantly changing and adapting based on experiences. Malabou has written extensively on the concept of "plasticity" and how it relates to the construction of identity, arguing that the brain's ability to reorganize itself has implications for understanding our sense of self and subjectivity.

In *The New Wounded*, Malabou also explores the impact of trauma on the brain and how it can alter neural connections and disrupt the construction of the self. It relates to Gazzaniga's argument that memories are fragmented and reconstructed, as trauma can create gaps in memory and disrupt the cohesive narrative that the brain creates.

In *The New Wounded*, Malabou argues that the brain's ability to change and adapt, known as neuroplasticity, can lead to a loss of selfhood. She argues that neuroplasticity can be both constructive and destructive, resulting in a loss of selfhood. This destructive plasticity occurs when the brain's capacity for adaptation exceeds its capacity for stability, resulting in a breakdown of the self. Malabou argues that this breakdown is particularly evident in cases of trauma, such as brain injuries or PTSD, which can lead to a fragmentation of the self and a loss of identity (48).

Malabou also explores the concept of "ontological metamorphosis," which refers to the fundamental transformation of being that can occur through trauma and other life-changing experiences (3). She argues that these experiences can lead to a radical reconfiguration of the self, resulting in a loss of the self's previous form and identity. Additionally, Malabou discusses Heidegger's concept of the "ontological difference," which refers to the difference between being and beings (Heidegger36).

She argues that this difference can become blurred in traumatic brain injury cases, resulting in a loss of the self's ability to differentiate between itself and the world around it. Malabou's argument in *New Wounded* is that neuro-plasticity, ontological metamorphosis, and Heidegger's ontological difference can all contribute to a loss of selfhood, particularly in trauma and brain injury cases.

According to Wilde, we can easily be put off course by emotions. But emotions are crucial to making us what we are. In cognitive terms of the mind, one can study the importance of emotions. Also, they have a great role in assembling the self—as a set of synapses.

The advent of cognitive science influenced researchers of the brain and psychologists alike. Initially, emotions were considered a part of the mind instead of a process of the brain. Cognitive scientists were not interested in emotions; though they never undermined the role of emotions, they believed there was no relevance between emotions and their field of research. Consequently, the increasing interest in cognition declined the research on emotions in neuroscience. But in modern times, the research on emotion (a part of the mental trio) has retained popularity in neuroscience through the work of neuroscientists who have inspired psychologists, too.

Daniel Kahneman, along with his colleagues, has, in numerous examples, presented that only a defective reflection of an emotional experience of what we experience remains in our mind (9). We want to recollect our feelings about only the end of an emotional incident instead of the whole incident. Falsifications in memory go beyond the strength of experience and encompass the remnant contents of memory. For instance, Elizabeth Loftus and Ketcham (1996) have presented that there is a significant mismatch between emotional experiences in actual and the memories of those experiences. She mentioned a number of examples of very clear memories of crime

scenes which unintentionally became distorted. Bartlett presents that memories are a construction created at the recovery, and the information is sorted out while the preliminary experience is just one of the many elements incorporated in the construction; the previously available information, along with the product of a person's hearing, seeing and resultantly storing after an experience, is the other contributor (LeDoux 203).

Cognitive processing gets strongly affected by emotional arousal. Emotional states and their conscious concomitants influence memory, attention, decision-making, and perception. It happens because emotional arousal systematizes brain activity. Here, it is also important to know how conscious experiences are changed into emotional experiences by the emotional systematization of brain activity (LeDoux 225).

Damasio's book, *Descartes' Error*, illustrates his recent work on this subject. He and his colleagues have presented that patients with the injured orbital prefrontal area make poor judgement and decisions, which have social repercussions as well (6). Nancy Cantor and Hazel Markus propose that the self is not a static entity but a dynamic and changing construct shaped by social and cultural factors (Markus & Kitayama, 91). They argue that the self is not fixed and can be modified by life experiences and environmental influences. Cantor and Markus propose a theory of "possible selves," which suggests that individuals have multiple potential selves that can be realized depending on their experiences and interactions with the environment (Cantor et al. 19). Thus, contra classical view that suggests that the self is a fixed entity that remains constant over time, Cantor and Markus (1995) argue that the self is a dynamic and evolving construct shaped by life experiences and social interactions. The working self makes the main component of the mental machinery of an individual. It affects attention, thinking, perception, memory recovery and storage and directs to

act. According to John Kihlstrom, the relationship between the entity of an experience and one's concept of self in working memory is a major aspect of conscious experience. The working self is created in working memory, and the construction of the moment plays a crucial role in online processing, behavioral control, and decision-making. Cantor and Markus also argue that the self is constructed and dynamic, continuously changing based on experiences and contexts (Cantor & Markus95). Kihlstrom's ideas align with these views, as he proposes that the self-concept is not a fixed entity but a dynamic construct that changes in response to the situation and the individual's goals (87).

Besides emotions, motivation is also an important factor in the formation of memories. Motivation can be defined in many ways. It is a neural process which leads towards our desirous goals, results for which we put in the effort, or ones we fear and put in the effort to thwart or stop. Goals are initial to act, and the actions can be either concrete—a particular motivation (e.g., a customer product) or abstract—a belief (e.g., hard work never goes unrewarded) (LeDoux 236). Therefore, implicit and explicit pieces of machinery conduce motivation. Working memory conduces behavior towards goals embodied explicitly there and possibly performed by executive control functions. But simultaneously, human beings possess brain machinery for implicitly processing motivations and the guideline for behavior towards goals. Seldomly explicit and implicit motives are in harmony; in such instances, implicit machinery and working memory will channel behavior with mutual aim. (LeDoux 255-6)

Having convinced of the concept that certain brain areas and circuits perform certain functions is crucial initially to unveil the actual working of the brain. Hence, once we have comprehended the translation of fundamental motivational ideas into possible neural circuits, we can easily understand the relationship between hugely

complicated subjects of human motivation to the brain. The subject of motivation leads us to understand the working of the mental trio: reason, emotion and motivation. Unlike the cognitive science approach to the mind, it is more than merely a device to think with; rather, it is the machinery of synaptic grids that undertakes the functions of cognition, motivations and emotions (LeDoux 258). Self-knowledge is a substantial element of human motives, but even animals are motivated to get food and refuge and escape hunters and wounds. Therefore, in humans too, processes outside awareness influence many humans' actions. The unconscious processes of cognition, motivations and emotions are as important as conscious processes (LeDoux 259).

Ageing is a loss or at least a reduction in libido's plasticity because, with ageing, sexual capability weakens (Freud 275). Le Gouès understands that there is a presence and a beginning of the psyche while getting old. This start does not result from an accident that works as an opposite end of the slope. The certain recognition of plasticity manages becoming old and ageing, and this recognition was certainly expanded by orthodox psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud used this concept of plasticity in a very suggestive way (Freud 285). If we try to understand through the lens of neurology, old age is a rearrangement of brain processes that results in transformation and a total shift of being. According to Joseph LeDoux, a person's identity can transform with the change in connections (LeDoux 307). In the end, we find that old age suddenly comes with no pre-warnings as a trauma occurs. It looks like it has transformed us into an unfamiliar being so suddenly that it feels like there has been no childhood at all. This abrupt ageing needs dealing than that of psychoanalysis. Another possibility of being old is being aged before time because of the ontological ambivalence of time.

According to Han, the ontological ambivalence of time is the paradoxical nature of time in modern society. He writes that "time becomes infinite and finite at the same

time" (Han34). The infinite nature of time is due to the constant demand for productivity and the belief that there is always more work to be done. The finite nature of time is due to the speed at which time passes and the pressure to constantly achieve more in less time.

Sometimes, the youth is suddenly eclipsed before the time that forces a person to follow an untouched, irregular, indefinite path. Marguerite Duras explains in *The Lover* that she feels like she has become an "aged girl", and this ageing does not come with the years but by an accident which is a form of destructive plasticity (7).

Jean-Pierre Changeux, a neurobiologist, in his book *What Makes Us Think*, says that the instability of the brain can only be imprinted inside a genetic envelope (212). For instance, neurogenesis determines a hundred billion nerve cells of a human fetus at the onset of pregnancy and during nine months of gestation. The brain arranges these genetically determined billion nerve cells (Schwartz and Begley 112). The brain arranges these cells into patterns when it gains perception and experience after interacting with the world. While doing so, it also loses some and permits the growth of other cells. The plastic genesis of neural association involves displacement of unutilized connections, which are produced negatively through phenomena of variation and selection; establishment of connections made strong by their usage and weaker connections are rearranged across ever-changing internal neural borders.

Malabou discusses a balance between construction and destruction of plasticity in her work, but mainly in *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* and *Ontology of Accident*. The former describes the dynamic nature of plasticity, where negativity is also productive in the process of formation albeit Malabou takes care to differentiate plasticity from limitless flexibility favored by the neoliberal market forces that seek to turn brain into endlessly malleable substance. However, the latter considers the prospect

of absolute negative plasticity, which is non-productive and cannot be repaired. So, this kind of destructive plasticity has given rise to Malabou's interest in brain damage in *The New Wounded*. The effectiveness of synapses that expand or decrease is influenced by the experience of an individual. Although the brain has a central position in the nervous system of human beings, yet neurobiology reveals resistance to the concept of centralization by the plasticity of the brain through the delocalization of individualization. Plasticity defies the command of the legal framework through resistance and flexibility. It enforces the difference between identity and distinctive brain in individuals, the distinction of disciplines, and the difference of individuality, including reshaping, mutation, contingency, and explosion.

Malabou asks what should be done with our brains if synaptic plasticity of a brain carves itself due to specific experiences of individuals and external stimuli as well as a political consequence of this carving power of the brain. Daniel Smith considers that the question of Malabou and her plasticity analysis resembles Kant's critical question (what should we do?) in "The Second Critique". Smith professes that Kant's question has altered since his time. Kant looks for recognition of freedom and determinism of the universe as put forward by Galileo and Newton. However, nowadays, science has overturned the philosophy of Kant and suggested our living in a world which appears to be reintroduced and has freedom to some extent (Smith 23-4).

In *The Heidegger Change*, Malabou discusses the apparatus that achieves changes. It is a converter that runs in thinking, a tool of varying structure that can work like a retort and transforms cast iron into steel, a grist mill that changes cereal grain into flour, a converter of tensions from analogue to digital and vice versa and valuable in terms of money. The Heidegger-Change converts ontological, symbolic, and existential reigns. It mutates metaphysics, metamorphoses man and God, and changes language; it

also transforms the gaze and molds Heidegger himself (Malabou 104). The ideas of *Wandel*, *Wandlung*, and *Verwandlung*: the German terms used by Heidegger for change, transformation, and metamorphosis can be called a triad of change (2).

Due to the non-sustainable activities of human beings, scholars from various disciplines (Abson17; Asara, 25; Atkisson, 212), and the international community (EU, 1; UN, 16), have raised their voices for transformations. Both ecological and cultural viewpoints will welcome this digression if it gives importance that reformist prototype calling for sustainable transformation (e.g., Geels, 2018; Kemp, 1994; Smith et al., 2005) will be supplemented or interchanged with the de-growth movement- a more zealot agenda for change (D'Alisa et al. 15; Latouche, 9; Marti´nez-Alier et al.10). This de-growth movement could be distinguished as an inspection of alternate values, practices, and structures to the growth paradigm without regressing to essentialism. Even though various political and philosophical ideas (Demaria et al. 23; Kallis et al.12; Sekulova et al., 2) are enclosed in movement, the least requirement of the de-growth condition is mitigation of matter-energy output in a society. But the question is if the transformation discourse will take this essential condition gravely. There is, at the minimum, a risk that the debate on transformation will not support rebellious objectives of de-growth. Rather, it will become another slang word in the notional toolbox of reformers and quasi-radicals. As a result, the transformation will be about searching to dissociate economic growth from eco-spherical loss through more technologization (Heikkurenin 528).

1.2 Thesis Statement

Ishiguro's selected fiction seems to unravel a neuropsychological discovery that revolves around the concept of self as being a non-static entity; influenced by mental Darwinism, it argues that self appears to undergo a ceaseless cycle of formation,

transmutation, and deformation. This ontological metamorphosis is largely characterized by destructive plasticity, resulting in ontological violence.

1.3 Objectives of Study

The objectives of this interdisciplinary study are:

1. To bring behavioral neuroscience, trauma studies, and phenomenology together on the platform of literature (Ishiguro's fiction).
2. To elaborate that literature and physical science are not epistemological opposites.
3. To study the relevance of philosophy with the world today.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do the trauma-stricken characters in the selected texts of Ishiguro survive destructive plasticity?
2. How does the process of ontological metamorphosis emerge in selected pieces of Ishiguro's work?
3. In what ways is Ishiguro engaged with the mental Darwinism of characters in his fiction?
4. What are the dynamics of applied plasticity and how can it be beneficial as a coping mechanism for the self-undergoing trauma?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The framework of this research work will be based on the theory of destructive plasticity developed by Catherine Malabou. Multiple ideas regarding plasticity have been analyzed in Malabou's previous works, especially in *The New Wounded*. Malabou defines neuronal plasticity in these terms, "Plasticity in the nervous system means an alteration in structure or function brought about by experience or injury. However, it

must be remarked that plasticity is also the capacity to annihilate the very form it can receive or create” (5).

Human life moves on the dwindling dandling path along with some unknown chaotic and never-ending phenomenon. Human desire to find meaning has often proved to be fruitless in this meaningless universe. However, there is one thing that is not finite or meaningless; and that is the desire to know the unknown. Critics and philosophers have always tried to unfold the mysterious working of human body and mind. The ever-changing surroundings not only develop the inner personality but also give shape to the outer appearance of beings living in this universe. One such phenomenon, discussed by Catherine Malabou in her book *Ontology of the Accident*, is destructive plasticity as a result of a serious trauma or accident.

Malabou feels that human development, resulting from metamorphosis, ultimately leads to death. In this regard, she discusses various things in her essay like: plasticity; destruction by metamorphosis versus classical metamorphosis; difference in plastic appearance versus reality; accidental transformation which leads to the formation of the other; different philosophies of ageing; and various concepts of life and the ultimate destination, death.

In the ups and downs of life, human life suffers, both physically and mentally, as a result of some serious accident or trauma. Some such accidents can change the physical appearance of an individual as well i.e., one might not look the same as a result of some dent or a head injury or facial destruction. Some serious injuries can cause psychic abnormalities as well. Man may lose the ability to think the way they used to before that accident or injury. Some philosophers also believe that the recovery from “illness” means man’s return to the pre-accidental state. However, Malabou feels that all these accidents and traumas make one “who one is” (1). The grand thesis of

Malabou's work is that change is the essence of being: "Within change, being remains itself" (7). She expands; "A smashed-up face" still remains a face (8). So, destruction cannot diminish yet it can give birth to an individual with unique features. Malabou believes that all that plastic appearance that results from some sort of mutation turns one into another being whose present starts living with that individual with "no past" (9). It is plasticity that shapes us and makes us identifiable individuals. Plasticity is about creating a possibility for a new emergence between giving and receiving. One such example could be of a person who loses memory as a result of some neural mutation or accident. Malabou feels that all of us must be ready to be the "other", to be someone else as the unpredictable course of life can hijack any individual.

Metamorphosis is an undeniable phenomenon. Malabou carries on with her discussion about the concepts of destruction by metamorphosis versus its classic notion, and transformation by quoting examples from Greek mythology. "Metamorphosis never carr[ies] of the true nature of being" (9). "Form transforms, substance remains" (7). Different existential possibilities result from potential of plasticity. For a being to survive in times of serious adversity, flight, transforming oneself into an unrecognizable being, or flight is the only choice. Metis had the ability to transform herself into different shapes. But her ability of transformation is not infinite. She had to restart the cycle once she used all possibilities of her being. On the other hand, there is that destructive plasticity where only the radiance of Daphne remained. Daphne made herself forever unrecognizable by transforming herself into a tree when she had no choice left. Malabou believes:

Transformation is a form of redemption, a strange salvation, but salvation all the same. By contrast, the flight identity forged by destructive plasticity flees itself first and foremost; it knows no salvation or redemption and is there for no

one, especially not for the self. It has no body of bark, no armor, no branches.

In retaining the same skin, it is forever unrecognizable. (12)

Despite having enough explicit signs of metamorphosis, the problem of unexpected becoming remains there. All those people who experience mutation i.e., change in economic condition, behavior etc; turn into new individuals. Malabou quotes Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" to show that "metamorphosis is existence itself" (15). However, Deleuze thinks otherwise. For him, "as long as there is form, there is still reterritorialization" (*Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* 6). Destructive plasticity lets one suffer what is absent. For example, in case of Daphne, she was able to escape Pheobus but suffered much more than that by transforming herself into a tree. Not only did she experience lack of conscious dilemma, but she also felt pain that was supposedly absent.

Antonio Damasio considered Spinoza amongst the pioneers to highlight the importance of nervous system. Spinoza was the one who defined "form" as the actual unity between mind and body. In philosophical terms, "the unity of subject's ontological constitution and biological structure" (20) creates "form". For Spinoza, it is conatus, the power to endeavor, which affects the human ability to act and react. He believes that humans act actively in times of joy whereas they act and react passively whenever they are sad. He further claims that this conatus is very much adjustable. It is affected, both qualitatively and quantitatively, by everything that happens around. Since the effect of surroundings is not deniable, emotions play a vital role in the functioning of human nervous system. "Reasoning without desire is not reasoning" (22). When reasoning is done in the absence of natural instincts and surrounding environment, it becomes "cold-blooded reasoning" (22). On the basis of this, Damasio developed a hypothesis in which "emotional signals" become detached from the conatus, the life of

the individual, making the individual unable to live normally. The isolation of these “somatic markers” affects the ability of “reasoning” without affecting their intelligence.

Boris Cyrulnik, in his book *Resilience: How your inner strength can set you free from the past*, studied the case of some children who got affected by certain traumatic injury. The children became insensible and withdrawn from the world. In philosophical terms, they became “ontological refugees” (24). This coldness and indifference are the features of destructive plasticity. This coldness and indifference are not because of madness. Rather, with that severe injury in some specific part of the brain, the individual may even escape madness. She flies away in apathy. She falls in an area of “no-man’s-land”. Neither sorrow nor happiness can catch her senses. She becomes isolated, a kind of refugee in her own world. All these events result in the birth of a new identity as a result of destructive plasticity which is not death but an existence of a self within the self with no past.

Baruch Spinoza highlights the difference between life and death. He believes that life exists as a result of harmonious agreement between the parts of the body working in connection with each other. The breakage of this connection or the malfunctioning of those body parts result in the death of an individual. Spinoza’s “free person” the ideal individual all of whose thoughts and actions are under the guidance of reason, rather than passion, rarely, if ever, thinks about death. In one of the striking propositions of his philosophical masterpiece *Ethics*, Spinoza notes that “the free person thinks least of all, of death” (55). This is because the free person knows that there is nothing to think about. They understand that there is no after life, no post-mortem realm of reward and punishment, no world-to-come. Spinoza also stated “the soul dies with the body” (57). When a person dies, there is, for that person, nothing. In this respect, Spinoza’s view is closer to that of Epicurus.

In simple terms, the void in the repetition of daily routine of human body parts marks death. For example, he refers to the example of a writer who, in his works, does not even resemble his own identity, is dead even before his death. She falls “nowhere”. “The bodies can die without being dead. There is a destructive mutation that is not the transformation of the body into a cadaver, but rather the transformation of the body into another body in the same body, due to an accident, a lesion, an injury, or a catastrophe” (34).

In her perspective, Malabou in *Ontology of the Accident: an Essay on Destructive Plasticity* explores the notion that under normal circumstances, lives follow a predictable course, allowing individuals to gradually become who they are. Throughout this process, physical and psychological changes occur, reinforcing the stability and continuity of one's identity. However, she acknowledges that in certain instances, particularly as a result of severe trauma or even spontaneously, a person's history fractures, giving rise to a completely new and unforeseen persona. This newly emerged self is unrecognizable, disconnected from the past and lacking a clear future. It is an existence that emerges unexpectedly, like an improvisation, shaped by chance and the accident of circumstances. Malabou emphasizes that this transformative process occurs when a significant rupture or profound disruption disrupts the established narrative of one's life, essentially giving birth to a new being. It is a profound existential shift, where the individual is reborn into the world, but with a fundamentally altered and unfamiliar sense of self (Malabou & Shread12).

Then, there is plasticity; both positive and negative: positive plasticity which is the plasticity of the affects and other one which is the absolute modification of the mode. Malabou asserts that trauma always has an identical material and physiological substrate, regardless of its cause. For instance, stress-induced damage to synaptic

connections can result from various forms of stress, such as the experience of war or sexual harassment. Malabou's central argument is that complete reinvention of selfhood only occurs in certain instances of extreme trauma, such as dementia. In such cases, destructive plasticity results in the sufferer not only forgetting their trauma but also losing all continuity and memory of their previous existence, including family and friends.

The connection between trauma, depression, and other illnesses classified under the typology of the "new wounded" is a significant area of research in understanding the impact of psychological distress on mental and physical health. Studies conducted by researchers such as Roland Duman and Edward Bullmore shed light on the complex relationship between chronic stress, neuroplasticity, and the development of various disorders. Roland Duman's research on depression focuses on the effects of chronic stress on the brain and its influence on neuroplasticity. Chronic stress, which can result from traumatic experiences, leads to the release of stress hormones like adrenaline. Over time, the repeated exposure to these hormones can cause glial scarring, a process where the glial cells in the brain become excessively activated and impair neuroplasticity. This compromised neuroplasticity is believed to contribute to the development and persistence of depressive symptoms (Duman, 819).

Edward Bullmore's work in the field of neuro-immunology explores the intricate relationship between the immune system, inflammation, and mental health. Chronic stress can trigger an immune response, leading to systemic inflammation. This inflammation, in turn, has been associated with the development of various psychiatric disorders, including depression. Additionally, chronic inflammation can also affect neuroplasticity, disrupting the normal functioning of neuronal networks and contributing to cognitive impairments and mood dysregulation (Bullmore 97).

Understanding the link between trauma, depression, and other illnesses within the typology of the *New Wounded* is crucial for developing effective therapeutic interventions. By recognizing the impact of chronic stress on neuroplasticity and the underlying mechanisms involved, researchers and clinicians can explore innovative approaches to promote healing and resilience. Targeting the physiological and neural alterations associated with trauma-related disorders can potentially lead to more targeted treatments that address the specific needs of individuals affected by these conditions.

Research conducted by experts like Roland Duman and Edward Bullmore highlights the intricate relationship between trauma, depression, chronic stress, neuroplasticity, and the development of various psychiatric disorders. Their work contributes to our understanding of the physiological processes underlying these conditions, providing insights into potential avenues for therapeutic interventions and support for individuals who have experienced trauma and its psychological consequences.

Next up, Catherine Malabou deals with the phenomenon of ageing and illness. Ageing is considered to be the change in form with the passage of time. However, this ageing can come before time as a result of some sort of serious illness. Malabou also introduces her readers with some youth facing the issues of ageing. Gerard Le Goues refers ageing to that descent of a flight. It means ageing starts with the end of cruising, adulthood, and the start of descent. Plasticity enables one to adopt the form by declining gradually. On the other hand, the loss of plasticity means the acceptance of descent without any means of creating a form. With this concept of flight and ageing running side by side, there is possibility of crashing the plane as well. This happens with some young ones as a result of serious pain or mourning. They crash like a plane does as a

result of sudden rupture in normal routine. This can be seen and observed in some young boys who lose complexion of their faces and the colour of their hair. In this way, old age seems to be an existential break rather than continuity.

Sigmund Freud discusses the concept of the "plasticity of psychic life" in his work *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In this book, Freud explores the nature of psychic life and introduces the concept of the "psychical apparatus" or the structure of the mind. He suggests that psychic life is characterized by its plasticity, which refers to the malleability and transformability of mental processes (48).

Freud argues that psychic life is not fixed or rigid but rather shaped by various experiences and influences. He emphasizes the significance of unconscious processes and the role of memory traces in shaping an individual's psychic fate. According to Freud, these traces, or impressions left by past experiences, have a lasting impact on the individual's thoughts, behaviors, and psychological development.

Freud considers that ageing is controlled by plasticity. First there is what he calls the "plasticity of psychic life," which refers to "the indestructible nature of the traces that make up the psychic fate of the subject" (43). Whatever changes may occur, affects can never be wholly removed or erased as memory is never erased in the view of Freud. So, plasticity is transformation without being destroyed. Something can be damaged and destroyed but not removed entirely. The second case Freud comes up with is his natural tendency of associating ageing with the loss of libido and sexual power. He feels that recovery from ageing means the return to the life of adulthood where one can enjoy one's pleasure with freedom.

Joseph LeDoux, a neurologist, feels ageing is a result of change in synaptic connections. With change in connection, the habits of people, their appearance and their reality changes. However, the dominant claim remains that old age comes suddenly as

a result of trauma or accident, changing us abruptly in unknown subjects without any warning. In *The Lover*, Marguerite Duras calls herself an “aged-girl”, a woman subjected to destructive plasticity as a result of accident. Her life changes suddenly. She looks totally different at nineteen than she was at seventeen or eighteen. She starts drinking and suddenly drinking turns out to be her “habit”. Duras “became an alcoholic as soon as [she] started to drink. The incredible coincidence of the beginning and becoming—as soon as I began / I became—is terrifying”(60).

The concept of death is also discussed. Death is a certainty which can become and becomes possible at any moment. In *Buddenbrooks*, Thomas Mann describes the death of four generations before dying of the hero in his prime. This suddenness in death separates it from the phenomenon of gradual degeneration. His son, Hanno’s death also happens suddenly as result of typhoid disease stamping the authority of its suddenness. Where death is ultimately the destination, illness is usually an intermediary between life and death. Although signs of diseases and their effects are same, two sick people behave differently. They are not same. The changes in their individual lives are different. Death suddenly shapes individual into worst. “One does not die as one is; one dies as one suddenly becomes” (69). What if someone loses link with the past? How would he look at himself in that case? If in some cases one says nothing, even this nothing has its own attributes. In old age, with approaching death, we just observe added indifference before death.

In the final chapters, Malabou discusses the notion of negation and affirmation, as the philosophy of dream, which is nothing but appears everything. A girl who sees her mother in her dream negates that it is her mother. But this negation has endless possibilities of affirmation. There could be her second mother, third mother and so on and on. Post-traumatic subject who has nothing, not even void, not even lack is

suspended somewhere in between. The negative possibility also remains suspended. The negation is such that its essence is affirmation. This, she explains with the help of an example about the post-traumatic form.

To sum up, it can be concluded that plasticity is actually the mode of infinite possibilities of being. Trauma or accident can destroy the personality but can never undo or dissolve the existence. Similarly, the road to death is different in the eyes of different philosophers and critics. Some believe it to be the sudden disappearance of a being while others believe it to be a gradual deterioration.

One philosopher who views death as a sudden disappearance is Jean-Paul Sartre. In his work *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre argues that death is an abrupt cessation of existence (43). He emphasizes the stark contrast between existence and non-existence, suggesting that death represents an abrupt end to the possibilities and potentialities of being. On the other hand, Martin Heidegger presents a contrasting perspective, considering death as a gradual process of deterioration. In his seminal work *Being and Time*, Heidegger explores the existential concept of death as the ultimate possibility of Dasein, the human being (71). He suggests that death accompanies human existence throughout life and is a continuous phenomenon that influences our understanding of being. Additionally, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Friedrich Nietzsche emphasizes the importance of embracing the finitude of life and approaching death as a natural transition (18).

1.6 Research Methodology

This research embarked upon an interpretative and exploratory design. The research methodology that is used to draw results is qualitative and we employed textual analysis as the research method. The strategy applied is a ‘plastic reading’ of Ishiguro’s texts to analyze their embedded gestation of a neuronal subjectivity (Malabou *Plasticity*

at the Dusk of Writing 50). Drawing a framework from Malabou's conception of plasticity, the research project identifies the traces of plasticity in Ishiguro's works, which come up with the rich narrative for such an attempt due to their persistent quelling of identities and their synchronized resurrection. This interminable trialing with the quirks of the "I" suggests the work as an unrelenting investigation into the inquiry of subjectivity, interrupted by the quotidian veracities of existence that simultaneously support and tarnish at the same time. It is envisaged that in employing such elements to the methodology of this thesis provided a more wholesome view and exploration of the complex concepts of plasticity of subjectivity.

Textual analysis is employed in this qualitative research for several reasons. Firstly, textual analysis allows for a close examination and interpretation of the selected texts by Ishiguro. By closely analyzing the language, themes, and narrative structures of the texts, researchers can uncover underlying meanings, patterns, and motifs that contribute to our understanding of how trauma-stricken characters navigate destructive plasticity. Secondly, textual analysis provides a systematic and rigorous approach to studying literature, enabling researchers to identify and analyze key textual elements that shed light on the process of ontological metamorphosis and the engagement of characters with mental Darwinism. Through this method, researchers can offer in-depth insights into the dynamics of applied plasticity and its potential benefits for individuals in mastering themselves. Textual analysis offers a rich and nuanced exploration of the selected texts, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives and the intricate interplay between literature, psychology, and philosophy.

The key terms are operationalized as given.

Plasticity

Plasticity referred to the inherent capacity of the brain and psyche to change, adapt, and reconfigure in response to various internal and external stimuli. In the context of this study, plasticity was operationalized as the ability of characters in Ishiguro's texts to undergo transformation, adaptation, and restructuring of their identities and subjectivities in the face of trauma and existential challenges.

Destructive Plasticity

Destructive plasticity signified the disruptive and potentially harmful aspects of neuroplasticity, where neural pathways and structures underwent negative changes or degradation. Destructive plasticity was operationalized as the detrimental effects of trauma and psychological distress on the characters' identities and sense of self in Ishiguro's narratives. This may have manifested as fragmentation, disintegration, or loss of coherence in the characters' subjective experiences.

Mental Darwinism

Mental Darwinism referred to the application of evolutionary principles, particularly natural selection, to the development and adaptation of cognitive and psychological traits. In this study, Mental Darwinism was operationalized as the survival-oriented strategies and adaptive mechanisms employed by characters in Ishiguro's works to navigate the challenges of their environments and internal struggles. This included resilience, adaptation, and the selection of psychological traits conducive to survival and self-preservation.

Ontological Metamorphosis

Ontological metamorphosis denoted the fundamental changes or transformations in the nature of being and existence, particularly concerning the construction and reconstruction of identity and subjectivity. Within the context of this research, ontological metamorphosis was operationalized as the dynamic process

through which characters in Ishiguro's narratives underwent shifts, evolutions, and redefinitions of their sense of self and ontological frameworks. This may have involved existential crises, epiphanies, and moments of profound transformation that reshaped their understanding of reality and existence.

1.7 Delimitation

The research under discussion will be delimited to the three works of Ishiguro: *The Buried Giant*, *The Unconsoled* and *A Pale View of Hills*. In establishing these delimitation parameters, the aim is to make this research more comprehensive, focused and specific.

1.8 Significance of Study

The significance of this study lies in its interdisciplinary approach that bridges the fields of literature, neuroscience, trauma studies, and philosophy. By applying Catherine Malabou's theory of Plasticity to the selected texts of Kazuo Ishiguro, this research offers a unique perspective on the themes of destructive plasticity and ontological metamorphosis. It expands our understanding of how trauma-stricken characters in literature navigate the challenges of memory loss, indifference, and the reconstruction of their sense of self. Moreover, this study contributes to the broader discourse on the relationship between literature and physical science, highlighting that these disciplines are not epistemological opposites but can complement each other in exploring the complexities of human experience. By examining the dynamics of applied plasticity, the research also opens avenues for potential practical implications, offering insights into how individuals can harness their own transformative capacities to improve their well-being and assert agency over their lives. Ultimately, this study seeks to shed light on the relevance of philosophy in contemporary society and its potential to contribute to the understanding and enhancement of human existence.

Along with being a unique contribution to the critical work on Kazuo Ishiguro, this research project is an intervention in the constant expansion of Medical Humanities; especially, it targets to evaluate and comprehend the role of Behavioral Neuroscience for the comprehension of literature and the subjectivities it stimulates. This exploration of the neuronal plasticity of the brain affords further credibility to Malabou's theory of plasticity.

Reading Ishiguro through the lens of Catherine Malabou's theory of plasticity offers several valuable benefits and enriches our understanding of Ishiguro's works. Reading Ishiguro through the lens of Malabou's theory of plasticity enables us to delve deeper into the themes of trauma, personal transformation, and identity in Ishiguro's narratives. It connects literature and philosophy, uncovers the malleability of selfhood, and offers fresh insights into Ishiguro's texts, expanding our understanding of the human condition.

The study aims to contribute to the existing body of research through its exploration of Kazuo Ishiguro's texts through the lens of Catherine Malabou's theory of plasticity. By applying Malabou's framework to analyze Ishiguro's works, this research offers a unique perspective on trauma, personal transformation, and the human condition. The significance of this study can be summarized as follows.

By combining the realms of literature and philosophy, this study presents a fresh and interdisciplinary approach to understanding the themes of trauma and destructive plasticity in Ishiguro's texts. It explores the convergence of literature, neuroscience, and philosophy, revealing unique perspectives and generating novel insights into the psychological and physical effects of trauma.

The study delves into the process of ontological metamorphosis as depicted in Ishiguro's works, shedding light on how characters navigate and survive destructive

plasticity. It deepens our understanding of the complex nature of personal transformation, resilience, and adaptation in the face of trauma.

By investigating the dynamics of applied plasticity and its potential benefits for individuals, this research provides practical implications for personal growth and self-improvement. It examines how understanding and harnessing plasticity can empower individuals and help them navigate the challenges of life.

This study contributes to the ongoing dialogue between literature and philosophy, demonstrating the relevance and interconnectedness of these disciplines. By reading Ishiguro's works through Malabou's theoretical framework, it adds to the discourse on the intersection of literature, philosophy, and personal transformation.

This research stands out for its integration of diverse disciplines and theories. By combining the literary analysis of Ishiguro's texts, the insights of Malabou's plasticity theory, and the implications of trauma studies and neuroscience, it offers a unique and comprehensive exploration of the themes under investigation. It adds a distinctive perspective to the existing body of scholarship and expands the understanding of trauma, resilience, and personal transformation in literature.

In conclusion, the study's significance lies in its innovative approach to reading Ishiguro through Malabou's theory of plasticity, providing new insights into trauma, personal transformation, and the human condition. It offers practical implications for personal growth and self-mastery, advances interdisciplinary understanding, fosters dialogue between literature and philosophy, and presents a unique contribution to the field of literary analysis and trauma studies.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

- **Brief introduction to the purpose and focus of the literature review**

The concept of "self" has been a central topic in literature and philosophy for centuries, with authors and thinkers exploring the complexities and nuances of identity and subjectivity. In recent years, advances in neuroscience have added a new dimension to this discourse, revealing the plastic and malleable nature of the human brain and its impact on the formation and deformation of the self.

This interdisciplinary literature review will focus on the work of Kazuo Ishiguro, a contemporary British novelist whose fiction explores the themes of memory, trauma, and identity. Specifically, I shall examine the novels *The Buried Giant*, *The Unconsoled*, and *A Pale View of Hills*, analyzing how they reveal a neuropsychological discovery about the ceaseless cycle of formation, transmutation, and deformation that characterizes the concept of the self.

The central thesis of this study is that Ishiguro's selected fiction highlights the destructive plasticity that results in ontological violence, challenging the traditional notion of the self as a static entity. To achieve this objective, I shall bring together the fields of behavioral neuroscience, trauma studies, and phenomenology on the platform of literature, demonstrating that literature and physical science are not epistemological opposites.

Moreover, this study aims to show the relevance of philosophy in today's world by exploring how Ishiguro's fiction engages with fundamental questions about the nature of self, trauma, and memory. By undertaking this interdisciplinary approach, we

hope to provide a comprehensive and focused analysis of Ishiguro's work, shedding light on the complex interplay between literature, neuroscience, and philosophy.

Malabou's philosophy is grounded in plasticity, which she describes as the capacity for transformation and adaptation in both the brain and society. She argues that plasticity challenges traditional notions of subjectivity and identity, questioning the idea that the self is a fixed and immutable entity.

To explore Malabou's work, I shall examine her philosophical approach and key concepts, including her engagement with Freudian and post-Freudian trauma theory. I shall also explore the role of subjectivity in Malabou's philosophy and how it relates to her emphasis on plasticity.

In light of these objectives, the research will be limited to the three works of Ishiguro mentioned above, allowing for a more targeted and specific analysis of his work. This literature review aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation about the nature of self and identity, exploring how literature can provide a unique and valuable perspective on this complex and multifaceted topic.

2.2 Introduction to Catherine Malabou

Catherine Malabou is a French philosopher whose work has significantly contributed to philosophy, neuroscience, and trauma studies. Her approach is characterized by a unique blend of continental philosophy and cognitive science, in which she explores the plasticity of the brain and its implications for subjectivity and identity.

According to Malabou, the brain is not a fixed and immutable structure but a dynamic and constantly changing system. As she writes in *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, "The brain is a living tissue that changes in time, and we are the agents of that change" (10). This emphasis on plasticity is a central theme in her work, as she

seeks to challenge traditional notions of self and subjectivity and explores how neurobiological processes shape them.

Malabou's work also engages with trauma theory, particularly the writings of Freud and post-Freudian theorists. In *The New Wounded*, she argues that trauma is not simply a negative experience that results in psychological damage but rather a transformative process that can create new possibilities for subjectivity. She writes, "Trauma is a process of transformation, of radical change that reveals new horizons of experience" (6).

Central to Malabou's philosophy is ontological metamorphosis, which refers to the constant transformation and deformation process that characterizes subjectivity. As she writes in *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing*, "We are constantly remaking ourselves, not only in the sense of constructing ourselves anew but also in the sense of remaking what we have been" (5). This emphasis on ontological metamorphosis challenges traditional notions of self and identity as fixed and unchanging entities.

In summary, Malabou's work explores the plasticity of the brain and its impact on subjectivity and identity, engaging with trauma theory and the concept of ontological metamorphosis to challenge traditional philosophical assumptions. Through her unique blend of cognitive science and continental philosophy, she has made significant contributions to philosophy, neuroscience, and trauma studies.

2.4 Neuroscience and plasticity

Overview of plasticity in the brain and its significance for Malabou's work

Several studies have provided a comprehensive overview of the latest research on brain plasticity and its implications for cognitive and emotional well-being (DoIDGE, 7; Begley, 32; Greenfield, 22; Merzenich, 213). These authors explore how the brain can be reshaped by experience and how its capacity to adapt can lead to personal growth

and transformation. Their work aligns with Malabou's concept of plasticity, which emphasizes the malleability of the brain and its potential for change. In particular, Doidge and Merzenich provide detailed case studies of individuals who have overcome neurological disorders through targeted interventions that harness the brain's plasticity. These studies illustrate the transformative power of plasticity and support Malabou's claim that experience can shape and reshape the brain.

The idea that brain plasticity has been exploited by capitalism's desire to work us ever harder is also a central theme in contemporary philosophy and neuroscience. As Catherine Malabou argues in *The New Wounded: From Neurosis to Brain Damage*, "the desire to achieve and exceed goals leads to a never-ending quest for self-improvement, which in turn exhausts and even destroys the brain's capacity for plasticity" (3).

This exploitation is also discussed in Byung-Chul Han's *The Burnout Society*, where he notes that "the unlimited adaptability that neuroplasticity implies becomes a productive force in the service of capitalism, which demands a constantly flexible and productive workforce" (22). Similarly, Edward Bullmore in *The Inflamed Mind* argues that "the stress of modern life, which demands constant adaptation and flexibility, can lead to inflammation in the brain and contribute to the development of depression and other stress-related illnesses" (12).

In essence, these works suggest that the drive to constantly adapt and improve, fueled by the exploitation of brain plasticity by capitalist ideologies, can ultimately lead to a breakdown in the brain's capacity for plasticity and the proliferation of stress-related illnesses. As Malabou puts it, "the brain's capacity for plasticity has become a double-edged sword, both a means of resilience and a tool for destruction" (3).

- **Discussion of the developmental and modulatory aspects of brain plasticity**

Humans themselves contribute to the development of their brains. The weight of an infant's brain is 20 per cent less than that of an adult (Changeux 126). So, there is an enlargement in the network of neurons along with age. The brain continues to grow, but at a certain stage, the growth of brain cells decreases. At this specific stage, the external environment influences the development of the brain, which gives it plasticity and individuality. According to Malabou, like plastic, further growth of brain cells stops, and the brain envisions new functions not included in its infancy. The neurons and fibers in the brain work under the influence of the external environment to unchain the brain. (18).

Modulatory plasticity defines the function of the brain in which it begins the practice of what it is going to do in the future concerning its environment. It becomes creative due to the effectiveness of synapses. Humans make their synapses/neurons, which grow the other way around. Donald Holding Hebb, first of all, introduced the interrelation of synaptic efficacy. The concept of synaptic efficacy can be better understood with the help of an example. The working of reflexes (response system) is different in humans belonging to different professions. For instance, in cricket, the back of a fast bowler is stronger than that of a leg-spinner because the brain of a fast bowler gets used to making such synaptic connections which enhances the capability of back muscles. Likewise, a professional writer writes faster than a non-professional writer (22).

In her book *What Should We Do with Our Brains?* Malabou uses technical terms such as long-term potential (LTP) and long-term depression in her book (LTD) which are a consequence of regular mental actions. There is also a question about the adult

human brain and whether it becomes rigid and does not grow. Despite getting new information, its capacity for modification and deformation of things perishes (22).

Reparative plasticity is the capacity of the brain to repair losses of injury. It mends impaired parts. Even after paralysis, the hands and legs of a patient start movement. Here, again, is the question about the possibility of functions of these cells of the body which were dead during a head injury. The answer is the recovering capability of the brain and returning towards normality. But all types of brain injuries cannot be recovered. The plasticity of the brain consists in functional redistribution. In case of damage to one part of the brain (Alzheimer's disease), the other starts working. As brain is not a single entity, plasticity of the brain is also multiple. It comprises many kinds of plasticity of the brain (cerebral functioning) (29).

The plasticity of the brain has been explained by using all the analogies. Henri Bergson uses central brain exchange and computer brain analogy in *Matter and Memory*. He claims that the brain, like a telephone exchange, receives data and does not include anything from its side.

The brain works like a telephone exchange: It collects data, sends the link, and brings down the line (Bergson 30). Its function is to permit communication or defer it. The concept of telephone exchange is obsolete. Bergson writes, "the human mind is so constructed that it cannot begin to understand the new until it has done everything in its power to relate it to the old. (Bergson 4). Jeannerod responds to Bergson in his book, *The Nature of Mind*, as "the activity of the nervous system can be better represented as the outline of a multidimensional map than as a sequence of symbols. (31). Gilles Deleuze uses the term "a centered system," for the brain; he writes, "our lived relationship with the brain becomes more and more fragile, less and less 'Euclidean,'

and goes through little cerebral deaths [...].The brain becomes our problem or our illness, our passion, rather than our mastery, our solution or decision. (Deleuze 211-2).

Dennett, in *Consciousness Explained*, describes the commonality between the human brain and computer: plastic organization. That is why the computer is compared with the brain. Both the computer and the brain are thinking machines. Thinking adds up to calculation and programming. "A computer," he writes, "has a basic fixed or hard-wired architecture but with huge amounts of plasticity thanks to the memory.(210-1).

Explanation of Neural Darwinism and its relationship to plasticity

The brain, a mechanical device, solely controls all the movements and functions of the human body as a chief leader. Regarding plasticity, the brain is defined as a device that transcends itself from brain-machine to brain-world. In *What Should We Do With Our Brain?* Malabou contends that this model exists together with the socio-economic environment. Despite changing our understanding of the cerebral system, this new concept of the brain will also modify our social organization. The function of the brain and modern business enterprise is quite similar. In both, there is devolution of power where networks are rearranged concerning designated tasks to realize definite goals (42).

Malabou compares Alzheimer's (degeneration of neurons) and depression (soul disconnection). In both illnesses, the patient detaches from society. In the first case, detachment is never-ending, while in the second case, reconnection is possible. Dementia, an alternative to plasticity, results in permanent disconnection (52).

After renouncing the theory of rigidity, predetermination, and commanding organ about the brain, the theory of flexible, adaptable, and plastic organs gives rise to the liberation of the brain. Plasticity is different from flexibility. Plasticity is a process of adaptation, whereas flexibility is the submission method. It does not reproduce

mimicry of the world, and this is what should be done with our brains. According to Marx, "Humans make their own history, but they do not know that they make it" (Marx 18). Likewise, humans make their brains but are unaware of them. (1). In 1979, Jean Pierre Changeux wrote in the preface of his book *Neuronal Man* that the discovery of synapses and details of their functions was a big event like the discovery of DNA and atom (8). Despite attaining comfort through the study of CNS, man still lacks consciousness of brain. It would be right if it is said that we are still not alive to what goes on in the brain. We neither know who we are nor what we have on one side of us.

The phenomenon of selection is anyhow omnipresent. Besides natural function over an evolutionary period, there are processes of neural selection, antibody selection, and some learning which can be imitated as a selection process. It is instrumental learning (Justin Garson 68).

The strain between genetic machinery and its volatile equivalent namely plasticity needs further exploration. The plastic independence of a brain that includes transformation, reparation, improvisation, and undetermined transparency forms as a result of experience and its extent and scope must be contemplated. The central consolidation of the machine metaphor is shattered through plasticity through a radical and democratic framework that comprises networks and delocalization of power. Malabou highlights the dogmatic nature of epigenetics and the concept of brain that emerges in its deterministic model and calls for a more democratic and egalitarian theory of brain in her writings (*Darwin and the Social Destiny of Natural Selection* 156).

In her book *New Wounded*, Catherine Malabou draws on Gerald Edelman's theory of neural Darwinism to support her argument about destructive plasticity in the brain (12). Edelman's theory proposes that the brain's plasticity is driven by selection

and competition among neuronal populations, which strengthens some connections and the weakening or elimination of others (87).

Malabou argues that this selection process can also lead to destructive plasticity, in which the brain's capacity for adaptation becomes a liability and can lead to negative outcomes such as memory loss or cognitive dysfunction (20). She cites Edelman's work to support her argument that the brain is not simply a passive recipient of external stimuli but an active agent in shaping its structure and function (20).

Malabou further develops this argument in her book *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* by suggesting that the process of neuronal selection and competition can also lead to the emergence of new neural networks and structures, which she refers to as "ontological metamorphosis" (8). This concept is similar to Edelman's "neuronal group selection" theory, which proposes that the brain's plasticity can result in new and unique neuronal assemblies that contribute to cognitive function (7).

Malabou's use of Edelman's theory of neural Darwinism supports her argument about the potential for destructive plasticity in the brain and the brain's capacity for adaptation and transformation through the process of neuronal selection and competition.

Analysis of neuronal modeling and its contribution to understanding plasticity

Synaptic efficacy is the result of the individual experience of humans. The synaptic efficacy theory claims that the synaptic circuit grows with its frequent use. It sticks to the induration process, which comprises the emergence of the brain as its special and constricted object based on a common pattern. An individual's identity is made by their experiences, activities, environment, past, and the adaptability of a brain to any new change. Education, experience, and training formulate the specific work of a brain (6).

The assertion of Jean Pierre Changeux about the discovery of synapse as great a breakthrough as that of DNA is understandable. Similar to other disciplines, boundaries are lessening between the mind and the brain. It resembles the proto-self. We make our brains, and we are our brains. We also know about them. But we must be aware of brain plasticity, which embodies our real potential for growth. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, in *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, write that the function of neurons and social functioning determine each other and have mutual forms. According to the discovery of the twenty-first century, the plasticity of neurons has biological anchorage, and it can be understood by the “naturalization effect” (149).

The mind has been believed to be a trio during the past years, a multilateral combination of cognition, emotion, and motivation. Many considered these three parts as divisions of the same mental capacity, while others considered them three distinctive faculties. But both the concepts regarding trio got lesser acceptance when behaviorism was in fashion during the twentieth century, as psychology completely set the mind aside, making this trio controversial. The mind was again carried back to psychology by cognition resolution, but emotion and motivation were (and are) considered responsible for thinking-related cognitive processes. Nevertheless, it is worth grasping that it is not the only way we reason, remember, or pay attention but also the cause to reason, remember, or pay attention to one thing instead of the other. We need to take emotion and motivation into account to think fully (LeDoux 174).

A famous Russian psychologist, Aleksandr Romanovich Luria, introduced significant theories on brain function, studying the wounds of gunshot survivors during World War II. He concluded that any injury to the frontal lobe leads to the inability to prepare and implement goal-oriented behavior (Romanovich 2). The same conclusion—the frontal lobe controls planning, goal-oriented behavior, and short-term

memory—was verified from studies of many patients suffering from the damaged frontal lobe and psychiatric patients who experienced frontal lobotomy. The tasks requiring executive functions and short-term memory accelerate neural activity in the frontal cortex; MRI and PET scans can measure it in modern times. It is believed that neural circuits in the frontal lobes cause working memory. Top-down cognition requires the prefrontal cortex to execute its work. Decision-making is the core role of executive functions. Many researchers have unveiled how it functions in the brain.

Bottom-up information

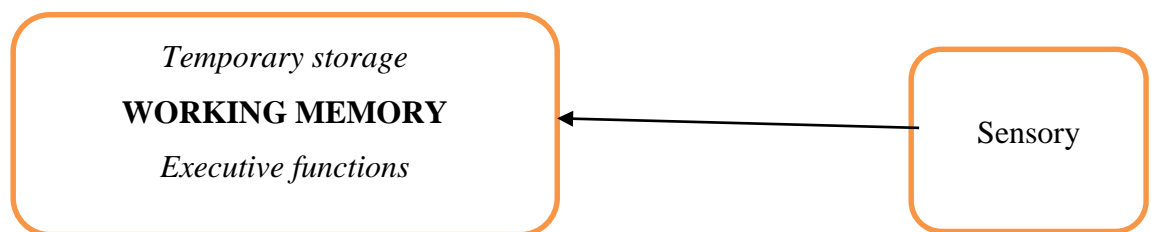


Figure: BOTTOM-UP AND TOP-DOWN PROCESSING.

The bottom-up process is illustrated while sending information from the sensory system to working memory. In contrast, the top-down process is illustrated by the control of working memory on sensory processing.

Thinking is the executive facet of working memory in synaptic connections among neurons in the anterior cingulate, the lateral prefrontal regions and any other area. Different executive function facets are spread differently in many areas. Evidence proved that certain executive functions are localized—some areas of the prefrontal cortex are specialized to discharge various facets of executive functions (decision-making vs conflict resolution vs stimulus/response selection). No evidence supports manifold executive, with every executive function having the capacity for decision-making and planning. But groups of interlinked circuits in the frontal cortex and some

other brain areas collectively accomplish numerous facets of executive functions (LeDoux 187-8).

2.5 Trauma and memory

- **Exploration of trauma**

Collectives, whether political activists or survivor groups, ethnic or national or regional groups, unify due to their re-experience of wounds. Histories of violence based on gender, sex, or race have clear-cut reasons to look for explanations in trauma. However, there is a common argument about traumatic identity as the main reason for several collective memories. From the suggestions of Sigmund Freud on buried trauma at the fountainhead of Jewish history, one can now study traumas that directed Germany after the war, post 9/11 America, Eastern Europe after communism, or Britain after colonization. According to Andreas Huyssen, marks of historic trauma appear throughout the whole of the twentieth century (8). In culture, identity is made by privileged severity and survival. The prisoners of a concentration camp, Gulf and Vietnam War veterans, victims of barbarity, traumatized parents, and survivors of calamity are the subject matter of comprehensive investigation and dispute in sociology, politics, biology, psychiatry, therapy, and law. Bestseller lists contain narratives explaining the severity of domestic violence, rape, war, cruelties, lifetime illness, family deaths, and sadness in all its forms and manifestations giving rise to the traumatic memory. Academic works have flourished and often appear to include the whole area of the memory studies under the trauma token. To an increasing extent, the memory of trauma is valuable in talking and remembering (Antze and Lambek xii).

