3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature® The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies
Vol 30(2), June 2024 http://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2024-3002-03

Dualistic Wilderness in Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills*

NAN FENG *
School of Humanities
Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia
nanfeng@student.usm.my

MOHAMAD RASHIDI PAKRI
School of Humanities
Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Set in Nagasaki, struck by atomic bombing during the Second World War, Kazuo Ishiguro's A Pale View of Hills (1982/1990) has been explored through the lens of ecocriticism only by a few critics, and investigations into the wilderness have been underexplored. Overlooking the wilderness in this fiction may lead to a neglect of nature's therapeutic influence on the characters. The primary aim of the present study is to examine the dualistic qualities of wilderness and highlight the nexus between wilderness and the psychology of the main characters. This study primarily employed the lens of wilderness to explore the representations of wilderness and its influences on the main characters. It concluded that, to the main characters in the fiction, wilderness is not only repulsive and frightening purgatory but also a sublime and picturesque haven, the latter of which is tonics, antidotes, and tranquillisers for people who approach and assimilate into the wilderness.

Keywords: dualistic; ecocriticism; Ishiguro; therapeutic; wilderness

INTRODUCTION

"Not only do the capitalists have commodified nature and natural resources as factors of production, but they also de-humanised most of the humans" (Pal & Pannikot, 2023, p. 28). Like Pal and Pannikot (2023), expansion and exploitation elsewhere might be equated with the essence of capitalism. Japan, enamored with militarism and ultranationalism in the 1940s, for example, started a full-scale war in the Far East to find land for its overpopulation, obtain raw materials, and seek markets for its finished goods (Jain, 2005). Following Japan's ignorance of the Potsdam Declaration, the US, in order to further accelerate the surrender of Japan, unleashed two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6, 1945 and August 9, 1945, respectively (Maddox, 1995). The detonations took a heavy toll, causing the late effect, the long-lasting delayed effect, and psychological damage (Masao, 2019).

Japanese-British writer Kazuo Ishiguro, winner of the 2017 Nobel Prize in Literature, claimed that his maternal grandfather was one of the victims who died of nuclear radiation while helping burn the bodies (Ishiguro, 2008). He purported that the Japanese generally hold no grudge against the bombings and scarcely ever regard it as a monstrous crime (Ishiguro, 2008). Ishiguro was unaware that militarists committed horrific atrocities across Asia (Tanaka, 2019) and that ordinary Japanese knew the simple truth that "the wheels of justice were turning" (Tay, 2015, p. 224). Ishiguro's stance, thus, is related to his background. Although he immigrated with his father to England at the age of five, he was preparing himself throughout his childhood in various ways for returning to Japan, a place he "had a strong emotional tie" (Ishiguro & Kenzaburo, 1991, p.

110). Ishiguro grew up with a strong image of Japan from his childhood in his mind, so he wished to recreate this imaginary Japan by turning to writing novels (Ishiguro & Kenzaburo, 1991). His debut, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982/1990), is set in postwar Nagasaki around 1953. It follows the memories of a widowed Japanese woman, Etsuko, as her daughter, Niki, from her second marriage to an Englishman, visits her at her home in an English village. The elder daughter, Keiko, from a previous marriage, committed suicide years ago. Etsuko fabricates another little girl named Mariko, whose archetype is her elder daughter Keiko, to alleviate her feelings of guilt and shame by redirecting a negative emotion from its source to a less threatening recipient. Since she sacrifices her elder daughter's happiness for a different kind of life, out of guilt, she "arrange[s] her memories in a way that allows her to salvage some dignity" (Mason & Ishiguro, 1989, p. 338). The backdrop of the story, therefore, comprises the wilderness of war, the natural wilderness of a river, and a hill.

Through textual analysis, the paper aims to explore the duality of the wilderness and highlight the efficacy and repercussions of the wilderness in a generic sense. To a certain extent, this study will encourage urbanites to attach importance to their environments by valuing the interactional relationship between environments and people's well-being and behaviour. By looking at Ishiguro's work this way, this study proposes the term "psychological wilderness," which could be a reference for the current understanding of ecocriticism. Finally, the paper may raise consciousness concerning war and nuclear catastrophes.

