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Memory, Identity, and Amnesia in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*: A Cultural Memory Analysis through Jan and Aleida Assmann's Theories

ABSTRACT

A post-Arthurian Britain engulfed in communal forgetfulness serves as the setting for Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*, which deftly examines the intertwined themes of memory, identity, and amnesia. The story explores the complex relationship between cultural narratives and human memory via the journey of Axl and Beatrice, an elderly couple traversing a fog of amnesia. This study explores how forced forgetting serves as a survival strategy and an instrument of power, causing society disintegration and sustaining cycles of animosity, drawing on the theories of cultural memory developed by Jan and Aleida Assmann. The conflict between personal memories and group forgetfulness, the influence of cultural memory on character identities, and the effects of censored historical narratives on social cohesiveness are some of the main study concerns. The results show that remembering and forgetting play a crucial role in the development of both personal and societal identities. In a world where selective historical amnesia is a problem, Axl and Beatrice's hunt for their missing kid serves as a metaphor for their quest for shattered identities. In order to preserve the tenuous peace between the Saxons and Britons, the mist, which represents forced amnesia, hides unpleasant facts while undermining ties to the community and genuine reconciliation. Wistan's quest to unearth hidden historical facts highlights the conflict between identity, pain, and power. The book concludes by arguing that communal memory is essential to promoting healing and reconciliation and criticizing the morality of forgetting as a peacemaking strategy. This research shows how Ishiguro's work is still relevant today for comprehending the intricacies of historical narratives and identity building by placing it within larger discourses on memory studies.

Keywords: *The Buried Giant*, Memory, Identity, Cultural memory theory, Amnesia, Forgetting, Remembering

Introduction

Kazuo Ishiguro is a significant figure in science fiction in contemporary literature. This is due to his meticulous and exact approach to language and character, the novel's diversity of issues, and the way his work is defined in terms of quality and in his novels. He paints a picture of England 1,500 years ago in *The Buried Giant*. Written in a fantastical style, this book by Kazuo Ishiguro is regarded as being full of strange happenings (1).

Against the background of a post-Arthurian Britain struggling with the ghosts of its past, Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *The Buried Giant* offers an unsettling examination of memory, both personal and social. This story, which is full of complex themes, challenges readers to think about how memories—both happy and sad—influence social cohesiveness, communities, and identities. The framework offered by Jan and Aleida Assmann's theory of cultural memory is essential to this investigation because it provides a vital approach for comprehending the complex processes of remembering, forgetting, and the formation of communal identity within the story (2, 3). Following much of Ishiguro's prior work in its fundamental preoccupation with trauma and memory, *The Buried Giant* uses its neomedieval fantasy to examine how we remember and forget. Given what scholars call the “classificatory slipperiness of the period,” the Briton-Saxon struggle, which the novel is set during, closely correlates to the early Middle Ages. Axl and Beatrice, an “elderly couple” (4), as the narrator calls them, make the decision to leave their “warren” to embark on a journey to join their son, a young man they hardly remember who, it seems, lives a few days distant from their hamlet. This is how the story begins. The amnesia experienced is first shown as both individual and collective, despite the opening chapter's play with the seemingly simple association between aging and memory loss (5).

The following important fields of study are covered by the research issues that direct this academic analysis: How does Ishiguro depict the conflict between a community's collective forgetfulness and individual memories? How do historical amnesia and cultural memory interact to influence the characters' identities in *The Buried Giant*? Furthermore, how do the themes of selective memory retention and induced forgetfulness highlight the wider ramifications of manipulating historical narratives? These inquiries stem from an understanding that memory is an active process by which societies deal with identity, trauma, and the effects of the past rather than just a passive recall of the past.