Likewise, in the eager world of celebrity culture, trauma can expand or even become the only reason for popularity. What Mark Seltzer has called the diseased public

sphere occasionally develops around moments of trauma and threatens a specific community. Examples might be the death of Princess Diana, brutal or uncommon child murders, the launch of Holocaust Memorial Days, or terrorist attacks on New York, London, or Madrid (3). Trauma is derived from a Greek word which means wound. It was first used in English in the seventeenth century in medicine and referred to a physical injury caused by an external factor. Wounds and cures are homogeneous; physicians use traumatic herbs or balsams for wounds. In older editions of the Oxford English Dictionary, the entries for trauma, traumatic, traumatism, and the prefix trauma were mentioned only from the sources regarding physical wounds. The exception is an edition of "Popular Science Monthly" from 1895 which calls it psychical trauma, a psychological nervous condition (Luckhurst 2).

It indicates the initial shift of trauma from the physical to the mental domain that would begin to take place in the late nineteenth century. In the recent edition of the OED, references to physical wounds lessened to three and largely exceeded in number by those from psychoanalysis and psychiatry. The dominant popular implication of trauma now denotes metaphors of psychic lesions and mental wounds. The metaphor of psychological effect still holds on to the sense of a wound caused by an external agent. A further shift into common usage of the adjective traumatic for any tough or inconvenient circumstance is also recorded by OED. However, in medicine, the trauma still alludes to bodily injury. According to the observation of Steven Connor, the center of attention on the borderline of skin in ritual cutting or making sacrifices keeps playing with robust taboos in many cultures. The culture of trauma has emerged, and skin is a transparent object of various forms of imaginary or real onslaught in the modern world (Connor 65).

It is beneficial to maintain the sense that meanings of trauma have been put somewhere between the physical and psychical. Almost every traumatic disorder has been an instance of an intense fight over its final origin, whether it is an industrial accident, frenzy, shell shock, survivor syndrome, fight fatigue, or PTSD. Are the symptoms the consequence of a physical, organic disease generated by recognizable external agents or a completely psychical disorder created by imitation, proposition, mental collapse, or intrinsic mental weakness? Or does it emanate from nerves, that unsure, interstitial space somewhere between the body and mind? The production of nervous shock or nervous exhaustion resulted from the self-consciousness of Victorian doctors looking for a third term to lie between the organic and the mental dominion, a shifting point where the physiological and psychological merged in unforeseeable ways (Luckhurst 1).

As Janet Oppenheim remarked, metaphor penetrated all Victorian and Edwardian discussions of the nerves. Although the physical and psychical nature of trauma is argued daily and their grounds of argumentative authority get refreshed, the structure of dispute has not considerably changed for a hundred years. Trauma is percolation or transgression of a border. Trauma intensely opens pathways between once-subtle systems, making unpredictable links that perturb. Trauma also seems to be alarmingly contagious: it releases between mental and physical symptoms, between patients as in contamination of hysteria and shell shock, between patients and doctors through the weird processes of transference or suggestion, and between sufferers and their listeners or watchers who are frequently moved to forms of enormous sympathy, even to the proportion of asserting victimhood. Transmissibility has become the main ethical anxiety about description and reaction to traumatic narratives and images. Can

the right to talk about trauma be finite to its primary victims? Who can affirm secondary status without imperiling suitability? (83).

At least minimal awareness of the history of psychodynamic psychology, including the late nineteenth century, is needed to grasp the full resonances of trauma. Still, far from exclusion, the work of Sigmund Freud and then the advancement of the law of torture concerning the recovery of damages related to the heedless imposition of nervous shocks since 1901, and the role of military psychiatry and pension agencies across succeeding wars of the twentieth century, and the position of trauma in deconstruction and poststructuralist philosophy since about 1990, and then sociological theories of trauma as socially interposed ascription, a form of collaborative testimonial practice dismiss the naturalistic delusion of psychologists (Alexander8). The latest studies of the brain physiology of the locus coeruleus and the impacts on the memory and emotions of catecholamines as norepinephrine when under intense stress, and then, ultimately, the revolution in the remedy of traumatic stress using an amalgamation of drugs concentrated on serotonin and cognitive behavioral therapy describe unstable nature of mind-body divide and the experience of trauma seems to transgress these boundaries. According to the observation of La Capra, trauma as a problem is not ownership of any discipline or genre, and we cannot prescribe any specified boundaries for it. Nevertheless, the superior model for cultural trauma is acquired from a comparatively narrow section of this complicated, interdisciplinary history (96).

The work of Cathy Caruth, a prominent theorist who facilitated in promotion of the increment in cultural trauma theory in the early 1990s, made aporia or un-resolvable paradox start working. Caruth, in a preface to a particular issue on *Unclaimed Experience* in 1991, suggested that trauma expands beyond the leaps of marginal pathology and has become the main attribute of the survivor experience of our time.

However, trauma has been an intrinsically paradoxical experience. An event might be traumatic to the degree that it overcomes the psychic defenses and normal processes of recording memory marks. Trauma somewhat scorches directly into the psyche just like a piece of shrapnel and does not submit to the deformity of subjective memory: it is a symptom of history. Caruth indicates that traumatic experience proposes a specific self-contradiction: that the most direct watching of an aggressive incident may happen as a total lack of ability to be aware of it (3).

Moreover, a Freudian paradox is strange transience of traumatic memory: an incident can only be comprehended as traumatic after the reality, yet the symptoms and memories of past events and deferred efforts at understanding that these signals of perturbation generate. According to Caruth, trauma is the hardship of representation, history and truth, and chronicle time. It is a repetitive assertion that psychoanalysis and literature are specifically prerogative forms of writing that can address these confusing paradoxes of trauma (7). Lyotard reproduced the Freudian idea of conflictingly registered yet unregistered trauma, displaying modernism as continuously tormented by what it had intensely repressed or not remembered in the symptom that would indicate itself even in the present as a menace (11).

The theory of the sublime by Lyotard describes the post-traumatic aesthetic. Here constituting non-success in organizing the excessive event paradoxically determines its success as a work of art. Lyotard gave innovative art a special place in vocalizing this paradox: "what art can do is to tolerate testimony not to sublime, yet to this aporia of art and its pain. (47) Deconstruction of philosophy by Jacques Derrida gives the second main reference to this aporetic thinking and its significant place in literary theory in the American Academy in the 1970s and 1980s. In a belated lecture named "Aporias", Derrida thought carefully how his readings had often searched

important moments of obvious refutation or indecision, so many aporetic places or dislocations that each text inclined to divulge.

Derrida determined the aporia as a choking of passage, a hindering or hesitation, a foot lingering on the threshold, caught between proceeding and retreating, between the possibility and impossibility. Derrida had followed the possibility and impossibility of melancholy in the work of Paul de Man, the paradoxes of memory in Freud's models of psychic engraving, burnt marks or ashes of memory, and the aporia of the wound in the poetry of Paul Celan. The main dedication of Derrida to responsible thought, ethics, and politics was to preserve the marks of these aporias: the trauma was that most western thinking restrained this passage of not capable of being decided, that all metaphysics ratified a sort of violence.

The main route of Derrida into the American academy was through a reputed Yale school since the 1970s. The important person in this grouping was Paul de Man. He established a specific deconstructive reading of the language. In a space between reference and representation, at the minimum, some of what we aspired to convey were always welcome to misrepresentation or mistake; literature, in particular, appeared to make an important decline intrinsic in the act of representation and often came to be about this blundering (Derrida 15).

According to de Man, this also unavoidably affected the work of literary interpretation, which he devised in the pithy paradox: the parable of reading describes the impossibility of reading (de Man 77). De Man's errors and diminutions between reference and representation apprised Caruth's creation of paradoxes of traumatic representation. However, this reading of de Man was just part of a broader move by Yale critics to the trauma theory. Geoffrey Hartman, whose deconstructive re-readings of romantic literature and elucidation of Derrida's work were eminent in creating the

impact of Yale school, began to shift his interest to commemoration and representation of the Holocaust in the early 1990s. The Fortunoff Holocaust Video Archives at Yale, which gather the evidence of Holocaust survivors, and which Hartman co-founded, triggered him to investigate this area theoretically as well as autobiographically (Hartman as a child, first travelled from Germany to England and then from England to America to run from the oppression and murder of the European Jews).

Hartman had productively translated his prolonged profession into variant trauma studies until 1995. If trauma indicates the lack of consistency between the event and the forever delayed, incomplete comprehension of the event, then Hartman argued that this was the most important part of romantic poetry. A figurative language is a permanent meaning surrounding a primary experience. If it is “Ancient Mariner” of Coleridge with its compellingly recurring of the theme and its description in retelling, or William Wordsworth's narrative in *The Prelude* of how scary incidents create poetic subjectivity, Hartman suggested that trauma theory was the main explanatory device. Hartman always stressed that poetic conversation created multiple meanings; trauma was now the inspiring nature of negative that triggers symbolic language and its excess of signifiers (Hartman95).

At the same time, another Yale critic, Shoshana Felman, also translated deconstruction into trauma theory. Felman is fairly popular for her essay on Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, which searched how this ghost story had directed the succeeding generation of literary critics to a form of interpretive insanity. Instead of trying to sort out the riddle, Felman observed how the text created vagueness, focusing not on positive knowledge but where the meaning of a text does not work, that which in the text, and through which the text does not succeed to connote (Felman 112). Felman acknowledged the limitations of interpretive knowledge in her writing, and in

her analysis of the Holocaust, and examined the nine-hour documentary film *Shoah* by Claude Lanzmann. The film features testimonies from survivors, providing a comprehensive view of the Nazi genocide machinery and how the final solution was executed.

Felman's interest was still in paradoxes and limitations of knowledge. Still, there was a language of hardships and haste about taking liability for the truth of history, as ours is an age of proofs, an age in which viewing itself has experienced major trauma. She comprehends the documentary project of Lanzmann to catch the weakness of surviving witness in now well-known irresolvable (aporetic) terms: it is now the object of reference to return, contradictorily, as something before now was not seen by history, to manifest the real effect of literality that history cannot incorporate as knowledge, but that which it continues to encounter (Felman 41). The next year, testimony was published by Felman and psychoanalyst, Dori Laub.

It was a text in which the trauma of the Holocaust provoked almost repetitive obsession and eagerly emphasized aporetic formulae. The Holocaust is demonstrated as a violent historical crisis of viewing, an event terminating its viewers (Felman and Laubxvii). Felman and Laub restated that the derivative of 'the necessity of testimony' is derived from the 'impossibility of testimony' (Felman and Laub 224). Felman also postulated a new pedagogy of trauma in which the ability of textual material to shatter the very structure of a class is the basis of the calculation of its efficacy (Felman and Laub48). The discovery of Felman was the induction of unintentional crisis in her students, but then energetically, she found this disturbance as an estimate of material in transmitting trauma. Felman argued that teaching must successively attest and make something happen. This activism supposedly aspired to instigate effect in students for

final cognitive learning, although according to a definition of trauma, it is an aporia that weakens the cognitive grip (Felman and Laub 53).

The classroom was an important place through which productive dissemination and movement of traumatic emotions are hypothesized: testimony led the boom in the transmutation of Yale deconstruction into trauma theory which then sailed across literary and cultural studies. The theory of education by Felman first came to light in Caruth's special issues of *American Imago*, where Caruth talked about and endorsed the possibility of real pedagogical confrontation, which produces new ways of getting an approach to a historical disaster for those who try to look at it from a distance. The academic impacts of these works vigorously displayed the transmission of traumatic effects (Caruth91). Psychoanalysis is the most obvious means for theories of cultural trauma. Lyotard, Derrida, Felman, and Caruth have engaged with trauma through Freud and suggest that his work is the inevitable basis for theories of trauma. This is certainly the case for cultural studies (Luckhurst13). Freud's commitment to the traumatic neuroses was literally rather periodic, and Ruth Leys remarks that the writings of Freud on trauma and the mechanisms of defense are disordered in ways that appear to invite, or compel, critical discussion (Leys 274).

Consequently, every three major interventions of Freud have given models that are sometimes incompatible but keep going into contemporary discussions. Traumatic hysteria was considered a psychical disorder of memory in *On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena*, co-authored by Freud with Joseph Breuer in 1893. It was recorded in the famous epigram "Hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences" (Freud 58). Traumatic memory is perplexing, totally missing from patients' memory when they are in a normal state of mind, but which is persistent below the threshold of consciousness, amazingly undamaged and with great sensory force.

The diagram of their treatment changed the hysteric's body into a cryptogram, each physical or mental symptom to be traced down to a torturing secret and to be treated by revealing the memory of the event and in bringing to light its accompanying impacts. The patient is supposed to be cured only when the patient has explained that eventfully and has put the impact in words. In studies on hysteria, these traumatic events were relatable, as in the popular case of Anna O, to her father's death and suppressed guilt. Three years later, Freud urged that these traumatic secrets perfectly make headway to the field of sexual experience in the end, a position inseparably associated with the origins of psychoanalysis itself (Freud 199).

This understanding creates a different prominence in hypothesizing the traumatic origins of hysteria. There was a supposition of two-stage development in the sexual theories of Freud, an initial stage of childish sexuality that was suppressed for a period of childhood latency and which came back with puberty and the arrival of adult sexuality. Sexual neuroses and distortions were assigned to the deviance of sexual aims that was the consequence of infantile disturbances. It also means that early traumas in childhood would be obliterated in latency but reappear in adults. Therefore, sexual disorders behaved like indicators indicating a covert crime entombed in infancy: Freud's case histories were based on interpretive digging to reveal the sexual secret.

This two-stage theory of trauma that says that the first obliterated impact making a belated comeback after a pause has been fundamental to cultural trauma theory. Freud's term for belated or delayed action was translated by the psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche as an *afterwardsness*, an intentionally cumbersome word that makes prominent the strange temporality of an event not comprehended as traumatic until it comes back (Laplanche9). The linear description of trauma is indescribable: it has a measured signature that must smear conventional causation. In 1918, there was a stand-

off in Freud's sexual economy of psychic life when he was again (second) compelled to return to the issue of trauma at the finality of the Great War. His dynamic model of psyche could not seemingly indicate the symptoms of war neurosis in soldiers, which was usually indicated by dominating return in walking thoughts and bad dreams to the pain and dread of traumatic fight scenes.

This active search for displeasure pressurized Freud unwillingly to return to what he termed the gloomy and somber subject of traumatic neurosis. (Freud 283). The first publication of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in 1920 was Freud's highly conjectural effort to comprehend what he called this repetition compulsion. The psyche permanently returned to scenes of displeasure because, by repeatedly presenting the traumatic moment, it hoped belatedly to manage the incongruent material to find methods of overcoming the trauma chronologically. In a transparent metaphor, Freud predicted the mind's singularity as a cell with an outer membrane. It performs the following functions: filters material from the external world, manages nutrients, repels poisons, and maintains the integrity of its boundaries- as the conscious mind does.

A traumatic event is something striking that explodes, opens the membrane, and inundates the cell with alien material, leaving the cell submerged and trying to recover the loss (201). Freud says Traumatic event is described as any agitations from outside that are strong enough to make headway through a defensive shield. Such an event as an external trauma is obliged to instigate excessive perturbation in an organism's energy functions and to activate every possible protective measure. Likewise, obstructing the mental apparatus from inundation with the great stimulus is no longer possible. Rather, another problem arises: the problem of overcoming the amounts of stimulus which have intervened and holding them together, in the psychical sense, so that they can be discarded (Freud 301).

The obligation to repeat was a back action for management of the traumatic effect, Freud returning to the actual sense of trauma as a scarring external intervention. By observing children who represent upsetting absence and come back of mother in dominating games, Freud speculated the repetition of distasteful experiences in children for supplementary reasons that by being active, they can learn thoroughly powerful impressions compared to merely by passive experience (Freud, 1920a. 307). Repetition constraint has become cultural shorthand for the results of traumatic events: individuals, collectives, and nations endanger their growth by confining themselves in cycles of incomprehensible repetition until the translation of traumatic event takes place from repetition to the healthy analytic process of non-stop working (Freud, 1914).

Belatedly, Freud's work, *Moses and Monotheism*, was dedicated to a supposition of Freud based on Judaism by utilizing the analogy of the impact of trauma on an individual for the whole generation. Freud proposed that Jews had a covert traumatic secret in their early childhood: the killing of their founding father and law-maker Moses. After a latent period, the Mosaic law of one revengeful god came back, reconfirming Judaism as a monotheistic religion, which was the ambivalent beginning of civilization for Freud. Chiefly, unsubstantial conjectures such as this on prehistory were classics of Victorian anthropology. Still, Freud urged for the structure of explanation from a distant field by application of traumatic neuroses of an individual to the group. In it, we once again discovered the phenomenon of latency, the advent of incomprehensible demonstrations on summoning for an explanation and sooner or later forgotten events as an essential determinant. An element of compulsion is also found (Freud 72).

The assertion of Freud, in one of his transparent summaries of the causation of traumatic neurosis, was that extraction of coercion from obliterated traumatic kernel

showed great physical severity as well as exhibited wide-ranging independence of arrangement of other mental phenomena. He claims they performed like a state within a state (Freud76). This analogy gave rise to bias against Jews as nonintegrated alien bodies in European nations. The disorganization in writing indicated in *Moses and Monotheism* was created by an upsurge of Nazism in Germany, the occupation of Austria, and Freud's extradition in London. The book's reading has been done as a scarcely encoded autobiographical mirroring of removal and exile. According to Caruth, *Moses and Monotheism* can facilitate us in understanding our disastrous era and the intricacies of writing history from within. While Caruth emphasizes aporia of history led by unreachable traumatic prehistory, general ideas of collective cultural trauma take a major part from the suppositions of Freud (Caruth 12).

Kai Erikson defines collective trauma as a blast to fundamental social issues that destroys bonds connecting people and weakens the predominating sense of community (Erikson 460). Erikson concludes by saying that trauma's communal aspect is one of its distinguishing clinical signatures (Erikson 471). There is a powerful countertrend in sociology expressing disagreement with typical societies on the individual psyche: beginning with Maurice Halbwachs and carried on with work by Paul Connerton and Jeffrey Alexander, collective memory is considered a set of modifying social practices instead of externalization of psychic structures.

However, Freud's merging of neurotic and national history has been another significant place where analogy transmits and bounds physical trauma, and a set of models in general flow is provided. Although the pursuit of trauma theory by Felman, Caruth, and others who gouged and redistributed these models from the history of psychoanalysis is significant, their works do not acknowledge aggressive disputes that flared up around Freud in the 1980s and 1990s, arguments that basically reviewed the

endowments of psychoanalysis and unavoidably tinged the reception of any theory of trauma painted with Freudianism. In these years, Freud's work was embroiled in controversies over the nature of traumatic memory. In 1984, as feminist theorists proceeded with the thesis that sexual abuse was common and structural within the patriarchal family, Jeffery Masson issued his interpretation of former unpublished material in the Freud documents (Luckhurst 15).

In *Assault on Truth: Freud and Child Sexual Abuse*, Masson proclaimed that Freud had realized that fathers had sexually abused all of his women patients. Although these results were published in *The Aetiology of Hysteria* by Freud in 1896, Mason proposed that this paper had provoked a professional and theoretical crisis, used up mostly in letters to his friend Wilhelm Fliess. Freud disposed of the so-called seduction theory over the next two years for the narrative of general sexual fancies of sons and daughters—the kernel of the Oedipus complex that would be Freud's basis for his psychodynamic theory of the universal development of the subject. In the dramatic narrative of Masson, Freud had found a truth that he could not tolerate and recreated a theory that changed real abuse into structural fancy, if not deception. An important strand of the feminist cultural theory depended on psychoanalysis, but Mason's Freud was a patriarch to repress the reality of women's experiences. The theory of Masson created an outflow of massively invested assaults and defenses (Borch-Jacobsen 96; Scott 19; Malcolm 77).

The development of the consequence of this dispute started in the late 1980s when proponents of recovered memory therapies claimed to excavate virgin memories of suppressed or disconnected childhood traumas many years after the findings in many patients. This depends on the belief that traumatic memory was conserved in a new form outside conscious recollection. Still, suitable therapeutic interference could

recuperate it fully, and it is termed Recovered Memory Therapy (RMT). Some assert that Freud's model of repression of traumatic memory is the basis of it. Recovered memories of abuse give rise to criminal actions and confinements, even modifications to statutes in some American states, in the cases where the legal assertions are often dependent on psychiatric proficiency about the particular characteristics of traumatic memory. The renowned legal case was the detention of George Franklin in California in 1990 on the exclusive proof of his daughter, who, with her therapist, had recovered suppressed memories of the murder of a childhood friend from 1969 (Luckhurst 98).

Lenore Terr presented psychiatric prowess that validated the ability to recuperate suppressed memories in pristine form; Elizabeth Loftus offered equal and contrasting psychiatric competency that traumatic memories are uncommonly malleable and open to revision. The popular narratives of participation of both in a medico-legal squabble over recovered memories were published as an important segment of an extensive psychiatric literature (Loftus and Ketcham 102; Terr, 4). RMT techniques, which were already highly contentious, further became questionable by a wave of cases that purported to recover wide network of ritual or demonic abuse. At its climax, ardent proponents asserted that black magic rituals in America had killed 50,000 babies. Lawrence Wright assaulted the foundation of Paul Ingram's detention for ritual abuse of his daughter in the *New Yorker* in 1993. A year later, his book *Remembering Satan* came to light. Two eminent cases in England declaring well-ordered devilish abuse disintegrated in Rochdale in 1990 and Orkney in 1991. Simultaneously, at the external edges of this cultural factitious, Whitley Strieber issued his blockbuster communion at the climax of these clashes, explaining his mesmeric recovery of enormously traumatic memories of being abducted and sexually abused by a foreign organization (Luckhurst 12).

Many foreign kidnapping narrations followed, including the globally acknowledged television series *The X Files* (Luckhurst 19). As therapists were undecided about refusing or accepting the reality of traumatic affidavit, they put themselves in the position of reality-nullifying Freud, when these developments were to be ratified as a literal reality. This facilitated the genesis of contradictory movements like the *False Memory Syndrome Foundation* in 1994, which claimed the possibility of induction of traumatic memory, as a byproduct of every therapy.

The name of Freud was usually used, if not incorrectly, in these clashes. The lobbying Anti-Freudian, Frederick Crews, deemed recovered memory as the stepchild of Freudianism, which facilitated in conforming that psychoanalysis was the quintessentially pseudoscience of our era (Crews 14,9). Freud might have evaluated traumatic memory as a covert truth that could be liberated from suppression and revealed. Nevertheless, Richard Terdiman has indicated the existence of two models of memory as productive of nervousness in the work of Freud. Firstly, it might appear the conservation of pristine memories by the unconscious, but immediately as that odd fixedness reaches consciousness, the traumatic memory shows a positively vicious betrayal of the truth (Terdiman 290). Secondly, screen memories that hide the traumatic memories were realized by Freud as highly pliable that submitted to incessant revision and evaluation. Certainly, it may be questioned if we have any memories of our childhood: memories related to our childhood may be all we own or they may be how they have been narrated to us by authority figures after the event. Our childhood memories exhibit our primary years not as they were but as they came into view afterwards (at later periods) when memories were evoked (Freud 322).

Freud had already predicted the complication that recovered memories could be constructions or confabulation. However, Crews's controversial anti-Freudian

journalism was supported by a large number of grave scholarly and scientific questioning into the founding proposition at this time. Psychodynamic models that fostered Freud's thinking started to validate themselves by pleading to the biochemistry and neuro-endocrinology of the brain from the 1970s on. Allan Young has claimed that the term Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and its key symptom collections have been produced with the facilitation of biologization.

The scientific foundation for PTSD was antagonistic with psychoanalysis in basic ways. While historians and archivists negated the myths of the origins of psychoanalysis, the reorientation of psychiatry also excluded Freud. Freud's permeation of definite segments of the humanities and his effective absenteeism in the social and natural sciences also reflects in the strands of trauma theory that persist along parallel paths with only the blurred (generally the scornful) cognizance of each other (Luckhurst 12).

For Caruth, even though the work of Freud remains a central body through which to vocalize the traumatic paradox, trauma is no less than a challenge as it is an aporia that checks the limitations of the psychoanalytic framework. Nevertheless, to her acclaim, there are indications that Caruth recognized the modifying location of authority. In her *American Imago*, Caruth inserted Bessel Van der Kolk's work on the literal engraving of trauma on the mind. Van der Kolk tried to separate the physiological footing for the specific eidetic severity of traumatic memories and their locale outside the consciousness and recollected by tracing the emission of hormones in the brain at times of great stress. After these emissions escalate the emotional states, memories can be re-experienced as a horrifying comeback to the preliminary traumatic scene. However, it obstructs cognitive processing and is inaccessible to narrative memory.

Caruth proposed an analogue to her theorization of the unknown snippets of history dwelling in the unconscious. In a potent critique, Ruth Leys has pointed at Caruth's implausible exclusion of poststructuralist literary theory, neurophysiology, and psychoanalysis, asserting that Caruth and Van der Kolk reference roundly to each other suppositions to support and strengthen the candidly literal model of trauma's psychic impression. Leys puts Caruth and Van der Kolk at the mimetic pillar of trauma theory, in which trauma is the unaltered particle of the thing itself. Anti-mimetic pole does not determine it where trauma memory is always symbolic, accessible to memory, and extended to continuous revision.

The fluctuation of these poles predominates the history of trauma back to its genealogical origin in the nineteenth century. According to Leys, recent debates over trauma will end at a standstill because equal and contradictory theories hold attention (Leys 305). After this criticism, abandoning Caruth might be alluring, had it not been the length of Leys' critique actions as a strange kind of memorial to its significance. This still is the work where lines bolstering the idea of cultural trauma merge: the issues of aesthetics after Auschwitz; the aporia of symbolism in post-structuralism; the development of diversified models of trauma and Freud (Luckhurst 13). Wulf Kansteiner has blamed that the most intense abuses of trauma concept recently take place in the theoretical, figurative language of cultural criticism in another genealogical study (Kansteiner 215).

The aesthetic, moral, and political vague concept of cultural trauma has been taken as objective, a detached concept that has diverged us all into proficient survivors (Kansteiner 194-203). Kansteiner inspected a critical route from Adorno to Lyotard to Caruth and into cultural studies that deduct traumatic experience and modify it into an issue of media significance: just because trauma is an issue of portrayal in memory and

communication does not seem to imply the reverse, that is, the problems of depiction are often manifesting in the traumatic (Kansteiner 205).

This exception in approach has been an important factor in writing down on Holocaust, comprehensibly where the Holocaust revisionism has agitated the complication of an onlooker. It is frequently linked with the survivor Elie Wiesel who insists on political and ethical demands developed by prodigious violence against the Jews. Nevertheless, there is also a controversy regarding exceptionalism; some assert that preferment for the Jewish Holocaust mutes other actions of genocide and has been utilized for right-wing political interests. Kansteiner prefers history over cultural studies, but his genealogy is uninformed of the history of trauma in psychology and law since the 1860s, discourses that have constructed the survival of the Holocaust. The disciplines lacking in multidisciplinary knowledge can only have uninteresting competition among themselves to inflict their particular idea of trauma. There is a need for other models to comprehend the twisting history and confusing modern degree of a paradigm that is inherently interdisciplinary speculation (Luckhurst14).

Kansteiner's essay has genealogy which is a dead metaphor. All enclosing and global theories were suspected in the proposal of Foucault for historical genealogy, so to go to the intermittent, specific, local, and functional coherences or formal systematization have buried or concealed all those historical subject matters (Foucault6-7). He was also anxious to recover subdued knowledge, that whole sequence of pieces of knowledge that have been eliminated as non-conceptual and inadequately detailed knowledge (7). But more applicable for this project is the effort of Bruno Latour to reconsider the unavoidable linkage of science and its history to culture, politics, and society.

Knowledge is not put into hierarchies by the theory of Latour, but knowledge and practices are seen as making complex networks. The number of links and associations measure the success of a statement far beyond the accuracy of its disciplines, as it is connected through various knowledge, institutions, practices, and social, political, and cultural frameworks. Therefore, the success of the scientific concept is through its heterogeneity instead of its purity, the linkage of several points, and the length and strength of association (Latour 201). In this network, a concept is preferably called a knot by Latour, as it facilitates envisioning the many heterogeneous elements it knits together.

The history of such a knot would be an action of disentanglement, disclosing the intensity of the connection of a knot to a much greater repository of resources (Latour108). It appears that the emergence of the traumatic self proposes a perfectly imaginary ligature and magnificent domain of elements that binds together and lets it travel to such diversified places in a nexus of knowledge that must comprehend its successful pervasion. Trauma is seen as one of those distinguishing hybrid conglomerations that we face in the contemporary world, according to the suggestion of Latour. Progressively, we must tackle complicated objects and difficulties that muddle our basic listing of subject and object, human and non-human, society and nature. Latour gives examples which include ozone depletion, global warming, mad cow disease or immune deficiency disorders, the appearance of rising of things somewhere between natural and artificial, the entangled questions of science, law, technology, capitalism, politics, medicine and risk.

These issues neither have clear boundaries nor a sharp disconnection between their rigid kernel and environment (Latour24). They still need to be resolved; they are controversial as contending claims cannot decide the facts, whereas various social and

political investments enlist the facts. Rather, these complicated objects first arise as a matter of worry, as new entities that arouse confusion (Latour 66). Contradictory theories burgeon around the concept of trauma as it is one of those complex subjects whose mysterious causality, the impacts that connect the mental and the physical, the individual and collective, and complex usage in many sundry disciplinary languages instigate bewildered, contradictory debate. Instead of offering another invested critical, there is a supposition to start by disentangling the complex elements that have been tied into the notion of trauma.

Sleep is seen as a way to run away from trauma by Lacan and Freud. Freud says that sleeping and having dreams are required to fulfil unconscious desires. Sleep gives a break from trauma and creates an image of wishes in the dreams. He says that the desire to sleep, wholly directed by the conscious ego, must be considered rationale for making dreams. The success of a dream is the realization of that wish (Caruth 97). Nevertheless, Lacan is of the view that waking up from slumber is itself a situation of trauma as one gets to know one is still in the state of non-fulfilment (Caruth100).

Herman states that the identity of a victim is permanently changed by longer confinement: the psychological composition of self, which includes body image, learned portrait of others, values, and ideals that are coherent and purposeful for a person, is assaulted systematically. After getting free from imprisonment, the victim does not take up her old identity. The victim's new identity, which grows in liberation, must comprise a memory of her persecuted self. The image of her body carries a body that is controllable and violable. The self-image of a victim, in comparison to others, is a lost person. She has to live with this image of a broken person who is now the companion of a perpetrator. As a result, the identity of a victim is tarnished with

disgrace, self-hatred, and a sense of defeat (Herman93-4).The victim may be lost in thoughts.

There is an innate relationship between identity and trauma. Kathryn Harrison in *The Kiss* and Kamila Shamsie in *Brunt Shadows* narrate extensive traumatic events in the modern world and the shifting in identities at personal, familial, social, national, and international levels. The devastating force of trauma disintegrates the identity and sensation of self. Trauma also changes the sense of self concerning others and the community (Kathryn 24; Shamsie 78). The identities change permanently. There is a possibility of recovery from trauma, and a person may regain his identity; however, the sense of loss always accompanies the retrieved identity. It is altogether a modified identity than that of a pre-traumatic identity. There is a likelihood of covering holes and filling cracks, but traces of that filling remain firmly fixed in the mind and personality of the person.

2.6 Trauma and Plasticity in Literary Works

Giannakopoulos, in the article "Out of the Ruins of Dresden: Destructive Plasticity in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*" (2019), explores the relevance of Catherine Malabou's notion of destructive plasticity to Kurt Vonnegut's trauma narrative in his postmodern literary work, *Slaughterhouse-Five*. The essay highlights how plasticity in Malabou's thought refers to the destructive emergence of another that takes the place of the self when encountering a devastating event, which becomes a metaphor for the destructive effect of the traumatic event upon the psyche. The essay also emphasizes the novel's distinctive fragmentation as a textual manifestation of the traumatized psyche and the author's shattering and rearrangement of the temporal continuum of the narrative, involving the "plastic art of destruction. (55). Overall, the

essay offers an insightful analysis of how trauma and plasticity are represented in Vonnegut's novel.

Dhamyal et al. in the article "Behavioral Neuroscience, Traumatology, and Phenomenology on the Single Platform of Literature Ishiguro's Fiction. examines the relationship between behavioral neuroscience, traumatology, and phenomenology in Kazuo Ishiguro's novels through textual analysis. The findings suggest that Ishiguro's novels critique the idea of creativity while exploring the interplay between identity, memory, and expectation. The characters in Ishiguro's novels lack self-awareness, but through their respective stories, they better understand themselves. The theory of destructive plasticity is applied to the characters, as they all appear to result from their unhealable trauma. The study suggests that the plasticity of the self allows for the destruction of the old self and the construction of a new self. The relevance of philosophy in today's world is highlighted by analyzing Ishiguro's characters. Overall, the study shows how Ishiguro's novels offer insight into the human condition and how trauma can shape one's sense of self.

Janani and Karmakar, in the article "The Violation of the Female Body: Violence, Trauma and Agency in Roxane Gay's *An Untamed State*. (2021), explores Roxane Gay's novel *An Untamed State* as a quintessential life narrative of trauma and agency. The paper analyzes the impact of prolonged exposure to violence and sexual assault under confinement on the protagonist Mireille and argues that she develops a completely new subjectivity due to the destructive nature of trauma. The narrative structure, resembling the structure of Mireille's life punctuated by her traumatic experience, is examined as a map of Mireille's psyche. The paper argues for a critical approach towards both the content and form of life narratives of trauma. The study uses Catherine Malabou's theory of "destructive plasticity" to support its argument. It also

considers the narrative written in the past tense as a testimony to Mireille's survival and agency over her story. The paper highlights the importance of literature and narratives in gaining agency over traumatic experiences.

Monnickendam, in the article "Getting it all in the Right Order: The Love Plot, Trauma and Ethical Uncertainty in Rachel Seiffert's *Afterwards*." (2016), examines *Afterwards* by Rachel Seiffert, a novel that has received less attention than her debut work, *The Dark Room*. *Afterwards* follows the stories of two ex-combatants and their experiences with trauma. The narrative combines romance and PTSD, weaving together the stories of a "squaddy" involved in a shooting in Northern Ireland and a former RAF officer in colonial Kenya. The article argues that Seiffert recognizes the incompatibility of trauma and romance, as healing is impossible in an ethically uncertain world. The novel also explores themes of guilt, responsibility, and forgiveness. Seiffert's conclusion, reminiscent of Primo Levi's ideas, highlights the tragic irony that the more humane the perpetrator, the further closure becomes, leaving the protagonist trapped in trauma and the reader in a state of uncertainty.

Satterlee, in the book *Shadows of the self: Trauma, memory, and place in twentieth-century American fiction* (2006), challenges the idea that trauma destroys identity and meaning by drawing on contemporary American novels and psychology studies. They argue that traumatic events can produce new forms of knowledge that demand innovative narrative strategies for expression. The novels they study by Leslie Marmon Silko, Lan Cao, Toni Morrison, and Edward Abbey present trauma as an experience within a cultural context that reformulates identity rather than as an isolated incident in which the self is destroyed. The author also highlights the importance of the physical environment and place as significant characters in each novel. It marks the boundaries between the traumatic past and present reality, and functions as a referent

for identity. Overall, the author focuses on formal concerns with trauma by exploring the geographic location and historical moment that merge to define trauma's impact.

2.7 Applied Plasticity in Healthcare

Phillips and Reeves, in a research article "Interactive Pathology following Traumatic Brain Injury Modifies Hippocampal Plasticity" (2001), discuss the role of combined injury paradigms in understanding post-traumatic hippocampal vulnerability in the context of traumatic brain injury. The authors argue that a better understanding of the interaction between differentiation-induced structural remodeling and other pathological mechanisms, which commonly coexist in central nervous system trauma, will require combining injury paradigms where such plasticity can be systematically manipulated. The article presents experimental evidence obtained with the combined concussive plus differentiation model and subsequent studies utilizing pharmacological methods to manipulate maladaptive hippocampal plasticity. Finally, the article considers the effect of age on outcome after combined neuroexcitation plus differentiation and how future studies in such combined injury models will better define the full range of post-injury hippocampal plasticity possible after brain trauma.

Bashir et al., in the article "Changes in Cortical Plasticity after Mild Traumatic Brain Injury" (2012), discuss a case study of a previously healthy man who suffered a concussion and was tested two and six weeks later for objective measures of early brain abnormalities following mild traumatic brain injury TBI. While the MRI, DTI, and neuropsychological evaluations showed no abnormalities, neurophysiologic tests revealed subclinical abnormalities in the patient, including higher intracortical facilitation, absence of intracortical inhibition mediated by GABA receptors at week 2, and abnormal mechanisms of plasticity at week 2 that normalized at week 6. The study concludes that these findings demonstrate a transient alteration of cortical brain

physiology following concussion independent of anatomical findings and neuropsychological function and that TMS measures may serve as sensitive biomarkers of physiologic brain abnormalities after a concussion.

Chen et al., in a research article "Profound Deficits in Hippocampal Synaptic Plasticity after Traumatic Brain Injury and Seizure is Ameliorated by Prophylactic Levetiracetam" (2013), investigated the effects of post-traumatic seizure activity on hippocampal processes in rats after traumatic brain injury (TBI). The results showed that seizures suppressed short- and long-term synaptic plasticity in the hippocampal CA3-CA1 pathway, and this effect was worse in rats with early post-TBI seizures than those with later post-TBI seizures. Prophylactic treatment with levetiracetam after TBI reduced the synaptic plasticity deficits in early post-TBI seizure animals. The study highlights the importance of understanding the effects of post-traumatic seizures on brain function and the potential for preventative treatment to mitigate these effects.

2.8 Conclusion

This literature review explores various perspectives on the self and consciousness, drawing from the works of prominent philosophers and theorists from interdisciplinary fields. The review explores the implications of Malabou's work on plasticity and the brain for philosophy, neuroscience, and healthcare, particularly regarding trauma and the potential for rewiring the brain. Overall, the main themes from this literature review include the dynamic and ongoing nature of the self, the role of effects in shaping consciousness, the transformative potential of traumatic experiences, and the importance of plasticity in shaping the brain and one's sense of self.

After reviewing the literature on the topics of self, consciousness, and brain plasticity, it is clear that Catherine Malabou's work on destructive plasticity has

significant implications for future research and its potential impact on philosophy and neuroscience and healthcare.

Malabou's work challenges traditional notions of the self as a fixed and stable entity, arguing instead that the brain can undergo profound transformations and even lose its sense of self. This concept of destructive plasticity has significant implications for our understanding of mental health and illness, particularly in cases of trauma and brain injury. It also highlights the need for a more nuanced and holistic approach to healthcare that considers the complex interplay between brain plasticity, the self, and mental health.

Furthermore, Malabou's work has significant implications for neuroscience and its understanding of brain plasticity. Her work challenges the traditional view of plasticity as a strictly positive and adaptive process, highlighting the potential negative consequences of brain plasticity instead. This opens up new avenues for research into the mechanisms of brain plasticity and how it can be harnessed or regulated.

Finally, Malabou's work has significant implications for philosophy, particularly its challenge to traditional notions of the self and its relationship to the brain. This calls for re-evaluating philosophical frameworks that rely on a fixed and stable conception of the self and opens up new avenues for inquiry into the relationship between the brain, the self, and consciousness.

In conclusion, the literature review has explored the philosophical approach and key concepts of Catherine Malabou, particularly her work on plasticity, trauma, and ontological metamorphosis. It has discussed the relationship between Malabou's work and Freudian and post-Freudian trauma theory, highlighting the significance of subjectivity in her philosophy. The review has also analyzed the implications of plasticity in neuro philosophy and the role of brain plasticity in developmental and

modulational aspects. Additionally, it has examined the concepts of mental Darwinism and neuronal modeling concerning understanding plasticity. The review has also delved into ontological metamorphosis and its significance. Furthermore, the chapter explored the theme of trauma and its impact on memory, as seen in Ishiguro's fiction. The review suggests that Malabou's work offers a unique and insightful perspective on the brain's plasticity and its implications for philosophy, neuroscience, and healthcare.

A research gap that can be identified is the need to bring together behavioral neuroscience, trauma studies, and phenomenology on the literature platform, particularly through Ishiguro's fiction. This research gap can bridge the divide between the humanities and the physical sciences and explore the intersection of literature and neuroscience in a more nuanced and holistic way.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Catherine Malabou's Thought: Perspectives on Plasticity

The chapter attempts to present the components and contour of the theoretical framework that is regulating the argument of the study. Pivoting the approach around the broader existentialist and ontological theorizations, the section covers specifically the discussion of all the essential postulates centering on the idea of the self with reference to Catherine Malabou's theory of plasticity as proffered in her *The Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity* (2012) and *What Should We Do with Our Brain* (2008). The perplexing inter-disciplinarity of Malabou's philosophical discourse informs her argument and "the concept of plasticity opens on to different domains" in "myriad ways" (James in Williams, 2022, p. 9). Therefore, to elaborate the context of her ideas and strengthen the conceptual grounding of the study, a few supplementary significant works from some other relevant theorists have also been negotiated.

As the study aims at identification and interpretation of transformations of Ishiguro's trauma-stricken characters, the relevant philosophical tenets have been invoked to create a comprehensive framework for a rigorous critique: materiality and fluidity in existentialist thought, phenomenological structure of consciousness and brain plasticity, plasticity and modalities of transformation of the self, destructive plasticity and trauma. Thus, the section cogently covers the theoretical underpinning and conceptual constituents that are informing the critique accomplished in this research.

The phenomenon of plasticity is derived from Catherine Malabou's philosophy that links neuroscience, psychoanalysis, and phenomenology together to arrive at the

identity of self along with tracking the transformation of self. It is the formation of self through transformation. Plasticity designates both the power to “take form (as in the plasticity of clay) and to give form (as in the plastic arts and plastic surgery)” (Malabou *Changing Difference* 75). Catherine Malabou established this notion as part of her thesis by analyzing Hegel’s work, under the supervision of Jacques Derrida. Malabou’s book, *What Should We Do With Our Brain?* focuses on the intersection between psychoanalysis, neuroscience, and philosophy, envisioned through the lens of trauma. The key argument Malabou builds is that Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome and old age are key factors that clarify plasticity. Mental Darwinism, destructive plasticity, plastic ontology and ontological metamorphosis are the terms used by Malabou to describe the different shades of plasticity. Mental Darwinism as a concept emerges in Catherine Malabou’s latest book, *Before Tomorrow: Epigenesis and Rationality*, as she writes: “I shall push the Kantian thesis to its limit: what if, in the end, the agreement of the categories of thought with the real was simply the fruit of biological adaptation, an evolutionary process at the origin of the theory that some neurobiologists call ‘mental Darwinism’?” (34).

However, in *Ontology of the Accident*, Malabou warns that plasticity can also behave as a ‘plastic bomb’ and in doing so has the power to unveil the self in insightful ways. If “You are your synapses” (ix) as Joseph LeDoux, a neuroscientist argues, undoubtedly, we are susceptible to their disentanglements and mutations. This is defined by Malabou as plasticity’s the ‘dark side’, both being capable of giving form and equally able to annihilate it. As an upshot of trauma - material (e.g. a brain tumor or dementia), or socio-political (e.g. depression or post-traumatic stress) or occasionally, completely arbitrary, Malabou explains the diverging paths that emerge

as a “deep cut in the biography of the subject, an ontological violence that gives rise to a new being which has nothing in common with its preceding form” (OA 17).

In its simplest senses, plasticity is the capability of simultaneously “receiving and giving of form” (3). But as the theorization of plasticity is marked by interdisciplinary interventions — philosophy, neuroscience, and psychoanalysis — I have tried to offer a discussion of the definition, derivation, and various shades of the ideas by keeping all the relevant discourses in view. In doing so, I have attempted to cover the crux of debates apropos plasticity instead of merely tracking terminologies. Hence, an inclusive operationalization of the ideas has been accomplished to encompass the testicular nature of the perspectives under study. However, the framing of the various dimensions of plasticity is in accordance with the nature of the argument of study as a thorough discussion of every aspect of the philosophical stance is neither possible nor desirable within the limited ambit of a chapter.

3.2 Philosophical foundations

- **Overview of Malabou's philosophical approach and key concepts**

Catherine Malabou's philosophical approach is characterized by her engagement with the brain's plasticity and its implications for subjectivity and identity. She draws on many philosophical and scientific traditions, including continental philosophy, cognitive science, and neuroscience, to develop her unique perspective.

One of the central concepts in Malabou's work is "plasticity," which refers to the brain's ability to change and adapt over time. She writes in *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, “Plasticity is the brain's capacity to change and be changed by experience”(4). This emphasis on plasticity challenges traditional notions of the brain

as a fixed and immutable structure and instead emphasizes the brain's dynamic and constantly changing nature.

Another key concept in Malabou's work is subjectivity, which she argues is shaped by neurobiological processes. As she writes in *The New Wounded*, "The brain is not simply the seat of the mind; it is also the site of the unconscious, of subjectivity, and of the self" (3). This emphasis on the role of the brain in shaping subjectivity challenges traditional philosophical assumptions about the nature of the self and identity.

Malabou's work also engages with trauma theory, particularly the writings of Freud and post-Freudian theorists. She argues that trauma is not simply a negative experience that results in psychological damage but rather a transformative process that can create new possibilities for subjectivity. As she writes in *The New Wounded*, "trauma is not just the experience of the negative; it is also the experience of the new, the possibility of the new" (6). This emphasis on trauma as a transformative process challenges traditional assumptions about the nature of trauma and its impact on the self.

Finally, Malabou's work emphasizes the concept of ontological metamorphosis, which refers to the process of constant transformation and deformation that characterizes subjectivity. Malabou's philosophical approach emphasizes the plasticity of the brain and its implications for subjectivity and identity, engaging with trauma theory and the concept of ontological metamorphosis to challenge traditional philosophical assumptions. Her work draws on various philosophical and scientific traditions to develop a unique perspective.

Discussion of Freudian and post-Freudian trauma theory in relation to Malabou's work

Malabou's engagement with trauma theory is deeply rooted in her critique of Freudian psychoanalysis, which she finds inadequate for capturing the complex ways trauma operates. While Freudian trauma theory posits that traumatic events are buried in the unconscious and can only be accessed through talking therapy, Malabou argues that this approach fails to account for the brain's plasticity and how traumatic experiences can alter it. She suggests that "the time has come to move beyond Freud's work on trauma and consider the revolutionary impact of the neurosciences on the understanding of trauma" (Malabou 1).

Malabou's work on trauma centers on the concept of "destructive plasticity," which refers to how traumatic experiences can cause lasting changes in the structure and function of the brain. In her view, traumatic events can create "lesions" in the brain, resulting in long-term damage and even destroying neural pathways (Malabou 14-15). This process, which she terms "neuronal death," is an important aspect of her trauma theory. It highlights how trauma can permanently alter the brain and lead to ongoing psychological problems.

Malabou's critique of Freudian trauma theory has influenced contemporary approaches to trauma, particularly in neuroscience. Her emphasis on the brain's plasticity has led to new insights into how traumatic experiences can cause lasting changes in neural structure and function. However, her work has also been criticized, particularly regarding her use of biological metaphors to describe complex psychological processes.

Malabou's work can be linked to Freud's trauma theory in several ways. First, both theories recognize trauma's role in forming mental health disorders. Freud believed that traumatic experiences, especially those related to childhood sexual abuse, could leave unconscious memories that later manifest as symptoms of mental illness.

Malabou argues that trauma can lead to "plasticity of the brain," in which the brain's structure and function are altered, leading to changes in behavior and mental health.

Moreover, both Freud and Malabou recognize the importance of repetition in forming mental health disorders. Freud's theory of repetition compulsion suggests that individuals may repeat traumatic experiences to gain mastery over them, but this often leads to further suffering. Malabou similarly suggests that trauma can lead to the repetition of behavior patterns, which can reinforce the neural pathways associated with the trauma.

Finally, both Freud and Malabou recognize the unconscious's role in forming mental health disorders. Freud believed that traumatic experiences could leave unconscious memories that later manifest as symptoms of mental illness. Malabou similarly argues that trauma can lead to the formation of unconscious neural pathways that can later manifest as symptoms of mental illness.

Jonathan Gammage (2016) acknowledges Malabou's claim that trauma creates de-constituted subjectivities and puncture socio-historical connections, which Freudian psychoanalysis cannot address. However, the author argues that Freud's theory explains history as essentially discontinuous and acknowledges discursive latency. In essence, the author suggests that while Malabou's critique of Freud's trauma theory has some validity, it is not a complete rejection of Freud's work. Instead, the author argues that Freud's theory provides a framework for understanding history's discontinuity and trauma's impact on subjectivity. In this way, Gammage is engaging with Malabou's critique of Freud's trauma theory while also suggesting that Freud's theory provides a useful framework for understanding the impact of trauma on subjectivity and history. Gammage also suggests that we must incorporate the new histories inaugurated by

trauma into the social narrative, reflecting a critical engagement with Malabou's concept of trauma theory.

In addition to Freud's trauma theory, several post-Freudian theorists have contributed to understanding trauma, including Jean Laplanche, Jacques Lacan, and D.W. Winnicott. Laplanche posits that trauma occurs when an external stimulus invades the psyche and is not fully integrated, leading to a "hole" in the psychic structure (73). Lacan focuses on the subject's relationship with language and the symbolic order, arguing that trauma arises when the subject's symbolic system is ruptured (66). Winnicott highlights the importance of the caregiver-child relationship and the potential for trauma when this relationship is disrupted or absent (65).

Malabou critiques Freud's trauma theory, arguing that it does not adequately account for how trauma permanently punctures socio-historical connections and creates de-constituted subjectivities (4). She contends that Freud's theory does not offer hope for understanding post-traumatic stress disorder survivors. However, some scholars have challenged Malabou's view, arguing that Freud's theory allows for recognition of how trauma disrupts historical continuity and creates new psychic structures. For example, Robert Stolorow and George Atwood argue that Freud's theory of repetition compulsion acknowledges how trauma disrupts temporal continuity and creates new histories (8).

Other scholars have sought to bridge the gap between Freud's trauma theory and contemporary understandings of trauma. Cathy Caruth (1996) argues that Freud's theory of the uncanny, which describes the unsettling feeling of something familiar being experienced as unfamiliar, provides a way to understand the disjuncture between traumatic experience and conscious memory. Herman (1992) emphasizes the

importance of social and political contexts in shaping the experience of trauma, arguing that Freud's theory can be enriched by attention to social and cultural factors.

Malabou's work has generated important debates in trauma theory, challenging conventional understandings of trauma and calling for reevaluating psychoanalytic approaches to trauma. While some scholars have critiqued Malabou's view of Freud's theory, others have sought to bridge the gap between Freud's theory and contemporary understandings of trauma. Ultimately, ongoing debates highlight the importance of continued engagement with trauma theory and the need for interdisciplinary approaches to understanding trauma.