WILDERNESS AND ECOCRITICISM

The trope of wilderness emerged in the first stage of ecocriticism in the 1980s, but the waves of ecocriticism were not in succession. The previous waves do not simply complete when a new wave starts, and even in 2009, the first wave remained vigorous and vital (Slovic, 2010). A person may use the term "wilderness" to refer to a particular location in which it signifies a quality that creates a particular feeling or mood. In other words, "wilderness" is heavily loaded with a personal, symbolic, and verifying meaning, so a universally accepted definition is elusive (Nash, 2014). By combining Nash's arguments, we provide a broader definition of wilderness to avoid confusion; that is, wilderness designates any place or psychological state in which a person feels unguided, isolated, depressed, frightened, or revered. A person straying into a primitive forest, or a desert may be in the traditional wilderness; a person lost in a violent community or an alien and dangerous modern world may be in the urban wilderness; and a person suffering from illnesses such as autism, depression, and trauma may be stuck in the psychological wilderness.

Critics have, however, long ignored wilderness, particularly urban wilderness and psychological wilderness in the novel, and such an undervaluation of the wilderness may affect its inhabitants' well-being. Moreover, the researchers may be misguided by focusing on the sick inner world as opposed to the ecocidal outside world, since psychological anguish is more likely to occur in an increasingly degraded ecological setting and in a context where the nature of selfhood is being redefined to match an industrialised society (Kasser, 2003). Ishiguro's novel *A Pale View of Hills* encompasses a great deal of scenery depictions and ecological consciousness, but it queerly arouses only a few critics' attention. To reiterate, there is a paucity of literature approaching it through the lens of ecocriticism. Awla and Sharif (2019) employ an ecocritical approach in analysing the relationship between the setting and characters, as well as the connections between environment and individual psyche. The paper is well-organised and innovative, but regrettably, the authors attempt to utilise inductive reasoning to reach conclusions. Additionally, the

conceptions of natural and built settings are not distinguished. However, the analysis of individual psychology and surroundings has inspired the present study.

Analogously, Matsuya (2021) sheds light on environments. However, it is debatable that she assumes that the landscape that the protagonist portrays might be imaginary, simply because her story is fabricated to avoid facing painful reminiscences. She further contends that the characters' gesture of looking out of the window is a sign of withdrawing into one's world of fantasies and recollections, which is highly perceptive. Yet the power of windowscape is not clarified. Matsuya finally argues that the barren landscape represents the memory of war and an isolated self, and the adjacent river and woods symbolise Etsuko's gloomy self. Overall, both Matsuya's and Awla & Sharif's studies are inductive in general and lack persuasive theoretical support.

Like Matsuya, Taketomi's (2020) foregrounds specifically focus on the theme of the river, mainly from a cultural perspective. She argues that the river symbolises the boundary line between life and death as well as the transience of time. Taketomi continues to assert subjectively that the woman who haunted Mariko is a ghost, which, to our light, is obviously Mariko's hallucination caused by her witness of the woman drowning her baby and committing suicide. Literature is fiction, after all. In her paper, Aso (2010) also states that Japan brewing in Ishiguro's mind was not consistent with the real one; it was "the landscape of imagination" from the very outset, which is more psychological than realistic. However, "[i]magination is not opposed to reality but has as one of its important applications and adaptions to reality" (Beres, 1960, p. 327), and it is a form of expansion of experience and perception of the world (Zittoun & Cerchia, 2013). Aso additionally mentions the power of the landscape of Mt. Inasa on Etsuko's spiritual determination to move forward as an atomic bomb survivor, which will be expounded on in our study.

Bearing these readings in mind, the previous studies by no means employed the approach of the wilderness to analyse this novel. Virtually all the critics use the general term "nature" to designate both built and natural environments without any differentiation, which would cause perplexity among readers. Additionally, the relationship between nature/wilderness and individual psychology and behavior has not been thoroughly investigated, which may lead to ignorance of interactional effects. Hence, this study will investigate the representation of wilderness and its nexus with the main characters' psychology and behavior by utilising the lens of wilderness, primarily by Roderick F. Nash, John Rennie Short, and Andrew Light. It is important to note that, though it is a Western construct, ecocriticism is still appropriate for the novel's Japanese settings. On one level, Japan has long been westernised. During the Meiji Era, "Japan reorganised its educational methods based on the foreign methods. […] America supplied the basic curricula" (Jain, 2005). On another level, the protagonist in the novel was born into a decent diplomatic family and was edified by numerous English books.