This study has two objectives. The first is to examine how Ishiguro's depiction of memory in *The Buried Giant* relates to and builds upon the theoretical frameworks proposed by the Assmanns, specifically with regard to the roles of cultural memory and the effects of forgetting. The second goal is to investigate how these themes relate to a larger understanding of communal identity, especially as it relates to the power dynamics involved in remembering or forgetting. This study will highlight how the past continues to impact the present by placing Ishiguro's story within the framework of cultural memory and shedding light on the interaction between individual and group experiences. In the end, this research aims to add to the current conversation about memory studies, historical narrative, and identity construction by examining the complex ways that Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant* both reflects and challenges modern conceptions of remembering and forgetting. In order to better understand how literature addresses the basic issues of human experience and societal cohesion in the face of historical trauma, the paper will employ cultural memory theory in conjunction with a close reading of the text to uncover the layers of meaning woven throughout Ishiguro's story.

1.2. Literature Review

The themes in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant* have been examined in recent academic works using the framework of cultural memory, especially in light of Jan Assmann's ideas. This is a summary of pertinent debates and research from a number of recently published academic sources.

Zheng (6) examines Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant* through the prism of Assmann's cultural memory theory, looking at how the giant's cairn, the monastery, and the warren all act as containers for both individual and collective memories. The results emphasize themes of facing past trauma, rejecting negative forgetting, and the critical function of cultural memory in promoting identity reconstruction and peaceful cohabitation. They also demonstrate the importance of cultural memory for trauma recovery and identity reconstruction.

According to Borowska-Szerszun (7), the novel functions as a vehicle for cultural memory. This essay examines how Ishiguro reimagines the classic cultural theme of quest while alluding to both modern fantasy literature and medieval literary traditions, especially Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. It contends that the novel emphasizes the function of literature in forming cultural recall by alluding to a fictitious history based on Arthurian romances rather than rigorous historiography, therefore acting as a metaphor for the procedures involved in cultural memory.

Bai (8) emphasizes the idea of communal memory that is woven throughout the story, implying that Ishiguro links personal memory with more comprehensive historical narratives. Echoing Assmann's contrasts between individual and community remembering (2, 3), the novel's elderly characters—described as metonymic representations of society memory—symbolize a collective inability to properly address previous tragedies.

Yanping and Fengyu (9) contend that Ishiguro employs landscape descriptions as representations of imperial and pastoral memories that intricately interweave. They argue that the novel's eerie ruins and peaceful rural landscapes provide a backdrop for examining the conflict between an idealized British identity and historical facts, especially the effects of violence and oblivion.

Yang and Zhang (10) examine the moral quandaries and identity crises that the novel's four central characters encounter. It looks at the importance of these individuals' identity reconstruction in this environment and explores how they deal with moral dilemmas while pursuing various objectives. The findings reveal that merely forgetting the past is not a workable solution and that identity reconstruction is a necessary step in overcoming doubt and ambiguity around moral quandaries. Rather, the article makes the case that moral salvation and personal development require facing up to unpleasant experiences and trying at self-reconciliation.

The examined literature highlights Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant*'s deep and complex examination of memory, identity, and cultural narratives. In order to analyze how the novel combines individual memory and group memory with more general historical and sociological dynamics, scholars have continuously referred to Jan Assmann's cultural memory theory (2, 3). Borowska-Szerszun (7) and Zheng (6) both emphasize the novel's function in resolving previous trauma and redefining identity, as well as its significance as a vehicle for cultural memory. This discussion is furthered by Bai (8) and Yanping (9), who examine the relationship between individual and collective memory as well as the symbolic use of landscapes to contrast peaceful identities with harsh historical realities. The novel is framed as a critical engagement with the ethics of memorialization and identity reconstruction by Teo (11) and Yang (10), who explore the moral and philosophical ramifications of forgetting and memory retention. When taken as a whole, these pieces make *The Buried Giant* a powerful story that resolves the conflicts between remembering and forgetting while claiming that cultural memory is essential to promoting personal development, social harmony, and moral reflection.