Before delving into the concept of subjectivity in Malabou's philosophy, it is important to understand the wider theoretical framework within which her work on trauma theory operates. As mentioned earlier, Malabou challenges the traditional Freudian psychoanalytic model of trauma by positing that traumatic experiences create de-constituted subjectivities that cannot be fully addressed through psychoanalysis. This has led to a shift in trauma theory, with many contemporary theorists and analysts exploring alternative modes of understanding and treating trauma. However, it is important to note that Malabou's work on trauma is closely connected to her broader philosophical project, which centers on the concept of subjectivity and its relation to identity, embodiment, and social norms. Thus, to fully appreciate Malabou's contributions to trauma theory, it is necessary to explore her broader philosophical framework and how it informs her understanding of subjectivity.

Exploration of the concept of subjectivity and its role in Malabou's philosophy:

Subjectivity is a complex and multifaceted concept defined and explored by numerous philosophers and theorists throughout history. In general, subjectivity refers to the individual's inner world, encompassing their unique experiences, thoughts,

feelings, and perceptions. One definition comes from philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, who posits that subjectivity is "the starting point of all philosophy"(23), as it is through subjective experience that individuals can understand and make sense of the world around them.

Another prominent definition of subjectivity comes from German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who describes it as the "capacity for self-consciousness" (103). According to Kant, subjectivity allows individuals to recognize themselves as distinct entities with their thoughts and experiences, separate from the external world.

French philosopher Michel Foucault also engages with the concept of subjectivity, describing it as "the point of intersection between power and knowledge" (98). For Foucault, subjectivity is not a fixed or inherent aspect of the individual but rather something constructed and shaped through the various power relations and discourses in society.

While Joseph LeDoux's work is not directly related to the philosophical concept of subjectivity or Malabou's philosophy, his research has implications for understanding how subjective experience is grounded in the brain. LeDoux has argued that emotions are not simply psychological experiences but are rooted in the neurobiology of the brain. In his book *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life*, he proposes a "dual pathway" model of fear processing in which sensory information is rapidly transmitted through a "low road" that bypasses the conscious mind and triggers an immediate emotional response, while a slower "high road" allows for more conscious appraisal and regulation of the emotional response (3). This work highlights the interplay between subjective experience and neurobiology and suggests that emotions are an important component of human subjectivity.

In the arena of philosophy, the viewpoints about the 'being' vary from philosopher to philosopher. Heidegger comments that if we, as beings, investigate being and further explore the existence of beings, then we have a question that leads towards the start of Western philosophy and the end of history up to Nietzsche. The question related to being of beings can be called a leading question. Its common form can be traced from Aristotle when he asked: "what is the beingness of a being?" Here beingness is synonymous with being. It means, despite the exclusion of human nature, being (as beingness) always stands for the commonality of every human being (39).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, "Philosophy does not give a simple frame anymore to comprehend the composition of the universe, rather than examination and reflection, it (philosophy) hints to creative ideas"(xiii). They argue that philosophy creates new concepts that describe the emergence of differences, multiple components, and events rather than providing explanations, meanings, and results. The concepts identify differences and give strange and disturbed sounds to them. Philosophy innovates new figures and thinking within and beyond natural reality, creating links between reality and practice.

Deleuze views philosophy from the body's perspective in the present era "to think through - or across - the body while respecting its suspended becoming" (32). This approach emphasizes the importance of embodiment and how the world around them shapes bodies. He argues that philosophy must engage with the body and its processes to provide a comprehensive understanding of the world.

In her work, philosopher Catherine Malabou builds on these various definitions of subjectivity to develop her unique approach. Malabou argues that subjectivity is not a fixed or stable aspect of the individual but something constantly in flux and subject

to change. She writes, "Subjectivity is a being in movement, a being that does not cease to give itself form, to transform itself" (12).

Subjectivity is a complex and multifaceted concept defined and explored by numerous philosophers and theorists throughout history. While there are many different definitions and approaches to understanding subjectivity, it is generally understood as the individual's inner world, encompassing their unique experiences, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions.

Subjectivity is a central concept in Catherine Malabou's philosophy. She offers a unique perspective on subjectivity, which she believes is not fixed but rather mutable and constantly undergoing change. Malabou's approach to subjectivity is heavily influenced by Hegelian and Heideggerian thought, which she reinterprets in light of contemporary neuroscience. Malabou argues that "the subject is the place where the structure of time unfolds" (39). It means that subjectivity is not simply an individual experience but rather a dynamic process shaped by internal and external factors.

Malabou's concept of subjectivity is closely tied to her ideas about plasticity, which she defines as the brain's ability to form new connections and change in response to external stimuli. She argues that plasticity is not just a biological process but also a cultural and political one and that it can potentially transform subjectivity in radical ways. She writes, "plasticity of the subject signifies not only that the brain is plastic, but that the subject is plastic" (12). It means that subjectivity is not fixed or predetermined but malleable and open to change.

Malabou's emphasis on plasticity and mutability of subjectivity has significant implications for her understanding of trauma. She argues that traumatic events can rupture subjectivity and create, what she calls, "de-constituted subjectivities," characterized by a loss of identity and a sense of fragmentation. However, unlike

Freudian psychoanalysis, which views trauma as a fixed and unchanging experience, Malabou sees trauma as a process that can be transformed through the brain's plasticity. She writes, "trauma can be overcome not by returning to a prior state of being but by the production of a new subjectivity" (11).

Malabou's concept of subjectivity is central to her philosophy, and her ideas about plasticity and mutability heavily influence it. She sees subjectivity as a dynamic process constantly changing and being shaped by internal and external factors. Her emphasis on plasticity has significant implications for her understanding of trauma, which she sees as a process that can be transformed through the brain's ability to form new connections. Malabou's work offers a unique perspective on subjectivity that challenges traditional notions of the self and opens up new possibilities for personal and collective transformation.

The modification in social, psychological, and intellectual frameworks regulated the creation of identities in the earlier modern era. In the sixteenth century, there was a rise in self-awareness about creating a human identity as a moldable phenomenon. (Greenblatt1–2)

In his book *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are*, Joseph LeDoux logically expounds the theory that we (our personae) are our synapses, and these synapses, located as spaces between brain cells, serve as a medium of communication between them. The brain also performs most of its functions through synapses (LeDoux ix). LeDoux asks, "What makes us who we are?" (1). And, his answer happens to be: "we are our synapses" (2). Catherine Malabou's theory of plasticity has its scientific roots in LeDoux's explanation of the formulation of neurons and the spaces between them-synaptic spaces-in the brain. The self is the quintessence of what we are, and it mirrors the design of the interlinking of neurons with one another in our brains. These

links between neurons are synapses, pathways via which information flows and is stored in the brain. The brain mainly functions by decoding the information that disseminates across synapses. The brain's performance based on synaptic transmission is significant in calling the self truly and practically synaptic (Malabou 2). Many oppose the neutral nature of self and consider it a psychological, social, moral, and aesthetic self. It is merely a portrayal and realization of various forms of self.

Scientific research not only gains reliable information about the brain but it can also boost the living standard by disclosing new treatments of mental disorders (neurological or psychiatric disorders) “The particular patterns of synaptic connections in an individual’s brain, and the information encoded by these connections, are the keys to who that person is.... But genetic sculpting of the synaptic organization of neural systems is the key to the process” (3-4).

As experience mostly changes the system of the brain, its synapses are plastic too. Both learning and memory (a synaptic consequence of learning) are vital in cementing the consistent personality of human beings during their lifetime. A personality devoid of memory and learning is a poor manifestation of genetic makeup. We surpass our genes via learning.

Experience makes us aware of ourselves, our self-thinking, thinking of others about us, and our behavior in specific circumstances. Memory makes this information available to us. We need learning and memory to know if we are the same person as we were in the past or will be in the future according to our expectations. LeDoux asserts that "Without learning and memory, we wouldn't know if the person we are today jibes with the one we were yesterday or the one we expect to be tomorrow. These two qualities evaluate us" (9).

It is said that the things learned get stored in the conscious part of the brain. This learning inclination of the brain entirely influences our behavior. It is likely as significant in daily activities as our conscious awareness. The synaptic self asks questions about the function of the brain in making us who we are. A person's identity, feelings, thinking, and actions are not controlled only by consciousness. Rather, it is an automated process, and consciousness knows after the happening of actions, experiencing feelings, and formulating thoughts. To understand the complexity of a personality, we need to sort out the unconscious part of the brain. Unconscious is an infamous, complex word. In its received understanding, unconscious alludes to Freudian restrained, unfulfilled desires and forgotten memories, which described in neuroscientific idiom, may refer to the synaptic connections that do not get registered at the level of consciousness, "Collectively, these processes have been called the psychological or cognitive unconscious, and they account for much of mental life... The idea that the self is created and maintained by arrangements of synaptic connections, in other words, doesn't diminish who we are" (12).

The subject matter of whole psychology comprises the study of personality and the self. This subject is also discussed among theologians, philosophers, novelists, and poets. Theologians also took the topic of neuroscience and divine connection for discussion. They tried to reconsider the church doctrine by considering the perspective of science about the working of the modern world. If the mind and soul are analogous, and the mind operates due to the working of the brain, then how the interaction of God with people cannot be physical, which, then, may also have an impact on their neurons? But even people who believe in an immaterial soul that survives death have acknowledged the fact that the normal functioning of the soul depends on the brain"

(LeDoux 15). Shakespeare embraced this notion when he called the brain the "soul's frail dwelling" (Shakespeare, n.d.).

Descartes looked for ways to harmonize science and faith. He suggested that the mental and the physical were isolated until they gathered and connected at a particular site in the brain (Rorty 390). Descartes considered human brain as a seat of the soul, "And thus, although the whole mind seems to be united to the whole body, I nevertheless recognize that, if a foot or an arm or any other part of the body is cut off, nothing has thereby been taken away from the mind" (Descartes 20). This quote illustrates Descartes' dualistic philosophy, which posits that the mind and body are separate entities. Descartes believed that the mind was a non-physical substance, while the body was physical, and that they interacted through a specific point in the brain.

Plato opines that psyche or soul, the intellectual crux of an individual, remains alive. Plato anticipates death to eliminate all his bodily desires, emotions, and eventually impure thinking. Plato states, "For I am confident that there truly is such a thing as living again, and that the living spring from the dead, and that the souls of the dead are in existence, and that the good souls have a better portion than the evil" (Plato 82). On the contrary, for Aristotle, body and soul are interlinked so that their isolation is impossible. Aristotle asserts, "It is clear that the soul governs the body and that, though it is not easy to understand how it moves the body, it is clear that no movement of the body takes place without the soul" (Aristotle 1).

However, they can be distinguished in terms of a concept. Philosophers supported the views of both Aristotle (body and soul are combined) and Plato (the soul is immortal) until the Middle Ages (Flew 21). For instance, Aquinas believes that the perpetuity of the soul is due to immortal and abstract attributes of the mind, and in doomsday, the body would regenerate and reunite with the soul (Happel 32). Descartes

discusses body and mind. His view is similar to Plato's about the distinction between body and mind. He asserts, "I am not merely present in my body as a sailor is present in a ship, but I am very closely joined and, as it were, intermingled with it so that I and the body form a unit" (90). He comments that his soul is different from his body and that his soul has an independent existence. Descartes equalized soul with consciousness by merging faith with psychological theory and told that the behavior of humans is under their conscious control. So, only human souls can enter or exit heaven through their actions. According to Descartes's strategy, other animals behave in an automated and unconscious manner. If their behavior were conscious, it would have been mental too (LeDoux 16).

Descartes admits a little bit of the existence of unconscious processes, but they are demoted to the physical world. He proposes that the unconscious process is as workable in humans as in empty-headed animals. The question is if physical and mental are fully non-identical, how is the mind (conscious soul) in charge of the physical body? Descartes replies that the pineal gland, a small area in the brain, is a source of interaction between the conscious soul and the material body. Unlike the duplicity of other parts of the brain, it has a singular and central position in the brain through which instruction from the soul affects the body and information from the body (either about the outer world or body information in the form of perceptions, emotions, and knowledge) can get into the soul. Descartes suggests that the non-material soul has binary functions: it is in contact with the physical body and God.

The interchange between physical and non-physical materials presents a probable solution to the problem of the interaction of God with people. However, instead of this theological question (how God interacts with the soul?), major focus of this study is a philosophical question about the interaction of the body with the mind.

Descartes frames this philosophical question and gives a specific answer by saying that the interaction of the body with the mind occurs in the brain. But he also poses an impasse (body-mind problem) with which the philosophers are trying to cope "The implicit or unconscious aspects of the self also play an important role, in fact, an essential one, in shaping who we are and explaining why we do what we do" (17). Conversely, neuroscientists' supposition begins with the prospect of a body-mind enmeshment into each other, which is closer to truth. They try to comprehend the brain's possibility in making the mind. Nowadays, some materialism is endorsed by many philosophers. But if this trend changes in the forthcoming years and dualism supersedes philosophy, even then, neuroscientists will not lose their influence.

John Locke had the same idea in his mind. Many years ago, he used the term forensic for a person who acquires action and credit, possesses intelligence and capability of law, happiness and misery (Locke 11). Based on consciousness, personality exceeds present as well as past existence. Peter Strawson is a renowned modern philosopher in this area. "The philosophical "I" is neither the man nor the human soul. (Strawson 87). Rather, it is a metaphysical and limited subject that does not belong to this world. Strawson believes that as we can consciously ascribe our mental state to others, stemming from the view that those who resemble us must also have the same mental consciousness (19).

In accordance with the thinking of Locke, Kant, and other philosophers, Daniel Danett suggests a moral and a metaphysical concept of a person. A metaphysical person is both intelligent and conscious. He thinks and feels, whereas a moral person is answerable for his deeds (20). The idea of self, which is the subject matter of our discussion, correlates with a person's philosophical concept. The distinction between the minimum and the narrative self is mostly discussed. The minimum self is related to

instant awareness (consciousness) of one's self. While the narrative self coherently creates self-consciousness, it expands with past and future stories we recount about ourselves.

This latter self has some similarities with the postmodern concept of self, which society considers a construction. The philosophers, while bringing into focus the consciousness, which is the main metaphysical feature of our self-identity (who we are), also interrogate their area of interest: personhood and the self. They omit a non-conscious facet of self (who we are) (20). The concept of self is assumed along with a consistent evolutionary mechanism. Despite being the source of some basic concepts, philosophy may not give us the fundamentals required to trace the connection between the self and the brain (21).

Numerous philosophers have explored the concept of subjectivity in philosophy. One such philosopher is Catherine Malabou, whose work focuses on plasticity. Plasticity is the ability of the brain to change and reorganize itself in response to new experiences. This concept has significant implications for Malabou's work as it challenges traditional notions of fixed identity and subjectivity. Plasticity has been a major study area in neuro-philosophy, as it sheds light on the brain's ability to adapt and change. The implications of plasticity in neuro-philosophy are vast and complex, and they can potentially revolutionize our understanding of the brain and human identity. Therefore, discussing plasticity in neuro-philosophy and its implications for Malabou's work is essential.

- **Discussion of plasticity in neuro-philosophy and its implications for Malabou's work**

Malabou's engagement with neuroplasticity and neuro-philosophy has influenced her work by expanding her understanding of subjectivity and its

malleability. Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections in response to environmental and experiential stimuli (Pascual-Leone et al., 4). This concept has challenged traditional views of the brain as a fixed, unchanging structure and opened up new possibilities for understanding how the brain and the mind are interconnected. Malabou has incorporated this idea into her work by emphasizing the brain's plasticity and its relationship to the formation of subjectivity.

In addition, Malabou's work has also been influenced by neuro-philosophy, a field that seeks to bridge the gap between neuroscience and philosophy (Churchland13). Neuro-philosophy has allowed Malabou to explore the relationship between the brain and the mind in greater depth and has informed her views on the nature of subjectivity. Specifically, Malabou has drawn on the work of neuroscientists and philosophers to argue that the brain is not simply a passive receiver of external stimuli but an active participant in constructing subjectivity (Malabou 25).

Thus, the concept of neuroplasticity and the field of neuro-philosophy have provided Malabou with new tools to explore the malleability of subjectivity and the relationship between the brain and the mind. These concepts have influenced her work by expanding her understanding of how subjectivity is formed and how it transforms. They have also allowed her to challenge traditional views of the brain and the mind and argue for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between them.

Plasticity has been defined by Malabou in her work, *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* According to her, plasticity informs the development of brain, and genetics determine its form. This form is accorded through the synaptic links created due to interaction with the world (17-21). She also defines plasticity as modulation in which an individual's experience, which includes the history, life, and identity of a person, gives rise to the synaptic connection (21-25). The third plasticity is reparative plasticity

which indicates the therapeutic ability of a brain after an injury (25-29). Destructive accident is possible in all human beings throughout their lives. Malabou compels us to admit that we might become someone else: "Plasticity houses itself beneath a smooth service like a reserve of dynamite hidden under the peachy skin of being for death" (1).

To understand plasticity, Malabou related it to trauma (psychological abnormality). Damasio opines that instead of consciousness (reasoning), the frontal lobes, the brainstem nuclei, and the somatosensory cortical of the brain control working of innate reactions (gut feelings). These neural reactions get transformed into feelings once we become conscious of them. They, in turn, create biased emotions and impact decision-making. Damasio argues that reasoning will be impassive if this phenomenon does not occur in cerebral trauma (Damasio 174). Malabou also assents to Damasio's view. She gives justification for her involvement with neuroscience. She says that the apathy of a murderer or indifferent behavior of a spectator can only be understood when it is studied in comparison to an in-depth account of head injury, which results in absolute emotionlessness for which no cure is possible (Malabou 28).

Malabou proposes significant characteristics of plasticity. Unlike elastic material, it does not get back to its original form after deformation (15). Elasticity has polymorphism, so plasticity also completely counters form, but its creativity includes the obliteration of all forms (Malabou 67).

One of the main influences on Catherine Malabou's work on neuroplasticity is the French philosopher and physician George Canguilhem. Canguilhem's understanding of the brain as a self-organizing system that can adapt to changing conditions is central to Malabou's notion of neuroplasticity as a dynamic process.

Canguilhem argues that the brain is not a static structure but is instead constantly adapting to the environment: "The brain is not an inert, static machine that simply reacts

to external stimuli; it is a living system that constantly modifies itself in response to changes in its environment" (Canguilhem 78). This idea is central to Malabou's work, as she argues that the brain's plasticity allows it to reorganize itself in response to damage or trauma.

Furthermore, Canguilhem's emphasis on the importance of the body in understanding the brain also resonates with Malabou's work. He argues that the body is not simply a passive container for the brain but is an active participant in the process of perception and cognition: "The body is not a machine that the brain manipulates like a tool, but rather an organic instrument that participates in the act of knowledge" (Canguilhem 73). This understanding of the body and brain as intimately connected is central to Malabou's notion of plasticity as a holistic process that involves both the brain and the body.

Canguilhem's work on the brain and the body provides an important foundation for Malabou's philosophy of neuroplasticity. His emphasis on the dynamic, self-organizing nature of the brain and the importance of the body in understanding cognition resonates with Malabou's central ideas, and his work has helped to shape her understanding of the brain as a plastic, adaptive system.

The existing body of knowledge on neuro-philosophy also has room for Malabou's theory. Karl Marx's views on the materialist conception of history and the relationship between the individual and society have influenced Malabou's work. Marx argued that a society's social and economic structures determine its individuals' consciousness and identity. Malabou has drawn on this concept in her discussion of the plasticity of subjectivity, which she argues is influenced by social and biological factors. Marx states, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness" (Marx 20). It highlights

the importance of social and economic structures in shaping individual consciousness, a concept that is foundational to Malabou's work on plasticity.

She argues that the concept of neuroplasticity has been co-opted by neoliberal ideology to create a new form of "brain-washing" that emphasizes constant adaptation to external pressures and demands (Malabou 50). Malabou believes this ideology ultimately harms individuals and society, as it encourages a focus on performance and productivity at the expense of creativity and individuality. She suggests that a more critical approach to neuroplasticity is necessary to resist the oppressive effects of capitalist ideology.

Malabou has also drawn on Marx's concept of alienation in her discussion of the impact of capitalism on subjectivity. Marx argued that capitalism alienates individuals from their true nature, leading to loss and disconnection from oneself and others. Malabou has explored how plasticity can serve as a means of resistance to this alienation, allowing individuals to adapt and transform themselves in response to social and economic pressures.

Malabou writes, "The discourse on plasticity could critique contemporary society and its modes of domination, which can be described as brain-washing" (Malabou 53). This quote highlights Malabou's use of the concept of brain plasticity as a means of critiquing how capitalism exploits the adaptability of individuals, leading to a form of "brain-washing" that erodes individual agency and autonomy.

Marx's views on the relationship between individual consciousness and social structures have influenced Malabou's work on plasticity and subjectivity, providing a critical framework for understanding how social and economic pressures impact the human brain and its capacity for adaptation and adaptation transformation.

3.3. Materiality and Fluidity in Existentialist Thought:

As traditional existentialist thought liberates existence from the narrative of essence, plasticity saves existential materiality from the reduction of fixity: “plasticity directly contradicts rigidity” (Malabou5). The implication is that despite being concrete the human condition is malleable that evolves under the influence of various kind of internal and external pressing forces. The active nature of human beings performs reciprocal functions, that is, they both “receive” from and “give” form to (Malabou5) the interacting external factors. Ultimately, the process is the result of “an equilibrium between the receiving and giving of form” (Malabou3). So, the result is the evolving self, its evolving interaction with the environment, and the perpetually happening transformations that keep on defining the nature of human existence.

Human beings and materiality of their existence are the prime focus of the secular streams of existentialist thought. Sartrean succinct encapsulation of the need for preference of concrete existential conditions over the philosophical and theological abstractions has gained currency through its most famous slogan: “man is a being whose existence precedes his essence” (12). It is a call for shifting the focus of attention from metaphysical questions to the physicality of human existence, its demands, and the challenges to it. Therefore, the step towards concretization of the existentialist considerations is the point of departure for the philosophical paradigm that aims and claims to resolve the riddles of existence. Precisely, in its departure from the metaphysical essentialist dogmas of the past, existentialist paradigm opens up a space for thinking orientated toward change. Likewise, Heidegger's opinion about the materiality of the human life has found expression in his most representative concept, *Dasein*, that is the foundational notion presented in his seminal work, *Being and Time* (1927). He has addressed in the book “the question of Being itself— more particularly,

to that mode of being which is specifically human” (Eagleton 54). His work is one of the pioneering critiques in the domain that was later to surpass the earlier versions of philosophy. Therefore, Heidegger's phenomenological quest affords “the most fundamental understanding” of the different dynamics “of human existence” (Mulhall191).

Another important aspect of attitude of the existentialist philosophy vis-à-vis materiality is that it accepts the existential discontinuities, contradictions, and paradoxicalities. They attempt to identify and accept the actual existential conditions whatsoever is the nature of the riddled scenarios, whereas most of the other philosophical paradigms try to resolve the contradictions to bring conceptual coherence. Blackham has tried to draw a line of demarcation between different approaches based on their tolerance of discontinuities and aberrations in human existence:

In sum, then, existentialism is in contrast with other philosophies in its insistence on the ambiguity arising out of fundamental structural discontinuities. The characteristic attempt of philosophy to reduce the discontinuities is rejected, in evolutionary naturalism with its doctrine of emergence and refusal of reduction not less than in a monistic materialism or idealism. The discontinuities are existential and have to be lived, they are not problem for thought. (160)

To the existentialist, the discontinuities are not to be avoided by weaving webs of words as it is a kind of ineffective form of indifference instead of being a solution. Thus, the traditional philosophical approaches are inclined towards the rational and logical but the existentialist are more concerned about the ontological. In this manner, existentialism avoids the characteristic attempt, in Blackham’s words, of the traditional

philosophical paradigms to endeavour to bring logical harmony and creating conceptual balance.

In this theoretical background, plasticity emerges as a contemporary notion that has evolved out of the varying dimensions of the existentialist thought, psychoanalysis, and neuroscience. Any attempt at its consummate understanding and application also demands its placement within the same theoretical debates. Hence, the ideas proffered by Catherine Malabou need to be studied in the context of the philosophical enunciations offered by prominent existentialist thinkers like Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and others.

3.4 Phenomenological Structure of Consciousness and Brain

Plasticity:

Indebtedness of Malabou's ideas and interventions to the phenomenological theorizations is a manifest factor. Phenomenology endeavors to make explicit the structure of consciousness that has developed from an individual's perspective. In the phenomenological idiom, it is called "the structure of intentionality" that is, the notion that "the object of the act" of consciousness is "a meaningful correlate of the conscious act" (Moran16) irrespective of its own independent existence. This intentionality marks significance and centrality of consciousness in the process of creation of meanings and meaningfulness. Therefore, the working of the informing ideas of phenomenology should be streamlined with that of plasticity to bring coherence and plausibility to the thought processes.

Malabou's thesis about plasticity corresponds with this phenomenological priority. Rather, her arguments seem to have capitalized on the idea afforded by the phenomenologists. However, her engagement with the idea is an ingenious intervention as well as she relocates it on the meeting point of various contemporary disciplines,

ranging from politics to neuroscience. Interlacing various strands of knowledge, the theory of plasticity offers a new episteme to study the contemporary life. While attempting to define the link between the consciousness and phenomena, she writes:

The problem is that we do not see the link that unifies all these phenomena, names, and situations which are here purposefully listed completely at random and appears to have nothing in common with one another. The link exists nonetheless and is tied to the activity of the brain. (Malabou3-4)

The randomness of phenomena, in her opinion, finds coherence only through one medium, the human brain. The only link that yokes together the infinite stretches all around is that of the brain. Here, in the mechanics of brain, she finds the clue for her central notion: “What we have called the constitutive historicity of the brain is really nothing other than its plasticity” (4). The word constitutive is defining the creative role of the human brain that, in turn, triggers the continuous structures of consciousness. Through this operational mechanism the interminable process of “receiving and giving of form” is created (8).

As reciprocity is central to plasticity, the brain itself stands not only as a “formative” force but also a “formable” (Malabou5) thing that is influenced by the circumstantial factors. Accordingly, the phenomena leave obvious imprints on human brain and modifies it, just as the latter puts patterns upon the former. Malabou terms modifiability of the human brain under external influences as “brain plasticity” (5). This activity of reciprocal influences alludes to the fluidity of the phenomena and, also, the consciousness of it. Hence, there is continuous, and also simultaneous, flow of formations from one side to the other and, consequently, in their conjugation, both sides are unremittingly transformed.

The parallels drawn evidence the unmistakable phenomenological seed in formation of Malabou's ideas about the role of brain. However, the inflections put by her upon the existing ideas are significant and original. She has creatively negotiated the postulates and the problems. Therefore, these genuine inflections are more relevant as they bring contemporariness to the discussion of the human problems and the potential solutions thereof. So, she has simultaneously managed the historicity and the originality of her ideas by invoking and, also, evolving them into socially relevant discourses in accordance with the demands of the time.

3.5 Plasticity and Modalities of Transformation of the Self

The discourses about the existential conditions of *being* and *becoming* have always been foregrounded in the existentialist philosophy. This idea of transition of humans from one state of being to the other constitutes consistent themes of the ontological discourses, ranging from philosophical treatises to the fictional narratives. At the very outset of her seminal work, Malabou opines about this normative transitional trajectory and its indispensability: "in time, one eventually becomes who one is" (1). So, the change is indispensable whether it comes in the form of transcendence or deterioration.

According to the existentialist interpretation, the journey from *being* to *becoming* is premised upon the use of free will by the human beings. The roots of the ideal of *becoming* goes back to the Greek times as Heraclitus is believed to be "the philosopher of evolution and becoming" (Maritain²⁵). Sartre's categorical and interesting rendering of the idea reads: "I say that man is condemned to be free" (5). In Sartre's opinion, any alternative of freedom is impossible and, therefore, action to move ahead is the only option. Extending the argument around the point, Mary Warnock identifies the belief in the notion of free will to be unifying idea for all the existentialist

thinkers of eminence: “They are all interested in the world considered as the environment of man, who is treated as a unique object of attention, because of his power to choose his own course of action” (1). Consequently, free will becomes one of the defining features of human life and the most potent trigger for bringing about change in the world.

Another relevant idea to the discourse of free will is facticity that has been propounded by Sartre in his *Being and Nothingness*. Wilfrid Desan has defined the Sartrean perception of the notion of facticity succinctly as “the whole set of obstacles which freedom has to face” (44). Here, the freedom stands for the human mode of freedom. He enumerates the factors contributing to “facticity”: It includes five “facts” or data, namely: my *place*, my *past*, my *surroundings*, my *fellow-brethren*, my *death* (107). It shows that human freedom is hindered by both human and non-human actors. These various obstacles create a series of hindrances to curtail human beings’ free mobility. Therefore, human beings have to struggle with and surpass the hurdles to ensure exercise of their power of freedom.

Malabou pushes the issue of becoming into the biological and puts an intriguing question: “what if, in the end, the agreement of the categories of thought with the real was simply the fruit of biological adaptation, an evolutionary process at the origin of the theory that some neurobiologists call ‘mental Darwinism’?” (34). In the hands of Malabou, plasticity encompasses many different modalities of transformation of the self and evolution of personality, the human mind, and human body. Precisely, she contends that the “plastic possibilities are never-ending” (10).

3.6 Destructive Plasticity and Trauma

The changes and metamorphoses precipitated by the unwelcomed accidents, injurious incidents, and devastating developments often trigger a kind of *becoming* that

is more like “an unrecognizable persona” (2). It is because of the suddenness of change that one loses the connection between the previous personality with a stable identity and the newly developed existential improvisation. Resultantly, there remains a consistent contestation within and the victim of the co-existing contradictory personalities stands bereft. Malabou calls it the destructive plasticity that is a consequence of an accident and that, in turn, changes completely the ontology of the self.

On this point, plasticity shares some essential features, both in style and temperament, with the trauma literary theory. As Michelle Balaev has opined, in her influential book on the subject, referring to Malabou’s work as the hallmark of “interdisciplinarity of trauma studies, as exemplified most tellingly, perhaps, by the recent articulations of psychoanalysis and neurobiology around the idea of trauma in the work of Catherine Malabou” (38). Trauma has been defined as “an overwhelming experience” that triggers in the human consciousness “delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (Caruth11). The interaction between human consciousness and phenomena is also a central concern for plasticity. Moreover, trauma provides a potent impetus for metamorphosis, that is, a drastic change in human personality. Thus, it is conspicuous that plasticity and trauma theory are linked both in terms of their approach and subject matter.

The point of departure for the destructive plasticity from the trauma theory is to be found in the debate between the purely psychological interpretations and the ideas informed by the factor of physicality along with psyche. The trauma theories concentrate on the inner recesses of the afflicted mind that are at work to shape a different persona, whereas plasticity also considers the physical dimensions to understand the matter of transformation. In other words, one side of trauma theories is

concerned primarily with the mind while the other focusses equally on both mind and brain. A prime example of the latter kind is the theory of plasticity. To describe the nature of the philosophical category, Malabou stresses that plasticity “is simultaneously logical and biological” (30) in its approach. Thus, plasticity combines the methodological and conceptual approaches adopted in both psychoanalysis and neurobiology.

However, there is always an appearance of some positive possibility after even the ruinous event. This “formative” (4) facet of the destructive plasticity has also been considered in detail by Malabou. At the point, Malabou’s representation to describe the idea has a pictorial quality that puts a forceful impact on the mind: “Destruction has its own sculpting tools” (4). The image reinforces the creative capacity of destruction. Here, while playing with the binary of destruction and construction, her deconstructivist tilt also finds a way in her expression. The act of flipping over the sides of the binary bespeaks the Derridean streaks on her interpretive approach. In doing so, she acknowledges the significance and the creative power of even a devastating turn that she terms as “a vital hitch” (6).

As already mentioned, the kind of transformation theorized as plasticity is totally different from the one appreciated and celebrated in the narratives of startling growth, the development of “the Wholly Other”, inspired by “the mystical ethics” (3). In the mystical ethical discourse, referred to by Malabou, the event of the total transformation, where the hitherto self is lost entirely, is celebrated as “true transcendence” (Awan49). Malabou has rendered the transformation occurring through the accidents in pungently pejorative idiom and called it an “neoliberal” (3) version of flexibility. The kind of poignant lexical choices and nomenclature communicates the vehemence of the devastation that has hit the fragile consciousness of human beings.

The damage of the destructive plasticity is twofold: on the one hand it shatters the personality of the victim and on the other hand it terminates the redressing and recuperative possibilities. Malabou has conveyed the cuts of the excruciating experience in the following distressing way:

Destructive plasticity deploys its work starting from the exhaustion of possibilities, when all virtuality has left long ago, when the child in the adult is erased, when cohesion is destroyed, family spirit vanished, friendship lost, links dissipated in the ever more intense cold of a barren life. (89-90)

The passage attempts to present the condition of utter chaos that a victim of the destructive plasticity is destined to face. All the markers of identity, ranging from the personal memories to the collective affiliations, have been lost forever. This erosion of the memories of the past and the hitherto self, development of asymmetrical personality, vanishing of force of filiation, and loss of the sense of affiliation generate a self that keeps floating in the directionless streams of confusion and frustration.

A significant aspect of Malabou's theorization of the destructive plasticity is that in doing so she questions "the substantialist assumptions" (7) of the western master-discourses vis-à-vis the theme of metamorphosis and transcendence. The western episteme affords that "the form transforms", she elaborates, and "substance remains" (7). She asserts, having discussed various aspects of the narrative of metamorphosis, "I know definitively, resolutely, that it is dangerous to essentiate" (91). She contends that it appears more appropriate to relate metamorphosis with "accidents" (91) than with "the call" (90) of a person who has been waiting for the desired transformation. Thus, plasticity is skeptical about the traditionally cherished and romantic narratives of transcendence.

Split and erasure are at the heart of working of the destructive plasticity that guide its procedures to devastate the human consciousness of the self, dissolve its hitherto persona, and plant there a personality that will always be haunted by the ghost of the past without any hope of retrieval. The formations and reformation find way but the resultant forms are the unwanted ones. In this way, the human body and psyche provide the space for enactment of the accidents that “dangerously disfigure the meaning of essence” (91).

The discussion of the different shades of the existentialist thought with a special focus on theorization of the idea of plasticity has made explicit all the conceptual and critical dimensions of the discourse produced in the forthcoming chapters of the study regarding the critique of Ishiguru’s selected fictional works. It has systematically been attempted to adapt Malabou’s ideas to support the analysis as otherwise it is difficult “to situate her thinking or to categorize it within the well-established traditions” (James in Williams¹). All these philosophically loaded ideas are scaffolding the argument that has been developed and proffered by accomplishing a thorough explication and a substantiated interpretation of the fictional narratives. Thus, the theoretical postulates vis-à-vis the existential conditions framed under the model of plasticity are controlling the interpretive foray into the fictional world created in the selected novels.

CHAPTER IV

EXPLORING DESTRUCTIVE PLASTICITY IN ISHIGURO'S FICTION

This chapter analyses the intricate tapestry of transformation that unfolds within the selected texts of Kazuo Ishiguro's fiction. Building upon the theoretical framework provided by Catherine Malabou's concept of destructive plasticity and ontological metamorphosis, this chapter embarks on a journey to understand how trauma-stricken characters in Ishiguro's works navigate the treacherous terrain of destructive plasticity. Through a meticulous textual analysis of *The Unconsoled*, *The Buried Giant*, and *A Pale View of Hills*, I aim to unravel the threads that bind these characters' experiences of metamorphosis and examine the ways in which Ishiguro engages with the complexities of mental Darwinism. By delving deep into the dynamics of applied plasticity, I seek to illuminate the paths that lead these characters towards self-mastery and offer insights into how such transformative processes can benefit individuals in their quest for self-discovery and resilience. This chapter intends to make a significant contribution to the understanding of destructive plasticity and its implications for personal growth and human agency within the realm of literature and philosophy.

4.1 Constructive Destruction

4.1.1 Introduction and Background

“I don't know, so maybe I'm not”.

– LeDoux 1

The confinement of different epistemological forms in separate watertight compartments has been a hindrance in "knowing" and, therefore, in the realization of "I" or in finding the solutions to the problems of ontology. The statement of Johnston in the Preface to *Self and Emotional Life: Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, and Neuroscience* reads "no genuine materialist philosophy legitimately can neglect the natural sciences generally and that no authentic materialist theory of subjectivity defensibly can sideline the life sciences" (Johnston and Malabou ix). There must be a

niche where the permeability of walls can allow different streams of knowledge to fall together in a single pool so as the phenomenon of 'being' is minutely observed and explored, which would lead to better answers to the questions of ontology.

Current neurobiology is engaged in a profound redefinition of emotional life. The brain, far from being a non-sensuous organ devoted solely to the logical and cognitive processes, now appears, on the contrary, as the center of a new libidinal economy. Such a vision is not only redefining the relationship between body, mind, and psyche, but it also disturbs disciplinary boundaries and induces secret networks between sciences (biology and neurobiology) and the humanities (philosophy and psychoanalysis) (Johnston and Malabou 4). Psychology, philosophy, and neuroscience are related fields. Psychology was an offshoot of philosophy up to the 19th century. After the 19th century, Wilhelm Wundt, a German psychologist, performed experiments to comprehend the working of the mind instead of only speculating about it (LeDoux 22).

Psychology, philosophy and neuroscience are the three corners of a triangle with its central focal point "self. The brain and mind contribute to sculpting the self. It is believed that the brain has never been a source of philosophy itself.

Despite the brain taking an important position in Descartes' *The Passion of the Soul* and Bergson's *Matter and Memory*, "it remains a secondary organ that receives and transmits information without enjoying the slightest symbolic autonomy. (Malabou *Ontology* 25). Damasio agrees that Spinoza may have comprehended the basic concepts behind the natural system responsible for the corresponding materialization of mind and body. However, he argues, "I am convinced that mental processes are grounded in the brain's mappings of the body, collections of neural

patterns that portray responses to events that cause emotions and feelings (Damasio *Looking for Spinoza*12).

Spinoza has explained conatus as the cumulative outlook, where the brain circuitry, once connected with interior or ecological situations, tries its existence and safety (Deleuze 222). Damasio describes that the brain receives both neural and chemical communications through the vast range of actions of the conatus. Chemical molecules accomplish this task which is carried in our blood vessels. Electrochemical signals which are transformed beside nerve corridors do the same activities. Many life aspects and procedures are connected to the brain and can be shown in a map of nerve cells' circuits positioned in specific cerebral sites. Damasio explains, "By that point we have reached the treetops of life regulation, the level at which feelings begin to coalesce" (36-7).

There is another fact that philosophy that explores and probes into the different angles of self cannot lead us properly to arrive at a point where we can establish a liaison between the self and the brain. In the last quarter of the 19th century, Wilhelm Wundt, instead of believing in assumptions, pioneered the experimental study of the working of the mind; this clearly differentiated psychology from philosophy (LeDoux 22). Self is a subject that exceeds the boundaries of a specific discipline and has attracted the attention of scholars from all fields of knowledge. According to LeDoux, "In fact, a whole area of psychology is devoted to the study of personality and the self. And theologians, philosophers, novelists, and poets have also had much to say on the subject" (13). Jerry Bruner and Georg Miller—great psychologists of the age—believed and proposed the idea of a cognitive approach which asserts that information is processed through internal systems of the mind (23). Various fields of social science and sciences, i.e., linguistics to anthropology; and mathematics to physics, incorporated

information-processing concepts. Mathematicians and computer scientists then started considering the operations of computers as mind-like operations, which psychologists previously introduced. LeDoux states, "Ultimately, cognitive science emerged as an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the mind's workings. It came to be called "the new science of mind" (23). The notion that mechanisms of the brain are responsible for thinking, attention, perception, and memory was successfully proven by both the field of cognition and cognitive neuroscientists. LeDoux states, "Cognitive psychology, and its sister, cognitive neuroscience, would thus seem to be taking us ever closer toward psychological and neurobiological understandings of the self" (23). The study of the mind has always been taken as a trio; cognition, affect (emotion), and conation (motivation). Our faculties of thinking, perception, and memory are influenced by our aspirations, worries, and hopes. LeDoux argues, "Although views of personality, temperament, character, and the self-continued to be developed over the centuries, modern approaches essentially began with Freud's psychoanalytic theory" (25). Significant comprehension of how the mind works, presented by personality theorists, has paved the way for therapists to treat people (patients) to cope with the obstacles in life. Neuroscience and Psychology have deep-rooted connections.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?

Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,

Raze out the written troubles of the brain

And with some sweet oblivious antidote

Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff

Which weighs upon the heart? —Shakespeare, Macbeth (Act V, Scene III, 42).

Though Shakespeare spoke of mental issues as "troubles of the brain" centuries ago, neuroscientists found it hard to prove that mental illness is caused by issues with

the brain. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the concept was popular that mental issues arose because of the brain being injured. However, there were no bodily elucidations of changes in thinking and disposition (psychoses and neuroses). LeDoux comments, "Sigmund Freud changed his course of research from neurological reasoning to psychological treatments of mental illness by observing the fact that he could not achieve tangible progress in his lifetime. There was a want of a "sweet oblivious antidote" to incorporate Shakespearian verse for hysteria, anxiety, or melancholia" (260).

4.1.2 Discussion in the Context of Destructive Plasticity

The cognitive neuroscience has successfully studied the brain's underlying mechanisms, i.e., memory, perception, attention, and thinking. The neuroscientists have strived to make sense of the psychological and neurobiological aspects of self. The urge to dive deep into the soul of philosophy raises the question of what makes man think, contemplate and meditate; Aristotle answers this, "For it is owing to their 'wonder' that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize" (qtd. in Johnston and Malabou 10). Descartes believes that, of six primitive passions in French, wonder occupies the first place. In "The Passions of the Soul", all the passions are found in this order: wonder, joy, sorrow, love, hatred, and the last one, desire. Descartes defines wonder as: "When our first encounter with some object surprises us and we find it novel or very different from what we formerly knew, or from what we supposed it ought to be, this causes us to wonder and to be astonished at it" (350).

It is a wonder that makes the self-realize its "self-ness.: "Wonder is, in reality, the faculty of self-surprising, the amazement of the mind at itself, its own opening to objects" (Johnston and Malabou 10). Looking at it from a different angle, wonder is the natural outcome of the soul being interloped by otherness. "In that sense, Wonder may

be seen as the effect of difference, the soul's realization that the self is not alone. This effect of difference as such affects also the other in me” (Johnston and Malabou 10). Wonder is epiphanic; "it is prior to will and judgment" (17). Wonder is the effect of alterity or exactly saying "other" as well. Because of Wonder, the soul realizes that it is not alone. The other is one's self, which is closely affected by the effect of wonder: "If I am able to wonder about or at something, it is because I am not identical to myself because I am different from myself" (10). Wonder ruptures the self or creates a difference in the soul, just as an intruder startles the natives.

In the conclusion of her article, "How Is Subjectivity Undergoing Deconstruction Today? Philosophy, Auto-Hetero-Affection, and Neurobiological Emotion", Catherine Malabou admits that she had endeavored to "elaborate a new (continental) philosophical position on neurobiology, a bridge connecting the humanities and the empirical sciences of the brain or mind. Such a bridge could be found in the fact that, instead of proposing a substantial vision of subjectivity, current neurobiology is exploring the absence of the self to itself. There could be no power of acting, no feeling of existence, no temporality, without this original delusion of the first person" (121).

Malabou investigates that unlike other types of consciousness in the natural world, human consciousness and intellect have distinctive qualities. She explores the idea of neuroplasticity and how it affects how the self develops and changes. She suggests that our consciousness enables us to transcend and function outside such restrictions, challenging the idea that people only exist inside the parameters of conventional natural rules. We are a collection of visual and sensory knowledge that acts under the assumption that it has a self, utterly confident that human beings exist on an ontological basis even though the reality appears quite different.

It is inevitable to know the correct connotation of the terms: affect, auto-affectation, and hetero-affectation if one intends to understand the relationship between Philosophy and Neuroscience. Malabou traces her introduction to these terms and admits that she has borrowed the terms hetero-affectation and auto-affectation from Derrida and owes the term "affects" to Deleuze. She owes her introduction to the concept of the emotional brain to Damasio, the author of *The Feeling of What Happens*, *Descartes' Error*, and *Looking for Spinoza*, and a well-known neurobiologist.

Affects----- This primary term embraces feelings, passions, and emotions and embodies a modification. To be altered or modified by something or somebody refers to "to be affected. Deleuze, in his lecture on Spinoza on the 24th of January 1978, gives the reference from Spinoza's book *The Ethics, Book III, Definition III*, where he writes, "By affects, I understand the affections of the body by which the body's power of activity is increased or diminished, assisted or checked, together with the ideas of these affections. (44). Deleuze declares, "I would say that for Spinoza, there is a continuous variation? Furthermore, this is what it means to exist. An affect is a continuous variation of the force of existing, insofar as this variation is determined by the ideas one has" (45).

The term "affects" is synonymous with the existence being realized. The subject can only realize its existence if it develops the capacity to be surprised. Here, Spinoza means an existence realized through modification in our actions. According to him, the affects that spring from delight enhance our strength to act, whereas all the affects that flow from distress reduce this strength. This variety of experiences gives the feeling of being alive to the subject. "Affect" is a general term that cannot be associated with Spinoza's definition only; it refers to every sort of difference or modification that introduces the taste of existence. Now, the question arises, how can anyone feel that

they exist? When can they realize that they exist? Do they feel themselves? Is the feeling of "myself" and existence the same or different? These questions lead to the issue of auto-affection.

Heidegger coined this term in "Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. Kant splits the subjectivity of a subject into two forms that co-exist together, "the transcendental form of apperception, and the empirical form of the inner sense. (109). The auto-affection is a phenomenon that describes the appearance of "I" to itself by affecting the inner sense. According to Heidegger, when the self of a persona is affected, it becomes the source of various other affects, which may be called feelings, passions, or emotions. So, the fountain-head of all other affects: Love, hatred, envy, and jealousy, is auto-affection (Malabou 111-2). Hetero-affection is "the affect of the other" that can be defined in two ways: "First, the one who is affected in me is always the other in me? Never the "I" conceived as an in-frangible identity; and second, the other in me is always affected by the wholly other of this other. The other who is affected in me and the other who is affecting me are definitely not the same" (113).

It is proclaimed by Derrida in *On Touching that*, "No sooner does one [touch] itself than it is itself? It contracts itself; it contracts with itself, but as with another...I self-touches spacing itself out, losing contact precisely in touching itself" (180). When one feels that they exist, it is not the feeling of their existence but of the other's existence in them. The difference between me and the other of me is the difference that needs to be understood to understand "I. It means that love does not emerge from an intuitive synthesis of the ego but from disarticulation. We can conclude this discussion with Malabou when she asserts, "Hetero affection, more exactly, auto-hetero-affection would then be the real source of all affects" (114).

The most intriguing discussion in psychoanalysis, philosophy, and neurobiology nowadays revolves around not only the intricacies of hetero affection; it does not ignore the chance of hetero-hetero affection, which is "an affection of the affects. It becomes the reason for their disappearance or ruin. The subject that is hetero-affected would be affected, of course. However, hetero-hetero-affected subjects would be disaffected, "Most of the time, the impairment of emotional processes produces an indifference that coincides purely and simply with a disability to wonder" (Johnston and Malabou 11). In other words, the subject becomes indifferent.

In the age we are living in, every second or third person shows the traits of indifference, disaffectedness, and emotional coldness. As a matter of fact, this is a loss of wonder which, according to Damasio, "is a serious emotional disease. (139). The emotional aspect of the brain is traumatized after being emotionally or physically damaged, affecting subjectivity in such a way that the subject gets disinterested in life. Surprise, amazement, interest in novelty, and astonishment evaporate. Actually, the affected or the disaffected become detached and "cold-blooded. About one of his patients Elliot, Damasio, writes: "He was excellent, detached, unperturbed even by potentially embarrassing discussion of personal events. He reminded me somewhat of Addison de Witt, the character played by George Sanders in *All About Eve* (134).

The implications of affects, auto affects, hetero affects, and hetero-hetero affects have liaisons with the phenomenon of plasticity. *Plasticity* is a term that embodies the qualities of formation, deformation, and reformation. Plasticity marks a balance "between the receiving and giving of form" (13).. It is a molding of our mind and the brain that makes us who we are; in other words, it forms our identity. This sculpting of self qualifies us, the humans, "subjects of history, a singular, recognizable, identifiable history, with all its events, gaps, and future" (Malabou *Ontology of Accident* 3).

Malabou makes a distinction between two types of plasticity: flexibility and explosive potential. Explosive plasticity, which appears when neuroplasticity is confused with flexibility. Flexibility lacks the functional capacity to participate in creating our living environments. Malabou indirectly supports the notion that as opposed to reacting passively to environmental changes, brain function necessitates human agency and active engagement in creating our circumstances. Malabou defines plasticity as a form's capacity to change through time. We are shaped as subjects of history with all its potential by this process, which develops from a variety of experiences. Through structural and neurological connections, this plasticity is made possible.

The anatomical and neurological connections that change allow for this plasticity, significantly impacting how our personalities are formed. To Malabou, plasticity is more than just flexibility. It includes taking an active role in establishing norms in our environments and building our realities. This viewpoint supports the notion that active participation and agency, as opposed to passive adaptation, are essential components of a healthy life.

Neuroplasticity encompasses both constructive and destructive events, which are different from one another and have a significant impact on how the brain develops in terms of both structure and function. These phrases refer to conflicting results resulting from the brain's ability to adapt and reorganize in response to experiences and external inputs.

The term "constructive plasticity" describes the beneficial modifications in the brain's neuronal connections and circuitry. It includes the creation of new synaptic connections, the reinforcement of preexisting connections, and the development of more effective brain pathways. Learning, developing skills, and forming memories

relate to this plasticity. The brain can rewire through constructive plasticity to enhance cognitive functions, adjust to changing conditions, and pick up new information or abilities.

Destructive plasticity, on the other hand, refers to undesirable alterations or disturbances in neuronal connections inside the brain. It entails the thinning down or disappearance of synaptic connections and the restructuring of brain networks in response to various triggers, including trauma, injury, or prolonged exposure to unfavorable circumstances. Cognitive impairments, functional deficiencies, or dysfunctional behaviors can result from destructive plasticity. It frequently coexists with chronic stress, brain traumas, and neurodegenerative diseases.

The differences between constructive and destructive plasticity can be seen in how they affect the structure and function of the brain. While destructive plasticity represents harmful abnormalities that disrupt regular brain function, constructive plasticity encourages adaptive changes that improve cognitive capacities. In order to investigate brain development, rehabilitation, and interventions that attempt to promote beneficial neuroplastic changes while minimizing unfavorable ones, it is essential to understand these competing pathways.

The brain is a plastic, and, at the same time, it is rigid, provable, and determined by genes. Plasticity is not synonymous with flexibility. Plasticity also provides space for evolution. The plastic brain submits itself to plasticity. It receives form as well as obliterates it. It can also be said that it creates and is reluctant to comply with a model. One the one hand, brain reflects a widely recognized scientific definition of plasticity: a positive, coherent shape. On the other hand, it shows formation by destruction. Pathological metamorphosis is also fitted with a coefficient of regeneration and healing within the context of the neurosciences that employ such a definition of plasticity. In

the shadows, it is still, or at least still oriented to its salvation, the damaging value of plasticity. Thus, destructive plasticity is excluded from this perspective, which is plasticity without remedy.