"The term [wilderness] designates a quality […] that produces a certain mood or feeling in a given individual and, as a consequence, may be assigned by that person to a specific place" (Nash, 2014, p. 1). It is "not so much a place as a feeling about a place—a perceived reality, a state of mind" (Nash, 2014, p. xviii). Nash (2014) argues that it might be associated with wilderness characteristics and dualistic emotional undertones. For one thing, wilderness is mysterious, strange, desolate, and menacing, but it is also picturesque, hospitable, and delightful. In this second conception, wilderness is a haven or sanctuary in which people who require comfort can find relief from the stresses of modernity (Jacob et al., 1960, as cited in Nash, 2014). According to Short (2005), there are two typical responses that people have to the wilderness: classical and romantic. The traditional agrarian perspective believed that wicked spirits haunted forests. This attitude

toward the environment was brought over from Europe. Early settlers in New England depicted the forest as "terrible," "dismal," and "howling." There is a similar story with mountains. In the early seventeenth century, mountains were deemed ugly deformities (Nash, 2014). Mountains, too, were inhabited by witchcraft, demons, and deities in folklore and literary traditions. In the pre-civilised life of the wilderness, with threats lurking around every corner, humans lived a horrible existence and survived through the law of the jungle. The wilderness was undoubtedly forbidding and repulsive. Man's fear and hostility of the wilderness is essentially due to his inability to harness and utilise the wilderness (Nash, 2014).

There are other elements. First, when a sky-centered religion has been substituted for animism, then the uncultivated lands become the fearsome wilderness; second, the fear of the wilderness is shared with the wilderness's residents, who are often regarded as a threat to people in the civilised areas; third, as a symbolic representation of the id, wilderness, an atavistic and dark element, could burn off the thin veneer of civilisation and expose the dark side of the human psyche (Short, 2005). Today, the wilderness is dreadful to us on the grounds that dangers still exist in our collective unconscious (Short, 2005). Apart from the negative qualities, wilderness is also a place to revere or entertain. With the flourishing works of Romanticism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the repulsiveness of the wilderness has somewhat diminished. The ways in which knowledge about outer space engendered reverence for the sublime physical features of the earth changed how people view wild nature dramatically. Vast, chaotic landscapes could also be enjoyable; even the fear that wilderness induces may not be a drawback (Nash, 2014).

For the romantics, the wilderness is a sacred space to be revered. With the shrinkage of size, the wilderness has generally become an embodiment of innocence, a spring of nostalgia; contact with the wilderness resulted in a restored connection with deeper psychological truths and a more noticeable spiritual awareness; so Short (2005) continues, it was in the wild country that individual redemption and universal truths lay. Harris (1805) proposes that "majestic features of uncultivated wilderness, and the extensive views of nature gained from the brows of a lofty mountain produce an expansion of fancy and an elevation of thought more dignified and noble" (p. 71). Headley (1875, pp. 217, 46, 288) also asserts that "no man of sensibility can escape the enchantment" of wilderness, in which one can stay away from "the strifes of men and discords of life" and "come back to civilised life a healthier and a better man." Presumably based on the aforementioned views, Nash (2014) elaborates that wilderness provides an escape from society since it is believed by primitivists that men's happiness and well-being are inversely proportional to their degree of civilisation, while the freedom and solitude in the wilderness create an ideal environment for ecstasy or melancholy. Harmony, peace, and love in the woods would replace the conflict, immorality, and materialism of urban areas.

In conclusion, wilderness is a dualistic landscape. Wilderness has been widely acknowledged as an antidote having therapeutic power even for mental health (e.g., Russell, 2001; Fernee et al., 2017), but, on the flip side, it is still instinctively understood as an uncomfortable and hazardous environment alien to man (Nash, 2014). Moreover, the meaning of wilderness has drifted metaphorically, possibly because "many of the repugnant connotations of wilderness were transferred to the new urban environment" (Nash, 2014, p. x). "The classical idea of wilderness has shifted from an exclusive reference of 'green space' to include non-natural physical space" (Light, 1995, p. 21). The development of the city opened another field of wilderness. The metropolis has become the modern wilderness of concrete jungles where overpopulation has created an environment of alienation in which urbanites are all strangers afflicted by autism. "The big city is now the modern equivalent of the medieval forest populated by demons" (Short, 2005,

p. 26). "The implication is that modern man feels as insecure and confused in an urban setting as he once felt in the forest among the wild beasts" (Nash, 2014, p. 3). To some degree, the metropolis is a wilderness of a concrete jungle haunted by prey and predators such as swindlers, murderers, gangs, militarists, etc. Particularly, capitalist cannibals are the monsters in the urban wilderness, sucking the blood of the inhabitants. Urban space has been transformed into wilderness through the construction of the old theme. The original physical dimensions of the classical wilderness have been interestingly subverted, while the general cognitive meaning of the conception has been retained. Therefore, humans are trapped in the new wilderness, an evil physical setting unsuited to human settlement and even destructive to them (Light, 1995).