Methodology

The French sociologist Émile Durkheim initially proposed the idea of communal memory in the late 1800s. According to Durkheim, the common values, customs, memories, and beliefs that unite a social group or society are referred to as collective memory. He highlighted the function of collective memory in forming a group's identity and ideals as well as in fostering a sense of unity and solidarity among its members. Maurice Halbwachs developed Émile Durkheim's theory of communal memory by highlighting the role that social interactions and groups have in forming personal memories. According to Halbwachs, our memories are molded and impacted by the communities we are a part of in addition to being personal memories. He proposed that people create and strengthen their own memories by using collective memory, which is the shared experiences, customs, and recollections of a community or society.

Maurice Halbwachs, in his theory of collective memory, proposed that social groups are essential for localizing memories. From a young age, a person is consistently in the presence of the community in which they were born. According to Halbwachs in his *On Collective Memory*, "[n]o memory is possible outside the frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections." Therefore, an individual is always a part of different social groups throughout their life, whether that be family, politics, religion, nationality, or others. Belonging to a group can be a choice, however, there are times when it is not up to the individual and they may not realize they are part of a social group. According to Halbwachs, these groups offer a structure for memories to be integrated into by individuals. Halbwachs contends in *The Collective Memory* that individuals can be part of multiple groups simultaneously, stating that "it is individuals as group members who remember".

Analysis

Individual and Collective Memory in Ishiguro's The Buried Giant

According to Alexandra Alter in her *New York Times* article, *The Buried Giant* is a fantasy novel by Nobel Prize-winning British author Kazuo Ishiguro, published in March 2015. Axl and Beatrice, an old couple at the heart of the novel, live in a made-up post-Arthurian England where long-term memory loss is common. They decide to travel to a nearby hamlet to look for their son because they have hazy memories of having one. *The Buried Giant*, which is set in a mythical post-Arthurian England, centers on Axl and Beatrice, an old couple who succumb to a collective forgetfulness called "the mist." They go out to locate their kid, whom they hardly remember, who has vanished. They face several obstacles along the way, such as ogres who have abducted a lad named Edwin. They save Edwin with the aid of Wistan, a Saxon warrior assigned to battle a dragon called Querig. When the company goes to a corrupt monastery, they encounter Sir Gawain, King Arthur's nephew, who tells them that he was previously sent to kill Querig but has never been successful. When Wistan discovers that Sir Gawain's actual goal was to keep Querig safe in order to preserve the mist and conceal the history, conflict arises. Wistan removes the mist and restores the people's memories when he kills Gawain and then Querig in a spectacular duel. At last, Axl and Beatrice realize that their kid has away a long time ago. A ferryman they encounter offers to transport them to an island so they may be near him. While the ferryman insists they can remain together, Axl grows suspicious of his intentions. Ultimately, Beatrice decides to cross first, asking Axl to wait. Reluctantly, he agrees, leaving with uncertainty as the waves rise.

Enforced Amnesia and the Power of Remembrance

In his paper *Individual and Collective Memory in Ishiguro's The Buried Giant*, Gürova (12) studies the impact of traumatic experiences on both individual integrity and societal relationships, highlighting the complexities of memory's role in shaping identities, as he states:

In *The Buried Giant*, Ishiguro embarks on an investigation of the importance of memory on two levels. The first one is the collective memory in which the unity and the harmony of the group gets affected. The second one is the individual memory in which the impact is mostly on the integrity of one's self and one's relation to other human beings. The novel presents a rich content for the relation between individual-collective memory and the traumatic experiences of people. (57)

The journey of Axl and Beatrice is a moving example of the blending of personal and societal memory. Both characters have a strong desire to locate their son, who is now living in a different hamlet, but they are unsure of the reasons for his departure or even the details of their own history. This collective amnesia reflects a larger issue in their community, as people find it difficult to recall important occasions and experiences, which muddies their sense of identity as a group. The factors that obfuscate both personal and societal memory are represented by the enigmatic "mist" that envelops the settlement. Their

individual stories demonstrate the effects of this fog—not just on their relationship and sense of self, but also on the cohesion of the community—as Axl and Beatrice struggle with their disjointed memories. The interaction between collective forgetting and personal amnesia highlights the nuanced ways in which memory forms identity and shows how memory loss can obstruct comprehension of oneself and others. In the end, their search for recollection turns into a search for connection, both to their kid and to their history, demonstrating the profound interdependence of personal and societal events in forming identity.