The occurrence that pursues uniformity cannot be life. Life is a combination of harmony and upheavals, rise and falls, and creation and obliteration. All these episodes in the drama of life regulate its smooth-going. Self-regulation is the fundamental law of nature. The circle of construction and destruction maintains its regulation. The intermittent pursuit of construction leading to destruction, which is the construction of something new, does not oppose life; it enhances the possibility of life (Malabou OA 4). When an entity is damaged, its outlook, physique, or even functioning may change. However, even in the instances of catastrophic change, something remains. As Malabou states, the smashed-up face is still a face, and the traumatized psychology is still psychology. The destruction has its own constructive capability (33).

Accidents are the direct cause of the exposure of the brain to destructive plasticity. Neural plasticity is of two types: positive and negative. Positive plasticity embodies the materialization procedure of neural links, and we should remember that this neural network may be transfigured during the span of our life stimulated by the accumulation of experiences that make a sum total of our life. The formational anatomy of no two brains is identical. Consequently, in the case of some brains that possesses the quality of being plastic, every event is incorporated into the general pattern of neural connections, and this series of happenings in our lives create an autobiographical self. Negative plasticity refers to the destructive powers exercised by the brain in response to some exceedingly traumatic event. This plastic power gives way to the extreme transformation of a patient's identity that is completely different from its former identity (Johnston and Malabou 56).

The destructive plasticity forms what it destroys. It is not a simple annihilation or suppression to the precise extent that it has a result. This result is the formation of "someone else". a new self that cannot recognize itself. Destructive plasticity refers to a detonation that washes away whatever is already stored in the mind. Nevertheless, such a damaged mind is still alive. It is a survival that renounces the possibility of redemption or salvation. The event of brain damage occurs without presenting itself and forever stays out of access, out of interiorization, remaining exterior to any "becoming-subject. Destructive plasticity is a biological deconstruction of subjectivity. The neurobiological approach to the self can answer Derrida's questions regarding hetero-affection, for instance, how to present "I" to itself or self to itself. (Johnston and Malabou 58)

A neural calamity is a purely destructive event. It is unpredictable, hopeless, and never replaceable. The psyche cannot integrate it. It is such an episode that neither has any logic nor forms a moment in one's personal history. It incites the complete extermination of a psychic construction, and overwhelms wonder, the first one among the actual affects (Johnston and Malabou 62). So far, the repercussions of the loss of wonder have been discussed; we have to see the effects of the feeling of wonder; the realization of the advantages of something's presence can help chalk out the disadvantages of its loss. Wonder is utilized to "learn and retain things of which we were previously ignorant in our memory. (65).

Wonder is the response we give to the considerable features of the world, which is worthwhile to preserve the union of mind and body and of the soul in its curiosity and unraveling of knowledge (Jablonka and Lamb 226). A Neurologic injury leaves a patient with noticeable before and after variance (Damasio *The Feeling of What Happens* 41). The previous self loses itself to a new indifferent, cold, and unconcerned

self, "a marked alteration of the ability to experience feelings" (Damasio *Descartes' Error* 16).

Neuroscience has redefined emotional and psychological life by locating the brain as a center of psychic life. Psychoanalysis introduces the idea of a plastic psyche or plastic brain that copes with the demand for change and remains the same at a similar level; it marks a balance between memory and what is awaited and between receiving and giving of the form. We learn from experience, however, that illness and wellness principles are constructed socially. The disparity between the normal and the abnormal processes is culturally complex and historically evolving in a significant way.

While it is subjective to determine the therapeutic potential of literature and specific novels, there are several aspects of Kazuo Ishiguro's works that can be argued to have therapeutic value. Here are some points that can support the argument:

1. Emotional resonance: Ishiguro's novels often delve into complex emotional landscapes, exploring themes of identity, memory, loss, and the human condition. By delving into these emotional depths, his works can provide readers with a sense of catharsis and a deeper understanding of their emotions and experiences.
2. Empathy and perspective-taking: Ishiguro's nuanced character portrayals and exploration of different perspectives can cultivate empathy in readers. Engaging with his characters' struggles and dilemmas can encourage readers to consider alternative viewpoints and develop a greater capacity for understanding others, which can have therapeutic benefits in promoting empathy and interpersonal relationships.
3. Reflection and self-exploration: Ishiguro's novels often prompt introspection and self-reflection. They tackle existential questions and invite readers to

contemplate their lives, values, and choices. This introspective quality can be therapeutic, encouraging readers to engage in self-exploration and personal growth.

4. Themes of memory and identity: Many of Ishiguro's novels, such as *Never Let Me Go* and *The Buried Giant*, explore the themes of memory and identity. These themes can resonate with readers grappling with their memories, sense of self, or existential questions. By examining these themes through the narrative, Ishiguro's novels can offer readers a sense of validation and understanding and even provide a platform for processing their experiences.
5. Narrative escapism and catharsis: Ishiguro's storytelling prowess allows readers to immerse themselves in his fictional worlds, providing a form of escapism from everyday life. This escapism can serve as a therapeutic outlet, offering a temporary respite from personal challenges or hardships. Moreover, the emotional release experienced through reading his novels can provide catharsis, offering a sense of relief and emotional well-being.

It is important to note that the therapeutic potential of literature is highly individual and can vary from reader to reader. Individuals may find different novel therapeutics based on their experiences, needs, and preferences. Therefore, while these points provide a basis for the argument, it is crucial to consider the subjective nature of therapeutic benefits when engaging with literature, including Ishiguro's novels.

Malabou emphasizes the difference between plasticity and flexibility. While flexibility implies passive adaptation to external changes, plasticity refers to our active agency in shaping our own transformations. By recognizing this distinction, individuals can move beyond mere adaptation and take control of their own development. Plasticity, as explained by Malabou, highlights the limitless possibilities for personal

growth and self-overcoming. This perspective encourages individuals to embrace the idea that they can reshape themselves and their lives through intentional efforts and self-directed changes, albeit within the framework of the material and socio-cultural forces.

Various techniques and practices can facilitate the cultivation of plasticity. These include cognitive-behavioral therapies, mindfulness meditation, neurofeedback training, and self-reflection exercises. These approaches promote self-awareness, emotional regulation, and cognitive restructuring, enabling individuals to actively mold their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. The understanding that the brain is plastic and capable of rewiring itself throughout life provides a basis for self-mastery. By engaging in activities that challenge the brain, such as learning new skills, engaging in creative endeavors, and seeking novel experiences, individuals can harness the power of neuroplasticity to shape their neural networks and enhance their cognitive abilities.

Plasticity allows individuals to bounce back from adversity and navigate life's challenges with greater resilience. Through intentional efforts, individuals can develop adaptive strategies, cultivate emotional flexibility, and learn from setbacks, enabling them to better cope with stressors and setbacks. The therapeutic process rooted in plasticity empowers individuals to take an active role in their own healing and personal growth. By fostering self-reflection, self-compassion, and a sense of agency, individuals can become agents of change in their own lives, making deliberate choices and taking intentional actions to shape their desired outcomes.

The therapeutic process informed by Malabou's theory of plasticity offers a framework for individuals to become masters of their own lives. By understanding the distinction between plasticity and flexibility, embracing transformative potential, employing specific techniques, recognizing the power of neuroplasticity, building

resilience, and emphasizing self-directed change, individuals can actively shape their personal growth, enhance well-being, and take control of their own trajectories.

4.1.3 Textual Analysis of Novels

Literature gives us data to apply and study humanities or even scientific theories to evaluate the study's results and reach the conclusion. Catherine Malabou's theory of plasticity has been selected to be applied to the characters of the selected novels of Kazuo Ishiguro. The traces of memory loss, use of selected memory, indifferent and cold behavior due to some identified and some unknown reasons of trauma leading to the conspicuous changes in self are identified in the lines of *The Unconsoled*, *The Buried Giant*, and *A Pale View of Hills* by Ishiguro. The theory of plasticity is a container of all the gears that can deal with the issues Ishiguro's characters are dealing with. Malabou believes modifying neuronal connections evokes plasticity, an indirect but fundamental cause in formulating a personality (Malabou OA 3).

To identify trauma-stricken individuals, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), provides diagnostic criteria for trauma-related disorders such as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Acute Stress Disorder (ASD). According to the DSM-5, PTSD is characterized by exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence, accompanied by symptoms such as intrusive memories, avoidance behaviors, negative alterations in mood and cognition, and heightened arousal. These criteria offer a standardized framework for assessing individuals who have experienced trauma, allowing clinicians and researchers to identify and diagnose trauma-related conditions based on observable symptoms and their impact on daily functioning.

In literature analysis, the DSM-5 criteria can serve as a valuable yardstick for identifying trauma-stricken characters and examining the portrayal of trauma in fictional narratives. By applying the diagnostic criteria to characters' experiences and behaviors, researchers can analyze how trauma manifests in literature and explore its psychological and emotional effects on characters' identities and relationships. This approach enhances the depth and accuracy of literary analysis by grounding interpretations in established clinical frameworks for understanding trauma and its impact on individuals' mental health and well-being.

4.1.3.1. The Unconsoled

The preceding discussion establishes that the theory of plasticity has three interconnected dimensions; neuroscience, psychoanalysis, and lived philosophy or phenomenology.

In the novel *The Unconsoled* by Ishiguro, Mr. Ryder, the protagonist, seems to be an accomplished artist, a renowned pianist, and a public figure. However, a clue to his psychological woes—that will be discussed later—has been given right in the beginning. Ishiguro writes, "The Support Group comprises ordinary people from every walk of life brought together by their sense of having suffered from the present crisis. You'll be able to hear first-hand accounts of what some people have had to go through" (Ishiguro TU 12). No one knows what crisis underlies the reason for suffering here. However, some psychological abnormality and memory loss are detected in the protagonist's behavior right in the beginning: "After several minutes, I had succeeded in remembering all but two of the players, but these last two names remained just beyond the rim of my recall. As I tried to remember, the sound of the fountain behind me, which at first, I had found quite soothing, began to annoy me. It seemed that if only

it would stop, my memory would unlock, and I would finally remember the names” (24).

Mr. Ryder, a well-known pianist, was invited to play a special concert in this small European town-possibly with Germanic origins. He was also asked to speak briefly. The townspeople were deeply troubled because of their apparent impossibility of producing an influential musician, and Mr. Ryder was asked to come and strengthen their spirits. Later in the novel it reveals that the writer is an anonymous outsider who does not know the setting and he has never seen him before. He marks down “The sound of voices, the blues, and the browns of the eyes behind the familiar odd face: someone else's unquestionable presence”, further noting, “However, this other person was strangely absent” (27).

The city's people seem haunted by a recent event when city managers paid attention and support to a young musician who turned out to have false "arts values. (28). Mr. Ryder is not sure exactly what it means. However, the city leaders and the local people seem to agree that certain kinds of creativity should not be nurtured. Mr. Ryder is confused and disappointed that the city cannot be open to different forms of creative expression. Mr. Ryder was no longer worried but indifferent, unaffected, and calm. He spent all day creasing and un-building his thoughts; as the story goes, "it might be apparent that these thoughts are the result of his pain which has dramatically changed him. Besides that, he was not the only one who had changed” (34).

The history of Mr. Ryder has been disclosed gradually through other characters' actions. Mr. Ryder has a terrible effect on the people in a small Germanic town where he finds himself bringing a wrong front to the world. More broadly, Mr. Ryder is readily distinguished between victims of destructive plasticity and those considered normal and healthy because they are characterized as such.

Instead of a gradual change, the story depicts Mr. Ryder's life as a random string of setbacks. This viewpoint disputes Freud's claims regarding plasticity, which frequently overstate the likelihood of recovery and the resistance of the psyche to damage. Age, though, continues to be a mysterious subject of change. We observe a tremendous transformation in the fundamental nature of Mr. Ryder's thinking and cognitive patterns over the course of his life as he ages. This investigation will dig into the tremendous literary effect that Mr. Ryder experiences throughout his life.

From the outset of the novels *The Unconsoled* and *The Buried Giant*, the allusions attributed to memory loss are intertwined with the dark, foggy, misty, and cold environment. The protagonist's lack of self-awareness and life history is revealed to the readers through certain events and characters. A world is revealed to us full of false lovers, alienated lovers, failed, unsuccessful and unhealthy partnerships, and emotionless relationships. Mr. Ryder mentions the night outside, "its deathly hush, the chill, the thickening mist was such a contrast to the warm hubbub in the cinema that we both paused on the pavement as though to regain our bearings" (Ishiguro TU 108,109). The life of the city, Mr. Ryder had been a resident and came then to play piano in concert, was very much like the life of a dead city, "We have lost it. Why don't we resign ourselves to being just another cold, lonely city? Other cities have. At least we'll be moving with the tide. The soul of this town, it's not sick, Mr. Ryder, it's dead. It's too late now... Brodsky, Brodsky. It's too late. We're done for now. Let us be a cold modern city and be done with it" (107).

Similarly, Ishiguro sets the mood of the novel *The Buried Giant* with a destructive, cold, indifferent environment introduced right at the beginning, "Icy fogs hung over rivers and marshes, serving all too well the ogres that were then still native to this land" (Ishiguro BG 3). The narrator expresses his surprise as "-one wonders what

desperation led them to settle in such gloomy spots” (3). The setting is scary and mysterious, “Or that every so often, an ogre might carry off a child into the mist” (4). This line by the narrator is suggestive of the situation that the people in the age which Ishiguro is going to open up are living in hard times: “there had been a time when they had lived closer to the fire; a time when they had lived with their children” (5). A cold, misty environment interweaved with the memory loss of the characters is enough to prepare the readers for a destructive drama that could lead to the construction of a new self. “Now he could feel the damp in his legs, but as he turned to go back inside, he was well satisfied: for he had this morning succeeded in remembering a number of things that had eluded him for some time” (5).

Mr. Ryder lacks self-awareness and self-recognition, and the town has a threatening and claustrophobic environment. Mr. Ryder, while taking Boris to his home, mentions, “As we continued to walk together through the dark, I tried once more to remember just what he had said that morning, but to no avail” (Ishiguro TU 47). He was holding Boris on his shoulder and made an observation that was again linked to the darkness in the surrounding, “He pressed himself against my body but said nothing, and when I glanced down at him, I saw he was gazing thoughtfully along the darkened street” (53). Mr. Ryder’s inability to recognize his past and himself gives a surreal touch to the novel. Listening to and then trying to complete the requests of the people of the city while wandering in a fog, he questions why he came to that town.

The author defines the whole scenario of the narrative rather loosely as an increasing entropic process as the life of Mr. Ryder, who found himself in an odd dream-like trance in the midst of chaos happening around him. The reason why he came to this town becomes increasingly confusing. It, therefore, claims less attention and is easier to ignore. For any life, at any rate, a reflective philosophy of destruction is

necessary because we each have to deal with our own mortality. So, there is a quick introduction to the trauma and synaptic space to destruction. However, traumatic destruction can be separated relatively easily.

The destruction of unsafe, neglected buildings and controlled burns to contain the risk of wood fires are also easy to separate from non-evil and non-painful destruction, as explained by Joseph LeDoux.. The philosophy which explores and probes different angles of self cannot lead us properly to arrive at a point where we can establish a liaison between the self and brain. The epistemology of actions considers existence as the war of ideas and reflects it. Band-aid bug fixes and patches destroy the architectural integrity of the original life. One has to decide painfully to discard it entirely and start with a clear brain based on an advanced model of thinking architecture.

The story unfolds the curtains to a dramatic situation where Mr. Ryder initially seems to be a stranger in the city. However, he shocks the readers bit by bit when his behavior confirms his years-old intimacy with every character he comes across. Sophie had been his past lover or wife and has a son from another person. Mr. Ryder meets the father of Sophie, Gustav, just as Bellhop at the hotel, shows no signs of familiarity with him. On the other hand, Gustav clearly exhibits his acquaintance with Mr. Ryder. On the death of Gustav by the end of the novel, Mr. Ryder condoles his death in these words, “As you know, I had only known him for a few days, but he had been very kind to me, assisting me with my bags and so on” (Ishiguro 525). Mr. Gustav was his father-in-law, but he remembers no other reference of familiarity with him except that he assisted Mr. Ryder with his bags and other things.

Mr. Ryder had been the child of a disturbed family. His father and mother were always on their toes. Hailing from a broken family, he had an earnest desire to see his

father and mother together. This wish, in the back of his mind, gives him amnesic fantasies that his parents are coming to attend his concert. Catherine Malabou, in her *Ontology of Accident: Destructive Plasticity* describes a similar kind of situation which shows itself when there is a damage, a cut, something to which standard, creative plasticity gives neither access nor body: the deserting of subjectivity, the distancing of the individual who becomes a stranger to herself, who no longer recognizes anyone, who no longer recognizes herself, who no longer remembers herself (6).

The Greek word trauma means "wound" (Luckhurst 2). It refers to an injury that is inflicted on the mind, not the body. Freud, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, suggests that the breach in the mind's experience of the world, self, and time unlike the wound on the body that is healable and relatively simple, is experienced too unexpectedly, too soon, to be perfectly known and remains unavailable to consciousness unless it is imposed repeatedly in the dreams and tedious actions of the survivor. Trauma is not locatable from the original event but from its unassimilated nature, for its being unknown in the first place, and can be traced only when it revisits the survivor after some time (301).

Mr. Ryder was a trauma-inflicted soul. His unhappy past with his parents, which culminated in their breakup, left him broken from the inside in silence. Under the intermittent fits of trauma, he had fantasized about reuniting with his parents since the time unknown. "Do you realize what tonight is? My parents, they're coming tonight. That's right! They're coming at last, tonight! They may well be there at this very moment! ... I might not even get as far as the piano. Or my parents might leave, the moment they start to turn on me..." (443). Sophie tries to convince Mr. Ryder that his parents had never turned on him. She has lived years with him; she knows every episode which has developed the drama of Mr. Ryder's life. "Look, calm down,' Sophie said.

'It'll be all right. They never turn on you. You always say they'll turn on you and so far, no one, not a single person in all these years, has turned on you... (443). Not ready to be convinced, he replies to her, "But don't you understand what I'm saying? This isn't just any night. My parents are coming. If they turn on me tonight, it will be... it will be... (443). Sophie is adamant to drag Mr. Ryder out of this illusion that his parents would visit him to witness his performance. She says to him,

They will not turn on you,' Sophie broke in again. 'You say every time. From all over the world, you phone to say the same thing. Whenever you reach this point, they will turn on me; they will find me out. And what happens? A few hours later, you call again and are very calm and self-satisfied. I ask you how it went, and you sound mildly surprised I should even bring it up. "Oh, it was fine," you say. Always just something like that, and then you move onto other things like none of it is worth discussing...'. (443-4)

Sophie makes an effort to inform him of his issue with fluctuating, irrational urges. It draws attention to Mr. Ryder's mental state. Miss Stratmann, who is the in-charge of planning Ryder's concert, also gets worried. On his inquiring about his parents, she studies Mr. Ryder carefully in the dawn light, and responds with a sigh:

Mr. Ryder, I have been meaning to speak to you about this for some time. We were all very pleased when you informed us some months ago of your parents' intention to visit our city. Everyone was genuinely delighted. Nevertheless, I must remind you, Mr. Ryder, that we heard of their plans to visit us from you and you alone. For the past three days and today, I have been doing all I can to ascertain their whereabouts. I have repeatedly telephoned the airport, the railway station, the bus companies, and every hotel in this city, and I have yet to find any sign of them. They have yet to hear from

them; no one has seen them. Now, Mr. Ryder, I have to ask you. Are you confident they are coming to this town? (511)

"In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, the uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (Figley.Qtd. in Caruth 11).

Ryder has become so enmeshed in his terrible delusion that his irrational and ever-shifting impulses trap him. His denial, similar to the logic in Oscar Mannoni's "I know very well, but all the same!" manifests as a rejection of his own experiences rather than a simple inability to perceive or comprehend them. Ryder is unable to interact with the truths that others are attempting to communicate to him because of his devotion to his self-invented story and his aversion to facing reality.

He tells Miss Stratmann, "They must be here somewhere. Besides, I heard them. When I stopped the car in the woods, I could hear them coming, their horse and carriage. I heard them, they must be here, and surely, and it's not unreasonable" (512). She throws a counter-question at him: "But you said they came by rail. Did anyone help them with their luggage?" (514). Mr. Ryder again tells her the fake fact created by his new self: "Oh, the railway porters would have immediately gone about helping them. Taken all the luggage out to the taxi, then the taxi driver would have seen to it after that. They'd have been driven to their hotel and that would have been that. I'm sure they didn't have to even think about their luggage" (514). Mr. Ryder cannot take his parents off his mind, "My parents are quite right. I've a great deal left" (521). Finally, Sophie gives him her word, "Your parents? Listen, my advice is, to forget about your parents altogether for now (521).

What would our existence be like to become indifferent? According to Mr. Ryder's life and hardships, this issue is in a contemporary intellectual and socio-political environment that deals with the tropes of sustainability in a particular way. The novel is against an ontological context, which is increasingly understood through the unpredictable precocity of the political questions of ethics that dominate many contemporary social theories and orbit the kinds of transformation that can survive a subject. However, it assumes that Mr. Ryder can survive against the transformation background. Ishiguro raises an ongoing ontological query regarding Mr. Ryder's durability in this beautiful and insightful novel by exploring sudden explosive splits of the tissue of experience. He explored ideas in his early life, particularly during his self-interrogation. The novel's protagonist is interested in incidents of disruptive plasticity, creating non-relational, self-ruptured, and subsequent modes of ignorance, disregard, and anonymity.

Although the theory reflects on those who suffer from destructive plasticity, that is, those that are traumatized without a remedy, as does Mr. Ryder, the novelist's thoughts do not appear to be the result of his unhealable trauma.

The most significant advantage of the theory of cultural or collective trauma is that it assists profoundly in understanding and shaping a better life in terms of everyday living: "Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel that they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (Alexander 4). The village in *The Buried Giant* seems to have been suffering from a collective trauma that has affected the memory of the community overall: "It is queer the way the world's forgetting people and things from only yesterday and the day before that. Like a sickness come over us all" (BG 20).

According to LeDoux, our memory constructs our lives, emotions, actions, and logic; if we lose it even in bits, we might not exist (97). In his book, *L'Age et le Principe de Plaisir* [Age and the Pleasure Principle], Gerard Le Gouès, a psychoanalyst and a clinical expert on the older age, draws a comparison between the journey of life and the journey taken by an airplane. He says that life is like flying in the air in a plane, as we all know that the flight of an airplane has three steps: taking off, gliding, and landing. So, suppose a man's childhood is taken as taking off a plane and adulthood as flying and gliding in the sky. In that case, the older age is like descending or landing of life (Gouès 14). In *The Buried Giant*, the parents are unsure of the existence of their son in the past. The narrator attributes it to their old age as "perhaps these were just an elderly fool's imaginings" (Ishiguro BG 7). "Perhaps it was that God had never given them children" (7). At another place, "Is there perhaps talk of a plague on the way, and she is here to look us over?" (9). The narrator comments, "He was after all, an aging man and prone to occasional confusion" (10).

Catherine Malabou believes that we all have to allow the improbability of escape from the state in which an ultimate trauma of pain and suffering pushes an individual to an extreme place that is non-existent (OA 10). Through this sense, the researcher would extend the idea of disruptive plasticity so that it can be linked back to the idea of the elderly British couple, Axel and Beatrice, who plans to take up a voyage to meet a son whom they have not seen for long, and about whose existence they are not sure of.

The failure of plasticity happens with the dilemma of getting old. One can define *aging* as a change and count sickness with aging as an event (OA 39). The phenomenon of getting old tells us to be plastic so that we can gradually find a way to the declining youth and may find how to deal with it. On the other hand, the failure to

have this plasticity, one agrees to his getting old and allows his personality to be passive and receptive for the last blast or annihilation (Malabou OA 41).

Memory can bring the past back. Nevertheless, it is subjective, for it is a rebuilding of facts and happenings in the mind as they are stowed, not as they come off in reality. It is also a rebuilding of a brain which is a changed version of its previous state. Sometimes, we cannot access the required information from our memory because only a gist is available, but details of a certain experience are lost. Very rarely, we are reminded of such things as never happened. Memory is a great assistant to us, besides carrying some shortcomings. Bunuel synthesized a more accurate definition: “We are our memories, without which nothing remains” (qtd. in LeDoux 97).

An unexplained loss of memory hurts everybody in the world. This problem mainly focuses on the meaning we take for the word “loss. It is true that the idea of ‘loss’ is defined by a positive development according to the prevalent philosophical interpretation: it symbolizes inner healing forces that are rehabilitated through therapy.

The repeated use of the suggestive word “perhaps” in *The Buried Giant* indicates that even the narrator cannot authenticate details about the characters. The novel’s characters seem to be going through a tragedy that leads to a traumatic life. They have become victims of memory loss. They are not the ones they have been and will not be what they are. Plasticity has sculpted them into new selves marking a rupture from their past.

According to Malabou, affective plasticity is the central aspect of positive plasticity. It relates to the ability for emotional and affective alterations, implying that the brain can experience adaptive changes in response to various emotional states and experiences. Positive plasticity makes emotional regulation and modulation possible, which may promote emotional development and toughness.

Conversely, negative plasticity covers a more profound and radical change in form. It requires a total overhaul of the current framework, culminating in developing a being that differs from what it was in the past. Although more research is needed to fully understand the neurological mechanisms underlying negative plasticity, it can be assumed that this type involves significant reorganization and reconfiguration of neural connections and may be linked to significant alterations in identity, behavior, or cognitive functioning.

Positive and negative plasticities are likely variations or symptoms of the same basic phenomenon; rather than distinctly different, a fact that becomes clear by looking at the underlying neurological processes. Malabou's differentiation between "positive plasticity" and "negative plasticity" draws attention to the divergent outcomes and ramifications of each.

Destructive plasticity appears in the context of traumatic brain injuries and neurological disorders as the development of identity through the loss of previous identity. It is a procedure that, paradoxically, creates shape by eradicating form. Trauma and cerebral diseases have a significant impact on neurological functioning, making this type of plasticity evident. The main issue raised by such traumatic ruptures is whether or not destructive plasticity has the power to transform us in the wake of death—not through atonement but via erasure.

The neurological approach and Freudian psychoanalysis conflict with Malabou's study of traumatic wounds, which underlines the theoretical exhaustion of Freudian psychoanalysis in treating modern traumatic injuries. She criticizes the limitations of hermeneutic psychoanalysis, which clings to historical-libidinal psychic machinery and anticipatory psychic structures. Malabou challenges the idea of

regression and the return to primal psychic strata controlled by sexuality by arguing that the rupture of trauma exists beyond the possibility of hermeneutic significance.

In the context of analyzing the trauma-stricken characters in the selected texts of Kazuo Ishiguro, the theoretical insights provided by Catherine Malabou's exploration of destructive plasticity and neuroplasticity offer a valuable framework for understanding the emergence of indifference and loss of selfhood. Building upon the research conducted by Norman Doidge in *The Brain That Changes Itself*, which highlights the brain's remarkable ability to rewire and reorganize in response to various stimuli, including trauma, Malabou delves deeper into the consequences of plasticity and challenges the prevailing positive narrative surrounding its potential.

By integrating theoretical insights from Malabou's work, contextualized within the framework of Doidge's neuroscientific exploration, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the transformative potential of plasticity and its impact on the human experience. This holistic approach, merging scientific research, theoretical analysis, and literary interpretation, offers a comprehensive perspective on the negotiation of destructive plasticity and its implications for understanding the dynamics of trauma, resilience, and the process of self-reconstruction.

The work of Norman Doidge, *The Brain That Changes Itself*, offers essential background information for comprehending the neurobiological mechanisms underpinning neuroplasticity and its consequences for cognitive and emotional functioning. In his exploration of brain plasticity, Doidge offers case examples that show how the brain may change, and how it is wired and organized in response to diverse stimuli, including trauma.

When it comes to the emergence of indifference and loss of selfhood, it is crucial to consider the affected brain regions and the resulting disruptions in neural

connections. Traumatic brain injuries can damage specific brain areas responsible for emotional regulation, self-identity, and social cognition. For example, injuries to the prefrontal cortex or limbic system can result in altered emotional processing and a reduced sense of self.

According to a neuroscientific explanation for the formation of indifference and loss of selfhood, the brain circuits that control emotional reactions and self-referential processing may be disturbed. These circuits can get damaged, resulting in muted effect, apathy, or a reduced ability for self-awareness and self-reflection. Depending on the nature and location of the brain damage, the precise neurological mechanisms behind these changes may fluctuate.

Malabou criticizes modern neuroscience for downplaying or ignoring plasticity's potential for harm. She contends that neuroscience frequently only depicts the brain's ability to change in favorable terms, focusing on its power to learn, remember, and develop into a cohesive and harmonious personality. Neuroscientists typically adhere to a well-intentioned vision of a successful and mature personality by avoiding negativity from their discourse. Malabou claims that this reductionist strategy ignores the complexity and depth of plasticity.

Furthermore, Malabou contends that these capitalist ideologies shape these neuroscientific conceptualizations of the brain, which see plasticity as flexibility analogous to the ideal worker. Flexibility denotes the ability to adapt and comply with imposed tasks or demands, which may lead to exploitation, in contrast to fundamental plasticity. It limits agency and autonomy by reducing the capacity to affirm and construct one's forms. Malabou contends that natural plasticity has the transformative and creative potential that flexibility lacks.

Malabou looks at cases of brain traumas or neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's disease, cranial trauma, tumors, and strokes, to further explore the idea of negative plasticity. These neuropathological situations might cause identity to shift dramatically and suddenly. A rapid change might occur instead of a gradual metamorphosis or logical progression, making a person completely different and unrecognizable to their loved ones. These changes can involve adjustments to personality, feelings, memories, or even the lack of feelings. Malabou argues that these instances show how the plastic brain is not only capable of significant and disorienting changes that result in the genesis of a completely new self but also changes that are linear.

The traditional view of plasticity as being only advantageous and developmental is called into question by Malabou's investigation into negative plasticity. She stresses how it can erase and reshape old forms, causing significant changes, and emphasizes the necessity to recognize and research both plasticity's positive and negative elements. Deviations and confusions in the actions that make the changes in a 'being' result from destructive plasticity. Destructive plasticity includes a balanced emotional state of mind, neutrality, absence, and coldness. Spinoza looks forward to visualizing the presence of a transformative power that does not have any possibility of reincorporating into the string of fate, a life, or a real thought (Malabou OA 37).

4.1.3.2. The Buried Giant

We should acknowledge the role of destructive plasticity to radicalize the destruction of prejudice or to crush it once more. The acknowledgment leads us to understand that there is a power of total eradication of a being, an essential aloofness which is not only the fate of cerebral injuries, paranoia, and schizophrenia, but there is always a symbol of a law of the identity that is always on the belief of discarding of its

self (OA 37). The narrator of *The Buried Giant* unveils the under-sculpted or completely sculpted selves who had been treated terribly by life and were experiencing a fissure from their past in a village. The past was a no-go area for them. The narrator confides, “You may wonder why Axl did not turn to his fellow villagers for assistance in recalling the past, but this was not as easy as you might suppose...For in this community the past was rarely discussed...I mean that it had somehow faded into a mist as dense as that which hung over the marshes” (B.G. 7).

Beatrice tries to make her husband recall the arrival of a strange woman in their area a few months ago. However, he doubts in such a convincing way that the readers get perturbed about whose memory is to be questioned. “It simply did not occur to these villagers to think about the past — even the recent one. Yet now this same woman was no longer to be found anywhere, and no one seemed to wonder what had occurred, or even to express regret at her absence [...]Must have been a long time ago,” he had said. “Neither have I any memory of such a woman,” (Ishiguro BG 8). Here is an interesting thing; the novel’s characters know that a mist of forgetfulness invades them. They are in the phase of metamorphosis; they are under a noticeable change but not completely changed. “...but the woman was no dream, and you’d remember her yourself if you spared a moment to think about it”, Beatrice reminds him (8).

The random but recurrent flashbacks of the memory testify that the novel’s characters had been through difficult times, but this has not yet made them cold or indifferent. They have yet to complete their transformation, their destruction, which will be the construction of something different from what is left behind. Beatrice and Axl remember many incidents from the past accurately, “There she was at our door only a month ago, a kindly soul asking if there was anything, she might bring us. Surely you remember” (8). The study of being and existence must cover this transformation

that departs from being itself. This departure is not death; this farewell happens within life. It seems that life shows indifference to life itself for its survival. All trauma survivors have this kind of indifference in their attitudes; whether the trauma is from biological or political conditions, it has the same effects.

One should consider the destructive brain plasticity as a hermeneutic instrument to comprehend the situation in the novel. The famous phrase of Joseph LeDoux tells the same thing as a person is a synapse of himself that does not only denote assimilation of the identity of the subject to the formation by constructive plasticity, but it is also recognition of identity as the prospect of its destructive cerebral plasticity (Malabou OA 37,38). The victims comprehend entirely the events or objects that activate trauma; they respond lucidly. These responses lead to a progressive and problem-solving attitude on the one hand and destructive and regressive on the other. Aleksander Luria describes the origin of trauma quite lucidly, from an enlightenment perspective, it seems obvious, perhaps even unremarkable, that political scandals are cause for indignation; that economic depressions are cause for despair; that lost wars create a sense of anger and aimlessness; that disasters in the physical environment lead to panic; that assaults on the human body lead to intense anxiety; that technological disasters create concerns, even phobias, about risk. (Luria 3)

The same happens with Axl, who is experiencing various blows of memory. After a while, Axl could no longer remember how talk of this journey had started or what it had ever meant to them: “Nevertheless, then this morning, sitting outside in the cold hour before dawn, his memory seemed partial, at least to clear, and many things had come back to him: the red-haired woman; Marta; the stranger in dark rags; other memories with which we need not concern ourselves here” (Ishiguro BG 21).

The search for their son in the novel also differs dramatically from the concept of their son's memory loss. The battle helps them restore their lost memories, while in theory, the appetite for science in Ishiguro's novel is unsanitary; however, it is the opposite of any diagnosis and cure — the trauma itself, which will show up through all positive manifestations. The darkroom without candles, where the old couple in *The Buried Giant* could hardly recognize their outlines, can be interrelated with the darkness in their minds without any recent or remote memories. The same kind of darkness was in the room of Etsuko and Mariko without the facility of electricity in *A Pale View of Hills*. *The Unconsoled* is also marked by a dark, cold, rainy, and misty environment complementing the characters' indifferent, cold, and metamorphosed selves, especially Mr. Ryder. Beatrice, the female protagonist of *The Buried Giant*, tells her husband,

However, it is our candle they have taken, and now I can hardly see your outline, Axl, though you are right beside me.... Yesterday or was it the day before, I was at the river and walking past the women, and I am sure I heard them say when they supposed I had gone out of hearing how it was a disgrace an upright couple like us having to sit in the dark each night. (BG 9-10)

Sometimes, after getting sculpted into a new form and passing through an unusual event, the self-pushes the undeniable entities in life into the arena of forgetfulness. In *The Buried Giant*, the character of Marta disappears from the main scene. Everybody tries to find the reason for her disappearance but to no avail. Finally, she is seen coming out from the mist, which may be nothing else except the sheath of forgetfulness that had been put on their minds as an after-effect of sheer trauma. The 'new' beings, the ones undergoing metamorphosis, know that what they cannot remember is lost amid forgetfulness. Marta explained the mist where she was lost: "It's what else we're not remembering. She had said this while looking away into the mist-

layered distance, but now she looked straight at him, and he could see her eyes were filled with sadness and yearning” (Ishiguro BG 20). According to Catherine Malabou, “There are some traumatic events, larger and smaller, including a small amount of terrible news, a brainless misfortune, pain and sorrow, bereavement that suddenly freeze the mental capability of a person. These events create extraordinary form, identity, and being” (Malabou OA 41).

In *The Buried Giant*, each traumatised figure possessed its subtle phenomenology. The characters of the novel have been traumatized by brain injury, alcoholism, or catastrophic political events, which are unfitting to the connective tissue which sutures life. Each figure is characterized by an odd, new subject that emerges from its destruction. Particularly fascinating is that the shift can occur from apparently a dynamic event that ultimately turns out to be real trauma in the course of a lifetime. “In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, the uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (Figley 400). As Malabou explains, the road splits, and a new, unprecedented person comes to live with the former person because of severe trauma or often because there is no excuse. Destructive plasticity is also possible with a fall from love and even in the process of ageing.

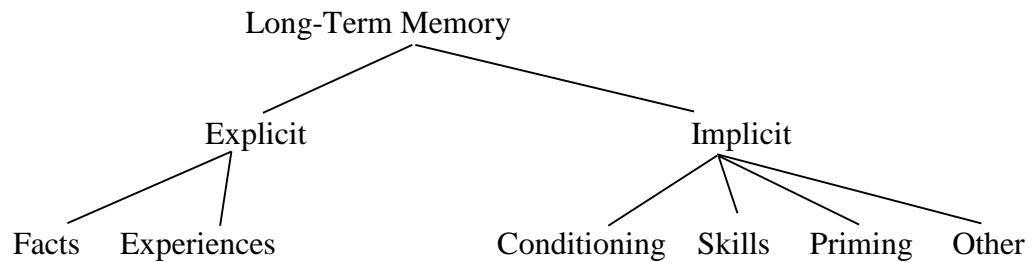
The capacity to recollect the incidents of the past consciously is what people call memory. However, psychologists refer to this faculty as explicit memory, for we retrieve it through conscious recollection and can state it in words (LeDoux 97). It is psychologically proven that implicit and explicit memories are formed and kept through specific brain systems. To be more accurate, domain-specific learning makes implicit memory, whereas explicit memory is made by domain-independent systems (98). For

the first time, German scientist Richard Semon referred to the neural representation of memory by the term engram in 1904 (LeDoux 98). H.M., in memory research, is most celebrated in the history of neurology. He remained the subject of countless publications on memory (LeDoux 100).

The early anatomists named the hippocampus, as its shape resembles a sea horse; the name was derived from the Greek word “hipokampus,” meaning “sea horse. The hippocampus was considered an integral component of the rhinencephalon, the area responsible for smell and olfaction. However, afterward, it was considered an essential component of the limbic system and was considered to play a pivotal part in emotional functions. Paul MacLean, the father of the limbic system concept, thought of the hippocampus as the position of the id, the term coined by Freud to denote sexual energy, where different concepts could get jumbled up. MacLean positioned the id in the hippocampus, for he opined that the primeval design of this edifice could be the key to the link between the rational and emotional brain. Nevertheless, this notion was modified by the mid-twentieth century, when studies conducted on patients, including H.M., proved the essential involvement of hippocampus memory—a cognitive phenomenon of the brain (LeDoux 100-1).

Underlying the memory phenomena of the hippocampus versus other brain systems, declarative memory was distinguished from procedural memory in the first half of the 1980s by Larry Squire and Neal Cohen. They assumed the hippocampus mediates between other brain systems and memory. The word procedural memory was utilized earlier because, during that time, severely amnesic patients could still execute skills that might be acquired as principles or procedures. With the recovery of more amnesic patients with damaged hippocampus, it became apparent that some involved procedures, but others did not, and therefore, all memories were not of the same kind.

A new name, non-declarative memory, was given to procedural memory. Dan Schacter's suggested terms: explicit and implicit memory, corresponding to declarative and non-declarative memory (LeDoux 102-3).



Synaptic routes help the hippocampus play a role in memory, similar to their function in other parts of the brain. They carry information to the hippocampus, make progress in the specific structure, and carry the result to marked areas. Much knowledge about the hippocampus's anatomy is available, but we will only be confined to exploring salient features (LeDoux 103).

The data from the outer world reaches the neo-cortex in the form of signals through sensory neurons, where the sensory representations of events and objects are produced. Whatever is collected in the neocortical sensory system is put together in the rhinal cortical area called the para-hippocampal region. All the information is integrated into this region before shipping it to the proper hippocampal area.

Retrograde and Anterograde are the two types of Amnesia: The former is the inability to remember and recall the events before the shock or surgery; in the latter type, the victim becomes unable to form new memories (LeDoux 105-6). A French psychologist, Théodule Ribot, discovered Ribot's law, which states that recent memories are more affected by amnesia than remote memories (LeDoux 106). The continuous influence of retrograde amnesia takes place due to the ever-changing

function of the hippocampus—it plays its part in memory storage at early stages, but gradually it declines.

The question arises: what is the reason that the brain follows this course? Why are memories itinerant? (LeDoux 106). According to several researchers, the cortical systems—which also processed the stimulus initially—store explicit memories, and the hippocampus directs that storage process. For instance, a memory of the pictorial scene is created through the transformation of conception from the visual cortex to the para-hippocampal cortical areas, which are further transferred to the hippocampal circuits. In response, para-hippocampal areas send the conception of a pictorial scene back to the visual cortex. Consequently, the memory is stored utilizing synaptic changes that come off in the hippocampus. On the relapse of the stimulus situation, the hippocampus reinstates the sequence of cortical activation that took place during the original experience. Every reinstatement slightly alters cortical synapses, for it depends on the hippocampus; any dent to the hippocampus stirs new memories but does not affect old ones, which already have roots in the cortex. Old memories are the outcome of buildups of synaptic alterations in the cortex due to passive restorations of the memory. The continuous change in the cortex thwarts the attainment of current knowledge from meddling with previous cortical memories.

Consequently, the cortical image becomes autonomous, and comes the point where the memory also stands independent from the hippocampus (LeDoux 107). Defining hippocampal memory became plain in human beings. The hippocampus came into play when consciousness was to be recovered (LeDoux 110).

The characters in *The Buried Giant* keep trying to enlighten the darkness of the split from the past using different means. They try to take life head-on: “This is ours, Axl! We’ll not sit in darkness any longer. Take it quickly, husband; it’s ours!” (Ishiguro

23). When Beatrice and her husband are told that their council had denied them the use of candles, "I can see for myself its true, Mistress Beatrice," the pastor says. "Now you'll not have forgotten the council's edict that you and your husband will not be permitted candles in your chamber" (24). They object to how they could spend night after night in darkness. "We've neither of us ever tumbled a candle in our lives, sir. We will not sit night after night in darkness" (24).

What should be the way forward? What can be the way outward when there is no place outside or elsewhere? Sigmund Freud precisely used all these terms to define the drive that weary inspiration that cannot find its release outside the consciousness and that, as he says in his *Instincts and their Vicissitudes*, decides that "no actions of flight avail against them" (Freud 119). The problem here is how to eradicate the powerful force of the drive. Freud says, "What follows is an attempt at flight" (155). Transience and persistence of memory have become inseparable episodes in the lives of this novel's characters: They attempt flight but feel their feet fixed on the ground of reality, which turns this flight into a failure.

Axl had let her talk on, listening with only half his mind as he walked because he had become more aware of something at the far edge of his memory: a stormy night, a bitter hurt, a loneliness opening before him like unfathomed waters. Could it have been he, not Beatrice, standing alone in their chamber, unable to sleep, a small candle lit before him? "What became of our son, princess?" he asked suddenly, feeling her hand tighten on his. "Does he wait for us in his village? Or will we search this country for a year and still not find him?" "It's a thought came to me too, but I was afraid to think it aloud. (BG 322-3).

There is only one possible way to escape from the incredible agony and turmoil of partially returning memory: the construction of a type of flight. In other words, it is

a formation of a type of identity that can flee itself from the impossibility of flight itself. This rejected and deserted identity cannot reflect itself, define its transformation, or realize its change. This alterity is a kind of salvation, a strange redemption. On the contrary, the escaped self, forged by the destructive alterity, flights itself at first. It does not know any redemption and salvation for itself. The transformed identity does not have anybody, no bark, or any offspring; it is not recognizable ever (Malabou OA 12). The identity of a being cannot be altered without being affected. This conspicuous surveillance broadens new ways for neurobiology if we take into consideration the basic principle of emotion in intellectual life, as the soul and body of a complex being.

Damasio's hypothesis is "emotional signals," also called "somatic markers" in some brainy wounds. When the marker is removed, the logic loses the connection between life and the marker, which is an aspiration to endure. This energy coexists exactly with the endeavor through which everything tries to persist in its existence (Spinoza *Ethics*209). The Somatic-Marker hypothesis, also known as Emotional Signals Hypothesis, details the condition of patients whose brain is damaged in the prefrontal region, specifically the medial and ventral sectors. This damage is either due to a tumor, injury, or stroke. This abnormality in the brain structure affects decision power in situation of conflict and risk; in the same situations, the ability to emotionally resonate reduces to a great extent (Damasio 41-2). At a similar juncture of *The Buried Giant*, Axl tries to connect logic and reality to his past but it proves to be a futile attempt, "It is nothing, princess. It is just this ruin here. For a moment, it was as if I were the one remembering things here" (47). He further states, "I do not know, princess. When the man speaks of wars and burning houses, it is almost as if something comes back to me. It must be from the days before I knew you" (Ishiguro BG 47-8).

Constructive plasticity lacks in defining and realizing this transformation process, while destructive plasticity defines and elaborates its processes. Plasticity is a transformation without a place for escape, fleeing, or transcendence. The only thing that can exist here is being other than the self. Only the heart of the former self remains that sometimes beats in the dark and sheds a few tears; nothing is left besides (Malabou OA 11-2). Axl and Beatrice were no more themselves. Collective trauma had made them forget their past, assuming novel subjectivities,

However, she spoke about how this land had become cursed with a mist of forgetfulness, a thing we have remarked on often enough. And then she asked me: “How will you and your husband prove your love for each other when you cannot remember the past you have shared? “However, Axl, we cannot even remember those days. Or any of the years between. We do not remember our fierce quarrels or the small moments we enjoyed and treasured. We do not remember our son or why he is away from us” Without our memories, there is nothing for it but for our love to fade and die. (Ishiguro BG 51)

The identity of a being cannot be altered without being affected. This conspicuous surveillance broadens new ways for neurobiology if we take into consideration the basic principle of emotion in intellectual life, as the soul and body form a complex being. In *The Buried Giant*, Beatrice fears memory loss is unseen but has predictable repercussions. Beatrice tells Axl that they might lose each other forever. They had to reply to the boatman’s questions accurately to testify to their pure and true love bond. Because of the mist of memory loss, which was quite possibly a post-traumatic stress disorder, she feared that they would not be able to pass the test and consequently lose each other. The question is; what is post-traumatic stress disorder?

“—What happened?”

—Happened?

—Yes.

—I did not die.

(“The Pawnbroker” 11)

In the current years, neurobiology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis have oriented to and probed into the consequences of the role of external agencies in psychic maladies. This learning has given ample space to a new field of study and research that is PTSD: post-traumatic stress disorder, which describes a series of or a single devastating experience of unexpected or shattering events, the response to which occurs in unrestrained, repeating visits of hallucinations accompanied by some unpleasant reactions (Caruth *Unclaimed* 57).

It is generally believed; that post-traumatic stress disorder reflects itself by taking over the driving seat of the mind, neurobiologically and physically, under the impact of an unpleasant happening of the past that has made its way to the present. As such, PTSD seems to provide the most direct link between the psyche and external violence. It is “the most destructive psychic disorder” that establishes a relationship between external violence and the psyche. (Caruth 56). Freud is of the view that “trauma is not simply an effect of destruction but also, fundamentally, an enigma of survival” (57).

Trauma establishes a paradoxical relationship between survival and destructiveness. The complexity and the centrality of trauma in the 20th century were first most deeply studied and expressed in two seminal works by Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Moses and Monotheism*. These two visionary works came to the surface in the wake of world war. Historical violence and trauma showed threads of connections between them. Caruth opines, “These two works, read together, represent

Freud's formulation of trauma as a theory of the peculiar incomprehensibility of human survival" (58).

The theory of individual trauma expounded by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure principle* foregrounded in the scenario of the trauma resulting from childhood maladjustments. The concept of historical trauma in his work *Moses and Monotheism* presents the complexity of the dilemma of survival as experienced by human beings. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, with the revelation of Freud's study of a psychic ailment that reflects the overwhelming and unavoidable burden of historical occasions on the human psyche. Confronted by the unusual manifestation of what was named the war neuroses in the context of World War I, a pathological condition emerged before Freud in the form of nightmares and repetitive haunting by battlefield events. Freud compares the symptoms of war neurosis with that of accident neurosis (57-9).

Freud also introduces another element through comparison of any other accident and war that gives additional vitality to the question of survival. It is not a simple event that becomes a reason for traumatic neurosis but specifically, according to Freud, as quoted by Caruth, "severe mechanical concussions, railway disasters and other accidents involving a risk to life" (60). What Freud observes about traumatic neurosis is that it is not a consequence of a horrible but rather a bewildering and weird survival experience. The flashbacks and dreams of the traumatized capture the attention of Freud because they witness the survival of the one that outstrips the very consciousness and assertions of those who endure (60). Freud suggests that the beginning of the traumatic drive is not marked by "the traumatic imposition of death but rather the traumatic "awakening" to life" (65). Freud says life is awakening to death, for which the enduring is unprepared. The drive is specifically the event of having traveled beyond the line of

death without even knowing it and failing to arrive at the moment of its identifiable moment of living (65).

The notion of trauma is an enigma that establishes the relation of the psyche to reality. Freud suggests, “The repetitions of the traumatic event—which remain unavailable to consciousness but repeatedly intrude on sight—thus suggest a larger relation to the event that extends beyond what can simply be seen or what can be known and is inextricably tied up with the belatedness and incomprehensibility that remain at the heart of this repetitive seeing” (91-2). Beatrice does not know that the transience of memory is as big a blessing as its perseverance. “The day I spoke with her by the old thorn,” Beatrice continued, “the strange woman warned me to waste no more time. She said we had to do all we could to remember what we had shared, the good and the bad. Furthermore, now that boatman, when we were leaving, gave the same answer I expected and feared” (50).

A terrified Beatrice asks, “What chance do we have, Axl, the way we are now? If someone like that asked of us our most treasured memories? Axl, I am petrified (Ishiguro BG 51-2). Axl consoles Beatrice that one day they will regain their full memory, “There, princess, there is nothing to fear. Our memories are not gone forever, just mislaid somewhere on account of this wretched mist. We will find them again, one by one, if necessary. Isn’t that why we are on this journey? Once our son stands before us, many things will start coming back” (52). They are aware of their memory loss and also know the reason behind their situation, which is collective trauma: “It is the same in our own country, sir,” Axl said. “My wife and I have witnessed many incidents of such forgetfulness among our neighbors” (BG 67). Still, Axl claims that he retains some shards of the memory that make him rationalize his situation a little better than others, “And is it because I am old, or that I am a Briton living here among Saxons, that I am

often left alone holding some memory when all around me have let it slip?” (Ishiguro BG 67).

However, consciousness of a problem does not automatically promise its solution or remedy. Axl goes on to say, “I only meant knowing its cause would not make it go away, here or in our own country” (BG 69). Memory loss turns, sometimes, into a blessing that makes the self-forget the remotely lived sufferings: “But how can this be, Ivor?” Beatrice asked. “Is it the mist’s work again that they have lost all memory of the horrors the child so lately suffered?” (BG 85). They cherish the pleasing memories, “It was a memory, a simple one, but I was pleased enough with it. Oh, Axl! What memory was that?” (BG 87).

The memory brings the past events slowly and gradually to the characters at their mercy. The couple pools up the cues in its laborious quest to recover their past: “There is something that comes back to me, but not clearly. I am thinking this was a drunken man you’re talking of (88). Axl responds, “A little drunk perhaps, I don’t know, princess. It was a day of festivities, as I say. All the same, he saw you and was amazed. Said you were the most beautiful sight he had ever seen” (BG 88). Amid such a mist of memory loss, Axl is suggesting that if a flashback visits them, they should keep it with them just like a treasure because memories are blessings, “With this mist upon us, any memory’s a precious thing and we’d best hold tight to it” (89). This strategy to hoard little memories as pieces of jigsaw puzzle to reconstruct the picture of the past is a case of applied plasticity.