The mental criteria for wilderness are as important as the physical. "In theory, if a person does not see, hear, or smell civilisation, he is in the wilderness" (Nash, 2014, p. 4). Physical wilderness, especially urban wilderness, tends to cause an individual to suffer from the psychological wilderness, which is a state where one feels perplexed yet estranged, isolated yet indifferent, and depressed yet introverted. Nowadays, with ecocide and the decline in traditional ethics and values, people have been brainwashed and implanted with materialism, consumerism, workaholism, ultra-nationalism, and individualism. Our minds have been objectified and shaped by sweat factories and institutions, fed with chick soup for the soul, dummy comforters of cultural rubbish, and oceans of propaganda and advertisements. The spiritual garden of Eden has been replaced with the wilderness desert, so individuals have become the walking machines of capitalism, tame and efficient. In brief, wilderness possesses dualistic qualities, which are fully represented in Ishiguro's *The Pale View of Hills*. In the following section, we will mainly discuss Etsuko's paradoxical attitudes and emotions towards dualistic wilderness and Mariko/Keiko's wilderness complex.

ETSUKO'S AMBIVALENT EMOTIONS AND ATTITUDES

Lexicologically, wilderness is regarded as uncultivated and undeveloped land; nevertheless, any place where one feels guideless, lost, and confused may be called wilderness; thus, a large and chaotic group of things, even if artificial, may be qualified (Nash, 2014). People's attitudes towards the wilderness have long been ambivalent. The ancient Hebrews considered the wilderness the unblessed place, and they connected its harsh and forbidding character with a water shortage. It was convinced that the wilderness was the lair of evil. Western thought is embedded with the idea that wilderness is the antithesis of paradise physically and spiritually, and it is deemed an enemy that ought to be conquered, subdued, and vanquished. Contrarily, wilderness is also a sanctuary from the anxieties, chaos, and hypocrisy of society and from the frequent haunts of unpleasant, money-earning businesses. It appears to have a liberating effect and therapeutic efficacy conducive to human health and well-being.

In *A Pale View of Hills,* Ishiguro depicts a foreground that primarily consists of three gradations of landscape: a wasteland, a river, and woods, which all lay before Etsuko's newly built apartment. The wasteland once was a pastoral village, "[b]ut then a bomb had fallen, and afterwards all that remained were charred ruins" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 11), which, ironically, is a triumph of militarism or barbarism over civilisation. This man-made wild ground is overlaid with "several acres of dried mud and ditches" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 11) and inlaid with craters brimmed with stagnant and filthy water, the cradle of intolerable mosquitoes in the summer. The farther gradation of the environment is the picturesque and sublime hills of Inasa, which could be seen from Etsuko's apartment window.

The wasteland, located on the river and adjacent to Etsuko's apartment building, possesses the negative qualities of classical wilderness. "The identification of the arid wasteland with God's curse led to the conviction that wilderness was the environment of evil, a kind of hell" (Nash, 2014, p. 15). It is indisputable that Japan was Westernised since it had long been invaded and colonised by Western countries, so the residents who might have been Westernised have the identical repulsive attitude just as Westerners do. The Japanese likewise harbour reverence and fear for the natural environment, which is claimed to be dwelt by the divinities, and they believe that nature would take revenge if not treated with respect (Hayashi, 2001). They feel awed and aversive not only because the wasteland is barren and hostile but also gloomy and fearsome, for hundreds of victims shed blood in the wasteland due to atomic bombing. Consequently, the local people perceive this wasteland as a "health hazard" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 11).

Wilderness engenders a certain mood or feeling in a given individual or a group of people (Nash, 2014). The dark forest beyond the river intensifies the eeriness surrounding the wilderness (Matsuya, 2021). Apparently, this partially artificial wilderness degenerated from civilisation as a pastoral village. It incurs apprehension and antipathy from the occupants who inhabit the newly constructed concrete buildings erected in this wilderness. "Many complained it was a health hazard" physically as well as psychologically (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 11). It is the antithesis of civilisation represented by the adjacent apartment complex.