Forgetting Memory to Gain Total Control of the Subjects

In his book *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Paul Ricoeur explores the interplay between memory and forgetting, illustrating its impact on the interpretation of historical events and the creation of historical narrative. He speaks of a type of communal amnesia that involves a national necessity to overlook delinquencies from the past. He specifically talks about the misuse of collective memory by authorities who enforce their own version of history on the people (448). Thus, power is used to manipulate the past and impose a new meaning. Anthropologist Paul Connerton, in his article “Seven Types of Forgetting,” discusses a type of forgetting known as “repressive erasure.” According to him, repressive erasure has been “precipitated by an act of state” and has been seen in totalitarian regimes throughout history (61).

Power frequently acts as a tool to rewrite history, changing the memories people have and the interpretations they give to certain events. In his paper “Seven Types of Forgetting,” anthropologist Paul Connerton delves deeply into this issue and presents the notion of “repressive erasure.” He describes this type of forgetfulness as being “precipitated by an act of state” and emphasizes how it has occurred under several totalitarian governments throughout the years (61).

The Buried Giant's story reveals several meanings for the word “buried.” The giant buried under the burial mound that Axl and Beatrice circle at the beginning of their search for their kid is the most obvious allusion. As the story goes on, it becomes evident that the real buried giant represents the atrocities that are often forgotten. The word “buried” acquires additional meanings associated with mass murder, repressed memories, concealed facts, and collective memory suppression as a result of Arthur's order to slaughter Saxons in large numbers. By demonstrating how historical narratives are twisted to support authority and impact societies' collective consciousness, Assmann and Connerton both draw attention to the crucial connection between forgetting and power.

In his “Monuments, unreal spaces and national forgetting: Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant* and the abyss of memory” Yugin Teo argues that in *The Buried Giant*, Ishiguro uses a less nuanced approach to examine political efforts to erase history, employing magic and sorcery to abruptly stop the Saxons from mourning collectively and individually. Arthur's erasure of history leads to forced amnesia for Britons and Saxons, resulting in a tense peace (508). *The Buried Giant* demonstrates how oppressive authorities can manipulate and distort memory and history's interpretation. In the novel, King Arthur, ruler of the Britons, establishes an agreement called the “Law of the Innocents,” (223) which prohibits Britons and Saxons from attacking unarmed civilians in each other's villages while the men are at war as the treaty was termed as one to “bring men closer to God” (233). Nevertheless, in order to reduce the number of Saxons and avoid any potential conflicts, King Arthur violates the treaty and commands his soldiers to massacre an entire village filled with Saxon non-combatants. Realizing he had gone too far, he instructs Merlin, the most powerful wizard, to enchant the she-dragon Querig so the Saxons would forget the Britons' betrayal and the massacre of innocents. Merlin removes the atrocity from the collective consciousness at Arthur's request. Merlin's magic enchantment conceals people's memories through the dragon's breath, ensuring political harmony and peace as long as the dragon remains alive. Even long after King Arthur's passing, the magical mist of forgetfulness lingers due to the dragon's breath.