This is a process of metamorphosis; they were different selves before this mist of forgetfulness prevailed over them, and they metamorphosed into new selves, completely ruptured from their chronologically past selves. They try to effect yet another metamorphosis by retrieving their past and endeavoring to forge a new identity

out of it. They are going to be different people if they succeed in rescuing their lost son. With the addition of a son to their family, they will have a sunny atmosphere in their home and might be relieved of the mist that hangs no less on their mind than on their homes. However, encountering the past is entering into an unknown territory; they might as well find him dead. It would be worse still if he was murdered or died of their negligence. Instead of bringing them closer, the discovery might tear them apart. The situation is akin to plasticity because plasticity also entails a change without a definite end in sight.

The characters seem to show that the self is constantly in a state of becoming, shaped by various factors such as biology, psychology, culture, and the environment. They contend that traumatic experiences can disrupt and fracture the self, leading to a reconfiguration and reconstruction of identity. Trauma, in this sense, becomes a catalyst for the emergence of new forms of selfhood. Similarly, Malabou and Johnston emphasize that selfhood is not a fixed or static entity but rather a dynamic process.

While the characters are aware of being plastic, they are not completely destroyed but rather meta-morphed. During this process, the characters intermittently get flashes of memory: “I cannot answer you, Mistress Beatrice, for I know not myself. I supposed by traveling beside you, the memories would awaken, but they have not yet done so” (BG 124).

For some time — ever since Arthur’s name had first been mentioned — a nagging, uneasy feeling had been troubling Axl. Now, as he listened to Wistan and the old knight talk, a fragment of memory came to him” (BG 126). The mist is a collective traumatic sheath that has covered not one or two persons but has affected the whole community: “Yet I saw on the bridge Lord Brennus’s guards seemed not to be passing their time idly, but stationed there for a purpose, and if not for the mist clouding their

minds, they might have tested you more closely” (BG 125). Erikson shows the relationship between the individual and the collective trauma:

By individual trauma, I mean a blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively . . . By collective trauma, on the other hand, I mean a blow to the essential tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people and impairs the prevailing sense of commonality. The collective trauma works slowly and insidiously into the awareness of those suffering from it, so it does not have the suddenness customarily associated with “trauma. Nevertheless, it is a form of shock all the same, a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an essential part of the self has disappeared [...] “We” no longer exist as a connected pair or linked cells in a larger communal body.” (Erikson 137)

By juxtaposing Malabou's idea of destructive plasticity with Erikson's account of individual and collective trauma, we can see how trauma can modify and shatter selfhood at personal and communal levels. Destructive plasticity's intrinsic destruction and reconfiguration processes are consistent with the significant ruptures and changes that individuals and communities go through after experiencing trauma.

It is more enigmatic, and perhaps more troubling, not to know the cause of the trauma: “Or is it the she-dragon’s breath makes him forget whatever cause he once had to fear me, yet the dread grows all the more monstrous for being unnamed?” (BG 252). The trauma-induced alterations seem to play a role in memory disturbances—depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Stress hormones harm the prefrontal cortex, and cause people to make wrong decisions when they are under stress.

Contrary to the effects of stress on the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus, intense stress appears to increase the contribution of the amygdala to fear.

Neuroplasticity helps the brain to adapt to new conditions, learn from experiences, and create new connections between neurons. However, neuroplasticity can also result in harmful modifications in the case of trauma. The creation, consolidation, and retrieval of memories are all affected significantly by traumatic situations. Traumatic experiences can sometimes cause memory problems or distortions, impacting a person's sense of personal history and continuity of self. Prefrontal cortical regions can be impacted by trauma, which can impair executive processes, self-reflection, and the capacity to weave together the past into a coherent self-narrative.

A study suggests that stress hormones play a role in the intensification of fear by stress: the amount of stress hormones is increased artificially in the bloodstream, which contains a similar impact as threatening stimulus has on fear” (LeDoux 224, 225). Panic disorder and PTSD implicate changes in the administering of threats, but both diseases have different reasons and indications. In panic-stricken patients, fear is expressed in distinct abrupt panic attacks caused by an apparent environmental provocation; it gives rise to preemptive anxiety and various degrees of escaping conduct. In panic disorder, fear does not show any relation to actual threats and primarily implicates atypical responsiveness to disturbing somatic sensations. In PTSD patients, fear is expressed in high responsiveness to provocations of an actual, fatal or distressing incident and comprises hallucinations and elevated alarming response. Therefore, various neural systems must be changed in these patients (LeDoux 294).

Awareness that one is affected by post-trauma memory loss proves that they have not yet touched the stage of destructive plasticity where even the sense of loss is

gone. Exhaustion of possibilities is a starting point for destructive plasticity. It starts when all possible genius leaves and when adulthood erases childhood; uniformity is shattered, the spirit of kinship unity disappears, companionship is broken, and associations are destroyed in the coldness of this sterile life. The negative possibility remains suspended between becoming real and unreal; it sustains its negativity until it is shattered. The happiness of Beatrice on knowing the cause of the mist that brought memory loss to her and her whole community excited her as the cause of a problem embodies its remedy in it. Eradication of the cause can bring a solution to the problem. The excitement is palpable: “Beatrice had turned to him in excitement, exclaiming, “Axl, do you hear that? The she-dragon is the cause of the mist!” (BG 178). Furthermore, why was Beatrice so happy about this revelation? Axl’s ruminations hold the key, “Beatrice, he knew, feared the boatman’s questions, harder to answer than Father Jones’s, and that was why she had been so pleased to learn the cause of the mist” (BG 181).

Although Ishiguro does not refer to any specific disaster that led to the traumatic disposition of not only the characters but the atmosphere that has muffled the characters yet the rattle of bones and skulls in the dark alley Beatrice and Axl visit give testimony of colossal devastation in the past that especially targeted babies: “What are all these skulls, sir?” Beatrice suddenly asked the knight. “Why so many? Can they all have belonged to babies? Some are surely small enough to fit in your palm” (BG 199).

Sometimes, individual components within psyche start living autonomously and dissolve the whole unit without complete annihilation, leading to a sense of madness. For example, if a writer does not remember his own works, even does not remember himself, they are no longer living without being dead as far as their previous self is concerned. Their nature changes into another being that does not resemble the previous

persona. The point here is that he does not say that his apparent look is changed, but he believes that his nature is changed, which is his form, being, and existence (Malabou OA 34).

Memory loss carved Axl into a new persona who gets back to his original in the form of flashbacks while going through a metamorphosis. Memory loss, particularly in neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's, can cause significant changes in a person's personality, behavior, and sense of self, according to research by Johnston and Malabou. Physiological changes in the brain accompany changes in selfhood, including possible synaptic modifications. During this procedure, synapses previously linked to specific memories, actions, or facets of identity may be pruned or removed. The person may experience a change in their sense of self as a result and display new cognitive and behavioral habits. During this procedure, synapses previously linked to specific memories, actions, or facets of identity may be pruned or removed. The person may experience a change in their sense of self as a result and display new cognitive and behavioral habits.

“The mist hangs heavily across my past,” Axl said. “Yet lately, I find myself reminded of some task, and one of gravity, with which I was once entrusted. Was it a law, a great law, to bring all men closer to God? Your presence, and your talk of Arthur, stirs long-faded thoughts, Sir Gawain” (BG 206). Axl’s discussion with Sir Gawain reveals that Axl and Sir Gawain might as well be the child murderers submitting to the orders of King Arthur. Another woman refers to the same tragic incident and Axl wonders, “Can it be this woman now rides in my saddle would say as much if she could hear my thoughts? She talked of slaughtered babes down in that foul-aired tunnel, even as I delivered her from the monks’ black plans” (BG 300).

Luis Buñuel says, “Life without memory is no life at all... Our memory is our coherence, reason, feeling, and even our actions. Without it, we are nothing (12). Indeed, memory determines what we are. Here, it is mandatory to note that memory is way more colossal than the capacity to recall consciously. A debilitating impairment to the hippocampus resulting in damage to explicit memory could not abolish personality. For instance, the hippocampus and its related area are first damaged in Alzheimer’s disease. Even in acute memory loss, the victim, early on some unconscious storehouse of memory, and continues to behave in the semblance of the same person as he was; some of his tics and traits are unchanged. Personality starts crumbling as soon as the disease corrodes other brain parts—which work implicitly. It should always be kept in mind that memories are spread across the brain’s systems, and they are not always consciously accessible. Life is an ever-changing phenomenon, and the human brain is devised to record it as it creates memories employing continuous learning. The aspects of learning and memory ascribe to who we are as an inimitable individual.

Nevertheless, what are the neural changes which create learning and memory? Modern neuroscientists argue in favor of modifying synaptic connectivity, which triggers learning, and memory is the longstanding equilibrium and stability of these changes. How does experience, then, actually change synapses, and what causes the changes to last? (LeDoux 134).

Sigmund Freud opined during his medical research, “The assistances occurring between neurons represent memory” (qtd. In LeDoux 135). Konarski used the term plasticity to describe the ability of neurons to be altered by experience and proposed a theory of synaptic plasticity not too different from Hebb’s. Moreover, by the early 1950s, several studies had successfully shown that repeated delivery of a brief electrical stimulus to a nerve pathway could alter synaptic transmission in that pathway—could,

in other words, produce synaptic plasticity” (LeDoux 137). Like Hebb, Konarski championed the synaptic plasticity theory, which describes that experience modifies the neuron.

One must be confronted with the essential question of whether this theoretical neuroscience possesses any real-world application. Simply, it would incorporate this science to advance enduring memory and, more importantly, to avert memory loss relating to age specifically (LeDoux 172). Synaptic interfaces in and among different systems of the brain construct who you are. We can acquire the impartial foundation of the self as much as we know of the synaptic functions of memory (LeDoux 173). The importance of the prefrontal cortex in human consciousness demands its role in explicit memory—our consciously accessible memory. Certainly, the recapitulation of long-term memory—including episodic one—is unsettled by the injury to the human prefrontal cortex (LeDoux 192).

It is believed that aspects like location, color, motion, and shape must be fastened together to form an object and processed, as stimuli, by specialized cortical areas to construct the perception of the whole object. Though these aspects can be identified separately, they are perceived as coherent parts of the object instead of separate parts. The binding process in mind, which integrates perceptions of various aspects from the respective specialized cortical areas, plays a pivotal role (LeDoux 193).

The characters are afraid of being annihilated from the minds one another and of being alienated from each other’s selves, which is why they keep stressing that they should keep their memories alive: “Do not forget me, Axl. “Forget you? Why would I ever forget you, princess?” “This mist makes us forget so much. Why should it not make us forget each other? Axl, do not leave me here. Do not forget me” (BG 261).

Each manual of psychiatric disease diagnosis expands the range of trauma-affected patients. Earlier trauma was attributed to only those who were directly affected. However, now secondary victim status includes all those who witnessed the event, bystanders, rescue workers, and relatives who immediately got affected by the news of the death or injury, expanding the radius to the relatives who just get the news of death or injury. Collectives, including survivors, political activists, ethnic, religious, regional groups, or national groups, gather around re-experiencing the wounded-ness. Collective Trauma in *The Buried Giant* has made parents forget their children,

So please say you will help us, for we are just poor children forgotten by our parents! Will you take that goat there, the only one left to us now, and go with it up that path to the giant's cairn? It is an easy walk, sir, less than half a day there and back, and I would do it myself but cannot leave these young ones alone. (BG 290)

4.1.3.3. A Pale View of Hills

A person's autobiography, a timeline of incidents delineating their life's journey, is their life story. Every life has a chronology of its own. The protagonist of *A Pale View of Hills* is Etsuko, a Japanese woman who now resides in England and thinks back on her childhood in Nagasaki and her connection with her eldest daughter, Keiko. As the story is told in a non-linear approach, Etsuko reflects on her life and the occasions surrounding her friendship with a strange woman named Sachiko.

The narrative examines issues like memory loss, and how conflict affects people personally. Etsuko's memories transport the reader to post-World War II Japan, particularly Nagasaki, and the events that followed the atomic bombs. The work explores the complicated relationships between mothers and daughters, cultural identity, and the aftereffects of tragedy from Etsuko's point of view.

We start with the Characters of *A Pale View of Hills* when their life had already ended owing to the nuclear bomb blast at Nagasaki and Hiroshima in Japan. “I know it was a terrible thing that happened here in Nagasaki,” she said. “But it was terrible in Tokyo too. Week after week, it went on; it was awful. Towards the end, we lived in tunnels and derelict buildings, and there was nothing but rubble. Everyone who lived in Tokyo saw unpleasant things” (71). Furthermore, Mariko did too. The narrator reflects on his experiences, “Moreover, now each knows that in the act of survival, he lived a dozen lives and saw more death than he ever thought he would see. At the same time, none of them knew anything (72).

Catherine Malabou puts forward the phenomenon of plasticity as the possibility of being changed or transformed. According to Freud, one can recognize that plasticity demonstrates the capacity of being to be something that can be broken or shattered without entirely vanishing (48). This transformation of identity offers a crucial escape to being and provides an alternative to total annihilation. The arrival of Sachiko from Tokyo at Nagasaki records a weird reaction from the locals. The cultural distance makes him look unfriendly, and even hostile to the local populace: “One was explaining to her companion how she had spoken to the woman that morning and had received a dear snub. Her companion agreed the newcomer seemed unfriendly — proud probably” (12-3). The narrator Etsuko herself, was a victim of the World War II; she jotted down her observation about the surrounding, “there were those who had suffered, those with sad and terrible memories. She did not intend to prove unfriendly, but “at that point in my life, I still wished to be left alone” (13).

The “point in [her] life is crucial because she seems to have aged beyond her years as a result of her traumatic experiences: “Sachiko was a woman of thirty or so but possibly her youthful figure had been deceiving, for she had the face of an older person”

(15). Malabou resolves the dilemma of pre-age aging in *Ontology of an Accident* as old age suddenly comes with no pre-warnings when trauma occurs in life. It looks like it has transformed us into an unfamiliar being so suddenly that it feels like there has been no childhood at all. This concept of abrupt aging needs to be handled differently than what psychoanalysis proposes (49). Trauma-induced aging is a break rather than a continuation. She explains that another possibility of being old is getting aged before time because of ontological catastrophe. Sometimes, youth is suddenly eclipsed before the time and forces a person to follow an unthought-of, irregular, and indefinite path. As a case in point, Malabou quotes Marguerite Duras. Duras explains in *The Lover* that she feels like she has become an “aged girl,” and this aging does not come with the years but by an accident which is a form of destructive plasticity (Duras *The Lover* 7). She says that she is too late in her life as between the age of eighteen and twenty-five, her identity has started to hold a new bearing.

She believes that she is old at only eighteen. Everyone has different possibilities that can differ from her age fellows in a certain age group. There have been many cases where some incidents accelerate the passing of the years for a specific person (Duras 7-8). Duras thinks that she had become an alcoholic as soon as she started to drink. It is a strange concurrence as the starting and becoming coincide as she says, “as soon as I began / I became” (16). If one dies before the real death comes biologically, one absconds oneself from the rest of the family. It looks terrifying to bid farewells to loved ones forever when real-time has not come yet, and it happens when one loses one’s sense of self as a result of dementia or other neurological diseases.

For some people, actual death is not biological, but they live as living dead and leave their subjectivity before time. One can see these forms in asylums, hospices for older people, emergency shelters, and old homes. Boris Cyrulnik has analyzed in his *Un*

merveilleux Malheur the conditions of the children abused and cast off. They are forced to live in abject conditions. He observes that this leads to a traumatic state of mind for the children concerned and their psychomotor domain cannot be adequately nourished.

These children become deserted and left in seclusion, living insensibly away from the rest of the world. This indifference and coldness for the abandoned children lead to the crux of destructive plasticity; this destructive power of modification is without any redemption. The indifference of the world leaves these children strangely numb. These neurological patients who get new identities have one thing in common, both suffer to various degrees from the assault of emotions. Most traumatic experiences incite this sort of conduct. The problem is to think about the absence of subjectivity, the separation of the person who has become an ontological expatriate with no association, neither genitive nor derivative (OA 23-4).

Mariko is the most severely affected of all the trauma-stricken characters of *A Pale View of Hills*. Her mother says, “Things were complicated when Mariko was born [...], Etsuko, no one knew what a war was really like” (75). Unresponsiveness underlies Etsuko’s interactions with Mariko. Etsuko records some of her observations regarding Mariko, “She looked up, not smiling, to where I stood at the top of the muddy slope” (16). “Mariko continued to watch me carefully. But then as she continued to stare up at me” (17). “The little girl showed no signs of recognition” (18). “Mariko was studying her fingers” (26). When Mrs. Fujiwara warns her, “And Mariko-San please, you’re never to talk to customers like that...Mariko went on studying her hands...Mariko gave no sign of having heard” (26). “We both glanced over to Mariko’s table; the child was still looking down at her hands. ...Etsuko, but you see, my daughter doesn’t seem to share my sense of humor” (27). She asked quietly: “Is it true what Mrs.

Fujiwara told me?” (27). “She says you were being rude to customers again. Is that true?” (27). “Mariko still gave no response” (27).

All these observations depict her mental condition and her experience of existence. Memory, one realizes, can be unreliable; often, it is heavily colored by the circumstances one remembers, and no doubt this applies to the recollections gathered here. She tries to differentiate between memory and day-dream but finds them inextricably mingled with each other. She ruminates on seemingly a memory flashback that she experienced: “it was a premonition one experienced that afternoon, that the unpleasant image which entered my thoughts that day was something altogether different — something much more intense and vivid — than the numerous day-dreams which drift through one’s imagination during such long and empty hours” (156). The flashback creates ripples and disturbs the apparently smug surface of her family life.

Their memories do not let them come close to one another. The shadows linger on, and their estrangement increases. They live like strangers unless the mist between them evaporates with a new memory wave. She can feel the unease in the atmosphere: “He can hear, you see. He can hear how much quieter the house is. The other morning, I found him awake, and he said it reminded him of a tomb. Just like a tomb, he said. It would do my father much good to have them back again. Perhaps she will come back for his sake” (161). Sachiko pities the lot of the couple as the symptoms of unresolved trauma are apparent to her. She reflects, “It is a shame that a pregnant girl and her husband spend their Sundays thinking about the dead” (25).

Damasio has studied some pathological cases which do not have any resemblance to madness. He says the cerebral injury is not madness but somewhat local dysfunction (OA 24). According to Spinoza, there are two distinctive impacts of sorrow and joy; he calls them two opposite poles. Joy can increase the energy to act and

increase the force of the conatus, broadening its value, while sorrow, on the contrary, reduces, abolishes, and limits the power to act. In both cases, human beings and their bodies are modeled in many ways by which their power to act can be increased or reduced (qtd. in Malabou2).

The premise of the changeability of the conatus that coexists with its permanent affective diversity, with the variability of its strain, stress, and manner, gives the basis for plasticity. When the variety of affects connected to the conatus is harmed or hurt, the identity of a being is badly altered and profoundly transformed. When a person faces a trauma, the whole affective capability is hit; the person may not feel any sorrow because it is more than a feeling of sorrow. He comes into a situation where he feels apathy which is beyond joy or despair. They do not care about their existence; they become indifferent to others as well. The learning cycle and the psychological education of the infant in the clutches of trauma, as well as subsequent lifelong development, are not popular topics in fiction, but in the novel *A Pale View of Hills*, one finds the characters learning to suffer. The suicide of Keiko forces Niki back home to help her mother. After her second husband's death and the movement of her children, Etsuko is left alone. Her big house now appears to be too huge. Recent events revitalize old memories and cause her constant agitation.

The difference between stress and trauma is very dependent. Her first marriage was not a joy. It was not, however, a complete cataclysm. Nevertheless, it is commonly recognized that tension is fundamental in the learning process. Strength is a reaction to new circumstances (including new information exposure) that initiates adjustment (including new knowledge assimilation). Even if Jiro was not caring, they had pleasant moments. A little flat and a child soon to be born helped her recover from war horror and enjoy that peaceful life. Etsuko fell in love with a man from England a couple of

years later. She showed she had enough bravery to abandon her homeland and history. In an effort to forget her Japanese roots and the trauma associated with them, she persuaded her husband not to give the child a Japanese name when she bore her second daughter. Both seemed to like Niki.

Etsuko spotted a girl playing while Etsuko and Niki sat at the café. She was immersed in memories when she saw her. Her friend Sachiko, in Japan at the time, led by a love of Frank, wanted to take away Mariko's daughter, forcing the child to support living in America. Etsuko thought it was a cruel thing to do. At the end of the story, Etsuko knew she was thinking about it like this because she was doing the same thing. As previously mentioned, Malabou is one of the examples of the work of destructive plasticity in post-traumatic stress disorder. The confusion about the relationship between mental illness and non-disorder often means an unclear division between those who experience destructive plasticity and those who avoid this destiny. Ishiguro's fiction draws a trail of how different persons manage to cope with their damage and how they pursue the path that leads them to pass the stages of "self-deception, to self-denial and last to self-redemption" (Guo 2508).

An endeavor was made to remove the memory of the damage and physical harm incurred on public lives by erecting a new building on the ruins of the atomic bomb in Nagasaki. Nevertheless, the psychological and emotional traumas threw a very painful spell on survivors. Because the bomb killed more than one-quarter of the inhabitants of Nagasaki, "citizens who had lost no family members in the holocaust were as rare as stars at sunrise" (Ishikawa 6).

In *A Pale View of Hills*, Etsuko's former neighbor, Mrs. Fujiwara, who lived a happy, contented, comfortable life before the disaster the atom bomb brought with it, bears an irreparable personal loss: It left her four children and husband dead. Only she

and her eldest son could survive it. The best way she found to cope with the disaster was her intensely hectic schedule for running a small noodle café that reflects. She goes to extreme lengths to forget the pain by not finding even a single moment to think about the dead, but despite all these efforts, she discloses to Etsuko that, she at times, opens her eyes to the dawn unaware of the fact where she was. After the blast, Etsuko becomes parentless and has to be adopted by Ogata-San; she later marries his son Jiro. Like a mad girl, Etsuko plays violently at night in the early days of his stay at the Ogatas (2509).

Sachiko's daughter Mariko, a 10-year-old girl, is the most severely traumatized character in the novel. After the death of her husband, Mariko's mother had to undergo an utterly inhospitable situation at her uncle's house with a cousin who was already not in the habit of sharing her space with someone. She re-plans her life from scratch and makes up her mind to immigrate to America with her American boyfriend Frank, taking her daughter Mariko with her. Her association with Frank makes her neglectful about the state of mind of her daughter, who often complains about seeing a strange woman. When Mariko was only five years old, she beheld a young mother who was drowning her baby in Tokyo:

Mariko went running off one morning. I cannot remember why; perhaps she was upset about something. She ran out into the street, so I chased after her. It was very early; there was nobody about it. Mariko ran down an alleyway, and I followed her. There was a canal at the end, and the woman was kneeling there, up to her elbows in water. A young woman, fragile. I knew something was wrong as soon as I saw her. You see, Etsuko, she turned around and smiled at Mariko. I knew something was wrong, and Mariko must have sensed it, too, because she stopped running. At first, I thought the woman was blind; she had

that kind of look, and her eyes did not seem to see anything. She brought her arms out of the canal and showed us what she had been holding under the water.

It was a baby. I took hold of Mariko then and exited the alley. (PVH 74)

According to Sachiko, a few days after the woman committed infanticide, she committed suicide. Mariko was haunted by the image of that woman and feels being followed by her throughout their journey from Tokyo to Nagasaki. One of the most trauma theorists, Cathy Caruth's notion about a traumatized subject is relevant to Mariko's state: "To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event" (4-5). Caruth's assertion testifies to the obsession of Mariko with the image of a woman as a traumatic fit.

Sachiko's regular absence from home leaves Mariko without emotional support. Mariko falls victim to feelings of alienation and insecurity when she learns that her mother has planned to migrate to America with a man she used to call a pig. She idealizes a complete and cozy home with kittens that she loves to nurture. This very world of her own was devastated by her mother a day before their departure. Sachiko throws a box with Mariko's kittens in the river to reduce their luggage to take along on their journey. Mariko relived the moments of witnessing the Tokyo woman drowning her baby once again while she was viewing every single step of drowning the cats. Mariko runs wildly along the kitten box flowing in the river with a futile hope to rescue them, which she cannot do. It is an inauspicious start to the journey. The memory stays with Mariko. The tale of Nagasaki is enclosed within an external layer of several decades. The last story of Etsuko is set in the countryside of England. Niki, Etsuko's younger daughter's five-day stay, recalls the summer when she made friends with Mariko and her mother. Niki is there on a mission to drag Etsuko out of a fit of trauma. She fell victim to trauma when a couple of months ago, Keiko, her daughter from Jiro,

and her first husband were found dead as she had hanged herself in her apartment in Manchester. Trauma visits her in the form of nightmares, and the eerie atmosphere of Keiko's bedroom reinforces the effect. During her five-day stay, neither Niki nor Etsuko could sleep well because of nightmares. Etsuko dreams of a small girl playing in a park on the swings. These dreams are the results of revisiting the memories of Mariko, and the little girl in the dream could be the shadow of Sachiko's daughter Mariko. As Sachiko is alter-ego of Etsuko; Mariko is Keiko's alter-ego. Sigmund Freud interprets dreams as: "The conception of dream-elements tells us that they are ungenue things, substitutes for something else that is unknown to the dreamer (like the purpose of a parapraxis), substitutes for something the knowledge of which is present in the dreamer but which is inaccessible to him" (114).

The dream is an extension of something unconscious, predominantly a thing one administers to escape. Through a dream, something unconscious finds its way to the conscious mind. The overlapping images of Mariko and Keiko and their being from the same age group make it harder for both Etsuko and Sachiko to deal with the trauma. Both the girls are also somehow associated with ropes: Mariko is startled by the rope Etsuko's ankles get entangled in and Keiko had hanged herself with a rope.

In addition to that, in the very first meeting of Etsuko with Mariko, Etsuko was several months pregnant with Keiko but Mariko's indifference awakens in her "every kind of misgiving about motherhood" (44). Another time when we witness the confused identities of Sachiko/Etsuko and Mariko/Keiko is when Etsuko tries to reassure Mariko, who wants to escape to America; she promises Mariko, "In any case, if you don't like it over there, *we* can always come back [...] 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" (173, emphasis added). Here, the use of the pronoun "we" four times by Etsuko accentuates

Keiko's identification with Mariko and her identification with Sachiko. The same word might have been said to Keiko when she was brought to England, like Sachiko, who considered America the best land to educate Mariko. While bringing Keiko to England, Etsuko does not realize Keiko's feelings for a strange land. The cultural dislocation and emotional separation from her father led Keiko into a profound isolation:

For the two or three years before she finally left us, Keiko had retreated into that bedroom, shutting us out of her life. She rarely came out, although I sometimes heard her moving around the house after we had all gone to bed...She had no friends, and the rest of us were forbidden entry into her room...In the end, the rest of us grew used to her ways, and when, by some impulse, Keiko ventured down into our living room, we would all feel a great tension. (53-4)

The memory of Mariko and Sachiko makes Etsuko realize she has been utterly mistaken in taking Keiko to England for a better future. This grief and guilt capture her so strongly that she feels Keiko's room haunted. In Tony Morrison's *Beloved*, Sethe, just like Etsuko, cannot dismiss the remembrance of her departed daughter. Though Etsuko does not kill her daughter as Sethe does, she is blamed for the untimely death of Keiko. According to Anne Whitehead, in "Trauma Fiction," "if the trauma is at all susceptible to the narrative formulation, then it requires a literary form which departs from a conventional linear sequence. The eruption of one time into another is figured by Caruth as a form of possession or haunting. The ghost represents an appropriate embodiment of the disjunction of temporality, the surfacing of the past in the present" (6).

At one instance, Etsuko feels that "someone had walked past my bed and out of my room, closing the door quietly" (PVH 174); while she is standing outside Keiko's room, she hears "a small sound, some movement from within" (88); Niki also notices

some unfamiliar sounds, and she asks her mother to move to the spare room, on the fourth day, because staying in the room opposite to the room of Keiko makes her uneasy. “At the level of the individual psyche, the ghost of Keiko reworks the unresolved trauma of the past in Etsuko, not only for the recent death of Keiko but also for the painful experiences decades back in Nagasaki” (Guo 2510).

4.1.4 Conclusion

The novels *The Unconsoled*, *The Buried Giant*, and *A Pale View of Hills* are a satire on creativity and meditation between identity, memory, and expectation. The characters such as Mr. Ryder, Axl and Beatrice, and Etsuko, Mariko, Keiko, and Sachiko deepen their relationships with the people they meet. They need more self-awareness, which they arrive at through the course of their respective stories. The theory reflects on those who suffer from destructive plasticity, that is, those that are traumatized without a remedy, as are all the characters mentioned above. All the trauma-afflicted and, resultantly, destructed characters are readily distinguishable from those considered normal and healthy because they are characterized during their destruction. The stories of the novels reflect the lives of the characters’ lives not as unforeseen failures but rather as deterioration stemming from traumatic experiences.

The constant growth in age and contact with fellow citizens change the very nature of their thoughts and habits of thinking. The resultant change in character is a testimony to the fact that the self is not static; it is plastic. The theory of plasticity stands witness to such destruction of the selves, which embody the construction of the new selves. Sometimes, constructing new selves feels like a blessing that allows injured ones to their life afresh. Applied plasticity, which is an offshoot of the theory of plasticity, can do wonders in transforming the personality and the quality of life for human beings.

It always keeps the venues of constructive destruction or a somewhat better open for the afflicted and traumatized souls.

4.2 Plastic Possibilities

4.2.1 Introduction

My mind leads me to speak now of forms changed

into new bodies:

O gods above, inspire this undertaking (which

you've changed as well)

and guide my poem in its epic sweep

from the world's beginning to the present day.

—Ovid, *Metamorphoses I*, 1–4

The Heidegger change is an apparatus that undertakes transformations (Wandlungen), changes (Wandeln), and metamorphoses (Verwandlungen). This phenomenon maneuvers the thoughts as a transformer (Wandler), a gadget of adjustable construction that can operate as a molded iron into steel, “The Heidegger change carries out conversions of ontological, symbolic, and existential regimes: the mutation of metaphysics, the metamorphosis of man, the metamorphosis of God, the change of language, the transformation of the gaze, and even the molting of Heidegger himself. (*The Heidegger Change*1) Man is what his self is, and self is what and how the environment shapes it. Self is permanently impermanent. It is subjected to drastic changes owing to neural disasters. A neurological accident is hopeless, unpredictable, and can never be accommodated to the existing structures of self. It is an accident that the psyche cannot integrate, that cannot make sense for it, and that cannot form a moment of personal history. This purely destructive event provokes the total

disappearance of a psychic formation, a brain region, or affects (Johnston and Malabou 62).

4.2.2 Change Related to Mental Derangement

The mental and behavioral transformation is also caused by trauma resulting in a complete mental derailment, caused by some accidents, tragedy, torture, or shock. The transformation linked with these causes is unintentional. It, however, has two results, namely aggression, and introversion. This is, in fact, an unintentional break up with the past, present, and future. If the transformation takes place, it will let an individual remain a robust part of the world around him.

This unintentional detachment can be compared with a purely intentional detachment from the world. The individual with this behavior intentionally ignores or distances himself from what is painful. For this purpose, he tends to opt for better alternatives or strives to divert his attention from discomfort by blocking the mental path that leads to thinking or visualizing the troubling experiences, happenings, persons, sights, or places. This kind of detachment is what we call “escapism. An escapist indulges in activities meant to erase painful memories, even temporarily. Many comedians exemplify this escapism, trying to hide tears behind a cover of laugh and joviality. More than personal transformation, escapism contributes to the transformation of the façade from painful to joyful.

The exploration of trauma and its psychological consequences has been a recurring theme in literature throughout history. Writers have delved into the human psyche, depicting characters who undergo profound transformations as a result of traumatic experiences. These literary portrayals offer insights into the complex interplay between trauma, mental stability, and the disintegration of selfhood. By examining notable works such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, as well as

Federico Garcia Lorca's play *The House of Bernarda Alba*, we can gain a deeper understanding of how trauma can shatter one's psychological well-being and lead to the unraveling of the human mind. These literary examples serve as poignant reminders of the fragile nature of the human psyche and the enduring impact of traumatic events on individual lives.

Literature provides various examples of transformation resulting from traumas. In the renowned Shakespearean tragedy *Hamlet*, Ophelia, the heroin, suffers an intense trauma and dies after getting drowned. Caught between the duties of the daughter, sister, and beloved, she faces a painful dilemma. Losing the love after being compelled by her father and brother and then losing the father after his death throws her toward a complete mental disorder. Her decision to break up relations with Hamlet after being warned by her father and brother annoys Hamlet. He accuses her of faithlessness, frailty, and adultery. That was sufficient to push her toward trauma. The second shock comes when her father, Polonius, is killed by Hamlet for Polonius's act of overhearing Hamlet's conversation with his mother as a spy. Two nerve-shattering experiences do not let Ophelia remain a mentally stable girl. Nothing remains in her life except confused utterances; she sings rhymes based on her plight and painful experiences and ultimately dies by drowning(Shakespeare124)

Shakespeare portrays psychological disorder even more powerfully in his tragedy *Macbeth*. Lady Macbeth, haunted by her guilt, loses her mental stability and ultimately turns mad. She is initially shown as a strong woman dictating things to her husband. To execute her plan of killing King Duncan for her husband's kingship, she continuously provokes him to kill Duncan. She points out the lack of courage in her husband and her strength to do whatever is required to make the dream come true. However, killing

Duncan, Macduff, and Banquo kick start an agonizing sense of guilt. The whole strength claimed by her turns into an ever-teasing fear. She starts imagining hell.

Her sleepwalking is a powerful indicator of her movement toward a psychological disorder resulting from the prick of her conscience and guilt-ridden mind. She visualizes nothing, but Duncan, Lady Macduff, and Banquo in her sleepwalk. She tries to wash away the imaginary blood from her hands “Out damned spots! Out, I say” (Act V, Scene I, Line 37). “All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten the little hand” (Act V, Scene I, Lines 53-54). She cries in agony and loses grip on her mind. She is afraid of the darkness because the crime was committed in the darkness. Her psychological disorder reaches its highest point when she unconsciously confesses before her doctor, “Who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?” (Act V, Scene I, Lines 41, 42). Her psychological derailment can be understood more clearly when Macbeth asks the doctor, “Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow, Rage out the written trouble of the brain” (Act V, Scene III, Line 51, 52). Lady Macbeth’s grip over her mind turns out to be too fragile to let her remain even slightly sane. Her madness ultimately results in her death by suicide.

The House of Bernarda Alba, a play by Federico Garcia Lorca, highlights dementia through an eighty-year-old woman Maria Josefa. The play revolves around Bernarda Alba and her daughters, who are constant victims of their mother’s dictatorial attitude. The daughters experience the worst sexual suppression because of being forbidden relentlessly to explore the world beyond the walls of the house. More importantly, any relation with men is an unpardonable crime declared by Bernarda. Bernarda’s eighty-year-old mother, Maria Josefa, also loses her mental balance because of her youth’s unfulfilled dreams and desires. She marries but becomes a victim of male infidelity. As it appears from her words, her marriage was a bond devoid of any pleasure

of having someone she desired. The sense of deprivation prevails even when she is eighty with a mind gone unstable because of an acute sense of deprivation. All the following lines have been taken from Act III of the play. When talking to her daughter Bernarda who keeps the older woman locked up, she says,

Bernarda, where is my shawl? You do not need anything of mine, not my rings or black-moiré dress, because none of you will ever be married. Nor one! Bernarda, give me my pearl necklace. I want to get married because I wish to marry a handsome young man from the seashore. Here the men run away from women. (67)

The eighty-year-old Maria Josefa appears again in the next act, carrying a lamb in her arms. She utters, "Little lamb, my little one, we'll go down to the sea. The little ant shall open the door; I shall give you milk and more" (46). While talking to her granddaughter Martirio, Maria Josefa says, "I know it's a lamb, but why shouldn't a lamb be a child? It's better to have a lamb than nothing at all" (46). Maria Josefa wants to escape and be free. Her desire to be married by the seashore (As she tells her daughter) indicates her desire for freedom. She is deprived of this, and the deprivation has turned her into a woman with insanity or mental disorder, which is sometimes inevitable when the obsession is so great. She tells Martirio, "I want to take a walk, but I'm afraid the dogs will bite me. Will you go with me till we are past the fields? I don't like fields. I like houses, but the houses that are wide open" (47). Maria Josefa's desire for freedom is expressed when she says frantically, ".....and we'll be like the waves, every one of us" (51). Despite passing through a matrimonial experience and even having a daughter (Bernarda), Maria Josefa forces us to believe that a matrimonial bond with no mental and even physical gratification and delight was not a matrimonial experience for her. Her harping on marriage without a stable psychological or mental

balance at eighty is sufficient proof. One of Beranda's servants reports about Maria Josefa, "She has taken the rings and amethyst earrings from her box, and put them on, and she tells me she wants to get married" (63).

According to Malabou, after facing a traumatic event, a time comes when one ultimately becomes the self that has been hiding ever since (Malabou *OA* 1). The American Psychiatric Association, in 1980, in its updated official diagnostic manual, included the symptom indicators for a new psychiatric disease: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Persons who face accidents, disasters, wars, or other stressors (extreme ones) create psycho-somatic and somatic disturbances which are identifiable. In addition to physical symptoms, trauma explicitly disrupts memory and, thus, identity in different ways. In the first phase of trauma, the set symptoms relate to how the traumatic event is importunately re-experienced in the form of recurrent dreams, indiscreet flashbacks, or situations that echo or repeat the original.

The second phase of trauma is marked by an opposite cluster of symptoms, which is "persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with trauma," which ranges from avoidance of feelings or thoughts referring to the event to an emotional numbing of generalized nature to the total forgetfulness of the actual event that is the cause of the trauma (APA 467). A third and the last set of symptoms leads to "increased arousal" that includes "loss of temper control, hyper vigilance or exaggerated startle response" (467). Symptoms can capture the individual intensely and stay chronically; a peculiar effect is that they may appear belatedly even after months or years (APA 467).

4.2.3 Textual Analysis

4.2.3.1. The Unconsoled

The real persona of an individual comes out when the existing identity splits because of specific traumatic experiences or without it. The newly born persona is unrecognizable because it comes out from no past, and its future is also uncertain, an extreme existential reproduction. It is an accidental form that comes out by accident. This newly formed identity is like a ghost whose genetic composition cannot be explained by its apparition. This newly created form can only be found in a biography, so it is its second coming (Malabou OA 1-2). This mysterious figure springs from an old or fresh wound of a traumatic experience or from nothing like that, from no past to no future (2). These are some of the improvisations that are invasions on the individual identities; Mr. Ryder in *The Unconsoled* says,

After several minutes I had succeeded in remembering all but two players, but these last two names remained beyond the rim of my recall. As I tried to remember, the sound of the fountain behind me, which, at first, I had found quite soothing, began to annoy me. It seemed that if only it would stop, my memory would unlock, and I would finally remember the names. (24)

The boy, who is later introduced to be the son of Sophie, with whom Mr. Ryder had spent a pretty good time with, refuses to recognize Mr. Ryder, “he continued to look at me with disapproval. Then he said to his mother: “Why did you tell him he could sit down? I was just explaining something to you (32). The boy’s mother tries to make him recall his acquaintance with Mr. Ryder, “This is Mr. Ryder, Boris,” Sophie said. “He’s a special friend. Of course, he can sit with us if he wants” (32). Mr. Ryder had become a new self. He had no link to his past. He could not develop familiarity with his frequently visited places: “The street seemed much longer than I remembered

it, and then when I finally reached the end, I found myself getting lost again in the network of narrow little alleys” (Ishiguro TU 389). According to Malabou, it is essential to understand that our identities are not fixed but somewhat fluid and subject to change. Eventually, our identities may undergo transformations that cannot be reversed or restored without atonement and redemption. These transformed identities exist beyond the confines of time. However, it is worth noting that the notion of being changed or transformed without any negative consequences is not entirely accurate. Plasticity allows us some flexibility to absorb environmental shocks, but there are limits to this adaptability. When we absorb changes to the point of breaking down, we can experience the types of selfhood transformations as discussed in *The New Wounded*.

Additionally, Freud’s concept of plasticity, specifically the vivacity of libido, can be seen as another perspective on change. Plasticity, according to Freud, refers to the capacity to be reshaped or altered without complete annihilation. It acknowledges that while something can be broken or shattered, it does not vanish entirely. This transformation of identity results in reorganizing the image of the being that leads to another crucial escapade which is fragile as well, and there is no compensation in it (Freud *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* 286).

Death does not come only biologically, but one can die as he or she suddenly transforms and becomes someone else, as some other self which is a withdrawal from the older self. One can imagine that if we forget everything we had in our childhood and the moment we spent in our past, what should our face look like? What would be our face before the face we lose at the last moment? What would be our face after the metamorphosis? Malabou writes in *Ontology*, “Metamorphoses never carry off the true nature of being” (9). This metamorphosis would effect an existential subversion which is different from the round of transformation, and it would allow the subject matter to

turn out to be undecipherable, less undecipherable due to a modification in manifestation than on account of a transformation in originality, shaping of the interior figurine. Our synthetic potentials are, in fact, continuous, “Our plastic possibilities are never-ending” (10).

The most striking aspect of the cases of trauma-induced transformations is that when the alteration happens, no matter apparently how obvious its causes are (unemployment, rational obstacles, sickness), the effects of it are unimaginable and could not be understood, disappearing its causes, breaking all etiological links. Because they could not escape, suddenly, these people became strangers to even themselves. It was not because they were broken or became disappointed with gloom or any misfortune, but the reality is that they have become new beings and belonged to another species (13).

Several other theorists have propounded ideas related to the ‘self.’ The idea of ‘the self’ is also perceived in the evolutionary paradigm. The self, then, is a notion that can be conceived of along an evolutionary continuum. Our aspirations influence our faculties of thinking, perception, memory, worries, and hopes. William James was mindful of multiplicities within self when he described the self as the collective total of what an individual is (26). In modern personality theory, as in philosophy, the notion of the self typically refers to the conscious self, in the sense of having self-knowledge, a self-concept, and self-esteem; of being self-aware, self-critical; of feeling self-important; and of striving toward self-actualization. One of the pioneer psychologists, Carl Rogers, very briefly but aptly defined the self in the following words: “the organized, consistent conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of the ‘I’ or ‘me’” (27). Ruth Munroe presents a more rudimentary option and states the self: “A sense of self which develops in the course of living is too far confused with the

essential organic self. The presence of a self is a necessary feature of an animal, regardless of whether it can be self-awareness” (27).

The differences between conscious and unconscious aspects within organisms, and between organisms having consciousness and organisms not having consciousness, cannot be surfaced by identical ideas of the self but by differentiating explicit from implicit aspects of the self. These differences are self-aware and compose self-concept, and the interest of “self” psychology lies in them. Implicit aspects make us what we are, but they are not present in consciousness (27).

Human beings can possess personas, unlike animals which can only possess selves while distinguishing between explicit and implicit selves (28). Implicit and explicit terms are not neutral in their entirety. The study of memory rents these terms, where it is generally considered now that the brain system is intricate in establishing explicit, consciously reachable memories, which is dissimilar to various other systems that are implicitly enabled to get and store information. The brain systems are enabled implicitly to sort categorized information owing to their flexibility and working beyond consciousness; that is why they are believed to be implicit memory systems. As our experiences in life underwrite who we are, so is the contribution of implicit and explicit memory storage to create chief mechanisms that resultantly construct and uphold the self. Explicit aspects of the self are formulated by explicitly gotten and sorted aspects (28).

The self never remains unchanged. Instead, factors like aging, stress, forgetting, genetic mutation, and learning make addition and deletion to it. For instance, little praise would be recorded and kept in explicit memory, but explicitly recorded positive commendation may boost dynamic systems which also implicitly sort experiences. On

the contrary, stress is the worst negative factor for explicit memory and the best enhancer of implicit functions of the emotion system simultaneously (29).

Mark Epstein, during his study on Buddhism and psychoanalysis, opines that the ego's imprint hardly exhibits details of the subject (the self), which means, in other words, that most significant portion of the self is, in existence, implicit (31).

An organism's physical, biological, cultural, social, and psychological aspects contribute to the emergence of the self. Despite being a unit, it does not need to be unitary. It encompasses all things we are aware of and all the remains, all those aspects of ours that others know but never feel. It also comprises things we manifest and conceal and all aspects we do not consider necessary. It also incorporates our aspirations to become something along with our wishes not to become (31).

Genetic commands for the body's development and the brain's structure are written on the human genome. The brain development is estimated to be influenced by 50 to 70 percent of human genes. Still, humans lack enough genes to carry information about the brain's synaptic connections that occur trillions of times.

Both the phenomena of learning and development go side by side. Our learning depends on synapses; they begin occurring and are affected by instructive commands and experiences. The brain is constructed by genetic makeup, instruction, selection, environment, and learning, whereas synapses cause the development of the self. Synapses keep on changing throughout their lifetime (96).

4.2.3.2. A Pale View of Hills

In the novel, *A Pale View of Hills*, the characters talk about forgetting their present selves and metamorphosing into new identities by changing their geographical and political positions. The transformation seems possible if they adapt to the new land and circumstances. They have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. PTSD is diagnosed in

those who experience natural or frightening death or grave injury, physical or psychological menace to the self, and this kind of experience is considered abnormal with a particular collection of symptoms. Individuals who experience wars, calamities, accidents, or other intense, stressful events appear to experience certain distinguishable somatic and psycho-somatic disturbances. Besides a significant number of physical symptoms, trauma distorts memory and also identity in specific ways.

The first group of symptoms is related to the persistent re-experiencing of a traumatic incident through disturbing memory, repetitive dreams, or flashbacks that repeat or reverberate the original. Strangely, the second set of symptoms is contrasting: constant evasion of stimuli linked with a trauma that spans from avoiding thoughts or feelings associated with an event to general death of emotions to total non-appearance of recollection of the critical event. The third set of symptoms refers to augmented arousal, including loss of temperament, hyper-attentiveness, or excessive scared response. There can be an acute appearance of symptoms, chronicle persistence, or strangely belated appearance months or years after the precipitating event (American Psychiatric Association 467-8).

The emergence of PTSD facilitates the consolidation of a trauma paradigm that has come to permeate the comprehension of subjectivity and experience in the developed industrialized world. Each succeeding edition of the Diagnostic Manual has enlarged the classification of those who might be identified with PTSD. Earlier, PTSD was only ascribed to those directly involved, but now it includes secondary sufferers: witnesses, onlookers, rescue workers, and relatives who got stuck in an instant after effects; a closeness now expanded to getting news about the death or injury of a relative. The comprehension of the psychological effects of trauma has penetrated many different contexts, and western cultures have been shaken violently by iconic traumatic

events. Families might be detected to hide histories of domestic abuse because recuperated memory treatments terminate the psychic protection of refutation and amnesia, and complete sections of traumatic childhood return to consciousness in full, dreadful light (Roger Luckhurst 1).

The discussion of the characters of *A Pale View of Hills* throws light on their mental conditions: “If it were not 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 collective trauma which the characters of *A Pale View of Hills* were victims of left them full of regrets, dissatisfaction, and discomfort with their prevailing situation. Sachiko, who, in the post-war days, was bound to work in a noodle shop for which she felt unfit and degraded, considers an exit to America an escape and relief. She confides to her friend, “Etsuko, I am about to go to America. There is no need for me to work anymore in a noodle shop... can’t you appreciate how loathsome it has been for someone such as myself to work each day in a noodle shop?” (46). The trauma has consequences for the whole society. Lamenting upon Japan’s socio-cultural transformation in its post-nuclear blast and post-traumatic phase Ogata-San sighed, “Discipline, loyalty, such things held Japan together once. That may sound fanciful, but it is true. A sense of duty-bound people. Towards one’s family, superiors, towards country. Nevertheless, now, instead, there is all this talk of democracy. You hear it whenever people want to be selfish or forget obligations” (65).

Most of the events in the lives of the various characters occur un-expectantly and reveal their hitherto unsuspected selves, which they are unaware of. The external events change their mental condition, and they respond accordingly. Sachiko had become so used to tragic desertions of the people, whether accidental or intentional on their part, that the phenomenon of desertion had become a new normal for her. “Gone?

Moreover, had he left you no message at his hotel?” Sachiko laughed. “You look so astonished, Etsuko,” she said. ‘No, he had left nothing. He had gone yesterday morning; that is all they knew. I half expected this’ (68). The trauma of desertion is new normal for her:

“But how terrible for you,” I said. “And you were waiting with everything packed and ready. “This is nothing new to me, Etsuko. Back in Tokyo — that is where I first met him, you see — back in Tokyo, it was just the same thing. Oh no, this is nothing new to me. I have learned to expect such things.”” (68)

Malabou refers to trauma after giving a theory about plasticity. It is a way that remakes the subjectivity of a being. Trauma and identity are interlinked in various ways. Trauma applies force, deforms, shatters, and sometimes annihilates identity. Likewise, the perception of a traumatic incident is determined by identity.

Furthermore, as a result of the traumatic incident, the degree of transformation differs in every person and at each place. The change proportion depends on the intensity of traumatic events, such as geographical area, socio-political conditions, culture, age, and gender. The effect of an event on a person determines the gravity of the traumatic event. Frank Seeburger mentions in *The Open Wound* that trauma is such a never-ending lesion that it remains non-curative even after complete healing. The lessons of trauma are unforgettable (3). Therefore, the identity of a person is entirely changed by trauma. According to Herman, the methodology of psychological control is developed to ward off fear and helplessness, and the sense of self in a victim is destroyed (77).

It has been written in *The Open Wound* that the authority of the perpetrator is finite until the victim keeps a relationship with other humans. That is why that perpetrator tries to keep the victim away from other means of information, content,

help, or moral support. The perpetrator not only puts harsh allegations of disloyalty but also asks his victim to abandon all her work, job, friendships, and links with her family to prove her loyalty. After isolation, the victim becomes highly dependent on the perpetrator for her survival, basic needs, information, and emotional support. Her fear enticed her to hold on to the relationship with the perpetrator (79-81).

Sachiko reminiscently looks back at the circumstances and narrates what she and her daughter went through as a logical cause for her and her daughter's present traumatic mental condition.

I know it was a terrible thing that happened here in Nagasaki," she said. "But it was bad in Tokyo too. Week after week, it went on; it was terrible. Towards the end, we lived in tunnels and derelict buildings, and there was nothing but rubble. Everyone who lived in Tokyo saw unpleasant things. Furthermore, Mariko did too. She continued to gaze at the back of her hands. (73)

She says that her daughter Mariko has become comfortable living alone after being subjected to living in isolation for a long time. Her mental makeup has been developed so that she no longer has the memories of living among a company of people. "Things were complicated when Mariko was born. She said, "My daughter is quite capable of amusing herself. So, please do not bother too much with her" (75).

Sachiko has also transformed into a persona no longer affected by the loss. Living in a post-war era, she does not feel it whenever she comes across any new tragedy. She has become an indifferent being who is not affected by any external stimulus. When her last hope, her boyfriend Frank, leaves for the US without taking her along, she reacts as, "Etsuko, do you imagine little things like this distress me?... I've no intention of accompanying some foreign drunkard to America. I'm quite happy he's

found some saloon girl to drink with him; I'm sure they deserve one another. But as far as I'm concerned, I'm going to do what's best for Mariko, and that's my decision" (87).