The newly built concrete apartment blocks, the symbol of civility and culture, are the modern haven as well as encroachment in the conquest of wilderness since "[wilderness] is instinctively understood as something alien to man—an insecure and uncomfortable environment against which civilisation had waged an unceasing struggle (Nash, 2014, p. 8)." The sprawl of the city is, to a certain degree, the conquest of nature, particularly wilderness. The reduction of the acreage of the wilderness manifests man's accomplishment as he marches towards civilisation.

Just like most people, Etsuko has ambivalent attitudes towards the wilderness. In one condition, wild country is dark, forbidding, and repugnant, just like Etsuko's gloomy and blue heart; in another, as an antidote, wilderness is conducive to her meditation and spiritual escape.

Being a wilderness used to mean being "deserted," "savage," "desolate," or "barren," a waste. One was more likely to experience "bewilderment" or panic in its presence because of its negative implications (Cronon, 1996). Although the wilderness in this novel is not extremely immense in size, the feeling that it engenders is abhorrent and terrifying (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 11). Beyond the river, the ground is "marshy" (Ishiguro, 1990, pp. 40, 180), and Etsuko feels "a cold touch of unease, a feeling not unlike premonition" upon her fist visit (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 40). Presumably, the ground on the riverbank used to be a marsh, an essential constituent of wilderness. Then the form of the ground might have been changed, probably due to the aridness caused by the explosions of the atomic bomb. After all, the small village on the bank was converted into "charred ruins" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 11). Marshes are unsanitary environments, a source of illnesses, and unsuitable grounds for inhabitation (Borca, 2002). They have long been places of terror and death in literature as well. Hence, the "marshy" ground evokes emotions of worry and fear inside Etsuko, and she is overshadowed by an uneasy sense of foreboding. The abnormal and unstable "marshy" ground also insinuates unsettled Nagasaki, a human catastrophe caused by the war and estrangement from Mother Earth. It forebodes Etsuko's precarious marital life and her daughter Keiko's suicide. In short, Etsuko's repulsiveness towards the "marshy" ground is a human being's antagonism towards the wilderness.

The panorama of the wilderness is “charred ruins” caused by the atomic bomb, as well as several acres of dried, cracked mud and deep ditches. “It was a loathsome journey” to cross the wasteland to reach Sachiko’s cottage (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 99). Wilderness is a place that one may only enter against one’s will and always tremble in terror (Cronon, 1996), since it is haunted by unknown dangers and cruelties, such as “all manners of insects” and “the mosquitoes in particular seemed everywhere” (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 99).

In antiquity, people were convinced that the wildernesses were inhabited by demons, supernatural beings, horrible beasts, elves, or semi-human Wild Man. This factitious wilderness is haunted by swarms of insects, mosquitoes, grubs, and midges. “All year around there were craters filled with stagnant water, and in the summer months the mosquitoes became intolerable”; "The ground bred all manner of insects, and the mosquitoes, in particular, seemed everywhere"; and "along the river, the air was full of insects" (Ishiguro, 1990, pp. 11, 99, 40, 100, 29). The protagonist, Etsuko, complained many times that the insects were intolerable, which reveals the harshness of the wilderness and aggravates Etsuko’s abhorrence towards it. In mythology, the wilderness was dwelled by ogres, satyrs, or Wild Man who devoured children and ravished maidens, which triggered great imagination among people (Nash, 2014). In this novel, there were reports of several cases of brutal child murders despite being on the other side of the city, which proves that the big city is the urban wilderness dwelt by modern cannibals.

Apart from swarms of insects and reports of murders, “[t]he place is alive with stray cats,” which Etsuko exclaims that “[i]t is such a shame” (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 19). Sachiko’s ambivalent attitude towards the wilderness is represented in her feelings for cats, which are depicted mostly as wild animals in the Bible. Cats have been venerated in many cultures since antiquity for their ability to capture rodents, and they have also gained religious, symbolic, and emotional significance. However, attitudes towards them as symbols have varied from veneration to revulsion. In medieval and early modern Europe, cats became a symbol of female sexual immorality and societal disorder, and they were persecuted and reviled for their alleged ties to witchcraft and the devil (Serpell, 2013). Additionally, the devil preferred assuming the shape of a huge cat when appearing to his disciples (Russell, 2019). Thus, associated with darkness and evil, the cat is the embodiment of wilderness. Sachiko’s claims that those kittens are “filthy little animals” and “dirty little creatures," "just like a rat or snake" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 165) denote her hostility towards wilderness and her superiority over the nature of anthropocentrism. Consequently, due to her aversion to the wilderness, Sachiko drowned the kittens ruthlessly in front of her daughter Mariko.