According to Chenta in his “*The Buried Giant: Forgetting The Past to Survive*,” “The pivotal role of forgetting in keeping peace is the major theme in the novel” (98). In their search for their son, the couple navigates a world where “individual recollections spontaneously fade and die with their former owners,” indicating that personal memories are slipping away, leaving a void. Meanwhile, communal memories are “reconstructed within a transgenerational framework, and on an institutional level, within a deliberate policy of remembering or forgetting” (Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization* 6). Axl appears to have a better memory of the past compared to the other villagers, but he keeps the resurfaced memories to himself. At the beginning of the novel, the omniscient narrator mentions:

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 do not mean that it was taboo. I mean that it had somehow faded into a mist as dense as that which hung over the marshes. It simply did not occur to these villagers to think about the past – even the recent one. (7-8).

Living on the outside of this settlement, Axl and Beatrice see their exclusion and the animosity of the inhabitants as a metaphor of both their own loneliness and the hidden past they are trying to unearth. The necessity of memory in humans is seriously called into doubt by this circumstance. As they set out to locate their kid, their search turns into a quest for connection—not just with their child, but also with their common past, exposing the essential necessity of facing, comprehending, and incorporating the past into the present. The narrator's observation that “in this community the past was rarely discussed” suggests that the act of remembering is essential for forging bonds and maintaining identity. The villagers’ collective silence about their past creates an environment devoid of shared experience or understanding, leading to a fragmented identity. Axl's struggle to recollect memories and his reluctance to engage the villagers reveal the complexities of memory—how it can be both a burden and a source of strength.

By employing the journey motif, Ishiguro can describe how Axl changes his understanding of the amnesic mist as he recaptures these poignant memories and recognizes his past life in the course of his journey,” according to Nakajima (13). In *Revisiting Loss: Memory, Trauma and Nostalgia in the Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro* Drag (14) argues that “similar to Ishiguro’s other protagonists, Axl is torn ‘between a need to advance one’s self-knowledge and a protective impulse to suppress unwelcome realisations’.” Through the act of remembering, Ishiguro's protagonists start facing reality, enhancing their self-knowledge and coming to heal their emotional wounds. The journey of reclaiming memory is not devoid of pain, but it serves as an essential process that fosters connection, understanding, and ultimately, a renewed sense of hope and identity. Axl and Beatrice’s journey to reclaim their son serves as a means to confront their past traumas, find the truth and, through the act of remembering, begin to heal. They finally know that their son died of the plague; Axl mentions the confirmatory side of the mist that “allowed old wounds to heal.” “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?” he asks Beatrice later (4).

Historical Amnesia and Memory in Shaping Community Identity

The significance of communal memory in forming a community's identity is discussed in this section. It makes the case that, although being offered as a short-term fix, historical forgetfulness erodes a community's sense of identity and security and breeds animosity and fear against outsiders. This section explores how communal memory is a reconstruction that meets present societal demands and promotes cohesiveness, rather than only a recollection of the past, drawing on the ideas of Maurice Halbwachs (15) and Jan Assmann (2, 3). It emphasizes how important it is to recall common experiences in order to foster community while also acknowledging the importance of forgetting some facts that might jeopardize peace within the group.

In their comprehensive work *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, Erll and Nünning (16) delve into the concept of cultural memory, which they define as an umbrella term that encapsulates “the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts.” This interplay is crucial for understanding how communities construct their identities and navigate their collective experiences. Whitehead (17), in her insightful book *Memory*, reinforces the idea that shared memories are essential for the formation of a cohesive community. This notion aligns with the early theorizations of collective memory that emerged in the twentieth century. Halbwachs (15), a pioneering figure in this field, articulated the concept as a “body of shared concerns and ideas” that members of a particular society have constructed over long periods. Halbwachs emphasized that collective memory does not merely resurrect the past; instead, it reconstructs it, adapting historical events to meet the evolving needs of the present. Each generation contributes to this memory, thereby participating in the ongoing formation of group identity.