Trauma had left the little girl Mariko as an emotionless and introverted being who neither liked to mix up with other beings nor even reacted to any call from the outer world. "And have you enjoyed your day?" she asked Mariko. "It's very pretty up here, isn't it?" Mariko continued to crayon her page, not looking up (113).

At another place, when a stranger woman asks Mariko something, she looks at her with a cold gaze. "What are you drawing there?" she asked. "It looks very nice... This time Mariko stopped drawing and looked at the woman coldly" (113). When that lady asks Mariko, "Who does your father work for?" (117). She tells a lie, "He is a zoo keeper" (117). Trauma affects the little girl, so she completely forgets her previous identity assuming a fake one. She confidently tells the woman about the fake occupation of her father to avoid the further bombardment of questions and diverts her attention, creating noise, "What an interesting occupation. We are very fond of animals. Is your husband's zoo near here?" Before Sachiko could reply, Mariko had clambered off the bench noisily (117). Sachiko observes, "Without a word, she walked away from us towards a cluster of trees nearby" (117).

The ontological metamorphosis in the persons around may cause trauma among the witnesses. Ogata San could not absorb how a woman from a distinguished family reconciled with a drastic change in her status, "A great pity," he said again. "Her husband was a distinguished man. I had much respect for him. Moreover, now she is running a noodle shop. Extraordinary. He shook his head gravely. "I would call in and pay my respects, but then one supposes she would find that rather awkward. In her present circumstances, I mean" (123). At another place, "Ogata-San watched her, then shook his head. "A great pity to see her like this," he said, in a low voice" (151).

Both terms, explicit and implicit, are not entirely neutral and have been taken from the study of memory. Here the formation of explicit and consciously accessible memories by a system of the brain is greatly acknowledged, and it is clear that various other systems can learn and store implicit information but unconsciously. As most brain systems are plastic and their working is not inside consciousness, they can be considered systems in terms of implicit memory or, even better, systems capable of implicitly storing specific information. As experiences in life contribute to making who we are, implicit and explicit memory storage makes up fundamental processes that form and maintain the self.

4.2.3.3. The Buried Giant

The explicit system only displays explicit characteristics of self as they are learned and stored in that system (LeDoux 28). In *The Buried Giant*, the readers interact with a community victim of collective trauma. This trauma morphed their spiritual selves to the extent that their faith in God as All Knowledgeable had been greatly affected. “The stranger thought it might be God himself had forgotten much from our pasts, events far distant, events of the same day. Furthermore, if a thing is not in God’s mind, then what chance of it remaining in those of mortal men?” (73).

Teo, a book reviewer, explores the forgetting link to a suppressed traumatic past, and only a fragmented narrative represents it. The concluding section of this chapter is about collective and national forgetting. Teo claims that some of the significant characters of Ishiguro and other minor characters keep themselves away from accountability, and their desire motivates them to develop such a version of history that rejects the responsibility of a nation for doing injustice to others.

Dissociation is symptomatic of many psychological disorders related to traumatic stress, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociative disorder, and borderline

personality disorder. It represents a collection of symptoms classified by retardation of interlinked mental processing functions. The phenomenological approach describes the manifestation of dissociation in top cognitive functions, which are consciousness, memory, and identity, and also in low-level motor and sensory functions, which are sensation and movement. Stress is perceived as having a significant role in dissociation. The literature recognizes the role of at least two types of stress. Present-day stressful events are the usual forerunner for happening of dissociative experiences.

The trauma of a tragic past led them to shape a meta-narrative of loss. The victims of memory loss were aware that they had forgotten everything, and now they were trying to figure out the reasons for their memory loss. They are considering another possibility that it may be God Himself who does not want His people to remember their past: “Do you suppose there’s any truth in it, Axl? What Ivor was saying last night about the mist, that it was God himself making us forget” (86).

Forgetting one’s son is nothing less than catastrophic memory loss. A lesion, a catastrophe, an injury, an accident, or other traumatic experience can kill a person psychologically. One must call it a harmful mutation which is not the metamorphosis of the body into a corpse; instead, it is the metamorphosis of the being into another being in the same body (Malabou OA 34). There are different forms of trauma theory. Trauma is a response to a sudden change that is very much rational, whether at the social or individual level. Beatrice says, “Some days I remember him clear enough, Then the next day it’s as if a veil’s fallen over his memory. But our son’s a fine and good man, I know that for sure” (Ishiguro BG 28). She tells Axl,

When I was outside just now, doing my best to remember all I could in the stillness, many things came back to me. But I can’t remember our son, neither his face nor his voice, though sometimes I think I can see him when he was a

small boy, and I'm leading him by the hand beside the riverbank, or when he was weeping one time and I was reaching out to comfort him. (BG 28)

It is hard to forget the one who has been a part of your body, having your blood running in their veins. The parents of a boy must have passed through something very catastrophic or damned by a serious curse that led to the forgetfulness of their part and blood. "A strong, handsome face, that much I remember. But the color of his eyes, the turn of his cheek, I've no memory of them" (BG 33). At another place, "I don't recall his face now at all," Axl said. "It must all be the work of this mist. Many things I'll happily let go to it, but it's cruel when we can't remember a precious thing like that" (BG 34).

The victims of memory loss are in so much discomfort that they wish to be punished for their faults rather than suffering in a state of forgetfulness, "A curious thought, princess. But if it is as you say, why doesn't he punish us? Why make us forget like fools even things that happened the hour before?" (86-7)

As this has already been discussed in the previous chapter that they were undergoing a medical condition of selective amnesia. The wife, Beatrice, is thankful to God that He still has cared for them and for not throwing them into the world of complete memory loss, "Oh, Axl, it is a relief we can remember a few things still, mist or no mist. It could be God's already heard us and is hastening to help us remember" (89). They realized that nature also shared their tragic condition of absentmindedness, "The trees and moorland here, the sky itself seem to tug at some lost memory" (91).

While undergoing the metamorphic stages in the transformation of self, the mist of forgetfulness rises and falls, which results in the transience and remembrance of the past intermittently: "Nevertheless, as he stood there at the warren entrance and gazed beyond the villagers to where the land sloped down towards the marshes, Axl could see

the mist rising again, and supposed that by the afternoon they would be submerged once more in the grey drizzle,” (BG 22). This mist is dense enough to make them forget a child born from them. Beatrice asks Axl, “Our son, Axl. Do you remember our son?... As she said this, softly into his chest, many fragments of memory tugged at Axl’s mind, so much so that he felt almost faint” (Ishiguro BG 26).

All characters affected by the mist have been going through a transformation process that will give them a new form of being, another self that is different from their former self. “Forgive me, sir. I was just now reminded of something” (93). Here is another example of metamorphosis: “As a strong breeze swayed the tree, Edwin moved his grip to a different branch and tried again to recall the events of the morning” (96).

“Not easy at this distance, sir, and I’ve little knowledge of local dress. But I’d suppose them Britons, and ones loyal to Lord Brennus. Perhaps Mistress Beatrice will correct me. “It’s far for my old eyes,” Beatrice said, “but I’d suppose you right, Master Wistan” (108)”.

They had become such beings who could not give the reason for their particular sentiments because the very next moment of their experiencing an emotion, they would forget even the presence of that sentiment in their selves. “He said nothing, looking like an angry man who had completely forgotten why he was angry” (112).

Ontological metamorphosis resulting from a conscious effort is based mainly on the human desire for inner purity and strength. These two qualities are attained through a detachment from material inclinations or physical demands. Success in attaining this purity and strength is believed to change an individual from ordinary to extraordinary and from superficial to profound.

In a more inclusive sense, it is a shift from physical to spiritual. An individual attaining the destination subdues his physical self, which is considered a basis for

surrendering to physical or material desires. It is like muffling the voice and demands of the flesh and thereby converting oneself into a fort or citadel that is hard to be invaded and conquered by all that is physical, sensuous, or emotional. The strength of the mind and its power to resist emotions is the confirmation of attaining spiritual strength.

The desire to control unbridled emotions through a spiritual strength has its roots in the belief that insignificant and petty are the desires of the flesh, and the sooner an individual distance himself from them, the greater the chances of his sublimity as a being. In a purely religious context, the victory of spirit over flesh determines the strength of character or moral sublimity, which are considered to be the ultimate goals for an individual desiring to deserve a blessed niche, which he can get entitled to, through a sin-free existence: the sins which erupt from the domination of the physical over the spiritual.

A powerful bond with the Creator ensures the change that springs from a religious fountain. This is an experience of surrendering to the will of the Creator and isolation from all that risks this affinity. A secluded life or selfless sociability are choices available to and pursued by the one choosing the path of spiritual transformation. It is sometimes like sociability in isolation or isolation in sociability. This shift can be called a shift from one's essential self to a higher self in which the ordinary is rejected and the sublime or extraordinary is achieved. The ordinary in this context creates a love for what is material or physical, whereas the sublime links one with the metaphysical, abstract, and divine that is pure, sanctified, and blessed. So, the transformation contributes to the diametrical change in the meaning pattern of existence. The enlightenment regarding the true purpose of existence is achieved through an amputation in which all diseased or disease-causing part is removed.

The metamorphosis based on a religious urge follows the natural order of belief first and surrender to Him in the second stage. (Belief in Creator and surrender to His will). The surrender, however, results from some higher stage of belief in which the bond with the Creator is the only purpose of existence.

4.2.4 Conclusion

In the pre-modern age, the predominant focus was on pursuing power as a reflection of truth, albeit with some recognition of the importance of artistic expression. However, in the modern age, the emphasis has shifted towards the pursuit of transformation, with truth taking a backseat. The concept of truth has been co-opted by the neoliberal techno-capitalist framework, where wealth accumulation through progressive techno-science is the primary objective. All human activities, e.g., scientific endeavors to understand truth, must align with technological advancement and economic growth to be deemed valid. This is the only system that can sustain the pace of wealth accumulation.

However, the will to transform, like capitalism and technology, exists in varying degrees and is influenced by cultural and biological factors. Certain human cultures exhibit an insatiable drive to change and reorder things permanently, while others may not share the same intensity. A prime example of this firm's will to transform is seen in techno-capitalism, where no force restrains this human urge, and values, practices, and structures are shaped to support the drive for change. The belief in consumer power to drive transformative alterations and glorify the entrepreneur as a superhuman entity vividly illustrates this will.

Like Nietzsche's concept of the will to power, it is challenging to pinpoint the existence or absence of the will to transform to a specific historical time or place. The foundations of the destructive growth machine run deep, akin to the roots of humanity

itself. However, while the will is recognized as a fundamental characteristic of the human species, reducing the entirety of the human condition to this will to transform is not the intention. Instead, the aim is to raise questions about the origins of real-life existential problems associated with the ongoing large-scale destruction of life.

From a historical perspective, the decaying form of the will has not manifested equally in all individuals, and the progress of the will has not been supported to the same extent by all cultures. This realization offers a glimmer of hope in dark times, as there are situations where humans can resist or counteract the will to transform. To envision an alternative mode of existence, the analysis we conduct must shift towards a more personal level, albeit not necessarily individualistic, where the responsibility of actors is acknowledged.

Considering the ontological will to power and the will to transform that are central to the techno-capitalist system, societies' sociopolitical and energetic dynamics will remain unchanged unless there is a shift in approaches. This phenomenon necessitates a corresponding transformation in individuals' thinking and actions. Nietzsche had already alluded to the entrenchment of the liberal economy within the ontology of the will to power, and the will to transform only further reinforces it. Therefore, paying attention to the alternative ontological register of experience is crucial to catalyze a radical change.

Building upon the exploration of the will to transform and its relationship with the techno-capitalist system, it is essential to draw connections to the concept of Mental Darwinism and the processes of selection and adaptation. Mental Darwinism suggests that the mind is an adaptive apparatus, operating at various levels of consciousness and influencing individual, group, and societal behaviors. While the focus has been

primarily on physical adaptation in Darwinian theory, applying these principles to mental and emotional processes brings a new understanding.

In the context of Mental Darwinism, the concept of selection and adaptation takes on a broader meaning. It encompasses biological evolution and the selection and adaptation of ideas, beliefs, and cultural practices. Just as species evolve through natural selection based on their fitness to survive and reproduce, human thoughts, behaviors, and cultural norms undergo a similar process of selection and adaptation. This dynamic interplay between individuals and their environment shapes human societies' evolution and collective consciousness.

The connection between the will to transform and Mental Darwinism lies in the recognition that the drive for transformation, rooted in the will to power, influences the selection and adaptation of ideas and behaviors. In the contemporary era dominated by neoliberal techno-capitalism, the pursuit of wealth accumulation and technological advancement shapes the selection and adaptation processes, driving the direction of societal change. The will to transform becomes intertwined with the mechanisms of selection and adaptation at the individual and collective levels.

Therefore, understanding the interplay between the will to transform, Mental Darwinism, and the processes of selection and adaptation provides valuable insights into the dynamics of societal change and the underlying forces at play. It prompts us to examine the complex relationships between human desires, cultural evolution, and the transformative impulses that shape our present and future. By delving deeper into these connections, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the potential pathways for societal transformation and the role of individual agency in shaping a more sustainable and just world.

4.3 Mental Darwinism /Selection and Adaptation

4.3.1 Introduction

Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change. (Stephen Hawking)

The Darwinian idea of mental development states that mental development for all the organic species means a progressive series of mutual interdependencies. This idea resulted from Darwin's concepts of the mind and its changes and relation to the brain (Hamilton 556). Charles Darwin, in his book *On the Origin of Species*, wrote. "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but rather most adaptable to change. (39) The propitious progression of life on planet earth invoked a primeval interest among curious minds to explore. They were transcribing inhabitation and existence; they enumerated the conditions responsible for enabling life on this planet. Billions of years of cosmic accomplishment, ecological interactions, and geological triggers collectively contributed to the existence of life and, most importantly, humans. Fourteen billion years followed a stream of extinction, appearance, and disappearance of organisms, life forms, and species. Earth survived; Homo sapiens thrived. What ensured the survival of Homo sapiens when different humans kinds (Neanderthals and humanoids) went extinct in blows of the time? Adroit attempts have been made by evolutionary theorists, including Darwin, in this regard. Charles Darwin made a significant contribution to the field of natural selection through his book *Origin of Species*.

Darwin theorized that natural selection is fundamental to the course of survival. Acquisition of significant variations led to human survival; the cognitive revolution hailed as the ignition of human persistence and cognitive advancement that shaped the tree of knowledge mutation fashioned language and communication, created social interactions, fostered the agricultural revolution, and unified humankind, in the

industrial revolution and scientific spreads. Over time, humans learned, unlearned, and relearned countless skills to ensure survival, but cognitive capabilities were always held supreme and integral. Darwin believed in survival of the fittest, which inevitably requires humans to adapt to changing circumstances; their tremendous cognitive architecture helps them do so. Here, Darwinism reaches the realm of Mental Darwinism that Robert Langs, M.D. defines as: “The emotion-processing mind is an adaptive entity that operates according to the principles of universal Darwinism”” (103).

4.3.2 Discussion in the Context of Mental / Selection and Adaptation

Our environment is vulnerable and prone to drastic changes; environmental variations such as weather patterns and geological pitfalls limit the possibilities for human beings and affect human choices. In such conditions, humans either migrate or develop an innovative lifestyle to secure their survival. The communicative approach to psychoanalysis and psychotherapy postulates that humans or hominids are and were adaptive organisms and respond to changing environments with an adaptation that occurs on two distinctive levels; awareness level and beyond the access of awareness. If human communication or message holds any meaning, it requires adaptation to understand the message, meaning, and trigger (Langs 104). The “neural exploitation hypothesis” asserts briefly that characteristics of human social cognition are supported by the adaptation of sensory-motor-integrating brain mechanism to perform new roles in thought and language while retaining the original function as well (Malafouris *Beads for a Plastic Mind* 403).

Another context provided by the “cultural reconversion or neural recycling hypothesis” is that the cerebral architecture of humans is capacitated to transform; for instance, what was a proper function in the evolutionary past may be transformed into another function that is currently more useful (Malafouris 403). The preceding

perspectives advocate that the mind is more than a brain, and cognition is a living system in action embedded socially beyond the skin and individual. Earth is trigger sensitive, humans are change sensitive, and this ability determines their course of action. In his landmark work *Origin*, Darwin concludes,

These laws, taken in the most meaningful sense, are growth with reproduction; an inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the external conditions of life, and use and disuse; a ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a struggle for life, and as a consequence to natural selection, the entailing divergence of character and the extinction of less-improved forms (489–90)

The success of reproduction is integral to the growth of humans as a species; reproduction infers inheritance, and external and environmental circumstances determine usage, disuse (*of organs, tactics, muscles, etc.*), and variance because of this. The proportion of increase (*as species in number, n1, n2, n4, n16...*) creates a struggle for life or competition for survival; this arrangement leads the process of natural selection, which induces divergence of character (*in species*) or helps species in going extinct in case they remain less improved. It would be well perceived if we try to understand Darwin's stress on less-improved forms in terms of less-adopted forms. Reluctance in adaptation annuls possibilities of progression for species. Several species went extinct not because of the failure in improvement but due to inability to adapt.

With overtime additions and contributions, the theory of natural selection progressed to the terms Darwinism and Neo Darwinism, which is an accretion or a series of processes that completes the cycle of evolution (Jablonka and Lamb 353). Natural selection, reproduction, mutation, and environmental conditions are different stages of evolution and adaptation. Apart from the earth and species inhibited upon it,

the fate and function of human(s) are more concerned to this study. The ability to adapt at the individual level and its entailing inferences are subjects of interest. Cognitive ecologies suggest that all interacting elements & relations are a part of the environment for each other (Malafouris⁵); in this context, humans are the same to the environment as any other interacting relation or element, therefore, equally prone to be consumed by the alterations of material as well as causing them.

The functional structure and anatomy of the human brain changes in response to environmental factors. Malafouris in *Beads for a Plastic Mind* suggests, “Brain is a dynamic construct remodeled in detail by behaviorally important experiences which are mediated, and often constituted, by the use of material objects and artifacts which for that reason should be seen as continuous integral parts of the human cognitive architecture” (401).

This engagement affects human beings enormously, cell phone users and non-users have visibly different behavior and life experiences, but the suggestion of its integrality to human cognitive architecture is exaggerated. A particular experience, if repeated over time, becomes a habit, and habits are an essential part of personality and a mere adaptation over time that could also be dropped over time. Several socio-cognitive theories of personality describe habit development as a necessary process of personality development (McCloskey & Johnson²¹). It is essential to acknowledge that the notion of an “essence” of personality is outdated, and many argue that what we consider essential aspects of ourselves are deeply ingrained habits. In Gregory Bateson’s work *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, the author argues that addiction becomes problematic because it becomes essential to the addict’s personality. Genetic or psychological adaptations play a crucial role in shaping who we are as individuals, regardless of the possibility of being eliminated by future mutations.

Here, “synaptic plasticity” or Meta- plasticity extends the domain of habit. It saves material engagement theory by tracing an activity-dependent change in neurons and neural circuits [...]an ability to adapt and generate expressible plastic changes. It underlines that learning, particularly memory, is influenced by a preceding outline of pre-synaptic and post-synaptic activity (Malafouris47). For example, professional musicians bring dexterity in rendition; professional athletes display perfection in accordance with the assumptions of synaptic plasticity.

Other than material engagement and activity-based learning, humans also experience sensitivity, being affected by the experience(s) and being shaped by the activities; humans strive through adaptations and resultants of endurance. The human body can be touched or affected in numerous ways; a different threshold would yield different responses. As Spinoza referred to a range of effects, joy increases the power to act, and sorrow contracts the same. This power affects the endeavor of survival (*conatus*) too, which is why humans experience different levels of craving to survive at different times. Malabou added to Spinoza and noted that this endeavor is adjustable; to the extent of being tuned like an instrument, making it resonate or muffling the tone. To her, joy and sorrow are passions through which the endeavor helps or hinders (OA 21).

Being affected is being alive. What we feel has a significant bearing on how we act or react. Even cerebral life has emotional inferences that neurobiology undertakes to study, a complex of body and spirit that forms an organism, and the organism cannot perform its function without being affected. Emotion cannot be separated from consciousness. Malabou noted, “High-level cognitive functions such as language, memory, reasoning, and attention are attached to emotional processes, especially when it comes to personal and social matters involving risk and conflict” (OA 23).

The communicative approach to psychoanalysis and psychotherapy also notes human communication. It suggests it happens on two distinctive levels, i.e., conscious and unconscious, where conscious meaning reflects direct adaptation and unconscious meaning reflects encoded adaptations. This encoded adaptation is decoded in psychotherapy through decoding triggers, often an emotional reckoning (Langs 105). Cognitive utility coupled with emotional function leads to an emotional brain that demands a different approach to passion, emotions, and feelings (Johnston and Malabou 163). Parallel to social, cognitive, and life, an emotional life exists that affects all other forms of being and life. The brain, regarded as a logical organ, also functions as the epicenter of the libidinal economy. This approach not only attempts to redefine the connection between mind, body, and psyche but also challenges established disciplinary boundaries by inducing new networks between natural sciences and humanities (Johnston and Malabou 4).

Even consciousness is an emotional reaction to outside intrusion. Consciousness is an awareness inevitably caused by external objects (Johnston and Malabou 32). As an emotion processor, the mind drives both activity and experience and transcribes it into memory and experience. This ability to carry and process emotions is more visible today than they hailed and acclaimed cognitive revolution of homo sapiens. As discussed in the preceding lines, cognition is inseparable from emotion processing, and therefore, cognition and emotion processing are connected, though not interchangeable. Human evolution from australopithecines to homo habilis, then homo erectus to homo sapiens, is evidence of this emotion processing and adaptation because of the mind's ability to emotion processing. Today's complex social and cultural life of human beings features nuances of emotion (Langs 111).

Along with individuals, contemporary human societies are emotional societies and given to the ongoing supremacy of “post-truth”; suffice it to say modern humans are more emotion-oriented or driven than any other stimulus. However, it is not exactly a trend of modern life; emotions have been playing a crucial role in survival. This is emotional adaptation at the conscious, unconscious, subconscious, self, individual, group, society, and national levels. This is what is suggested by mental Darwinism that the mind is an adaptive apparatus. Darwinism suggests a modification (variance in Species) because of external conditions and use and disuse; this modification plays a determining role in natural selection through the phenomena of “divergence in character,” which is the development of dissimilar traits in closely related species (typically the same species settled in different habitat or environment).

External conditions are also apt to influence the use and disuse of a particular activity, organ, or behavior; for instance, a person forgets to walk after meeting a severe accident that hinders his mobility for a considerable time, and a physiotherapeutic intervention enables the misfortunate to walk again. Transplant is the standard medical practice today in which a foreign organ replaces an organ of the body; the brain adjusts itself to include foreign members in a bodily scheme with or without conscious effort. The nervous system can repair itself (*at least partially in some cases*) in case of damage (Malabou *What should we do with our Brain* 3). Transplantation also showcases the brain’s adaptability in incorporating foreign organs into the body. However, it is essential to recognize that neural Darwinism and plasticity theory are part of the extended evolutionary synthesis, which seeks to move beyond a narrow focus on adaptation. Scholars such as Jablonka, Lamb, and Canguilhem have contributed to this broader perspective, highlighting the complex interplay of genetic, epigenetic, and environmental factors in shaping the brain and its cognitive processes.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that not all adaptations are inherently optimistic or beneficial. Some adaptations can be seen as coping strategies to dull oneself to the world's stresses, such as depression and addiction. This perspective highlights the complex nature of adaptations and challenges the notion that all adaptations are inherently good. Canguilhem's theory of normativity versus adaptation, as discussed in *The Normal and the Pathological*, provides valuable insights into this matter.

In the context of enforced adaptation, particularly within the framework of capitalist exploitation, it becomes evident that adaptation can have destructive consequences. The emphasis on flexibility and constant adaptation in capitalist systems can place immense pressure on individuals, detrimental to their well-being. It is crucial to consider the societal and structural factors that influence and shape adaptation and their impact on an individual's mental health and overall quality of life.

Considering Canguilhem's perspective on normativity versus adaptation, we can recognize that adaptations do not inherently indicate a desirable state. Instead, they are strategies individuals employ to navigate and cope with challenging circumstances. By understanding the complexities of adaptations and their relationship to societal norms, we can critically examine the consequences of enforced adaptation within systems of exploitation and work towards creating more supportive and sustainable environments for individuals.

In the case of trauma, this rehabilitator intervention is also mandatory though not visible later. The miracles of Darwinism are apparent; the effectivity of mental Darwinism is invisible. The mind is the epicenter of emotions and does not store emotions; an emotion cannot be traced even with a brain dissection, and instead, it processes emotions. This emotion processing enables other cognitive functions, such as

feeling & experience. Interestingly, the brain is a dynamic construct, not a static thing, as commonly perceived in terms of rigidity implied by the genetic scheme. It is plastic, formable, and modifiable in structure and function by experience or development (Malabou *What Should we do With Our Brain* 5). The theory of plasticity is an affirmation of the Darwinian understanding of adaptation due to external stimuli. Plasticity acting in different layers helps us regulate our daily life by enabling day-to-day adaptations we must adapt to function normally or undisturbed. For example, brain plasticity lets us interact with machines; with the rigid structure and function of the brain, shifting from an old cell phone to a new one or from own car to a different car would be a sheer disdain.

Thanks to plasticity, change occurs naturally and smoothly; that is why we do not experience a significant confrontation in change; we quickly interact with machines such as electronic devices, computers, and gadgets and adopt them once and for all. Plasticity has existed in the brain since primitive times (Langs 11). This scenario asserts to include plasticity as an intrinsic characteristic of the brain (or mind) instead of something that happens over time as an adoptive ability to fulfill the need for evolution. Plasticity is different from adaptation; adaptation is the induction or addition of new or modified parts (things/traits/behaviors.) in a species that makes it fitter for survival.

In contrast, plasticity is the intrinsic ability of the mind that transforms this adaptation into a neural framework. In the nervous system, plasticity means a structural or functional alteration due to development, experience, or injury (Malabou5). What does it mean? Do we mean that the brain changes because of a history of experiences? Malabou termed the constitutive historicity of the brain as plasticity; the plasticity of the central nervous system (also called nervous plasticity or neuronal plasticity and synaptic plasticity) is an emerging discipline to study this phenomenon. She further

reprimands us for our ignorance of the plastic Brain. Malabou wrote in *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*

Our brain is plastic, and we do not know it. We are entirely ignorant of this dynamic, this organization, and this structure. We continue to believe in the “‘rigidity’ of an entirely genetically determined brain,” about which it is ultimately in vain to ask: What should we do with this? Even the very word brain frightens us: we do not understand anything about it—all these phenomena, all these folds, ridges, valleys, localizations, and this jargon that describes (we imagine) a series of fixed, indeed genetically programmed, entities, without any suppleness, without any improvisational ability. (4)

The preceding quote manifests Malabou’s understanding of the brain, for her brain is not merely an organ in the skull or upper body. She expressly referred to an organization that reflects her understanding that includes a nervous system as an integral extension of the brain. She refuses to accept the brain as controller, sending orders from top to bottom, and also the supremacy of the brain that makes humans a puppet of reflexes tarnished by her. Plasticity is contradictory to rigidity. Plasticity is a human addition to their lives; plasticity controls what humans exercise in their lives. Plasticity is the way to include learning in personality. It is the imprint of a journey, the manufactured part of the personality. Plasticity is the capacity to evolve, the faculty to adapt, and the ability to advance. Malabou writes,

From the Greek plastic to mold, the word plasticity has two basic senses: it means the capacity to receive the form (clay is called “plastic,” for example) and the capacity to give form (as in the plastic art in plastic surgery). Talking about the brain’s plasticity thus amounts to thinking of the brain as something

modifiable, “formable,” and formative simultaneously. Brain plasticity operates, as we shall see, on three levels:

1. The modeling of neuronal connections (developmental plasticity in the embryo and the child)
2. The modification of neuronal connections (the plasticity of synaptic modulation throughout life)
3. The capacity for repair (post-lesional-plasticity) (5)

However, the neurobiological perspective finds three types of plasticity in the brain,

- i.) Experience independent
- ii.) Experience expectant and
- iii.) Experience-dependent plasticity

Experience-independent plasticity involves parental development and does not require any external stimuli; experience expectant plasticity occurs during cell development and may be affected by external sensory input; experience-dependent plasticity is a process that involves changes in neuronal ensemble due to experiences and requires external stimuli. Animals exhibit a third type of plasticity during learning and solving problems (Rubin 39). All this emphasis on experience led us to talk about memory, experience is first of all, a memory, and what plasticity refers to is, in simple words adaptation of memory by neural pathways; we already discussed that particular action, if repeated intervally, becomes a habit, in other words, if a specific memory recalled again and again would constitute an experience that may further transform into a neural pathway or reflex or a network through plasticity. Indeed, its memory allows the transmission of information (Richards and Frankland n page) or reflexes or stimuli; neurologists refer to memory as mental time travel. Remembering reflects the past brain stage in the present brain stage. It involves a neural activity that reactivates the neural

pattern present at encoding (n page). In the “Somatic Markers Hypothesis (*aka Hypothesis of Emotional Signals*), which Damasio developed, he says, “selective reduction in emotion is at least as prejudicial for rationality as excessive emotion” (Malabou *OA* 23) Gerald Edelman is the most celebrated advocate of neural selection of the modern age, and he was also awarded a Nobel Prize for his contributions to the field of the immune system, like Jerne. In the paradigm of neural Darwinism, Edelman contended that synapses have to fight for survival in the brain, as do the animals in the environment. The more the synapses are used, the better they fight to survive, and vice versa. He stated that “the pattern of neural circuitry...can neither be created nor be reshuffled with the help of externally influenced instruction; rather external influence can only make a selection of synapses through originating and maintaining particular patterns of neural activity which affect them” (73).

It is an assumption, on the part of selections, that interaction between genetic and non-genetic aspects occurs at the early period of brain development. The selection is made from already available connections established by genes—they produce proteins—that lead axons to the exact point of working in engagement with non-genetic aspects—a chemical from the mother. Nevertheless, preliminary connections are not the product of the chemical environment and genes. Selectionists came up with another supposition that synaptic connections are established by terminals and dendrites through the random assortment, despite the availability of planned genetic makeup.

Consequently, the already present connections possess unique and general genetic plans, but the selection is made by experience from the former; for every person has a distinct set of experiences which leads to the selection of unique connectivity designs. The genetic makeup is a meshwork of the same circuit and connectivity, which is common to all of us. However, the unique experiences of different persons, along

with the connectivity of circuits chosen through synaptic activity, design the individual brain (73-4). They had been living in some other mode, and the condition we see them living in then seems to have evolved; whether it is an upward or downward evolution will be decided later. In the words of the narrator in *The Buried Giant*, “But now, as earlier outside, nothing would quite settle in his mind, and the more he concentrated, the fainter the fragments seemed to grow” (Ishiguro BG 7). Viktor Hamburger and Rita Levi-Montalcini, in their early research in the 1930s, demonstrated the occurrence of regressive events in the nervous system; this phenomenon is now primarily recognized. Cells are produced and destroyed; chemicals enter and omit; functions later in development. We want to bring synaptic regression or the clipping of energetic cells in the early stages of development (44).

A largely quoted study of Pasko Rakic alongside his fellows provided evidence for synaptic regression. He also determined that numerous synapses go up and down in different cortex areas in the first twelve months of life. Hence, it was noticed that the reduction only took place in puberty in a specified study of a single cortical area. Cognitive development gets completed up to puberty; pre-puberty reduction in synapses has nothing to do with the maturation of the mind. There have been listless studies conducted in humans, but a very noticeable work recommends that most of the synapses appear on the cortex at the age of twenty-four months—much earlier than the onset of puberty; it is also noted that various areas gain peaks at various times. Of course, serious research is required to estimate the level to which synapse removal occurs, when it comes off in particular neural circuits, if species differences are noteworthy, and how much data should be construed. If synapses are removed—they are—is not the primary issue, but if occurring, reductions stipulate convincing evidence for the robust edition of selections—the edition that declares that performance averts

the removal of the synapse. It brings us to the selection contention's next part—the “use it or lose it” part (Janette B. Benson, Marshall M. Hait 73).

This notion is well-recognized that transmission across synapses is an actual transmission of free, infantile connections of the brain in the early period to the specific and mature connectivity in the adult period of the brain that needs neural activity. Either the establishment of the mature connections or making a selection from the retained intrinsic connections is the prime function of neural activity along with the environmentally stimulated activity. This function is ardently discussed, and the discussion has cut human nature into halves: Is the ‘self’ shaped by a group of readily available synaptic choices, or instruction and addition are made on the synaptic basis by experience during the early period of life? As the instruction and selection of connectivity are influenced by the neural activity of environmental stimulation, genes and environmental experience are not opposite poles of this debate; instead, the importance of experience is highlighted. For the first time, Darwinian biology presented selection ideas, which were incorporated into the domain of immunology and the study of brain processes.

4.3.3 Textual Analysis

4.3.3.1. The Unconsoled

A Nobel Prize winner, immunologist Niels Jerne was the proponent of a selection approach to investigate the brain during the early second half of the 20th century. He drew attention to the historical perspective of biology, where numerous examples would be available, evidencing that selectionists' ideas got their roots from instructional ones. More precisely, he quoted falsification of a previously well-recognized model of immunology that foreign antigens instigate cells to produce

antibody molecules after entering them. Cells need to detect foreign antigens, but it is only possible if foreign antigens have their antibody in cells, as the recognition of antigens are the job antibody. Jerne claimed it a myth, and following research proved his logic that foreign antigens choose from the already available set of forerunner molecules, which have the potential to be combined with various antibodies. Jerne also found this approach to be applicable to the learning process.

He disapproved of three centuries-old instructional connotations, hypothesized by John Lock, that experience fills the blank slate of the mind; instead, he extended the Sophistic view that learning is impossible. He further emphasizes replacing the old concept of learning with experience with the idea that experience can only make a selection from readily available latent knowledge. Jerne quoted Socrates' view about learning: "It entails to be retold of what the brain already contains" (LeDoux 72). Mr. Ryder, the protagonist of *The Unconsoled*, is selectively amnesiac; narrating the incident when he was sitting with Sophie in a cinema hall, he says, "I too turned back to the screen, but then after a few seconds, certain fragments of memory began to come back to me there in the darkness of the cinema, and my attention once more drifted from the film" (94). At another place, Mr. Ryder records his deliberation as a trace of selective amnesia, "Boris had been lying on his front on the carpet nearby, drawing on a sketch pad with a wax crayon. From the little boy's age—he was still very small—I supposed this to be a memory deriving from six or seven years ago, though what room we had been in, in which house, I could not remember" (94). Here, he remembers something from his past but cannot complete the string of this memory. Mr. Ryder, a broken family child, cherishes his past life spent with his parents so ardently that he has selected never to let the strings of that time be lost from his mind. He remembers no other character from his past except his parents.

Ontological Metamorphosis is marked by selective amnesia; stage one causes memory loss and memory recollection in flashes intermittently. Mr. Ryder is going through this phase of ontological transformation: “Just at that moment, as we continued through the little cobbled streets, I remembered more of my argument with Sophie. It had occurred perhaps a week ago, and I had been in a hotel room somewhere, listening to her voice at the other end of the line shouting” (Ishiguro TU 37). Another instance of selective amnesia is, “I could not now bring to mind what he had said on that foggy morning, but I could recall his words’ impact well enough” (47).

This sudden transformation is a total formation of a novel person; this novelty is a new kind of life without any resemblance to the previous life. Mr. Ryder feels unable to compromise with this new existence: “Now we have got ourselves rather lost, and I have no idea what her address is. She said something about living near a medieval chapel” (48). This situation of trauma in *The Unconsoled* leads Mr. Ryder to an existential dilemma, “Oh no, there is nothing that way. Nothing but emptiness” (48). This emptiness, nothingness, darkness, mist, and fog symbolize vagueness and inability to keep past, present, and future on one string. There are many instances of such vagueness: “The rain had stopped, but a mist was hovering around the base of the lamppost. Nothing was stirring around us” (51); “Oh, not really. No problem at all.’ Stephan steered round a tight corner into another narrow dark street” (54); “[...] Boris sighed heavily and gazed out into the darkness” (61). “[...] Boris, are you listening?’ I glanced over my shoulder and saw him staring vacantly into the darkness. We went on sitting silently for several more moments” (62). According to Malabou, transformation has its existence, unraveling persona as an alternative to the one that reassembles the old self. There is a perfect example of destructive plasticity is when Gregor awakens at the beginning of the story in *Metamorphosis* by Kafka (15). The identity transformation

is not only the result of exterior experience, starting from real possibility; it also transforms and changes the real established being. Malabou says that a normal being can be changed and transformed from the beginning and is always ready to say goodbye to the old self (OA 31).

4.3.3.2. The Buried Giant

A leading French neuroscientist, Jean Pierre Changeux, implying selection approaches, elaborated on the function of neural activity in establishing synaptic connections between nerves and muscles. He determined that “new connections are created by neural activity; rather, it helps remove preexisting connections” (LeDoux 72, 73). King Arthur left the Saxons and Britons in a harmonious relationship when he bid farewell to this material world. Beatrice and Axl, an elderly Briton couple, like all others from their tribe, suffered from selective amnesia that they named ‘the mist.’ They were hardly able to remember, but they were sure that they, long ago, had a son. They decided to travel to a far-off village; they had heard that their son was there.

The loss of selective memory and its resumption is a persistently traceable dilemma in *The Buried Giant*. The mist of forgetfulness, like a magician, vanishes and reproduces the things, persons, and ideas in sparks of memory. Furthermore, after a while, fragments begin to piece themselves together in his mind, of the missing Marta, of the danger, of how everyone had been searching for her not long ago..... However, already these recollections were growing confusing, in much the way a dream does in the seconds after waking. Axl held on to the thought of little Marta at all with a supreme act of concentration. At the same time, voices behind him continued to argue about the wren-eagle” (Ishiguro BG 12). Why the act of “concentration” is supreme for the narrator? If we start it from the concentration, this exercise takes one to contemplation

and meditation, which is the way of connecting the other of the self with the Ultimate Other, a stage which witnesses the merger of self and other and its exaltation to a point of timelessness, a point where past, present, and future just get evaporated so does the concept of memory. The “concentration” not only a trace of the memory but also the reality comes out of the mist of forgetfulness, “Then, as he was standing there like that, he heard the sound of a girl singing to herself and saw Marta emerge before him out of the mist” (BG 12), “Yet at each turn, it is as if another distant memory stirs” (BG 121), “I believe it must be one I loved, mistress (BG 124).

Marta has adapted herself to living in the mist among all odds of the mist. She has gotten used to the setting of her new situation. Adaptability is the primary reason when a mutilated subject is taken into a new custom; this saves a being from death even after having been, outwardly as well as inwardly, smashed severely. Destruction is counterbalanced by a form of constructive ability to be (Malabou *Ontology* 4). One adapts to the new details of the self, which they know are not permanent and static but fluid and plastic. Plasticity and pliability are complementary to each other. The human quality that makes plasticity’s flow easy to be accommodated is its adaptability. “Aren’t you afraid of the dark? Of the wolves or the ogres?” She replied, “Oh, I’m afraid of them, sir,” she said with a smile. “But I know how to hide from them” (Ishiguro BG 12).

Catherine Malabou believes that constructive plasticity lacks in defining and realizing this transformation process, while destructive plasticity defines and elaborates its processes. Plasticity is a transformation without a place for escape, fleeing, or transcendence. The only thing that can exist here is the being other than the self (OA 11). In this situation, only the former self’s heart remains that sometimes beating in the dark and shedding a few tears; nothing is left beside (OA 11,12). There are the hearts

of the former selves of Axl and Beatrice that shed a few tears in the form of the recollection of the selective or random incidents related to their son from the past, “Well, I dare say one or the other of us will remember soon enough,” (BG 34) he said. “Then I took shelter there once before when I came with the women. A ruin, but the roof was still good then” (BG 37). The ruined villa was further from the road than Beatrice remembered (BG 37). “This house where I was once a carefree child. It’s not as it once was, but for me it’s filled with precious memories, and I come here asking only the quiet to enjoy them” (BG 41).

Having another flash of memory, when Axl reaches Beatrice to rescue her from the crowd and take her in his arms, he recalls the moments when she rested her head on his chest, and they kept standing close like this for a long time (BG 25). Axl tries to make Beatrice adapt to the disaster and convinces her to live in the darkness they have lived in for a long time.

“What does it matter, princess?” he said. “What do we need with a candle? We’re well used to moving around our room without one” (BG 25).

4.3.4 Conclusion

Adaptation is also called employability, that is, the ability to respond. Great men prove themselves as adaptable and flexible ((Malabou *What Should We Do With Our Brain* 46). An inflexible person disappears (46). It is an essential quality of managers and employees. Castel equates depression with disaffiliation (47). Depression is a lack of adaptation which results in dissociation from society. Self is the manufacturing of all plastic processes that work in the brain---proto self—only the fittest can survive. Malabou highlights the destructive nature of enforced adaptation resulting from capitalist exploitation. It is essential to recognize that adaptations such as depression and addiction can be seen as coping mechanisms to numb oneself to the world's

pressures. Therefore, it is appropriate to assume that adaptations are not inherently good, as their functionality as coping strategies does not necessarily indicate their overall value.

To further explore this point, Canguilhem's theory of normativity versus adaptation in *The Normal and the Pathological* sheds light on the subject. The theory emphasizes the distinction between normative functioning and adaptations that deviate from the norm. It underscores those adaptations while serving as coping strategies, do not necessarily align with the ideal state of being. This perspective challenges the notion that adaptations should be regarded as inherently positive.

4.4 Applied Plasticity

4.4.1 Introduction and Background

Brain plasticity refers to the brain's ability to change and adapt its structure and function in response to learning, experience, and environmental factors. Applied plasticity refers to the practical application of brain plasticity in various techniques or interventions to enhance or modify brain structure and function. It involves utilizing specific activities, exercises, therapies, or interventions to promote neuroplastic changes in the brain.

These techniques can take different forms depending on the desired outcome. Applied plasticity techniques include cognitive training exercises, neurofeedback, transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), brain-computer interfaces, virtual reality-based therapies, and rehabilitation programs for individuals with brain injuries.

Applied plasticity aligns with Malabou's arguments and prescriptions by acknowledging the brain's capacity for change and emphasizing the importance of shaping neural connections through deliberate interventions. Malabou explores the

brain's malleability in her work and advocates for the potential of plasticity to address issues such as trauma and transformation.

Canguilhem's concept of norming distinguishes between normal and pathological states and can intersect with applied plasticity by considering the desired goals or norms that interventions aim to achieve. Applied plasticity techniques can be used to restore or establish normative brain functions or to redefine norms in cases of neurodiversity or cognitive enhancement.

Michael Merzenich conducts an experiment on the observation that stipulates that the human brain is fixed, compartmentalized or specialized. He initially considers the hypothesis that the damage once experienced by the brain could leave the brain permanently dysfunctional. As a result of the damage caused, the brain could lose the skill pertaining to the damaged area and the lost skill could not be learned again. However, the research led the researcher to an exact opposite theory that stood at an angle of 180 degrees to the initially proposed hypothesis. The researcher was shocked to see how his idea turned turtle after detailed research. This discovery proved to be a gateway to the field of applied plasticity.

His efforts unveiled the reality that the brain is a consistently developing and learning tissue that undergoes certain levels of transformation that can equip the brain to such an extent that something initially unlearned due to some damage can be relearned in the other parts of the brain.

The terminology that characterizes flexibility like the brain is neuroplasticity or brain plasticity; it causes skepticism in the people who take it in a literal meaning. In terms of in-depth research, it almost resembles the theory of mutation. Similarly, the brain transforms as a result of some adaptation or experience. When people, in general, come across the word plasticity, they suppose the brain is a piece of plastic composition,

but this is not the case. In actuality, the compound word neuroplasticity consists of *Neuro*, which means something related to the building keys of the brain that are generally termed as cells of the brain, the neurons that compile up and function together to form the brain system. *Plasticity* is the term that explains the malleability of the brain structure or the working of the brain.

The human brain composition describes that it has approximately 86 billion neurons connected and supported together for the systematic working of the organ system. As aforementioned, the initial researchers had a view of neurogenesis as if the composition or the birth of new brain cells or neurons stops shortly after the birth of a kid. The present research has collated evidence prove the miraculous characteristics and the capacity of the brain to rearrange its ways, including the creation of novel interrelations as well as production of new cells. It even develops the ability to create entirely new neuro constructions. The concept to denote this phenomenon is termed neuroplasticity or brain plasticity.

Neuroplasticity is practiced and studied at two levels. If the brain can shift the brain functions from the one damaged site of the brain to the other healthy site of the brain, then the level is known as functional plasticity. If the brain can change the structure of the brain physically as a consequence of any learning, then such a level is given the name structural plasticity.

Brain plasticity is a process that comes up with multiple benefits. It has brought astonishing development in the field of psychology and phenomenology. This technique brings high-level promotion in the fields of adaptability and change. For instance, it introduces the prowess to learn new things. It gives the propensity to amplify the existing noesis. It gives rehabilitation from strokes and grievous brain injuries. It

helps in buttressing some areas if some functions are lost or decline. It even gives enhancements that can promote the fitness of the brain.

The working of brain plasticity has some of the significant processes that act as the backbone of the procedure. The term "procedure" in the context of brain plasticity refers to the underlying processes and mechanisms through which the brain undergoes adaptive changes, including neuroplasticity, synaptic plasticity, long-term potentiation and depression, dendritic remodeling, and functional reorganization. One of the significant setups is synaptic pruning. The neuro-studies divulge that the initial few years of a child's life are the time of swift germination. At birth, each neuron in the cerebral cortex has approximately 2500 synapses. The number multiplies to a colossal 15,000 synapses per neuron by the age of three. While by reaching adult age, the number of synapses decreases to half of existing. The reason behind this shortfall is that with maturity, new experiences are gained that lead to nourishing some connections and liquidating others. This is what we call synaptic pruning.

Those neuronal connections become well-built, frequently used, while those die that are not brought to use frequently or that rarely come under usage. The brain becomes adroit enough to adapt to the circumstances by letting some links thrive and lopping off debilitated ones. There are various characteristics or critical features of the process of neuroplasticity or brain plasticity that are supposed to act as the pillars of the proper working of the process.

Plasticity refers to the brain's inherent ability to change and adapt its structure and function in response to experiences, learning, and environmental influences. It is a fundamental property of the brain that continues practicing throughout lifetime but there are some specific age-oriented mutations that are supposed to occur during that specific time period of life. For example, it is the initial time period of the birth when

the brain tends to change up to a major degree like immature brain growth and its organization by itself.

Substantially, young brains gravitate to be more delicate and amenable to happenings than older brains. Nevertheless, we cannot fall to the conclusion that mature brains are not capable of remodeling. Another factor that can regulate the process more is genetics. The reciprocity between the environment and genetics acts vitally in molding the brain's plasticity. Plasticity is an ongoing process involving brain cells other than neurons, like glial and vascular cells. Such a result can be obtained in response to some learning, experiencing, and adapting procedure or even as a consequence of some severe vandalism to the brain. People used to believe that the brain becomes riveted after a certain age. An up-to-date research has revealed that the brain never stops altering in relation to learning and as a consequence of experience.

4.4.2 Discussion in the Context of Medical Humanities and Applied Plasticity

Georges Canguilhem, a prominent figure in the field of medical humanities, has made significant contributions to our understanding of health, illness, and the relationship between normativity and adaptation. His work challenges conventional notions of what it means to be "normal" and critically examines the limitations of medical science in defining and categorizing human experiences.

One of Canguilhem's key concepts is the notion of normativity. He argues that normativity should not be reduced to mere statistical averages or fixed standards but should encompass the dynamic and varied range of individual capacities and experiences. Canguilhem emphasizes the importance of considering individuals' unique contexts and lived realities when assessing health and illness. He critiques the tendency

to pathologize deviations from the norm and highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of what it means to be "normal."

In his influential work *The Normal and the Pathological*, Canguilhem explores the relationship between adaptation and normativity. He challenges the assumption that all forms of adaptation are inherently optimistic or beneficial. According to Canguilhem, adaptation should not be understood as a simple alignment with norms or eliminating deviations but rather as a complex interplay between the individual and their environment. He argues that there are situations where normative adaptation can be detrimental to an individual's well-being and that rigid adherence to norms can hinder the potential for growth and transformation.

Canguilhem's ideas have profound implications for medicine and medical humanities. His emphasis on the contextual and subjective dimensions of health and illness encourages a more holistic approach to patient care. By questioning the rigid boundaries of normality and challenging the unquestioned authority of medical classifications, Canguilhem opens up space for a more humanistic understanding of illness, suffering, and the diverse experiences of individuals.

Canguilhem's work provides a framework for critically examining societal expectations and constructing "normal" identities in literature and the humanities. His insights encourage us to question dominant narratives and challenge the stigmatization of difference. By integrating Canguilhem's ideas into literary analysis, we can explore how literature represents and challenges normative frameworks, giving voice to marginalized experiences and shedding light on the complexities of human existence.

Canguilhem's work in the field of medical humanities offers a valuable perspective that encourages a more compassionate approach to understanding health, illness, and human diversity. His ideas continue to inspire critical reflections on the

intersections of medicine, culture, and individual experiences, enriching our understanding of the complexities of the human condition.

Norman Doidge, a prominent psychiatrist and neuroplasticity researcher, has significantly contributed to our understanding of the brain's remarkable capacity for change and adaptation. His work explores the transformative potential of neuroplasticity and its implications for various aspects of human life, including healing, learning, and personal growth.

In his book *The Brain That Changes Itself*, Doidge presents a collection of case studies and scientific research demonstrating the brain's ability to rewire itself in response to experience and external stimuli. He challenges the long-held belief that the brain is fixed and unchangeable, highlighting the dynamic nature of neural connections and the brain's capacity for regeneration.

Doidge explores various techniques and interventions that harness the power of neuroplasticity for therapeutic purposes. He examines the use of sensory substitution devices to help individuals compensate for sensory loss, the application of constraint-induced movement therapy to rehabilitate stroke patients, and the effectiveness of cognitive exercises in treating learning disorders. Doidge's work showcases how targeted interventions can facilitate neuroplastic changes and promote healing and recovery.

One of the critical contributions of Doidge's work is his emphasis on the importance of neuroplasticity in understanding and treating mental health conditions. He discusses the role of neuroplasticity in alleviating symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Doidge's research offers hope for individuals struggling with mental health challenges by highlighting the brain's potential for rewiring and self-repair.

Furthermore, Doidge's work has broader implications for medical humanities and literature. His research reveals the profound impact of neuroplasticity on human experiences and challenges deterministic views of the brain and identity. By exploring the brain's malleability, Doidge encourages us to reevaluate our understanding of human potential, resilience, and personal growth. His work prompts us to reconsider the relationship between the brain and the mind, paving the way for interdisciplinary discussions and collaborations between neuroscience, medicine, and the humanities.

Doidge's insights have also influenced therapeutic practices and inspired the development of new techniques and approaches. His work has contributed to the emergence of applied plasticity, a field that explores various interventions aimed at harnessing neuroplasticity to promote cognitive, emotional, and behavioral changes. These techniques include neurofeedback, cognitive training programs, and brain stimulation methods.