Another wild creature depicted in the novel is the spider, which is also a symbol of the wilderness. In the presence of Etsuko, Mariko caught the spider, imprisoned it with her cupped hands, and even attempted to eat it as the cat tended to do, which “took me [Etsuko] a moment to recover” (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 82). Spiders unintentionally evoke abomination and phobia. In Western culture, "spiders are hideous creatures connected to physical and metaphorical darkness” (Jürgens & Hackett, 2021, p. 10). As a member of the wilderness, spiders represent darkness. The words "dark" and "darkness" appear in the novel 29 times. The waste ground, the cottage, the apartment room, the characters' psyche, etc., all seem to be in the dark. The black widow spider is also the embodiment of Etsuko, foreseeing her fate.

Nevertheless, as stated previously, wilderness also has a positive side. It is that very place where Etsuko can seek solitary retreat and sanctuary from the depressed domestic life of suffocating patriarchy and the melancholy, traumatic reminiscences of the war. Paradoxically, hell and the sanctuary are one and the same. "As an aesthetic category, the sublime dispelled the notion

that beauty in nature was seen only in the comfortable, fruitful, and well-ordered. Vast, chaotic scenery could also please" (Nash, 2014, p. 45). The foreground of Etsuko's apartment building consists of a wasteland, a river, and woods. At least the latter two, which could be overlooked from the apartment building, are picturesque and sublime, though Etsuko seldom sets foot. The word "window" appears in fiction 48 times. The characters, including Etsuko, Niki, and Mariko, all have the frequent gesture of looking out of the window, among whom Etsuko stares out of the window most frequently, in that the majesty of the untamed and uncultivated land inspired an elevation of fancy and more dignified, lofty thought (Nash, 2014). Especially "on the opposite of the bank were the woods" (Ishiguro, 1991, p. 40). Those who enter the woods will likely have a peaceful and beautiful existence, for immorality, strife, and consumerism in the community would be replaced with love, peace, and harmony, and reverting to primitive would emancipate man from the social yoke that inhibits the complete display of his sensuality (Nash, 2014). Apart from seeking peace and tranquillity, Etsuko's fascination with the wilderness is also associated with her dissatisfaction with reality.

The apartment that Etsuko inhabits is "small and rather difficult to keep cool during the warmer months," but she could "remember an unmistakable air of transience there," as if all of them were "waiting for the day we [they] could move to something better" (Ishiguro, 1990, P. 12). In the postwar period, consumer society was considered the optimum means to achieve a better life in Japan. By the middle of the 1950s, the typical Japanese housewife could finally afford the individual consumption and middle-class lifestyles that the Japanese state had been promoting (Smith, 2018). A "consumer culture" is considered to exist when consuming products becomes the primary objective of a society. Materialists contend that levels of consumption are in direct proportion to the amount of pleasure acquired from life (Richins & Fournier, 1991). Against this background, as a woman brought up in an affluent family, living in such a humble abode was anything but satisfying. So, the protagonist's gesture of staring at the natural wilderness—river and woods through the window—is the expression of discontent towards the present needy life, the way to escape the emptiness of a housewife's humble existence, and the desire to seek consolation and sanctuary in nature after she lost her ardent love in the war. There was "enchantment" in finding in the wilderness escape from "the strife of man and discords of life" (Headley, 1849, pp. 45, 46, 174). However, Etsuko's psychological escape into the wilderness is likewise partly ascribed to the discords of her marital life.