This idea is further developed in the writings of academics like Jan and Aleida Assmann (2, 3), Connerton (18), and Olick (19), who emphasize that collective memory is a construct that isn't necessarily completely conscious or intentional. Rather than merely maintaining historical authenticity, its main goal is to satisfy modern social requirements, such as creating a feeling of identity and encouraging social cohesiveness. While collective memories are essential to building a community dedicated to long-term continuity, it's also critical to acknowledge that some realities must be forgotten in order to prevent or weaken communal cohesion. Building on the research of Jan Assmann and others, Olick (19) adds a “unconscious” element to collective memory, suggesting that unconscious factors influence both individual and societal memory. According to Olick, these unconscious factors “shape horizons of understanding whereby speakers might deploy the same tropes in defense not only of their solitary egos, but of cultural identities more generally.” In this sense, collective identity is the source of cultural memory, which also acts to strengthen it over time—often in intricate and non-instrumental ways.

Reflecting the deep issues of collective memory and historical forgetfulness, The Buried Giant deftly crafts a story that examines the complex nature of the adventures its protagonists undertake. The work demonstrates Joseph Campbell's (2004) monomyth structure through the travels of Axl and Beatrice, Wistan, and Sir Gawain, demonstrating how these adventures help to define collective identity in the face of memory and forgetfulness. Axl and Beatrice, an elderly couple, go on the first quest, which is a moving examination of both individual and societal memory. Their search for their kid represents a deeper need to recover a common past that has been masked by Querig's enchanted mist. This mission symbolizes the couple's fight against the forces of historical amnesia that threaten their identity and goes beyond just looking for a missing kid. As they go through their memories, Axl and Beatrice face death's inevitable conclusion and come to the conclusion that remembering is crucial to maintaining their relationship and sense of self. On the other hand, Wistan's mission as a Saxon warrior who must kill the she-dragon Querig represents a more forceful conflict with the past. His goal is to end the forgetfulness that has engulfed his tribe as a result of the violent ethnic cleansing carried out by Arthurian knights. In order to restore a sense of identity based on their common tragedy, Wistan aims to free his people from the cloak of forgetting by facing Querig. However, this quest also raises questions about the implications of remembering painful histories. Jan Assmann highlights that while collective memory fosters cohesion, it can also provoke fear and hostility towards others. Wistan's quest illustrates the duality of memory as both a means of empowerment and a potential source of conflict.

The story is further complicated by Sir Gawain's unclear goal to safeguard Querig. Gawain's journey, entrusted by King Arthur, illustrates the contradiction of remembrance and forgetting in a society. Querig's presence maintains a tenuous calm by averting the recurrence of previous wars, even as it prolongs forgetfulness. The role of Gawain highlights the need for selective remembering; in order to preserve peace, some realities must be hidden. The idea that forgetting may be just as important as remembering in forming a community's identity is consistent with Assmann's view that collective memory serves present social

demands. Ishiguro demonstrates via these interconnected missions how historical forgetfulness, although it may appear to be a short-term fix, eventually jeopardizes a community's identity and security. The book challenges readers to think about the fine line that separates remembering and forgetting, highlighting the importance of both in building a strong and resilient sense of community.

In their quest, Axl and Beatrice encounter figures from their past, revealing the struggles they've faced and the love that binds them. This phase tests their resolve and deepens their bond while also forcing them to confront their mortality. In their acceptance of mortality and the truths long buried, they embrace the notion of facing death together, ready to reconnect with their son and themselves before their journey ends.

It was just foolishness and pride. And whatever else lurks in the depths of a man's heart. Perhaps it was a craving to punish, sir. I spoke and acted forgiveness, yet kept locked through long years some small chamber in my heart that yearned for vengeance [...] And I think now it's no single thing changed my heart, but it was gradually won back by the years shared between us... A wound that healed slowly, but heal it did (357)