Doidge's work on neuroplasticity has revolutionized our understanding of the brain's capacity for change and adaptation. His research not only offers hope for individuals facing neurological and mental health challenges but also prompts us to reimagine human potential and the role of the brain in shaping our experiences. Doidge's contributions have profoundly impacted the medical humanities field, inspiring interdisciplinary conversations and opening up new possibilities for therapeutic interventions and personal transformation.

Norman Doidge's work on neuroplasticity has shed light on the remarkable ability of the brain to adapt and rewire itself. His exploration of case studies and therapeutic interventions showcases the potential of applied plasticity in neurorehabilitation and cognitive enhancement. However, Doidge's focus on the

positive aspects of plasticity, such as brain recovery and transformation, must be considered in light of Malabou's theory of destructive plasticity.

Malabou's theory of destructive plasticity emphasizes the harmful effects of enforced adaptation, particularly in the context of capitalist exploitation. She argues that the pressure to adapt constantly and change can lead to the erasure of individual identity and the loss of critical consciousness. This resonates with Canguilhem's theory of normativity versus adaptation, which challenges the assumption that all forms of adaptation are inherently beneficial.

Georges Canguilhem's work highlights the importance of questioning normative standards and understanding the limits of adaptation in the context of human experiences. Canguilhem's theories complement Malabou's critique of enforced adaptation and offer a critical perspective on the implications of plasticity in medical practice.

Canguilhem's insights challenge reductionist approaches to health and illness, emphasizing the importance of contextual and cultural factors in understanding human experiences. His work enriches the field of medical humanities by encouraging critical reflection on medical practices, normative frameworks, and the limits of adaptation.

When considering Malabou's theory of destructive plasticity, the integration of Doidge's and Canguilhem's perspectives becomes significant. Doidge's emphasis on the positive potential of plasticity can be nuanced by Malabou's critique of its destructive aspects. Canguilhem's theory of normativity versus adaptation further deepens the discussion by questioning the assumed benefits of adaptation.

In addition to the groundbreaking research and theories of figures like Canguilhem and Doidge, the literary works of Kazuo Ishiguro also contribute to our understanding of the human condition and the complexities of neuroplasticity.

Ishiguro's novels, such as *Never Let Me Go*, delve into themes of memory, identity, and the impact of societal and personal expectations. Through his nuanced portrayal of characters grappling with their pasts and struggling to reconcile their memories, Ishiguro offers a literary exploration of the intricate workings of the human mind and the potential for both adaptive and destructive plasticity. His narratives provide a rich and introspective perspective that complements and expands upon the scientific and philosophical discussions surrounding neuroplasticity. By weaving together, the realms of literature, neuroscience, and philosophy, Ishiguro's work offers a unique lens through which to contemplate the complexities of the human brain and its capacity for change and adaptation.

Ishiguro's works mainly focus on psychological orders like loss of memory, social expectations, hope, free will, fear, etc. Many critics and analysts have worked in depth on the writings of Ishiguro. In Ishiguro, this capacity of mediation drives the queries, which are a pathway to medical humanities discussing the limitations of human beings along with the momentous and diplomatic outcomes of biomedical technologization.

In 1997, the writing and inspection of Waugh turned the critical gaze on Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. She beautifully elucidates Ishiguro's take on the confusing questions on the subject of nature, human beings, and healthcare institutions in the England of the 1990s. The other themes Ishiguro elucidated are the novel's tremendous impacts, which linger on the reader's mind after the novel's close, disorganized, and emotive, 'confidential' and 'resolved' approaches to impression. In this context, the considerable power of the novel is hidden in its capability to make us able to experience, by way of detailed internal portrayal describing the workings of the mind. When we read about the narration of Kathy H, we suddenly get submerged into her imaginary

world which impressively opens the way to sympathize. On our return to reality, we are bound to question nature and human beings' limitations.

This capacity of the novel to draw us in through recognition while at the same time causing us to rethink our inherent assumptions has been powerfully explored and articulated by contemporary narratological critics such as David Herman (2002, 2011) and Alan Palmer (2008), whose work on the narrative representation of consciousness, and in particular on the interaction of the fictional mind and the reader's mind, has proved valuable in reorienting the relation between medicine and literature (Bates 120).

As the field combines various areas, people from numerous fields have discussed the concepts under various angles and dimensions. Concerning modern biomedicine, Gebreile Griffen claimed that *Never Let Me Go* has joined together various interlinked biotechnological expansions – reproduction, reap, biological structure, designer babies- into a single set of fictional engrossments (649).

Griffin stresses Ishiguro's consultation about biomedicine; according to Griffin, he exploits the same tactics of defamiliarization that give thought to recent health centers (Whitehead 56). The underfunded and downsized institutions of care that Ishiguro's novel presents the modern British environment of independent institutions and centers of care, which according to Tony Judt, try to minimize the standard of assistance in order to increase the profit (Judt 114). From the very first page, the most focused word of the novel is 'carrier.' In *Never Let Me Go*, the readers come to know that a non-toxic word has the most dangerous reality that is, in alternative England, children are quarantined and kept in isolation; before reaching adulthood, they are forced to supply their organs through surgeries in order to treat other human beings. This happens not only in well-established healthcare institutions in England but also in care centers of the UK, where the word 'care' conceals the cruelest realities. In his

novel, Ishiguro holds up a mirror to British medical training centers and organizations, highlighting a materialistic approach that describes our social and political world. However, the novel *Never Let Me Go* also illuminates the utmost scary dimensions of analytic medical humanities that have introduced modern medical technologies having negative impacts in the process of cure as well as have exploited the connotation of “care. (Bates 121).

However, the faithful reflection of biotechnology marks Ishiguro’s withdrawal from science. Griffin explores that on the first occasion, through a blatant indifference, he comes to know how the science of cloning works in actuality; however, Kathy and other students also present their various ‘possible’ theories while the people from whom they have been cloned remain only fiction. The novels are steered clear of the vocabulary corresponding to the science fiction genre. In this way, Griffin also brings to attention that Ishiguro bridges ‘a gap’ between biotechnical phenomenon and their depiction through his narration (Griffin 649). Science moves its journey towards engineering human flesh, supplying organs for repositioning and reimagining the cloning of people; Ishiguro sets it out in an entirely reversed direction. Ishiguro enables his readers to bring their attention to the reality of biomedical training. However, on a moral and ethical basis, his fiction gives a site for reflecting rather than focusing on scientific achievements.

The most recent brain imaging technologies have proved fruitful for the convergence of humanities and medicine. The immediately noticeable thing is that McEwan details and scrutinizes the role and realm of the novel, giving suggestions that it would be accessible for uncertain scientific perspectives of perception and awareness (Bates 122). In the introductory statement of the novel, the writer McEwan manifests this relation as his neurosurgeon mirrors his return to consciousness. It can be said that

McEwan offers us a ‘dignified parallel of CT scan’ (121); if the scan can show us an apprehension of some venture, similarly, the novel may highlight what it feels like – it provides us an efficient internal approach. It would be far off the range of this section to study the novel *Saturday*, and it is worth pausing over the opening lines of the novel to meditate on what they review about contemporary literature’s insight of another consciousness:

Some hours before dawn Henry Perowne, a neurosurgeon, wakes to find himself already in motion, pushing back the covers from a sitting position and then rising to his feet. It is unclear to him when exactly he became conscious, nor does it seem relevant. He has never done such a thing before, but he is not alarmed or even faintly surprised, for the movement is easy and pleasurable in his limbs, and his legs and back feel unusually strong. He stands there, naked by the bed – he always sleeps naked – feeling his full height, aware of his wife’s patient breathing and the wintry bedroom air on his skin. That, too, is a pleasurable sensation. His bedside clock shows three forty. He has no idea what he is doing out of bed: he does not need to relieve himself, nor is he disturbed by a dream or some element of the day before or even the state of the world. It is as if, standing there, he has materialized out of nothing, fully formed, unencumbered. (McEwan 3)

Consequently, the passage moves us towards a specific cognitive direction: First of all, Perowne’s brain is epitomized, which is why his every phenomenon must be considered significant. Secondly, the deliberate and purposive experience here goes along with the physical, or according to Gallagher, ‘the body anticipates and sets the stage for consciousness’ (Gallagher 2); and finally, the notion explores that our consciousness connects us with the world and others: it cannot be related to self-

absorption. The novel's opening is signaling towards the narratological – Perowne's moving towards consciousness is also a movement toward his fictional mind. In this sense, he has been materialized out of nothing, entirely shaped, but he leaves some questions in the reader's mind about the precise form having this act of 'materialization.' These queries are the root of McEwan's recent fiction work: How can it interact with Perowne's mind? With what intensity do we submerge ourselves in his fictional world? How dangerous it would be to enter another's mind through reading. Thus, the novel *Saturday* echoes the spirit of critical medical humanities.

Nature endows life with a capacity for plasticity. Similarly, the human body and brain are adaptable to changing circumstances, so it is the sure capability of the brain that it can be trained as per requirement within a naturally built limitation. The researchers have shown that the brain has an exceptional ability to adjust to changes in environmental conditions. After this unique discovery of organism's power of adaptability or the technique of changing with the required changes, the researchers who were scrutinizing supplemented rearing environment in animals disclosed the probability of producing positive results of brain plasticity and helped in popularizing the techniques for preparing the brain to alter the brain shortfall or to augment normal or conventional cognitive or cerebral performance (Bryck87).

As far as the study of science related to the growth and development of the brain is concerned, most of the present state of understanding regarding neural plasticity in infant brain is lodged in science that talks about the growth of the brain. Until the arrival of contemporary neuroscience, traditional wisdom or sagacity found that brain growth was most thoroughgoing comparatively in early stages of life, maybe owing to considerable anatomy: the brain of a human has outstretched that in preliminary childhood, almost 90% of its grown-up weight is attained by the brain and after five

years of age it substitutes very minute in size (Durstun et al 21). In reality, active and ongoing alterations or conversions in brain construction occur or happen all around the maturing period. For instance, in humans, the proportion of gray matter (unmyelinated neurons) to white matter (myelinated neurons) substitutes adequately from parturition through maturation, especially in the cerebral cortex. Gray matter solidity goes after a nonlinear or dynamical tendency of starting development throughout early childhood, with a succeeding decline in density or compactness through teens and young childhood (Bryck 88).

Although the maturing of the brain is also greatly affected by paternal, childhood, and teen development durations; moreover, there is growing confirmation that brain maturation goes on throughout the life of an adult. This leads to the perception that experience configures the structure of growth and development of the brain (Report of *National Scientific Council on the Developing Child* 2007). Inside this observational sculpting procedure, the flexibility of maturing brain must be understood or comprehended.

Applied plastic training refers to a specific type of intervention or program designed to harness the principles of brain plasticity to induce desired changes in brain structure and function. It involves engaging individuals in targeted activities or exercises that promote neuroplastic changes in specific brain regions or networks.

The content and nature of applied plastic training can vary depending on the goals and needs of the individual. It may involve various cognitive exercises, sensory stimulation, motor activities, problem-solving tasks, or specific training protocols tailored to address specific cognitive, motor, or behavioral challenges. For example, in neurorehabilitation, applied plastic training may involve repetitive tasks or exercises that target impaired functions to facilitate functional recovery. In the realm of cognitive enhancement, it

could involve mental exercises or training programs aimed at improving memory, attention, or other cognitive abilities.

The effectiveness of applied plastic training relies on the brain's ability to reorganize its neural connections in response to repeated and targeted stimulation. Individuals can promote synaptic plasticity by engaging in specific tasks or exercises, strengthening existing neural connections, establishing new connections, or rerouting neural pathways to support desired cognitive, motor, or behavioral outcomes. Applied plastic training is a purposeful and structured approach to leverage brain plasticity for therapeutic or enhancement purposes, utilizing tailored activities and interventions to facilitate positive neuroplastic changes.

Tutoring is something that requires multiple aspects to be considered. Many people consider it quite an easy task to guide and teach someone. The training of some specific body organs varies from person to person, situation to situation, and the medical condition of the organ. Even the extent of medical impairment is also considered critical for the training setup. In some exceptional cases, various neurorehabilitation therapies for suffering people with traumatic or distressing brain problems are focused on improving or enhancing analytical performance by availing of planned training or coaching to counterbalance instead of remitting off-tracked or lost functionality or serviceability. In these perspectives, the central neural system helping a present function or working is commonly assumed or supposed to be damaged or devastated before repair or restoration (Bryck 95).

A trainer needs to be very much vigilant about acute early troubles while dealing with patients who face learning disorders. Some beneficial lessons could be obtained from the earlier-mentioned improvement approach while addressing or dealing with acute early trouble (e.g., childhood physical and emotional trauma and neglect) that

could largely influence neurodevelopment. The outcome of neuroscience experimentation is highly demonstrating or exhibiting the presence of dispensable and interdependent neural systems, making it credible that the same adjusting systems could be utilized in children with the change in neural operations (Bryck 95).

Giving beneficial lessons and tutoring to the at-risk-patients' needs a lot to take care of. Tutoring the brain, especially at-risk populace, is an arduous undertaking with many constituents or elements to bring into notice, including the type of program for a specified population or populace, the ability to earmark, and the strategy, cost and time duration. Stating the hardships and restrictions jumbled in constructive or functional brain education, we recommend better-cooperating efforts. Consistent developments in neuroscience will permit a more in-depth analysis of underlying neural procedures and underlying or elemental education and training, specifically in brains undergoing trauma, or abnormal development. These advances will proceed to tell interventions, precautions, and educating efforts as the deficiency, and the specific systems of the brain to earmark varying issues. Apprehending the neural processes that are affected will also progress our perception of the significant pliable brain systems for educating or treating and arbitration. The medical science will keep finding ways to bolster plastic training for the benefit of the individual and help them cope up with the real-world conditions. Regarding efficient policy, the most crucial element will doubtlessly be the capability of neuroscientists and intervention scientists to hear, collaborate, and cooperate (Bryck 98).

4.4.3 Textual Analysis

4.4.3.1 A Pale View of Hills

Plastic reading is a process that includes a variety of techniques for the identification, enumeration, and analysis of occurrences of some specific messages and characteristics of messages that are lodged or implanted in texts. It is sometimes considered a self-effacing technique because it demands the study and focus on the meaning of texts rather than focusing on the novel composition of texts. The history of neuroplasticity is not as old as to consider it a matter of classical research.

A Pale View of Hills is a debut novel by Ishiguro for which he received Winifred Hiltby Memorial Prize. The case that the novel focuses on is the identity clash. This reflects the self-experience of the writer, who was dual national: Japanese and British. Lady Keiko committed suicide, and her suicide followed up a series of events starting with her mother migration from Japan to England.

The theory of applied plasticity works on various techniques; with time, the brain can change various dimensions. With the increase in experience, some connections get strengthened or removed. Such a procedure is termed synaptic pruning. The neuro-cells that are used repeatedly grow stronger connections, while those that are used very rarely or never used eventually die.

Almost the same concept applies to the mental states of both Etsuko and her daughter Keiko. Keiko committed suicide because she could not manage to undergo the development of the neurons in the positive dimension. She could not stop her brain from thinking about her original identity. At the same time, Etsuko cannot stop herself from thinking about her daughter's suicide, and the reason behind her daughter being ignored impinges on her mind to make her reflect on the thoughts time and again.

The identity clash initiated the psychological chaos that Keiko had been through. The case begins when a Japanese girl's dead body is found hanging in a room in England. The background is formed by the stinging memories that Keiko had been through since her shift from Japan to Britain. Etsuko was forced to leave the homeland because of the distress that she had been living with since her ex-husband mistreated her. This was the damage done to her emotional management that made Etsuko decide to move on without her husband. The thing that strengthened Etsuko's point of switching was her love affair with a British. She moved on to a better choice.

The stultification of Keiko's mindset was not self-induced; somewhat, it was influenced by her mother's numbness that triggered her apathy toward life. Etsuko could not realize how harmful and agonizing the mental despair inflicted on her daughter was. It was her grievance that shifted to her daughter once Etsuko unknowingly became selfish for her peace of mind and not for her daughter.

The snubbing attitude of Etsuko towards a stranger, who was thinking of shifting for the sake of financial betterment along with her partner and a kid, reflects Etsuko's state of mind; she needed to understand that she did not have a right to trespass the personal space of an unknown lady. This incident reflects how mental distortion of Etsuko had worsened after Keiko's death.

In some aspects, the phrenic clutter moves the person towards alienation and self-idleness. Etsuko experiences the same situation when she says, "At times a person wants solitude and loneliness, "for I still wished to be left alone at that point in my life" (Ishiguro PVH13). She has been through a state of affairs where she managed nothing more than running from the scene or listlessly getting along. The writer's symbolism is different and thoughtful; it tickles the reader's cognizance of an underlying concept via apparent signals. "She had a cut on her face" (" (15), a character whom Etsuko met

depicted the underlying sufferings of the mind and soul that she experienced in the form of wrinkles on her soul and thinking.

The absence of smiles and other lively expressions has been highlighted throughout the storyline because none of the expressions explain the condition of the people. The protagonist moves indifferently in the world and her indifference is painfully obvious to her daughter: “She looked up, *not smiling*, to where I stood at the top of the muddy slope” (“ (16, emphasis added). The image of muddy slope points towards the inclination of the mental approach of the lady towards something that is not hard and dependable to be a strong foundation or ground. This shows the level of insecurity or timidity that the lady’s mind has been through, from where things can fall apart either way- but more likely towards negativity or pessimism.

A patient with dysfunctional neuroplasticity sometimes comes across unusual things, like difficulty in recognition. The same thing happens with the girl; she had nothing like knowing around. There always remains a sense of vacuum for people with any mental impairment. “Mariko continued to watch me carefully [...] But then, as she continued to stare up at me [...] The little girl showed no signs of recognition” (17-8). Mariko in this story experiences the emptiness and hollowness that debilitates the sense of recognition. The indifference creeps up on everything. Curiously, the indifference erodes identity of the person herself as Mariko is reduced to “[t]he little girl” down the line. The patient with cerebral dysfunction displays unusual acts that make the observer think the person has been through some mental laceration. Likewise, in the story, Mariko is found reading her fingers, studying her hands, and leaving the talker in confusion because of her indifferent expressions:

Mariko was studying her fingers... “And Mariko-San, please, you’re never to talk to customers like that” ...Mariko went on studying her hands...Mariko gave

no sign of having heard... We both glanced at Mariko's table; the child was still looking down at her hands.... Etsuko, "but you see, my daughter does not seem to share my sense of humor". She asked quietly: "Is it true what Mrs. Fujiwara told me. She says, "you were being rude to customers again. Is that true?" Mariko still gave no response. (26-7)

As Damasio points out, in *Feeling of What Happens*, the people with severe brain lesions might lose their affect and may not find anything amusing (54). These people do not manage to find happiness, humor, laughs, and giggles around. Probably, their disturbed cognition finds nothing worthy enough to laugh or giggle at. Mariko's mother also comments that her daughter does not share her sense of humor. Even the comment that one of the characters gave was to rebuke little Mariko, but, even at insult, she stands blank.

Their unusual actions of Mariko were not a matter of worry for her mother. Another possibility is that it was her way of dealing with the stressful condition of her daughter on a lighter note. Hence, she just laughed at minor things and said that her daughter was normal and that she was not having any cognitive issues. She laughed and commented that there was nothing to get alarmed about her daughter's chaotic yet calm dealing. She managed to clarify that her daughter's out-of-the-ordinary attitude was not something to be embarrassed by, and she even accepted it boldly that she found nothing to hide from the public about her daughter. To the quizzical Sachiko, she responds, "I don't think so. Really [...] there's no need to be so alarmed. Nothing will have happened to her... there's nothing I'm ashamed of. There's nothing I want to hide from anyone". (37). This resolute denial of that the issue existed was Etsuko's way of dealing with the issue.

As discussed above, the cut on Mariko's face was a mere cut for her mother. She had differenced herself up despite seeing the daughter suffering. This shows how mental disorders change the sufferer's surrounding people. Their attitudes and behaviors undergo variations. Some found relief in optimism, while others found solace in denial. The victim's mother in *A Pale View of Hills* chose optimism and behaved positively with hope for a better future. But hers is a facile optimism. Her denial mutates into blind optimism that shows that plasticity does not always bring a happy change. A better version of thinking optimistically is provided by Sachiko. Sachiko's optimism is futuristic and has its feet on reality: "But her education, what will become of that?" Sachiko laughed again. "Etsuko, I'm not about to leave for the jungle. There are such things as schools in America. And you must understand, my daughter is a very bright child. Her father was an accomplished man, and on my side too, there were relatives of the highest rank. You mustn't suppose, Etsuko, simply because you've seen her in these...in these present surroundings, that she's some peasant's child.'" (44)

Mental repression results from any physical incident that quakes the mind so much that the person finds it hard to escape that turmoil. Mariko had been through the excruciating pain of her father's death. Out of this tumult, Mariko's mother finds a way of relief in the change of place. She finds it difficult working in a noodle shop. "Etsuko, can't you appreciate how loathsome it's been for someone such as myself to work each day in a noodle shop?" (46)" She thinks it better for her to leave that place and move onto the new place.

For many reasons, mental chaos can be an after-effect of the conflicts of traditions, values, and cultures. As far as Ishiguro's characters' concept of identity

conflict is concerned, it is seen that they show a more positive inclination toward Japan than America or Britain:

The Americans, they never understood the way things were in Japan. Not for one moment have they understood. Their ways may be fine for Americans, but in Japan things are different, very different. Ogata-San sighed again. “Discipline, loyalty, such things held Japan together once. That may sound fanciful, but it’s true. People were bound by a sense of duty. Towards one’s family, towards superiors, towards the country. But now instead there’s all this talk of democracy. You hear it whenever people want to be selfish, whenever they want to forget obligations. (65)

These lines clearly describe what a divisive tradition has taken hold of society and the old loyalties are torn asunder. The morality or the values that joined up Japan, including discipline and loyalty, were the founding materials that the American generation could never get. Such sore and lamentable situations engulf the mind leaving it to suffer for a long. Probably, these nonphysical nonissues become issues to make a mind racked with such extreme pain that the mind loses some cognizance leaving the person a victim of the chaos.

In such a complicated situation, a person finds mere straws to hold on to. They know how painful and agonizing the situation will be, but they comfort themselves or console themselves by holding a frail string so that things may get better. The victims get so used to deceitful blows that they are in perpetual expectation of the next ditch coming their way. This makes them utterly indifferent to their sufferings. ““Gone? Furthermore, had he left you no message at his hotel?” Sachiko laughed. Among other things, Etsuko faces desertion of her lover, “You look so astonished, Etsuko,” she said.

“No, he had left nothing. He had gone yesterday morning; that is all they knew. To tell you the truth, I half expected this” (68).

It happens that people sometimes want to share their feelings, but they find none, but later, wherever they find someone who could listen to them, they speak up. They want someone to read the book of their life. Similarly, Mariko’s mother found Etsuko to listen to her. She forced Etsuko to ask some personal questions out of curiosity. Both were strangers to each other, but the likeness and similarity of situations brought about an air of recognition and friendliness among them. It is easy and soothing when a patient finds their Xerox copy regarding their mental condition. It is easy for them to relate to each other. No one else could feel what exactly they had been through. That is why Mariko’s mother insists that Etsuko ask her about the one she loves: “Come on, Etsuko, I insist. Ask me about him. I want you to. Ask me about him, Etsuko.... “Come on, Etsuko, ask. I want you to ask.... “But there must be, why won’t you ask? Ask me about him, Etsuko, ask me. (72).

The wars of the nations are to settle some disputes inhumanely. The nations try hard to look for victory or occupation over the enemy to solve their disputes, but they never know how much mental stress they leave for the civilians and the commoner. After and during WWII, people started experiencing alienation, fragmentation, distortion, and contortion of attitudes, beliefs, and religiosity. The people started challenging the existence of God; they found themselves stranded in a hopeless and gloomy situation. They remembered the atrocities they had been through, the bombardment, the dark tunnels where they had to reside for long, and the derelict buildings which were no more than rubble. Things were not different for Mariko. She, too, experienced unpleasant things. These stressful things always leave marks of agony and pain on the sufferers’ appearances, minds, and personalities. The pain inflicted

upon minds turns the mind into chaos that requires significant effort to heal up and recover, through what medical science says is neuroplasticity. Before the war, none of them knew what wars looked like, but WWII imprinted such deep impressions that even after the years passed, the minds could not recover themselves.

“I know it was a terrible thing that happened here in Nagasaki,” she said. “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. Furthermore, Mariko did too.” She continued to gaze at the back of her hands. (73)

Severe suffering makes people strong enough to face much more but, at moments, weak enough to get worn off the minute pains, as Mariko’s mother found distress for not managing to bring that cat of hers which used to catch spiders. “Etsuko, do you imagine little things like this distress me?” (87). Mariko’s mother is strong-headed as she planned to move on for the sake of her daughter, not for herself. She did not want to move to America for any alcoholic man; she thought that such a man could get such a woman to enjoy with. She needed not to go with her desire’s satisfaction. Instead, she wanted everything to be done for her daughter’s betterment. On finding that her lover is with another girl, she states, “I’ve no intention of accompanying some foreign drunkard to America. I’m quite happy he’s found some saloon girl to drink with him, I’m sure they deserve one another. But as far as I’m concerned, I’m going to do what’s best for Mariko, and that’s my decision” (87).

The reconciliation of Mariko’s mother’s mindset and solid emotional control of her were the things that did not let her fall apart. This speedy neuroplasticity strengthened her enough to console and look after her daughter.

A person may come across some landscapes and sites that do nothing but make a person feel relieved for some time. The writer believes that the outer atmosphere and surroundings are strong enough to de-clutter the internal environment of a person's heart, mind, and soul: "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'" (99). The sufferers mostly find healing difficult as they become rigid consciously or unconsciously. They do not find it easy to leave their comfort zone.

Nothing is forever; if one day there are dark clouds, the other day the sun will shine brighter. Once, the area was bombarded, but later, it was set again and adequately furnished. It began to flourish. The new look did not give any clue of the past destruction caused by the bombardment. Similarly, the sufferers, too, managed to walk on once they get hold of themselves: "All that area was so badly hit when the bomb fell. Nevertheless, look at it now [...] How right you are, Etsuko; we should not keep looking back to the past. The war destroyed many things, but I still have my daughter. As you say, we must keep looking forward [...] I will look forward to it. I am going to be optimistic from now on... "We should both of us be grateful really. We may have lost a lot in the war, but there's still so much to look forward to'" (111-2).

One of the victims of the Nagasaki event is so positively portrayed by the writer that it feels like a cool breeze blowing and leaving serenity among the piercing deadlocks of the depression-filled storyline. The character of Mrs. Fujiwara is a flash of aspiration. She lost her entire family in the war; she had five children, and her husband was an important man in Nagasaki. She was left with none other than her eldest son during the bombing. It was a racking incident, but she stood and managed to walk on. Etsuko draws inspiration from her courage, "I am determined to have a happy future. Mrs. Fujiwara always tells me how important it is to keep looking forward" (114). She

narrates, Mrs. Fujiwara. I assume she lost her family in the war.... “I nodded. “She had five children. And her husband was an important man in Nagasaki. When the bomb fell, they all died except her eldest son. It must have been such a blow to her, but she just kept going” (111).

The comparison of the two characters reveals that one with the lesser suffering found it hard to move on, but the other who suffered the most managed to move on with a better spirit. Such people say with a smile that it is okay to lose the last leaves because the new ones are yet to come. Such morale keeps plasticity work in a better way.

A conversation between Sachiko and Akira’s mother reveals that Sachiko was an optimistic character in contrast to the problem child that Mariko had always been for her mother. In a discussion with Akira’s mother, she portrayed her kid with pretty good adaptability. She had exemplary drawing skills that show that somehow, the kid had her mentality directed toward some adaptive modes of expression. Akira’s conversation with Mariko scratched the hidden recovery of Mariko’s plasticity. The narrative is alive to the spirit of resilience: “A game isn’t won and lost at the point when the king is finally cornered. The game is sealed when a player gives up having any strategy at all. When his soldiers are all scattered, they have no common cause, and they move one piece at a time, that’s when you’ve lost” (129). These lines open up about the writer’s insight into the concept of victory and failure. To him, failure or victory depends upon the level of strategy formation among the players. “But I believe you just said yourself, the player who cannot maintain a coherent strategy is inevitably the loser”” (129). The writer gives an example of soldiers who, with a scattered mindset, lead the army towards failure. It is not the armory for fighting that matters for the writer; it is the strategic planning that makes the person victor even before the fight.

The victims of mental chaos grow up physically; they fail to develop adequate coping mechanism. They improve in their physical age but remain undergrown psychologically. “Children become adults but they don’t change much” (131). It does not matter how strong their physique is or how adult the person is by looks, the thing that matters is the mindset that does not alter much.

If a person manages to stand out from turmoil and anarchy, then the world also admires the efforts of the consistent fighter. As far as the character of Mrs. Fujiwara is concerned, she is that sort of iron lady who manages to run a noodle shop after her husband’s death, who had been a distinguished man in the area. She never felt embarrassed about running a noodle shop; instead, she felt it was a matter of pride. She stood for her son’s future and set up a noodle shop for this noble task. She is portrayed as a humble lady who wanted to run the business and had begun with a small business:

“A great pity,” he said again. “Her husband was a distinguished man. I had much respect for him. Moreover, now she is running a noodle shop. Extraordinary.” He shook his head gravely. “I would call in and pay my respects, but then one supposes she would find that rather awkward. In her present circumstances, I mean. “Father, she is not ashamed to be running a noodle shop”. She is proud of it. She says she always wanted to run a business, however humble. I expect she would be delighted if you called on her.” (140)

Experience and reflection have a close link; one relies on the existence of the other. Memories are made when someone experiences something; after time, those memories return in the form of reflections. This is a more phenomenological or philosophical procedure than a psychological one. The writer finds memories as unreliable or untrustworthy things, these are often heavily covered by the occurrences in which one reflects or recalls, and undoubtedly, such things get applied under the

particular recollections one gathers or collects. This constant preoccupation with memories may add to the daydreaming habit as well:

Memory, I realize, can be unreliable; often, it is heavily colored by the circumstances in which one remembers, and no doubt this applies to sure of the recollections I have gathered here. For instance, I find it tempting to persuade myself it was a premonition I experienced that afternoon, that the unpleasant image which entered my thoughts that day was something altogether different — something much more intense and vivid — than the numerous daydreams which drift through one's imagination during such long and empty hours. (156)

Once a person loses their dear ones, they start missing them more and more. Off and on, they sometimes confess that they miss someone for unknown reasons. Such conditions make up the way for the plastic revolution in the human mind. "He can hear, you see. He can hear how much quieter the house is. The other morning, I found him awake and he said it reminded him of a tomb. Just like a tomb, he said. It would do my father much good to have them back again. Perhaps she will come back for his sake" (161).

The silence roars. The same happens when the character says that the house's silence is precisely like the tombs; he can listen to what the silence says. It is possible that the things that attract a person for once could be left with no attraction with the changing time, The trees of England looked so eye-catching to Etsuko once when she was with her second husband when Keiko did not commit suicide, but now, when she is with Niki, she finds nothing beautiful in those trees. It is not the landscape that changed; the eye, mind, and heart have changed.

4.4.3.2. The Unconsoled

The theory of plasticity being multi-layered, and complex increases the versatility in the dimensions of neuro and psychological study. The concept of memory gained and lost is one of the major themes of Ishiguro's writing. The surreal dealing of Mr. Ryder's personality clearly depicts one of the traits of applied plasticity: memory. The theory of plasticity gives us an idea of brain activity, like how it remembers information and, with time, how it changes its shape.

This book is a contemplation on memory, identity, and expectation. The lack of self-realization, self-recognition, and self-awareness becomes a decisive point in a person's relationships with the people he meets; until the character manages to understand the real thing. The novel deals with devastation and hopelessness. The novel seems vexatiously serpentine, but that narrative bewilderment, as convoluted as winding staircase, is nearly perfect for conveying the lost opportunities.

In *The Unconsoled*, it seems capricious that the novel's hero, the pianist Ryder, has wasted his life. He is a dexterous artist, a well-known concert pianist, and an honored public figure. Nevertheless, the narrative shows that the life of Ryder has come to nothing, especially in the personal arena. It seems the book itself is all but tangible corroboration of his debilitated state of mind. Every page is a register of splurged opportunity, a dereliction to clutch the moment, a collapse to communicate, indecisive conjecture, and a wastage of time. Crucially, the writer also loses the opportunity of connecting to the human-like figure. This becomes a book about the destructive power of love without empathy.

Ryder never tries to get inside the minds of the people he is surrounded by. He always misapprehends, misconstrues, and misdirects. This is why, by the end of the novel, Sophie says to him, "Leave us. You were always on the outside of our love. Now look

at you. On the outside of our grief too. Leave us. Go away” (532). So, he also never copes with the results for his adventures.

The whole book is about an arrested affair. Throughout the 510 pages, Ryder practices and waits to get starred in a concert that would be organized in his honor, and by the end, it never happens. He moves onto the stage to give his performance on a raised and honored platform termed a stage before a vacant auditorium. His audience had already left for their homes, leaving the crew to pack-up. There is nothing for him to stay there any longer. His globetrotting has reached a colossal, vacant nothingness. If that could not symbolize time wastage, then what else does it?

An earnest question arises whether this intended non-conclusion, this inefficacious experiment, this meritless expense of time is cloned in the reading experience. Is it just a wisecrack? Does it invent its category of badness?

Ultimately, the answer to such questions depends on a subjective or biased approach about how much one liked the book. While analyzing, I enjoyed the humor, the humanity, the strangeness, and the mystery. The act of getting to be baffled is enjoyable.

The Unconsoled can seem to thwart, dragged out, possibly even farcical or even downright ridiculous. It is hectic to grapple through a narrative where every time in the present seems to create its new past, and the future never quite arrives, where for every step you take forward, you have to take three back and a detour around the corner, too. If you try to come back around the same corner, you will end up in a completely different place.

The story goes in a dream-like situation, where apparently the past is reflected into the present and one encounters no confusion in interpretation. Something seems to have occurred in real life, but it is also revealed that it was not real. Similarly, it may

act vice versa, where something happens in a reflection, and it is thought that it is just a thought but ends up making the reality. Thus, Ryder can be Boris's father and then not Boris's father consistently in consecutive minutes of experience.

The storyline occurs in the form of the escalators that absorb some of the stairs and show the rest and then absorb the rest ones and show the absorbed ones. Everything connects, and there are clear patterns; it is just that the stairs that are going up are also going down, and everything leads back on itself.

While analyzing, it is experienced that this novel falls under the category of those roads that goes nowhere. After a complete reading, it is noticed that there is a real purpose behind it. One of the eye-openers towards the end is realizing just how hefty the narrative has been. If we move from page to page, there is a little sense of reasoned dialectics, forward motion, or even advance through time. There are some fantastic subplots. It seems fine if the concert does not happen, but the stakes of the story are connected with the concert taking place. The major question round which the story pivots is whether Mr. Ryder will cope make his family work through the reunion he envisages at his concert. The small details are less unpredictable: The findings about the happenings of a hotel owner, Hoffman's marriage, and an incident about his son's future are predicted.

The finding about Brodsky's problematic relationship also hurtles towards an ending. Even the porters get some determination. It is spectacular to see how many rickety ends are fastened up in the ending pages and how many strands there have been. Even Mr. Ryder's need for food and coffee arrives at a beautifully warming resolution when he finally gets back for more breakfast on the tram and gets himself, in the very last sentence, "a generously laden plate" (521).

In a nutshell, dozens of clever plots wind through the book, all with forward motion and emotional resonance. The initial lines show that when ordinary people are taken out just after going through suffering or harsh experiences or simply crisis-torn situations, their behavior makes them appear different from the people. The character, Mr. Ryder, had managed to remember almost everything about the musicians playing in front of him except their names. He tried hard but all in vain:

After several minutes I had succeeded in remembering all but two players, but these last two names remained beyond the rim of my recall. As I tried to remember, the sound of the fountain behind me, which at first, I had found quite soothing, began to annoy me. It seemed that if only it would stop, my memory would unlock, and I would finally remember the names. (24)

The people of the town were deeply troubled due to their apparent inability to produce a musician with any significant talent; Mr. Ryder had been asked to come and bolster their spirits. Strangely, the consciousness and self-image of this town depended on producing a virtuoso musician. The town's inhabitants seemed haunted by an event in their recent history when the town leaders provided attention and funding to a young musician who had the wrong "artistic values" (12). Mr. Ryder was not sure what this meant exactly. Mr. Ryder was confused and appalled by the town's inability to be open-minded to various modes of creative expression. Though their identity seemed tied up in producing a high-quality and globally renowned musician, they were so narrow-minded that they ignored the possibility that every musician could be proper in their creative bubbles. This idea of self-image extends to the appearance of the town. Despite the absence of blatant aggression by the people Mr. Ryder meets, the town has a claustrophobic and threatening atmosphere. This is because, even though all of the locals treated Mr. Ryder with an almost obsequious level of flattery and respect, they

continually asked him for seemingly small favors that consumed his days and attention. No one was apologetic about this – in fact, they expected it from him. Mr. Ryder did not understand why he had become the subject of these requests, but as he journeyed around the town, he began to feel a strange sense that he had been to this place before. A significant part of the surrealism of the novel lies in Mr. Ryder's inability to recognize himself or his past and his complete lack of self-awareness. He wandered in a fog, completing the requests of people he met while questioning why he had come to this town. He has been suffering from memory loss. "I could not now bring to mind just what it was he had said on that foggy morning, but I could recall well enough the impact his words had had" (47).

Things got stranger when Mr. Ryder's suspicions that he had been there before were half-confirmed by the presence of a past lover, Sophie, with whom Mr. Ryder seemed to have some extensive history that he could not remember. Sophie also had a young son, Boris. Suddenly, Ryder's friends from his childhood in England appeared, with a kind of incongruous dream logic, and it becomes clear to the reader that the events that transpire have happened before and will happen again; that, in a sense, these actions are not isolated in one time or place but are constantly becoming.

Slowly, the information about the history of Mr. Ryder's life is revealed to the reader through the actions of other characters, though his lack of self-awareness is not corrected. His past life is also revealed through the events that occur. All the while, Mr. Ryder experiences the horrific aftermath of presenting a false front to the world through the behaviors of the people in this small Germanic town where he finds himself. Friends are fake; lovers, unable to achieve successful or healthy partnerships, are alienated from each other. The people's lack of empathy in this town makes it nearly impossible not only for anyone to be happy but also for the town to achieve its goal of fostering a

creative genius. Without emotions, there is no room for this kind of transcendent creativity.

One of the weird situations was when he could not recognize his beloved Sophie and his son. Even his son did not bother to meet him. It seemed that he was angry with Mr. Ryder. Mr. Ryder could not gather his thoughts about Sophie and her kid. In a conversation with Sophie, Mr. Ryder says with complete indifference, “I don’t know, I don’t know,’ I said.’ As I keep saying, these family matters... I’m merely an outsider. How can I judge? I was simply saying it’s a possibility” (86). It seemed to him as if something of that sort had sometimes happened. This situation is what mental impairment deals with. This is how the brain distorts the thinking procedure. It is the condition that medical science struggles to plasticize. It is not the effort of a medical expert to do neuroplasticity; Rather, it is a natural process that heals the mental impairment.

These reflections are not only restricted to looks and incidents. Even the voices too create a fuss around the victim. Mr. Ryder remembers the scolding and angry voice of Sophie on a phone call that happened in the near past, and he cannot recognize it. He remembers his walk through the cobbled street up to the hotel room, where he gets a scintilla of the conversation he once had with Sophie on the phone. A very vague memory reminds him of “Number Nine”, but he does not get to know the actual thing. The character remembers the impact and influence of the voice rather than the words and the things.

The feeling of forgetfulness makes him feel like a cold air is sweeping through the soul, leaving it breathless and still. He finds it difficult to search for the address of the lady that probably lived near the chapel. Mr. Ryder feels nothing but emptiness and

nothingness. The situation is so strange and incomprehensible that Mr. Ryder fails to recollect their memories even after retracing the lost memories' footsteps.

The mist of the memories sometimes gets thickened enough to hinder the recollection of the thoughts. Silence speaks louder than words; the same silence indicates the most profound ideas forming that create deep energies for recollecting thoughts. On the current days when Mr. Ryder is in the town, he manages to listen to the silence more vigilantly. The darkness of the stray thoughts has left Mr. Ryder to join the fragmented strands to unlock the deadlocks. The thoughts that leave him alone in the crowds move him into the dark tunnels of endless paths. The fragments of memories begin to come back to Mr. Ryder in the darkness of the cinema. The memories entered the mind of Mr. Ryder in such a way that they left the mist around him. "I too turned back to the screen, but then after a few seconds certain fragments of memory began to come back to me there in the darkness of the cinema and my attention once more drifted from the film"" (94)".

The loss of memory that Mr. Ryder has experienced has not only left him to suffer but has also inflicted intense pain in the life of Sophie and her kid. After fruitless efforts, Mr. Ryder gives up and leaves the city/surroundings cold. The night outside turns cold and dark symbolizing Mr. Ryder's mental state. The past flickered and smothered like burning ash, one image shows and the other gets blurry; this is how Mr. Ryder remembers his parents. The claustrophobic environment and setting of the novel are a symbol of the suffocated thoughts of Mr. Ryder. He is unable to manage the invasion of this suffocation. The coldness of forgetfulness has led to the extreme freezing condition; it is what we call numbness; Mr. Ryder's character is passing through the same numbness and indifference. The loneliness of thoughts has left him surrendering before the lonely sites, and he is lonely in the city and the world too. Such a person

either makes his life miserable or flows freely with the flow of time. It is the quality of the dead bodies to float over the water. This is the emotional depth of Mr. Ryder. He confesses, “A sort of illness I have. It might even be part of the ageing process. After all, we get older and parts of us start to die. Perhaps we start to die emotionally too. Do you think that’s possible, Mr. Ryder? I do fear it, I do fear that might be the truth of it” (417).

The theory of applied plasticity relates more to psychology than biology. It is concerned with the type of experiences that a mind comes across. Regardless of the injury or damage the brain receives, experience induces the type of plastic change that medical sciences consider neuroplasticity or applied plasticity.

4.4.3.3 The Buried Giant

The novel *The Buried Giant* opens with the setting where ogres reside. “Icy fogs hung over rivers and marshes, serving all too well the ogres that were then still native to this land” (Ishiguro BG 3). The setting includes the depiction of *icy fogs*, which point towards lifelessness; it is the same death that a part of the human mind may encounter during a traumatic situation that may lead the sufferer to death-like numbness. This could be classified as the death of human memory or paralysis of the brain. The other point focuses on the psychological aspect, where the writer talks about desperation and sadness that walk hand in hand in the story’s background. Neuroplasticity only gets its way to the mind when it finds a space to step in.

The couple lives isolated and yet connected life: “I would say this couple lived an isolated life, but in those days, few were “isolated” in any sense we would understand” (4). This situation of isolation building toward connection may provide a metaphor for the journey of neuro-plasticity that a victim of neuro-damage may experience during the recovery phase. Another applied plasticity symbol that can be

detected from these lines, “For warmth and protection, the villagers lived in shelters, many of them dug deep into the hillside, connecting one to the other by underground passages and covered corridors.” (4). It points towards the remote procedure that a brain or a mind undergoes after suffering. None can see the step-by-step functioning of neuroplasticity, but it works, happens, and gives an outcome by working subterranean to the conscious mind.

As far as English literature is concerned, the technique of symbolism adds much more to the ornamentation of the text. Similarly, the writer’s symbol of fire talks about the invigoration of life. A life is not merely the flow of breath or what we call the beating of the heart. It is the life that is spent with loved ones. Therefore, fire and the loving warmth of memory are intertwined in the discourse of the novel: “Perhaps there had been a time when they had lived closer to the fire; a time when they had lived with their children” (5). Probably, it is the healing moment, the moment of recovery where not only the brain cells manage to bring about strong immunity, but the mindset also plans and musters up the courage to get back to the normality-the normality that was once turned into severe abnormality and which led the happy souls to live in depression for a period.

Whenever a person faces the loss of their loved ones, they lose emotional control over them. The shock leaves the person numb. His mind gets distorted for some specific time period; the same happened with Axl. He lost his loved ones and his mind; he lost his inner peace and satisfaction and was left to live in isolation and severe trauma. As a result, he could not manage his emotions and fell prey to depression. Nevertheless, over time, his brain and mind coordinated with consciousness, and the blanket of numbness shifted into the opening of clear skies, having the sun shining with the bright rays of hope on the horizon:

Earlier, outside, some fragments of remembrance had come back to him: a small moment when he was walking down the long central corridor of the warren, his arm around one of his children, his gait a little crouched not on account of age as it might be now, but simply because he wished to avoid hitting his head on the beams in the dim light.” (7)

These lines show the level of complexity that the crisscross structure hints at the complications that the victim experiences throughout the procedure. During applied plasticity, the recovery proceeds in patches or fragments. The text focuses on the same phase of flashbacks that hinder the speedy comeback of lost memories. “Perhaps these were just an elderly fool’s imaginings [...] Perhaps it was that God had never given them children”(7). Sometimes, in some cases, the victim does not accept assistance remembering the missing pieces of his memory puzzle. He manages to step into the labyrinth of the past that could drive the victim in any direction and finally lead towards a small recovery. “You may wonder why Axl did not turn to his fellow villagers for assistance in recalling the past, but this was not as easy as you might suppose...For in this community the past was rarely discussed” (7). The embargo on the discussion of the past hints at an inability to come to terms with some major traumatic event that took place in the past.

The situation of the distorted mind made the person feel as if the figures coming into his mind were mere imaginations and none was reality. He felt this at times, but after a period, he might have been nostalgic about the actual existence of the figures knocking at the forbidden doors of his mind. He felt the image of the woman that moved him at one time and had resided around him in his past. At times, he felt all right for not asking about the missing memory chunks, but after a lapse, he craved someone to diagnose the problems in his past and he needed to look for that woman:

However, now this same woman was no longer to be found anywhere, and no one seemed to wonder what had occurred or even to express regret at her absence...their response told him that they genuinely had no idea what he was talking about. "Must have been a long time ago,"... he had said. "Neither have I any memory of such a woman,"... "But the woman was no dream, and you would remember her yourself if you spared a moment to think about it. (8)

The irregular chunks of memory mostly leave the victim on a non-healing turn, from where the gloom and sadness can never leave him alone. He feels like a burning candle that sometimes smothers and soothes others but only for a minute. The memory of the past is sometimes like the victim's walk through a dark tunnel, where he finds the dimmest of the outlines of his memories and loses the hints for thoroughly retrieving the fact of the past: "Then steadily a skepticism began to spread among the listeners [...] The shepherds angrily denied bringing any such previous report, and soon the crowd was dividing between those taking the shepherds' side and those claiming some memory of the alleged episode the previous year" (11). The symbols in the text portray the actual scenario working inside the victim's mind. The text shows that the sufferer overhears the passer-byes, and he feels as if they talked about his suffering and lamented at his condition. Nevertheless, he managed to go with those comments that could not give him the complete details of the past, but he got some clues about the fact that some mishap hit him once in his life that he could not remember: "And after a while, fragments began to piece themselves together in his mind, of the missing Marta, of the danger, of how not long ago everyone had been searching for her" (12).

The confusion, mirage, and illusions are some words that give a signal towards the fuss through which the crowd had been. This complication is not only for the physical mess around the people but also for the mental complexities. The broken image

of the little girl added more to the victim's agony. This mire was not only of the images. Instead, it was of voices too. There is a guilt that leaves a person agonizing for long. In this case, there is the guilt of not protecting little Marta from the ogres.

The appearance and disappearance of the figures are one of the symptoms of a traumatic mind. There is always hope even in extreme situations; similarly, the people find hope that the man would cover up the lost situation of the lady. He may have managed to improve a matter of sensation in his lady. This consistently happens with mental psoriasis; he comes across silhouettes and delineations that keep switching in front and back in the memories. The level of curiosity always leaves room for doubts and skepticism in the broken mind. He wonders, "It's queer the way the world's forgetting people and things from only yesterday and the day before that. Like a sickness come over us all" (20).

It seems bizarre that the characters are forgetting the people, things, and events around them. It also seems like a plague of forgetfulness around the world. It is an extreme pain when one tries to remember something essential and gets blank; it is called a fly in the bonnet that neither leaves a man in peace nor lets him forget the pain. It only gives tears and mourns:

After a while, Axl could no longer remember how talk of this journey had started or what it had ever meant to them. Nevertheless, then this morning, sitting outside in the cold hour before dawn, his memory seemed partial, at least not clear, and many things had come back to him: the red-haired woman; Marta; the stranger in dark rags; other memories with which we need not concern ourselves here. (21)

Several times, the patient's condition revived, and started to be on the road to the recovery. As in the text, one relaxing morning, the man's effort did not go in vain

instead, he managed to recover the relevant thinking. He managed to get clarity in his thoughts. He remembers the appearance of Marta.

The writer beautifully relates the images with the ongoing process of applied plasticity. The submergence of the apparent mist into the gray drizzle is related to the off-and-on clearance and fogginess of the state of mind the patient has been through and is still managing in spending at least everyday life. “Our son, Axl. Do you remember our son?” ... “As she said this, softly into his chest, many fragments of memory tugged at Axl’s mind, so much so that he felt almost faint” (26).

The sufferings are powerful enough to penetrate deep into the souls and even tear apart the soul into tatters. The same happened with the character sunder-discussion, who learned about the reason and actual incident of the loss of their children; even after knowing the facts, they stood up against the world. They said “no” to the lights, “no” to the luxuries and needs, and “no” to the basics. Axl said bravely, “What does it matter, princess?” he said. “What do we need with a candle? We’re well used to moving around our room without one” (25). They stood side by side. The state of mind in which both the figures managed to walk on that is what applied plasticity terms as re-learning the forgotten. The characters somehow learned to live with some of the effects of being distorted.

Whenever the characters survive to live with whatever they are left with, they find it more painful as the hallucinations target them in a more complicated way than before. The victim experiences a sort of veil that engulfs his memory. The person copes with returning to the past to some extent, but he gets some loopholes left. He finds some gray areas he cannot remember or gather even after collecting more and more force in the direction. “Some days I remember him clear enough,” she said. “Then the next day

it's as if a veil's fallen over his memory. But our son's a fine and good man, I know that for sure" (28).

The weird situation lies in terms of an identity crisis. The person must remember himself, his national recognition, and even his residential details. The outlines of the memories make their way into the mind but cannot make a person grasp the relevant clarity. The crucially worrisome situation seems to be crueler when the person cannot remember the thing that was the most precious to them. It is the most painful and brutal thing that could ever happen to a person.

When I was outside just now, doing my best to remember all I could in the stillness, many things came back to me. However, I cannot remember our son, neither his face nor his voice, though sometimes I think I can see him when he was a small boy, and I am leading him by the hand beside the riverbank, or when he was weeping one time, and I was reaching out to comfort him. (28)

The up-and-down situation a victim of severe memory breakdown goes through causes emotional flux, where the patient means to survive by holding only a little hook of optimism. "There is another thing troubles me, princess. This village may only be a few days away, as you say. But how will we know where to find it?" (29).