After the war, savage militarists were replaced with savage capitalists. "Threatening dark landscapes are not the creation of the supernatural but the result of the naturalisation of an exploitative labour relationship hidden behind an industrial factory environment" (Light, 1995, p. 22). Etsuko's husband, Jiro, is a masculinist indifferent to his wife and father. He has been alienated by the sweat factory, which has malformed him physically and psychologically. "Jiro had this same tendency to hunch forward—in a manner not unlike that of a boxer—whether standing or walking" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 28), which is not a genetic inheritance of his father, Ogata-San. Ogata-San is relaxed, upright, "well-built," and "robust," while Jiro is "a small, stocky man wearing a stern expression" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 28) and is dressed in a shirt and tie even at home. He appears invariably "tired" (Ishiguro, 1990, pp. 35, 36, 56, 64, 126). Marx himself demonstrates how alienation has a number of devastating repercussions on the health of the worker in capitalist society. "Squanders human beings, living labour, more readily than any other mode of production, squandering not only flesh and blood but nerves and brains as well" (Marx, 1991, p. 182). Consequently, capitalism deforms basic human nature into labour. This causes productive activity, which should be a delightful and fulfilling experience, to become the source and cause of all that

is wrong in life. Under capitalism, alienation is an experience that haunts the end of a working day. His actions in religion, family affairs, politics, and so on are as distorted and brutalised as his productive activity. That is to say, the corrosive repercussions of alienation sprawl into society. "This is a society that is rifted with division, cutting into that important characteristic of human collectivity, where people encounter fellow humans only as the objects of their production or as superiors or inferiors" (Ollman, 1976, p. 138).

Jiro is too busy with his work to accompany his wife. Alienated under capitalism, he has become haughty, unamiable, and patriarchal towards his wife, just like capitalists' exploitive and plundering attitudes towards nature. His relationship with his wife has become estranged. Therefore, Jiro's wife, Etsuko, invariably maintains the gesture of looking out of the window or even staring into the darkness through the window. In doing so, she may withdraw herself into solitude and escape the discord of family. The wild country provides the required freedom and solitude, which is a refuge from society's turbulence, fears, and emptiness, as well as the bustling haunts of sleazy, money-making businesses (Nash, 2014). On the opposite bank of the river are the barely trodden woods and mountains. Etsuko constantly looks out of the window during the daytime, even at night, since "the beauty, stability, and endurance of nature are necessary prerequisites for human social and psychological well-being" (Bate, 2013, pp. 33). It is the weeds and woods that are found beautiful and pleasant, and they bring comfort and cure to the depressed heroine accordingly. Through this gesture, Etsuko's mind wanders into the wilderness to escape the inharmony of family, the chaos of modern society, and the misery of reminiscences, and seek peace and salvation in wilderness nature.

Lastly, Etsuko's appreciation of the wilderness is ascribed to man's attribute of a wild animal, which is also called "biophilia," referring to human beings' innate affection for the natural world (Frumkin, 2001). An environment devoid of nature may have a detrimental impact on health and well-being (Grinde & Patil, 2009).

To sum up, Etsuko's contradictory cognition of wilderness is owing to the duality property of wilderness.

MARIKO'S WILDERNESS COMPLEX

It should be underlined once more that Etsuko fabricate Sachiko, Mariko, and Frank in her story as a defence mechanisms (Cramer, 2015)because she feels guilty and accountable for her daughter Keiko's suicide. "Psychological defence mechanisms represent a crucial component of our capacity to maintain emotional homeostasis. Without them, the conscious mind would be much more vulnerable to negatively charged emotional input, such as that pertaining to anxiety and sadness" (Bowins, 2004, p. 1). The following are the prototypes of the fictional characters: Sachiko—Etsuko; Mariko—Keiko; Frank—Mr. Sheringham.

Mariko manages to escape from the urban wilderness into the natural wilderness to pursue peace and tranquillity and to seek therapy and sanctuary. "Wilderness as negative space is found in people-made places. The negative attitudes towards wilderness and the consequent terms have been transferred to the urban" (Short, 2005, p. 25). The densely populated modern "stone forests" or "concrete jungles" have created an indifferent environment in which people are all strangers but all part of lonely souls (Short, 2005). With the degradation of morality, men's animality, and the development of capitalism, as well as materialism, cannibals and vampires of powerful groups and institutions greedily suck the blood of the prey of common people or the underprivileged groups.

Men's apathy is consequently the defensive strategy against the disguised demons in the modern wilderness.

Mariko's unsociability and forlornness are mainly attributable to the environment of the urban wilderness. At five or six years old, she witnessed a woman drowning her own child in the canal and committing suicide herself because of the war. It is in the urban wilderness that Mariko is afflicted not only by the brutality of war but also traumatized by the scenes of murder and self-destruction. She is orphaned by the war and her mother's neglect. Henceforth, she has become taciturn and has been haunted by the illusionary victim woman. Mariko is the prey and victim of the urban wilderness of Nagasaki, a concrete jungle alive with savages and uninhabitable for her. To be simple, Mariko survived the war waged by militarism, led a vagrant life at the bottom of the food chain, and suffered from maternal deprivation due to her mother's nonchalance. Mariko was traumatized by her peers' bullying through their murder of her preferred cat and by her mother's drowning of the kittens in her face. There is not much living space left for her in the urban wilderness, so Mariko switches to nature for consolation. It is animals' instinct to draw advantage and avoid disadvantage.