It is possible to see Axl and Beatrice's trip as a search for personal identity that requires them to face their respective experiences. Wistan's goal, on the other hand, is to find justice for past wrongs and unearth hidden historical facts. In the meanwhile, Gawain's main goal seems to be to make sense of what has happened by figuring out how to justify the brutality of the past while negotiating the difficulties of morality and history. Sir Gawain and Wistan's opposing missions, which symbolize the stories of winners and losers, help to shape a communal identity. Gawain's attempt to construct a past that omits the victims' perspectives underscores how dominant narratives often marginalize certain experiences, shaping collective memory in a way that favors the powerful. In contrast, Wistan's ambition goes beyond merely adding a new layer to history; he seeks to fundamentally alter the narrative by erasing the memory of the Brits altogether. This clash between their approaches highlights how collective identity is shaped not just by the stories told, but also by who holds the power to tell them, emphasizing the dynamic and contested nature of historical narratives in defining group identity, as Borowska-Szerszun states:

The quests undertaken by Sir Gawain and Wistan are mutually exclusive and may be seen as attempts to impose on the audience equally contradictory narratives, created by victors and victims respectively. The rivalry between the two knights can be then understood not only as a conflict between two different approaches to remembering the past, but also as a clash for the control of the historical narrative. While it is difficult to sympathize with Gawain's design of the past that excludes the victims' point of view, Wistan, who wins the duel, does not simply aim to add a new dimension to the existing tale. On the contrary, as a new victor, he intends to change history completely, eradicating all memory of the Brits, even from the landscape. (Borowska-Szerszun 38)

Wistan plays a crucial part in forming the collective identity of the community, especially for the Saxons. In contrast to the larger, fog-covered population that suffers from a collective forgetfulness, Wistan actively represents and protects his people's memories. His goal to assassinate Querig is not just a personal grudge; rather, it represents the Saxon war against the Britons, which ties his acts to the historical accounts that his society maintains. Wistan's ideas and deeds are firmly anchored in the Saxons' historical consciousness, which is consistent with Halbwachs' theories on collective memory and Jan Assmann's cultural memory. He seeks recognition of their past and is motivated by a desire to recapture a narrative that captures their suffering and struggle. His position as a warrior who not only recalls his people's grievances but also works to enhance their historical relevance in a world where the British narrative predominates is the culmination of this aim.

Wistan aims to recapture the Saxon story, challenging the prevailing memory that marginalizes his people, while Gawain attempts to defend Arthur's choice to violate the peace covenant between the two tribes in order to fight the decisive battle. He argues for the recognition of historical complaints and the authenticity of the Saxon fight, challenging the idealized perspective

maintained by Gawain. By doing this, Wistan encourages a broader conception of group identity that takes into account both victories and setbacks. Together, their divergent viewpoints show how important it is to accept a variety of stories in order to have a more thorough understanding of the past.

In *Memory, Myth and Modernism in Kazuo Ishiguro's The Buried Giant*, Gołębiowska and Kubasiewicz (20) highlight the cyclic nature of violence within the context of memory and amnesia. They argue that “after Wistan’s slaying of the she-dragon, Axl realizes that the cycle of violence, stopped for a short time by the mist, will be unleashed again.” Beatrice’s fear of the mist’s fading suggests that forgetting can provide a false sense of security, while Axl’s later acknowledgment reinforces the danger of unaddressed memories: “You and I longed for [the mist’s] end, thinking only of our own dear memories. Yet who knows what old hatred will loosen across the land now? [...] Who knows what will come when quick-tongued men make ancient grievances rhyme with fresh desire for land and conquest?” (4).

The back-and-forth among Gawain, Wistan, and Axl reveals the complexity of memory and its relationship to violence. Axl and Beatrice’s quest to reconnect with lost memories, particularly those of their son, highlights the human instinct to confront the past, illustrating that some memories can inflict trauma rather than strengthen identity (14, 15). The mist acts as a metaphor for amnesia, allowing characters to evade painful recollections while obscuring vital aspects of their lives (18). On the other hand, Wistan, who is deeply ingrained in past pain, represents communal memory (2, 3). His thirst for vengeance and memory of previous mistreatment highlight a cultural consciousness that the mist cannot hide (19). He believes that in order to heal unsolved grievances and the perpetuation of violence, remembering is crucial (11).