The symbolism is, at a significant level, spread along the storyline. The great plain symbolizes the incredible power and supremacy a person could hold in the form of optimism. The patients in this story gave their best in trespassing the little corner of that plain. Sometimes the conditions become so gut-wrenching that the person may find relief in ruin. Even the tattered remains seem a pipe dream for the patient as the writer states that the holed tree manages to show the bright sky. The memories are so powerful that the sufferer feels the nostalgia to such an extent that he enjoys quietness. The blame is charged onto the unknown people for the things that one could not even remember

clearly. In one of the situations, the lady is offered to visit the place where there is no one except the person who wants to go there. One enjoys the solitude there. The lady refuses getting ferried, and the boatman does not even take her along. Even then, the lady blames him for what he never encountered. She blames the boatman for separating her from her husband: “You couldn’t have spoken more aptly, sir,” the old woman said. “Do I think this a charming way to spend my fading days? I’d rather be far from here, in the company of my husband, and it’s because of this boatman I’m now parted from him” (42).

Now and then, the sufferer feels as if they are stepping into and out of the past. The deception of not finding the people’s heart and appearances similar to the expected one leave the sufferer more despaired. Pure clarifications also leave uncertainty in people’s hearts because of their mistrust. The person intentionally or unintentionally makes themselves alone. The lady feels the same, stranded on a square finding no way out or having many ways to go but no way to strictly follow.

The wretchedness and despondence make the person feel depressed. In the story, the lady calls the land cursed; this shows her disturbed mental state. If one person does not remember his past life, he lives as if without a soul. The places can never be considered responsible for memory loss. The patients suffer so much that they blame others and find many harmless things responsible for their suffering. The cases of forgetfulness occur so commonly in the locality in the story that it makes the sufferers feel as if the area is haunted or the land is cursed. In actuality, it is a matter of distortion of a person’s mind.

The patient feels lonely in the gathering. The crowd could not relieve the human mind of the unbearable weight of boredom and anxiety. Such a patient finds his separate

world of imagination even in the gathering. This shows that the victim not only gets emotionally disturbed, but he also experiences mood swings.

The loss of faith is also one of the results of brain damage. The sufferer is not capable enough to be stable in living an everyday life, so it is pretty difficult for him to trust the supreme powers. Probably, he forgets the existence of supremacy too. The extreme fit of pique does not let the victim understand that God can never forget anything; it is the human attribute to forget things. “The stranger thought it might be God himself had forgotten much from our pasts, events far distant, events of the same day. And if a thing is not in God’s mind, then what chance of it remaining in those of mortal men?” (73).

The things are so messed up in the patient’s mind that he either thinks that God has forgotten the things or that he does not want the patient to remember the things. These situations seem to act as the critical points of distortion of the mind that could be recovered with the help of plasticity. Sometimes the severity of the condition may lead to a sensation of guilt as if the sufferer is getting a punishment for doing something wrong, but the issue arises when he is not even able to remember; he wishes to have been condemned with any other punishment than forgetfulness for the remembered and unremembered mistakes he has committed.

The patient’s surroundings either enhance the betterment of the patient’s plastic situation or deteriorate it. Active and adverse incidents and even words can impact the state of mind. A runner gets a fall when he hurries, and his fall makes him lose his way. Haste makes waste. Slow and steady actions rebuild and mend the lost and damaged neurons and contribute to the constructive plasticity of the brain.

The transitional setup of the memory leaves a person mentally devastated; he even forgets how he became angry. He gets angry because of forgetfulness, and his

same trait leaves him speechless when he knows that the reason behind his anger has also been wiped out from his mind. The sufferer tries to accompany the people he loves before memory loss. His partial memories help him recognize who is more caring and loving around him. He plans to live beside them to get a flashback or a remembrance of the lost version of his memory. It is like a tale with a happy ending when even a child knows not to fear twists and turns: “Axl and I would remember our life together, whatever its shape, for it has been a thing dear to us” (180).

The patient with memory loss manages to compile the things in his mind once and then loses the already aligned settlement on remembering the news of the memory loss session. His mind tethers the happenings of the present to either of the memories in the past, but the tethering is fragile enough to get broken by a light breeze of tension. The weirdness of the lost memory is that the victim feels everything turning wild and traumatic around him. His power of trust and surety leaves him stranded somewhere in the vacuum. It is similar to the blockage of vision on grassy land caused by the growth of unwanted weeds.

Memory loss may sometimes lead to swaying from the right path. The path of religiosity can even be forgotten, or the person may vacillate between piety and blasphemy. The hopelessness and despair lie deep enough to negatively target the Gods and their religious facts. The sufferer may commit a type of blasphemy. The distress suffuses so profoundly that he sometimes commits blasphemy, and the next moment, he bows down for the solution, and the solution could be whatsoever. He wants to know the way out.

Is your Christian God one to be bribed so easily with self-inflicted pain and a few prayers? Does he care so little for justice left undone?” “Our God is a god of mercy, shepherd, whom you, a pagan, may find hard to comprehend. It is no

foolishness to seek forgiveness from such a god, however great the crime. Our God's mercy is boundless. "What use is a god with boundless mercy, sir? You mock me as a pagan, yet my ancestors' gods clearly pronounce their ways and punish us severely when we break their laws. Your Christian God of mercy gives men license to pursue their greed, their lust for land and blood, knowing a few prayers and a little penance will bring forgiveness and blessing." (173)

The darkness of the mind sometimes turns towards the door of light, the door of hope and betterment. The gravity of facts itself becomes the reason for the loss of memory and the sufferer gets afraid of the regain of the memory. He avoids getting the memory back: "Yet are you so certain, good mistress, you wish to be free of this mist? Is it not better that some things remain hidden from our minds? We will have the bad ones come back too, even if they make us weep or shake with anger. For isn't it the life we have shared?" "You have no fear, then, of bad memories, mistress?" (180).

It is excruciating to get to know that the one whom the victim is depending upon for the recovery of his lost memory may be the reason for the situation was created in the first place. The dreamy situation in which the patient is found is the sickness one experiences from the trusted ones. The doubts and uncertainties behind memory loss may leave the person guilty of the unwanted disappearance of memories. As the couple in the story gets on the path of recovery, their condition worsens while blaming themselves for losing their children and, ultimately, memory loss. The memory loss induces the patients to the production of the fake memories, as the woman discusses with her husband about the man who once cheated her by getting attracted towards the other woman. It seemed a matter of doubt to both of them, so they decide that they do not want to get such memories back.

Fear of bad and painful memories pierces the couple. They try to console one another by saying that if they had been through some violent incidents, even then, they would promise not to forget the current level of love and satisfaction for each other. They are hopeful that with the death of Querig, this mist of forgetfulness will move away, leaving them clear about their thoughts. This hope acts as a catalyst in the recovery of damaged parts of the brain; mostly in medical sciences, it is not medicine, therapy, or treatment; instead, it is the synaptic resilience and the capacity for readjustment that make the person move in the direction of the speedy recovery.

Memory works as it takes us to our past days, and very often, we recall our everyday routine, even unmindfully. Nevertheless, advantages and disadvantages go hand in hand; some fallible aspects of memory exist. Dan Schacter's view seems closer to the truth about implicit and explicit memory. He wrote *The Seven Sins of Memory*, which depicts an elaborative account of how memory flops us. The seven sins include transience, absent-mindedness, blocking, misattribution, suggestibility, bias, and persistence. Incapacity to keep information is termed as transience. Absent-mindedness refers to our inability to focus on what we are performing; for example, setting down keys when we do something else, and resultantly we cannot search them out for we set them down when we were engaged in another task (Schacter 4).

Being incapable of drawing out the fact that lies at the tip of one's tongue is called blocking. This particular 'sin of memory' is crucial as regards eyewitness testimony. Suggestibility relates to eyewitness testimony and false memories embedded in the restorative process. Bias affects our memory through many modes, including consistency bias: which prompts us to swat a memory of any situation according to our present mindset or feelings. Persistence comes at the last slot, which looks fair, but it is not always the case. Emotions attached to memory make it stronger, which is

responsible for a positive aspect of persistence, but it becomes devastating when it comes to a painful experience. Schacter highlights the benefits of the sins, which outweigh the flaws. He proposed that the sins are spin-off virtues. For example, persistence can be good too. Notwithstanding any probable negative implication of sins, we can attempt to save ourselves from adverse outcomes, at least with the awareness of their existence (Schacter 163).

Sometimes the gravity of past events demands the experience of forgetfulness. It is because the love and sensation that pain can inflict between loved ones can never be stirred by any other means. The same happened with the couple; by the end, they plan to let the past go; they do not want to remember the past anymore because it does not have only good memories; it also stores the saddest ones that once remembered would have left the couple torn apart with rage and grief. They decided not to recall the painful things anymore. They get satisfied with what they were left with, the recovery of the brain in some other way. “I was wondering, princess. Could it be that our love would never have grown so strong down the years, had the mist not robbed us the way it did? Perhaps it allowed old wounds to heal” (361).

4.4.4 Conclusion

In Ishiguro's novels, particularly *The Unconsoled*, *The Buried Giant*, and *A Pale View of Hills*, the characters undergo profound psychological and emotional transformations in the face of trauma and adversity. Applying the argument based on Malabou's theory of plasticity to these novels, we saw how the characters navigate destructive plasticity.

The characters in Ishiguro's novels confront the limitations of flexibility and passive adaptation. They recognize the need to actively shape their own transformations and challenge the predetermined expectations imposed on them by society, memory,

and personal history. The novels delve into the possibilities for personal growth and self-overcoming. The characters confront their traumatic pasts, face their suppressed memories, and embark on journeys of self-discovery and reinvention. Although they do not always succeed, they demonstrate a willingness to reshape themselves and their lives through intentional efforts and self-directed changes.

As the characters grapple with their trauma, they engage in various techniques that cultivate plasticity. They undergo psychotherapy, engage in introspection and reflection, confront suppressed emotions, and seek to restructure their cognitive and emotional frameworks. These techniques enable them to actively mold their thoughts, behaviors, and identities. Ishiguro's novels highlight the plasticity of the characters' minds and the potential for rewiring their neural networks. Through their experiences, the characters challenge their preconceived notions, acquire new knowledge, and engage in cognitive and emotional growth. They actively seek novel experiences, engage in artistic pursuits, and learn from their interactions with others, harnessing the power of neuroplasticity to shape their perceptions and beliefs.

The characters in Ishiguro's novels demonstrate resilience in the face of adversity. They confront the challenges posed by their traumatic experiences, navigate through uncertain and treacherous landscapes, and adapt to the changing circumstances. By cultivating emotional flexibility, developing adaptive strategies, and learning from setbacks, they exhibit the ability to bounce back and cope with the trials they encounter. Ishiguro's characters take an active role in their own healing and personal growth. Through self-reflection, self-compassion, and a sense of agency, they make deliberate choices and take intentional actions to shape their desired outcomes. They challenge societal expectations, confront their fears, and strive to regain control over their lives.

The characters in Ishiguro's novels embody the principles of plasticity outlined by Malabou. They navigate the process of ontological metamorphosis, survive destructive plasticity, and strive to become masters of their own lives. By understanding the distinction between plasticity and flexibility, embracing transformative potential, employing techniques for cultivating plasticity, recognizing the power of neuroplasticity, building resilience, and emphasizing self-directed change, these characters embark on transformative journeys.

Drawing from Mr. Ryder's experiences and characteristics, we explored existing techniques of applied plasticity that may be relevant to his care. For example, Mr. Ryder is depicted as struggling with memory issues or cognitive decline; interventions such as cognitive training exercises, brain stimulation techniques, or neurorehabilitation programs could be considered. These techniques enhance neural plasticity and promote cognitive functioning in individuals with neurological conditions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

In the selected texts of Ishiguro, trauma-stricken characters navigate the challenges of destructive plasticity by finding ways to adapt and endure. Despite the profound transformations they undergo, these characters display resilience and a will to persevere. They have been shown to employ various coping mechanisms, such as repression, denial, or the creation of alternative identities, to shield themselves from the full impact of their traumatic experiences. By exploring the psychological and emotional landscapes of these characters, Ishiguro sheds light on the complex process of survival in the face of destructive plasticity.

In Ishiguro's selected works, the process of ontological metamorphosis unfolds as a result of traumatic experiences that disrupt the characters' sense of self and identity. Through these experiences, the characters undergo profound shifts in their understanding of themselves and the world around them. The boundaries of their existence become blurred, and they grapple with questions of memory, perception, and the fundamental nature of their being. Ishiguro's exploration of ontological metamorphosis invites readers to contemplate the fluid and malleable nature of human identity and the transformative power of trauma.

Ishiguro's fiction often delves into the concept of mental Darwinism, which refers to the survival of the fittest within the realm of the mind. His characters are frequently confronted with internal struggles, emotional conflicts, and existential dilemmas. Through their experiences, Ishiguro explores the interplay between individual psychology and the broader socio-cultural environment. He examines how

characters adapt, compete, and evolve in response to the challenges they face, shedding light on the complexities of human nature and the intricacies of mental survival.

The dynamics of applied plasticity refer to the processes through which individuals actively engage with and shape their own neuroplasticity to enhance their well-being and personal growth. By understanding the brain's capacity for change and adaptation, individuals can harness the power of plasticity to cultivate positive habits, develop resilience, and overcome the impact of traumatic experiences. Applied plasticity involves practices such as cognitive therapy, mindfulness, and self-reflection, which can help individuals rewire their neural pathways, promote emotional healing, and foster personal transformation. By mastering the dynamics of applied plasticity, individuals can take an active role in their own self-development, leading to improved mental health, increased self-awareness, and a greater sense of empowerment and control over their lives.

Through a textual analysis of Kazuo Ishiguro's selected texts, this research has shed light on the survival strategies employed by trauma-stricken characters in the face of destructive plasticity. Drawing on Catherine Malabou's theory of plasticity, the study has demonstrated that ontological metamorphosis is a central process underlying the characters' transformation. It has been revealed that the metamorphic phase triggered by psychological trauma not only affects the characters' psychological well-being but also induces radical modifications in their behavior patterns.

The study has elucidated the ways in which Ishiguro's works engage with the concept of mental Darwinism, portraying characters' adaptation and evolution in response to their traumatic experiences. The characters' journeys serve as narratives of resilience, depicting their efforts to navigate the challenges of destructive plasticity and find meaning in their lives.

Furthermore, the research has highlighted the dynamics of applied plasticity as a means for individuals to master themselves. Techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapies, mindfulness meditation, and neurofeedback training have been identified as tools that promote self-directed change and facilitate personal growth. By harnessing the inherent plasticity of the human brain and engaging in intentional practices, individuals can cultivate resilience, adaptability, and cognitive enhancement.

By bringing together behavioral neuroscience, trauma studies, phenomenology, and literature, this research has successfully bridged disciplinary boundaries and demonstrated the interconnectedness of these fields. It has challenged the notion that literature and physical science are epistemological opposites, emphasizing their complementary nature in understanding human experiences.

The study's findings have affirmed the relevance of philosophy in the modern world. Philosophy provides a framework for exploring the complexities of human existence and offers insights into self-mastery and personal transformation. By recognizing their own agency and capacity for change, individuals can actively shape their lives and improve their well-being.

This research has contributed to the understanding of destructive plasticity, ontological metamorphosis, and the dynamics of applied plasticity within the context of Kazuo Ishiguro's fiction. By exploring the experiences of trauma-stricken characters, the study underscores the importance of resilience, adaptation, and self-directed change in overcoming adversity. It underscores the practical implications of plasticity theory, emphasizing the potential for individuals to become masters of their own lives by working on themselves and embracing their capacity for transformation. Ultimately, the research aims to inspire individuals to recognize their inner strength and empower them to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives.

Throughout the analysis, it became evident that trauma not only affects individuals psychologically but also brings about physical changes in the brain. Destructive plasticity can lead to memory loss and an indifference to pleasure and shocks. The characters in Ishiguro's works undergo a metamorphic phase, wherein their sense of self undergoes transformation. They grapple with the challenges of identity, memory, and emotional well-being in the face of traumatic experiences.

Moreover, our study sought to bring together the realms of behavioral neuroscience, trauma studies, phenomenology, and literature. By employing Malabou's theory of plasticity, this study bridged the gap between scientific understanding and the subjective experiences of trauma in literature. This interdisciplinary approach allowed us to shed light on the intricate dynamics of human consciousness, adaptation, and resilience in the face of adversity.

Furthermore, our research highlighted the relevance of philosophy in today's world and challenged the notion that literature and physical science are epistemological opposites. By drawing connections between philosophy, literature, and the understanding of trauma, the study demonstrated the capacity of literature to provide valuable insights into the human condition and the potential for personal transformation.

The practical implications of the theory of plasticity were explored, with the aim of improving the quality of life for individuals affected by destructive plasticity. While complete restoration of selfhood may not always be achievable in cases of severe brain damage, the brain's inherent plasticity offers opportunities for recovery, adaptation, and the improvement of cognitive functions. Medical interventions, rehabilitation therapies, and external support systems can play crucial roles in aiding

individuals in their journey towards self-mastery and enhancing their overall well-being.

5.2 Recommendations for Future research

Conducting a comparative analysis of trauma-stricken characters in the selected texts of other authors or genres to further explore the themes of destructive plasticity and ontological metamorphosis might be a fruitful endeavor. This comparative approach would provide a broader understanding of how different authors depict and address trauma in their narratives. The present study strongly advocates collaborations between literature scholars, behavioral neuroscientists, trauma specialists, and phenomenologists to deepen the integration of these fields. By working together, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between trauma, plasticity, and human experience. Investigating how cultural and contextual factors influence the experience of trauma and the process of ontological metamorphosis will open up new avenues for the scholars of literary studies. Analyzing Ishiguro's works in the context of different cultural backgrounds or historical periods to explore how these factors shape the characters' responses to trauma is certainly the topic that demands further enquiry, and I will continue to work towards that end.

By pursuing these avenues of future research, scholars can deepen their understanding of trauma and plasticity, and further explore the transformative potential of literature in bridging the gap between physical science, human experiences, and philosophical inquiries.

Works Cited

- Abraham, Wickliffe C., and Anthony Robins. "Memory retention—the synaptic stability versus plasticity dilemma." *Trends in neurosciences* 28.2 (2005): 73-78.
- Abson, David J., et al. "Leverage points for sustainability transformation." *Ambio* 46 (2017): 30-39.
- Ansbacher, Heinz L., and Rowena R. Ansbacher. "The individual psychology of Alfred Adler." *New York, NY: Basic*. 1956.
- Alcott, Blake. "Jevons' paradox." *Ecological economics* 54.1 (2005): 9-21.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. and Martin Jay. *Remembering the Holocaust: A Debate*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Alexander Jeffrey C., Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. "Toward a theory of cultural trauma." *Cultural trauma and collective identity* 76.4 (2004): 620-639.
- Allen, Kristie M. "Habit in George Eliot's 'The Mill on the Floss.'" *Studies in English Literature* (2017): 831-852.

- Antze, Paul, and Michael Lambek. *Tense past: Cultural essays in trauma and memory*.
Routledge, 2016.
- Aristotle. "De Anima." *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, edited by Jonathan Barnes,
vol. 1, Princeton University Press, 1996, pp. 633-711.
- Aristotle. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Ed. Richard McKeon. New York: Random
House, 1941.
- AtKisson, Alan. *The Sustainability Transformation: How to Accelerate Positive
Change in Challenging Times*. Now York: Routledge, 2012.
- Bain, Alexander. "International Settlements: Ishiguro, Shanghai, Humanitarianism."
NOVEL: A Forum on fiction, Vol.40, No.3 (2017): 240-264.
- Bashir, Shahid, et al. "Changes in Cortical Plasticity after Mild Traumatic Brain Injury."
Restorative Neurology and Neuroscience, vol. 30, no. 4, 2012, pp. 277-282.
- Bear, Mark F. "A synaptic basis for memory storage in the cerebral cortex."
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 93.24 (1996): 13453-
13459.
- Begley, Sharon. *Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals
Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*. Ballantine Books,
2007.
- Bergson, Henri. *Creative Evolution*. Translated by Arthur Mitchell, Macmillan, 1911.
- Bleakley, Alan. *Medical humanities and medical education: how the medical
humanities can shape better doctors*. Routledge, 2015.

- Blok, V. *Ernst Ju'nger's Philosophy of Technology: Heidegger and the Poetics of the Anthropocene*. New York and London: Routledge, 2017.
- Blok, Vincent. "Establishing the truth: Heidegger's reflections on Gestalt." *Heidegger Studies* 27 (2011): 101-118.
- Boltanski, Luc. Eve Chiapello. *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. Trans. Gregory Elliott. New York: Verso, 2005.
- Bonaparte, Marie, Anna Freud, and Ernst Kris. "The origins of psychoanalysis." *Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess* (1954): 1887-1904.
- Bremmer, J.N. *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Bremmer, J.N. *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Breuer, Joseph and Sigmund Freud. *Studies in Hysteria*. Trans. A. A. Brill. New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing, 1937.
- Brody, Howard. "Defining the medical humanities: three conceptions and three narratives." *Journal of Medical Humanities* 32 (2011): 1-7.
- Bruner, Jerome. *A Study of Thinking*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1956.
- Bryck, Richard L., and Philip A. Fisher. "Training the brain: practical applications of neural plasticity from the intersection of cognitive neuroscience, developmental psychology, and prevention science." *American Psychologist* 67.2 (2012): 87.

- Bullmore, Edward. *The Inflamed Mind: A Radical New Approach to Depression*. Picador, 2018.
- Butler, Judith. "Critique, dissent, disciplinarity." *Critical Inquiry* 35.4 (2009): 773-795.
- Canguilhem, Georges. *Knowledge of Life*. Fordham University Press, 2008.
- . *The Normal and the Pathological*. Zone Books, 1992.
- Cantor, Nancy, and Hazel Markus. *The Concept of Self in Psychology. The Self in Social Psychology*, edited by Roy Baumeister, Psychology Press, 1995, pp. 42-65.
- Cantor, Nancy, et al. "Life Tasks, Self-Concept, Ideals, and Cognitive Strategies in a Life Transition." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 61, no. 1, 1991, pp. 132-143.
- Carter, Marion Hamilton. "Darwin's Idea of Mental Development." *The American Journal of Psychology* 9.4 (1898): 534-559.
- Caruth, Cathy. "Unclaimed experience: Trauma and the possibility of history." *Yale French Studies* 79 (1991): 181-192.
- . "Introduction to Psychoanalysis: Trauma and Culture." Vol. 48. *American Imago*, 1991. 1 vols.
- . *Explorations in memory*. Baltimore/London (1995): 2012-13.
- . *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history*. JHU Press, 1996.
- . *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history*. JHU press, 1996.

- Changeux, Jean-Pierre, and Paul Ricoeur. *What makes us think? a neuroscientist and a philosopher argue about ethics, human nature, and the brain*. Princeton University Press, 2021.
- Chen, Pauline W. "Lessons from the Beside Exam". 2009. 04 09 2014
<www.nytimes.com/2009/02/13/health/12chen.html?_r=2&>.
- Chen, Yu-Hsiang, et al. "Profound Deficits in Hippocampal Synaptic Plasticity after Traumatic Brain Injury and Seizure Is Ameliorated by Prophylactic Levetiracetam." *Oncotarget*, vol. 9, no. 14, 2018, pp. 11515.
- Chiapperino, Luca, and Giovanni Boniolo. "Rethinking medical humanities." *Journal of Medical Humanities* 35 (2014): 377-387.
- Churchland, Patricia Smith. *Touching a nerve: The self as brain*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2013.
- Collingridge, Graham L., et al. "Long-term depression in the CNS." *Nature reviews neuroscience* 11.7 (2010): 459-473.
- Connor, Kathryn M. "Assessment of resilience in the aftermath of trauma." *Journal of clinical psychiatry* 67.2 (2006): 46-49.
- Connor, Steven. *The book of skin*. Cornell University Press, 2004.
- Craps, Stef. *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds*. Vol. 2. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Crawford, Paul, et al. "Health humanities: the future of medical humanities?" *Mental Health Review Journal* 15.3 (2010): 4-10.

Crews, Frederick. *The Memory Wars: Freud's Legacy in Dispute*. London: Granta, 1997.

Crews, Frederick. *The Memory Wars: Freud's Legacy in Dispute* London. Granta (1997).

Cyrulnik, Boris. *Resilience: How your inner strength can set you free from the past*. Penguin UK, 2009.

Damasio, Antonio. (1999). *The feeling of what happens: Body and emotion in the making of consciousness*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

---. *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, sorrow, and the feeling brain*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2003.

---. *Descartes' Error: Emotions, Reasons, and the Human Brain*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005.

Damlé, Amaleena. *Becoming of the Body: Contemporary Women's Writing in French*. Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

D'Alisa, Giacomo, Federico Demaria, and Giorgos Kallis, eds. *Degrowth: a vocabulary for a new era*. Routledge, 2014.

De Man, Paul. *Allegories of reading: figural language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust*. Vol. 16. Yale University Press, 1979.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *What is philosophy?* Columbia University Press, 1994.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Kafka: Toward a minor literature*. Vol. 30. U of Minnesota Press, 1986.

- . *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989.
- . *Spinoza: Practical philosophy*. City Lights Books, 1988.
- . *Expressionism in philosophy: Spinoza*. Princeton University Press, 2021.
- Delgado, José MR. "Integrative activity of the brain." *The Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* 40.4 (1968): 334.
- Dennett, Daniel C. *The Identities of Persons*. Ed. A.O. Rorty. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
- . *Consciousness Explained*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1991.
- Denny C.A., Kheirbek M.A., Alba E. L., Tanaka K.F., Brachman R. A., Laugham K.B., Tomm N.K., Turi G.F., Losonczy A., Hen R. "Hippocampal Memory Traces are Differentially Modulated by Experience, Time, and Adult Neurogenesis." *Neuron*. 83 (201): 189-201.
- Derrida, Jacques. "The University Without Condition." *Without Alibi*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002. 202-37.
- . *On Touching-Jean-Luc Nancy*. Trans. Christine Lrizarry. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- . *This Strange Institution Called Literature D'Attridge*. Trans. Aporias. London: Routledge, 1993. 33-75.

Descartes, Rene. *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason and Seeking Truth in the Science*. Ed. J Veitch. Trans. J Veitch. Edinburgh, Scotland: Sutherland & Knox, 1850.

---. *Meditations on first philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, 1996. (Original work published 1641)

---. *Passion of the Soul*. Trans. Jonathan Bennett. 2010.

Detienne, Marcel, and Jean-Pierre Vernant. "Cunning intelligence in Greek culture and society, trans." *Janet Lloyd (Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1978)*35 (1978).

Dharmyal, Saima A., Junaid Tayyab, and Mudassir Ahmad. "Behavioral Neuroscience, Traumatology, and Phenomenology on the Single Platform of Literature Ishguro's Fiction." *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2022, 880-894.

Doidge, Norman. *The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science*. Penguin, 2007.

Dreyfus, Hubert L. "Phenomenology and mechanism." *Noûs*(1971): 81-96.

Dudai, Yadin, and Mary Carruthers. "The Janus face of Mnemosyne." *Nature* 434.7033 (2005): 567-567.

Duras, Marguerite. *The lover*. Pantheon, 2011.

---. *Marguerite Duras Speaks to Jerom e Beaujour*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990. Durston, H E Hulshoff Pol, B J Casey, J N Giedd, J K Buitelaar, H van

- Engeland. "Anatomical MRI of the Developing Human Brain: What have we learned?" *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* 40 (2001): 1012-1020.
- Ebbinghaus, Herman. *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology*. Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1913.
- Edelman, Gerald M. *Neural Darwinism: The theory of neuronal group selection*. Basic books, 1987.
- Edwards, Paul. "The encyclopedia of philosophy." (1967).
- Eliot, Thomas Stearns. *Four quartets*. Faber & Faber, 2009.
- Epstein, M. *Thoughts Without a Thinker*. New York: Basic Books, 1995.
- Erikson, Kai, and Cathy Caruth. "Trauma: Explorations in memory." *Notes on Trauma and Community* (1996).
- Erikson, Kai. "Notes on Trauma and Community." *American Imago* 48.4 (1991): 455-472.
- Errinern, Wiederholen and Durcharbeiten." *Internationale Zeitschrift fur artztliche Psychoanalyse* 12 (1966): 145-157.
- EU. "Sustainability and Circular Economy." 2017.
- Federico, Demaria, Francois Schneider, Filka Sekulova and Joan Martinez-Alier. "What is Degrowth? From an Activise Slogan to a Social Movement." *Environmental Values* 22.2 (2013): 191-215.

- Felman, Shoshana. "In an Era of Testimony: Claude Lanzmann's Shoah." *Yale French Studies* 79 (1991): 39-81.
- . "Turning the screw of interpretation." *Yale French Studies* 55/56 (1977): 94-207.
- Figley, Charles.R. *Trauma and its Wake*. Vol. 2. New York: Brunner-Mazel, 1985-86.
- Flew, A. *Body, Mind and Death*. New York: Macmillan, 1964.
- Foucault, Michel. *Society Must Be Defended*. Trans. David Macey. London: Allen Lane, 2003.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Screen Memories*. Vol. 3. London: Hogarth Press, 1899.
- . "Thoughts for the times on war and death." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*. 1957. 273-300.
- . *Beyond the pleasure principle*. Penguin UK, 2003.
- . *Three case histories*. Simon and Schuster, 1963.
- Jeannerod, Marc. *La Nature De l'esprit*. Paris: Odile Jacob, 2002.
- Gallagher, Shaun. *How the Body Shapes the Mind*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.
- Gammage, Jonathan O. "Trauma and Historical Witnessing: Hope for Malabou's New Wounded." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2016, pp. 404-413.

- Gao, Rui, and Jeffrey C. Alexander. "Remembrance of things past: Cultural trauma, the "Nanking massacre," and Chinese identity." (2012).
- Gasche, Rodolphe. "One More Division." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 11 (2011): 31-44.
- Gazzaniga, Michael S. *The Mind's Past*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- . "The Split Brain in Man." *Scientific American*, vol. 223, no. 4, 1970, pp. 84-90.
- . *The Consciousness Instinct: Unraveling the Mystery of How the Brain Makes the Mind*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018.
- Geake, John. "Educational Neuroscience and Neuroscientific Education: In Search of a Mutual Middle-Way." *Research Intelligence* 92 (2005): 10-13.
- Geels, Frank. "Distruption and Low-Carbon System Transformation: Progress and New Challenges in Socio-technical Transition Research and the Multi-level Perspective." *Energy Research & Social Science* 37 (2018): 224-231.
- Georgescu-Roegen, N. *The Entropy Law adn the Economic Problem*. In: Bonaiuti M (ed.) *From Bioeconomics to Degrowth*. London and New York: Routledge, 1970.
- Giannakopoulos, Giorgos. "Out of the Ruins of Dresden: Destructive Plasticity in Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five." *Ruins in the Literary and Cultural Imagination* (2019): 145-158.
- Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Trans. Dana Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

- Goel, Vinod, and Raymond J. Dolan. "The functional anatomy of humor: segregating cognitive and affective components." *Nature neuroscience* 4.3 (2001): 237-238.
- Gonclaves, John, et al. "Adult Neurogenesis in the hippocampus: From Stem Cells to Behavior." *Cell* 167 (2016): 897-914.
- Graves, Alex, et al. "Hybrid computing using a neural network with dynamic external memory." *Nature* 538.7626 (2016): 471-476.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Greenfield, Susan A. *The Human Brain: A Guided Tour*. Basic Books, 2002.
- Griffin, Gabriele. "Science and the cultural imaginary: the case of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Textual Practice* 23.4 (2009): 645-663.
- Guo, Deyan. "Trauma, Memory and History in Kazuo Ishiguro's Fiction." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* Vol. 2. No. 12 (2012): pp. 2508-2516.
- Hamilton, Clive. *Earthmasters: The Dawn of the Age of Climate Engineering*. Yale MI: Yale University Press, 2013.
- Han, Byung-Chul. *The Burnout Society*. Stanford University Press, 2015.
- Harrison, Kathryn. *The Kiss*. Vol. 2. London: Fourth Estate Limited, 1998.
- Hartman, Geoffrey H. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies." *New Literary History* 26.3 (1995): 537-563.

- Hayashi-Takagi, Akiko, et al. "Labelling and optical erasure of synaptic memory traces in the motor cortex." *Nature* 525.7569 (2015): 333-338.
- Hebb, Donald Holding. *The Organization of Behavior: A Neuropsychological Theory*. London: Wiley and Sons, 1949.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Harper & Row, 1927.
- . "The question concerning technology." *New York* 214 (1977).
- Henri, Bergson. *Matter and Memory*. Trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. New York: Zone, 1988.
- Herindrasti, V. L. Sinta. "Sapiens A Brief History of Humankind." *Kilas Balik Evolusi Manusia Dan Tantangan Ke Depan* (2019).
- Herman, David. *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.
- . *Emergence of mind: Representations of consciousness in narrative discourse in English*. U of Nebraska Press, 2001.
- Herman, Judith Lewis. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. Basic Books, 1992.
- Herman, Judith. "Trauma and Recovery." *The Aftermath of Violence-From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (2012).
- Howard, Ben. "A Civil Tongue: The Voice of Kazuo Ishiguro." *The Sewanee Review* 109.3 (2017): 398-417.

Howard, Brian. "A Civil Tongue: The Voice of Kazuo Ishiguro." *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 109, no. 3, 2001, pp. 398-417.

Huyssen, Andreas A. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. California: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *A Pale View of Hills*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983.

---. *Never Let Me Go*. London: Faber, 2005.

---. *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro* Maya Jaggi. 2008.

---. *The Unconsoled*. Vintage, 2012.

---. *BOMB Swift Graham*. New Art Publications, 29 10 2017. 22-23. Jablonka, Eva, and Marion J. Lamb. "Precis of Evolution in Four Dimension." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 30.4 (2007).

James, Ian. *The New French Philosophy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012. James, William. *The Principles of Psychology*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1890.

---. *Mind*. Vol. 9. 1884.

Janani, K. S., and Manali Karmakar. "The Violation of the Female Body: Violence, Trauma and Agency in Roxane Gay's *An Untamed State*." *SPAST Abstracts* 1.01 (2021).

Janet, Oppenheim. *Shattered Nerves: Doctors, Patients and Depression in Victorian England*. London: Oxford University Press, 1991.

- Jodi, Tommerdahl. "A Model for Bridging the Gap between Neuroscience and Education." *Oxford Review of Education* 36.1 (2010): 97-109.
- John, Bruer. "Education and the Brain: A Bridge Too Far." *Educational Researcher* 26.8 (1997): 4-16.
- Jones, Tony., Wear, D. and Friedman, L.D. *Health Humanities Reader*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2014.
- Josselyn, Sheena A., Stefan Köhler, and Paul W. Frankland. "Finding the engram." *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 16.9 (2015): 521-534.
- Judt, Tony. *Ill fares the land*. Penguin, 2011.
- Justin, Garson. *What Biological Functions are and Why they Matter*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Kahneman, Daniel, Edward Diener, and Norbert Schwarz, eds. *Well-being: Foundations of hedonic psychology*. Russell Sage Foundation, 1999.
- Kai, Mikkonen. "From Metatropes to Textual Revision." *Theories of Metamorphosis* 30.2 (1996): 309-340.
- Kallis, Giorgos, Christian Kerschner, and Joan Martinez-Alier. "The economics of degrowth." *Ecological Economics* 84 (2012): 172-180.
- Kansteiner, Wulf. "Genealogy of a category mistake: a critical intellectual history of the cultural trauma metaphor." *Rethinking history* 8.2 (2004): 193-221.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by J. M. D. Meiklejohn, Routledge, 1787.

- Keen, Suzanne. *Empathy and the Novel*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Kemp, Anne, and Denise Manahan-Vaughan. "Hippocampal long-term depression: master or minion in declarative memory processes?." *Trends in neurosciences* 30.3 (2007): 111-118.
- Kemp, René. "Technology and the transition to environmental sustainability: the problem of technological regime shifts." *Futures* 26.10 (1994): 1023-1046.
- Kempermann, Gerd, H. Georg Kuhn, and Fred H. Gage. "More hippocampal neurons in adult mice living in an enriched environment." *Nature* 386.6624 (1997): 493-495.
- Kihlstrom, John F. *Handbook of Personality*. Ed. L. Pervin. New York: Guilford, 1990.
- . "The Cognitive Unconscious." *Science*, vol. 237, no. 4821, 1987, 1445-1452. doi: 10.1126/science.3629249.
- Kondiles, Beth R., and Paul J. Horner. "Myelin Plasticity, Neural Activity, and Traumatic Neural Injury." *Developmental neurobiology*, vol. 78, no. 2, 2018, 108-122.
- Konorski, Jerzy. *Conditioned Reflexes and Neuron Organization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection*. Tavistock Publications, 1966.
- LaCapra, Dominick. ""Trauma, Absence, Loss." *Critical Inquiry* (1999): 696-727.

Langs, Robert. "Mental Darwinism and the Evolution of the Emotion-Processing Mind." *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 50.1 (1996). 123-139.

Laplanche, Jean, and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis. *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*. Karnac Books, 1973.

---. *Essays on otherness*. Psychology Press, 1999.

Lashley, Karl Spencer. *Cerebral Mechanisms in Behavior*. Ed. L.A Jeffers. New York: Wiley, 1950.

---. "Basic neural mechanisms in behavior." *Psychological review* 37.1 (1930): 1.

Latouche, Serge. *Farewell to Growth*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.

LeDoux, Joseph E. *The emotional brain: The mysterious underpinnings of emotional life*. Simon and Schuster, 1998.

LeDoux, Joseph. *The emotional brain: The mysterious underpinnings of emotional life*. Simon and Schuster, 1998.

---. *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are*. New York: Penguin Books, 2003.

Lewis, Barry. "Atlantic Review." *South Atlantic Modern Language Association* 69.1 (2017): 125-127.

Leys, Ruth. *Trauma: A genealogy*. University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Kay & Troutman, 1847.

- Loftus, Elizabeth, and Katherine Ketcham. *The myth of repressed memory: False memories and allegations of sexual abuse*. Macmillan, 1996.
- Lorek, Sylvia, and Joachim H. Spangenberg. "Sustainable consumption within a sustainable economy—beyond green growth and green economies." *Journal of cleaner production* 63 (2014): 33-44.
- Luckhurst, Roger. "The Science-fictionalization of Trauma: Remarks on Narratives of Alien Abduction." *Science Fiction Studies* 25.1 (1998): 29-52.
- Luckhurst, Roger. *The traumaquestion*. Routledge, 2008.
- Luis, Bunnel. *My Last Sigh*. New York: Knopf, 1983.
- Luria, Aleksandr Romanovich. *The Working Brain*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- . *Higher Cortical Functions in Man*. Trans. Basil Haigh. New York: Basic Books, 1982.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Vol. 10. U of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- . "The postmodern condition." *The Postmodern Turn: New Perspectives on Social Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England (1994): 27-38.
- Malabou, Catherine. *Before Tomorrow: Epigenesis and Rationality*. Polity, 2016.
- . *Changing Difference*. Translated by Carolyn Shread, Polity Press, 2011.
- . *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic*. Routledge, 2004.
- . *The Heidegger Change: On the Fantastic in Philosophy*. Polity Press, 2016.

---. *The New Wounded: From Neurosis to Brain Damage*. Fordham University Press, 2012.

---. *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* Translated by Sebastian Rand, Fordham University Press, 2008.

---. *Plasticity at the dusk of writing: Dialectic, destruction, deconstruction*. Columbia University Press, 2010.

---. *The Heidegger change: On the fantastic in philosophy*. State University of New York Press, 2011.

Malabou, Catherine, and Carolyn Shread. *Ontology of the accident: an essay on destructive plasticity*. Polity Books, 2012.

Malabou, Catherine, Lena Taub, and Tyler Williams. "Darwin and the Social Destiny of Natural Selection." *theory@ buffalo* 16 (2012): 144.

Malafouris, Lambros. "Beads for a Plastic Mind: The Blind Man's Stick (BMS) Hypothesis and the Active Nature of Material Culture." *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 18.3 (2008): 401-14. Mark, Seltzer. "Wounded Culture." *Trauma in the Pathological Public* 80 (1997): 3-26.

Markus H.R., and S. Kitayama. *Psychol.Rev.* Vol. 98. 1991.

Markus, Hazel R., and Shinobu Kitayama. "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation." *Psychological Review*, vol. 98, no. 2, 1991, pp. 224-253.

- Martínez-Alier J, Pascual U, Vivien FD. "Sustainable De-growth: Mapping the Context, Criticism and Future Prospects of an Emergent Paradigm." *Ecological Economics* 69.9 (2010): 1741-1747.
- Martyn Evans Rolf, Ahlzen Lona Heath and Jane Macnaughton. *Medical Humanities Companion*. Oxford: Radcliffe Publishing, 2008.
- Marx, Karl. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Progress Publishers, 1859.
- Masson, Jeffrey Moussaieff. *The Assault on Truth: Freud and Child Sexual Abuse*. London: Fontana, 1992.
- McAvoy K.M., Scobie K.N., Berger S., Russo C., Guo N., Decharatanachart P., Vega-Ramirez H., Miake-Lye S., Whalen M., Nelson M. "Modulating Neuronal Competition Dynamics in the Dentate Gyrus to Rejuvenate Aging Memory Circuits." *Neuron* 11 (2016): 1356-1373.
- McCloskey, Kiran, and Blair T. Johnson. "You are what you repeatedly do: Links between personality and habit." *Personality and Individual Differences* 181 (2021): 111000.
- McEwan, Ian. *Saturday*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2005.
- Merzenich, Dr. Michael. *Soft-wired: how the new science of brain plasticity can change Your Life*. San Francisco: Calif : Parnassus Pub, 2013.
- . *Soft-Wired: How the New Science of Brain Plasticity Can Change Your Life*. Parnassus Publishing, 2013.

- Monnickendam, Andrew. "Getting it All in the Right Order: The Love Plot, Trauma and Ethical Uncertainty in Rachel Seiffert's *Afterwards*." *Alicante Journal of English Studies*, vol. 29, 2016, pp. 183-197, doi:10.14198/raei.2016.29.10.
- Munroe, Ruth. L. *Schools of Psychoanalytic Thought*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1955.
- Murphy, Nancey, Theo C. Meyering, and Michael A. Arbib. *Neuroscience and the Person*. Ed. Robert John Russell. Vatican Observatory Publ., 1999.
- Naeser Margaret.A, Alexander M.P, Helm-Estabrook N, Levine H.L, Laughlin S.A & Geschwind N. "aphasia With Predominantly Subcortical lesion Sites: Description of Three Capsular/Putaminal Aphasia Syndromes." *Archives of Neurology* 39 (1982): 2-14.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Ed. B. Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1882-2001.
- . *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Penguin Classics, 1883.
- . *The will to power*. Vintage, 1968.
- Nowell, April. "How Things Shape the Mind: A Theory of Material Engagement by Lambros Malafouris". Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2013. (2015): 195-196.
- Osler, William. *Aequanimitas*. 3rd. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1932.
- Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Trans. Illinois D.E. Hill. Bolchazy: Carducci Publishers, 1985.

- Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “plasticity, n., sense 1”, April 2023.
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4394435058>>Palmer, Alan. *Fictional Minds*.
Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008.
- Pascual-Leone, Alvaro, et al. "The Plastic Human Brain Cortex." *Annual Review of Neuroscience*, vol. 34, 2011, 571-597.
- Pasi, Heikkurinen. "Nature and Space." *Degrowth: A metamorphosis in being* 2.3
(2019): 528-547.
- Phillips, Lindsay L., and Tracy M. Reeves. "Interactive Pathology following Traumatic Brain Injury Modifies Hippocampal Plasticity." *Restorative Neurology and Neuroscience*, vol. 19, no. 3-4, 2001, pp. 213-235.
- Plato. *Phaedo*. Translated by David Gallop, Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Ranciere, J. *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art*. London: Verso, 2013.
- Reynolds, Brent A., and Samuel Weiss. "Generation of neurons and astrocytes from isolated cells of the adult mammalian central nervous system." *science* 255.5052 (1992): 1707-1710.
- Richards Blake A and Paul W. Frankland. "The Persistence and Transience of Memory." *Neuron* 94.6 (2017): 1071-84.
- Robertson, Michael. Book Review: *The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science*. Australian Psychiatry, 2009.
122-25.

Rorty, Richard. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton, NJ: University Press, 1979.

Ros, Antoni Casas. *Le Theoreme d'A Imodovar*. Paris: Gallimard, 2008.

Rubin, David C., and Amy E. Wenzel. "One hundred years of forgetting: A quantitative description of retention." *Psychological review* 103.4 (1996): 734.

Rubin, Beatrix P. "Changing brains: the emergence of the field of adult neurogenesis." *Bio Societies* 4.4 (2009): 407-424.

Sacktor, Todd C. "How does PKM ζ maintain long-term memory?." *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 12.1 (2011): 9-15. Salisbury, Laura. "Narration and Neurology." Ian McEwan's MotherToungue', *Textual Practice* 24 (2010): 883-912.

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. *The timing and quality of early experiences combine to shape brain architecture*. Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child, 2008. Sarah Atkinson, Bethan Evans, Angela Woods & Robin Kearns . "The Medical and Health in a Critical Medical Humanities." *Journal of Medical Humanities* (2015): 71-81.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*." Philosophical Library, 1943.

---. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. Philosophical Library, 1956.

- Satterlee, Madison. *Shadows of the self: Trauma, memory, and place in twentieth-century American fiction*. University of Oregon, 2006.
- Schacter, Daniel L. *The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001.
- Schwartz Jeffrey M and Sharon Begley. *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force*. New York: Harper Collins, 2002.
- Seaver, Richard. *Hiroshima Mon Amour*. New York: Grove Press, 1961.
- Seeburger, Frank. *The Open Wound: Trauma, Identity and Community*. Great Britain: Amazon Publishing, 2012.
- Sejnowski, Terrence J., Christof Koch, and Patricia S. Churchland. "Computational neuroscience." *Science* 241.4871 (1988): 1299-1306.
- Sekulova F, Kallis G, Rodriguez-Labajos B. "Degrowth: From Theory to Practice." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 38 (2013): 1-6.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Comedy of Errors*. 1542-1544.
- . *The tragedy of Macbeth*. Vol. 2. Classic Books Company, 2001.
- . "Hamlet." *One-Hour Shakespeare*. Routledge, 2019. 19-89.
- . *Much Ado About Nothing*. Edited by Barbara Mowat et al., The Folger Shakespeare, n.d., <https://folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/much-ado-about-nothing/>.

- Shamsie, Kamila. *Burnt Shadows*. London, NY, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2009.
- Shoshana, Felman, Dori Laub. *Crises of Witnessing in Literature: Psychoanalysis and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Silverman, Mark E., T. Jock Murray, and Charles S. Bryan, eds. *The quotable osler*. Vol. 173. Philadelphia: American College of Physicians, 2003.
- Smith, Adrian, Andy Stirling, and Frans Berkhout. "The governance of sustainable socio-technical transitions." *Research policy* 34.10 (2005): 1491-1510.
- Smith, Daniel W. "What Should We Do With Our Brain?" A Review Essay, *Theory*. Buffalo 16 (2012): 23-36.
- Solomon-Godeau, Abigail. "Mourning or melancholia: Christian Boltanski's "Missing House"." *Oxford Art Journal* (1998): 1-20.
- Spinoza, Baruch. "Metaphysical thoughts (CogitaMetaphysica). Appendix to principles of Cartesian philosophy." *E. Curley (Ed. & Trans.), The collected works of Spinoza* 1 (1985): 299-346.
- . *Ethics*. Trans. G.H.R. Parkinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Spitzer, Jan. "Emergence of Life on Earth: A Physicochemical Jigsaw Puzzle." *Journal of Molecular Evolution* (2017).
- Stephen G. Waxman, Donald G. Stein, Dick F. Swaab, Howard L. Fields. *Changing Brains Applying Plasticity*. Oxford: Elsevier Publications, 2013.

- Stephen, Greenblatt. *Renaissance Self Fashioning*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Steven, Conner. *The Book Skin*. London: Cornell University Press, 2004.
- Stevens, C.F. "A Million Dollar Question." Does LTP=Memory?" *Neuron* 20 (1998): 1-2.
- Stiegler, Bernard. *For a New Critique of Political Economy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010.
- Stolorow, Robert D., and George E. Atwood. *Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach*. Routledge, 2011.
- Strawson, Peter Frederick. *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959.
- Tamaya, Meera. "Ishiguro's Remains of the Day." The Empire Strikes Back " *Modern Language Studies* 22.2 (2017): 45-56.
- Terdiman, Richard. *Present past: Modernity and the memory crisis*. Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Terr, Lenore. *Unchained memories: True stories of traumatic memories lost and found*. Basic Books, 1994.
- Toni N., Laplagne D.A., C. Lombardi G., Ribak C.E., Gage F.H., Schinder A.F. "Neurons Born in the Adult Dentate Gyrus form Functional Synapses with Target Cells." *Natural Science* 11 (2008): 901-907.
- Tulving, Endel. "Episodic memory: From mind to brain." *Annual review of psychology* 53.1 (2002): 1-25.

UN. "UN Urges Action on Sustainable Development to Create Pathways for Global Transformation." 2016.

Valerie, Strauss. *Washington Post*. 29 03 2018.
<<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2018/03/29/stephen-hawking-famously-said-intelligence-is-the-ability-to-adapt-to-change-but-he-really-say-it/>>.

Victoria Bates, Alan Bleakely and Sam Goodman. *Medicine Health and Arts, Approaches to Medical Humanities*. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Viney W, Callard F, Woods A. "Critical Medical Humanities: Embracing Entanglement, Taking Risks." *Medical Humanities* (2015): 233-254.

Viviana Asara, I. Otero, F. Demaria, E. Corbera. "Socially Sustainable Degrowth as a Social-Ecological Transformation." *Repoliticizing Sustainability* (2015): 375-384.

Walkowitz, Rebecca L. "Ishiguro's Floating Worlds." *ELH*, vol. 68, no. 4, 2001, pp. 1049-1076.

Wall, Kathleen. "*The Remains of the Day* and Its Challenges to Theories of Unreliable Narration." *Journal of Narrative Technique* (2017): 18-42.

Waugh, Patricia. "The new Prometheans: Literature, criticism, and science in the modern and postmodern condition" *European Journal of English Studies*, 1(2), (1997): 139-164.

Wear, Delese. "The Medical Humanities: Towards a Renewed Praxis." *Journal of Medical Humanities* 30 (2009): 209-20.

- Wendy Austin, Caroline Park, Erika Goble. "From Interdisciplinary to Transdisciplinary Research." A Case Study, *Qualitative Health Research* 18 (2008): 557-64.
- Whitehead, A. "'Writing with Care.' Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*", *Contemporary Literature* 52 (2011): 54-83.
- Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1891.
- William Viney, Felicity Callard, Angela Woods. "Critical Medical Humanities." *Embracing Entanglement Taking Risks* (2015): 34-57.
- Willingham, Daniel.T&Lloyd, John.W. *How Educaitional Theories Can Use Neuroscientific Data, Mind, Brain and Education*. Vol. 1. 2007.
- Wisker, Gina. *The Postgraduate Research Handbook*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Wood, James. "The Uses of Oblivion: Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*." *The New Yorker* 23, 2015.
- Young, Allan. *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- Zhifang Dong, Huili Han, Hongjie Li, Yanrui Bai, Wei Wang, Man Tu, Yan Peng, Limin Zhou, Wenting He, Xiaobin Wu, Tao Tan, Mingjing Liu, Xiaoyan Wu, Weihui Zhou, Wuyang Jin, Shu Zhang, Todd Charlton Sacktor, Tingyu Li, Weihong Song, Yu Tian Wang. "Long-Term Potentiation Decay and Memory Loss are Mediated by AMPAR Endocytosis." *Epub125* (2015): 234-247.
- Zizek, Slavoj. *The Parallax View*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006.