Axl’s worry that clearing the mist may bring up “ancient grievances” exemplifies the anxiety that facing memories might rekindle long-standing disputes (12). The climax of Wistan’s mission to slay the dragon Querig symbolizes the barrier to reconciling with the painful past (13). The belief that the past cannot be simply wiped; it must be confronted, as demonstrated by Axl’s knowledge that violence would resurface if it is not explored (17). Ishiguro explains how violence, remembrance, and the pursuit of peace are all a part of the human experience (8). This fight against forgetting highlights how important it is to face memories in order to recover (16). The ferryman symbol ultimately acts as a moving reminder of death, implying that in order to build a more optimistic future, it is vital to acknowledge the past (7). In this approach, the book shows how crucial it is to acknowledge and make amends in order to cease the ongoing cycles of pain and violence (21).

Discussion and Conclusion

By deftly tying together the novel's themes of memory and forgetting, this debate provides solutions to the problems posed in the introduction. Ishiguro illustrates the ways in which individual and group experiences interact to shape identity and social dynamics. By closely examining these issues, the story challenges the difficulties of remembering and the effects of mass forgetfulness, compelling readers to think about how memory is crucial for building empathy, connection, and resilience in the larger framework of historical trauma. Axl and Beatrice's trip in *The Buried Giant* powerfully captures the conflict between personal recollections and a community's communal forgetfulness. This conflict is powerfully examined via their struggle to recover their history in the suffocating fog of communal oblivion. The struggle of individual memories being eclipsed by a community's-imposed forgetfulness is embodied in Axl and Beatrice's quest for understanding and connection. By showing how their fractured identities mirror the larger issue of individual memory conflicting with collective narratives, this essay answers the first question posed in the introduction about how Ishiguro expresses this contradiction.

Additionally, the individuals' identities are greatly influenced by the interaction between historical amnesia and cultural memory, which provides an answer to the second question in the introduction. According to the research, Axl and Beatrice's quest for their son represents both their yearning for links they have lost and the complex interrelationship between their

individual memories and the larger societal memories that shape who they are. The lingering fog, which obscures unpleasant realities and fosters a tenuous truce between warring groups, represents historical forgetfulness. Through the individuals' diverse pursuits of knowledge and belonging, this dynamic highlight how cultural memory functions as a communal story that significantly shapes individual identifications. The third question from the introduction is also addressed by the concepts of selective memory retention and enforced forgetfulness, which have wider ramifications for the management of historical narratives. The investigation shows how forgetting shapes communal identities by acting as a survival strategy and a purposeful power tactic. The mist, which stands for historical amnesia, creates a shaky tranquility while also undermining true ties to the society. This investigation demonstrates how repressing collective memories causes division and animosity within the society, underscoring the profound impact that manipulating historical accounts may have on identity development and social cohesiveness.

The complex analysis of memory and forgetting in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant* demonstrates how historical tales influence both individual and societal identities. The story of Axl and Beatrice, an elderly couple dealing with collective amnesia brought on by the dragon Querig, provides a moving prism through which to examine the difficulties of remembering and the psychological costs of forgetting. In a culture where forced forgetting is a problem, their attempt to recover their lost history behind a cloud of communal forgetfulness represents a common need for understanding and connection. The story explores the ramifications of carrying the burden of forgotten tragedies as they traverse a terrain where memories are hazy and realities are shrouded in ambiguity. The pitfalls of embracing a sanitized narrative that glosses over the unpleasant facts of the past are highlighted by supporting characters like Sir Gawain, King Arthur's nephew, and Wistan, a Saxon warrior, who represent opposing viewpoints on history and memory. Ishiguro emphasizes the need of remembering for people and communities to develop empathy, identity, and resilience by addressing collective amnesia.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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