Historically, Christianity also retained the concept that wilderness would be a place of haven and religious purity. One who lived alone found the solitude of a wild country beneficial to reflection, spiritual insight, and moral excellence (Nash, 2014). The reason is that "[t]he effects of the wilderness environment were powerful, and the experience was deeply restorative" (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989, p. 182). The biophilia hypothesis also maintains that "[b]iophilia, […], is the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms. Innate means hereditary and hence part of ultimate human nature" (Kellert & Wilson, 1993, p. 31). It impels human beings to look for therapeutic interactions with plants, animals, and natural environments. Human beings have an inborn affinity for the natural environment since certain types of environmental exposures, such as gardening and viewing landscapes, may have beneficial health effects (Horowitz, 2012). Therefore, Mariko's instinct dictates that she escapes the ruthless jungle society and seeks survival and therapy in the natural wilderness. But "[o]ur original freedom is compromised by the necessity to live under the rule of institutions, that is to say, compromised by education, by government, by the rule of civil law" (Bate, 2000, p. 31). Consequently, Mariko plays truant from school, claiming her strong reluctance to attend school, wandering in the heath, and unconsciously seeking freedom, sanctuary and the healing of nature, even though the man-made wilderness and its desolation might have aggravated her mental condition. She frequently roams around the river's edge, where the mud is wetter, even though "the river is still quite high and flowing swiftly after the rainy season" and "the ground slopes down steeply" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 16). "Even a brief encounter with nature can be restorative" (Lewis, 1996, p. 111). Mariko's journey with her mother to Inasa Hills proves to be a tonic and an antidote. During the journey, she becomes conversable and extroverted, in sharp contrast with her usual habit of reticence. Moreover, Mariko even seeks relief and healing by playing with spiders and sticking with the cats, which are believed by folklore to be half-domestic and half-wild, as she is unable to seek solace from her mother and peers in the urban wilderness. Mariko's attitude towards the wilderness, therefore, is generally consistent, but there are still exceptions.

Wilderness also has a negative influence on Mariko. As a place of darkness and desolation, wilderness is formidable and howling to civilised people. In the folk traditions of various cultures, the wilderness is swarmed with many supernatural beings, horrible beasts, and semi-human Wild Man who either ravish women, carry off children, or cannibalise men (Nash, 2014). These images portray the gloom of the wilderness with a frightening eeriness that is hard to dispel. On the other

marshy side of the river, Mariko is found to be "lying curled on her side, knees hunched" in the darkness, with eyes open and staring up with blankness. "The blood was coming from the inside of her thigh," whereas Sachiko claims that "'It's just a graze'" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 41). The reason for her physical injury and psychic shock is unmentioned, but it is obvious that Mariko is appalled and scared by something in the wilderness, where even Etsuko feels a sense of "unease" and "premonition" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 40). Mariko might be scared by the alleged "the other woman from across the river" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 19), who ever offered to take Mariko to her house, which hints at Mariko's or her prototype Keiko's subsequent demise. The fancied woman, or "ghost," turns out to be the woman who drowned her child and committed suicide during the war. However negative the effects of wilderness may be, there is a dominant (re)affirming consequence.

Nevertheless, the equilibrium collapses when her mother proposes to immigrate to her dream country. To conform to the novel, Sachiko, Mariko, and Frank will be hereinafter referred to respectively as their prototypes, Etsuko, Keiko, and Mr. Sheringham. Keiko's mother, Etsuko, hoodwinks her into believing that they will return to Japan if she does not become habituated to life abroad. In doing so, Keiko is displaced from the familiar natural wilderness into a foreign urban wilderness in England. Worse still, she is unable to establish a good rapport with her stepfather, Mr. Sheringham and her half-sister, Niki, as can be seen in this declaration: "Invariably, these excursions would end with her fighting, with Niki or with my husband, and then she would be back in her room" (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 54). As a symbol of modern civilization, Sheringham is also the name of an English seaside town within the county of Norfolk where nuclear waste could be buried (Grimmer, 2024). In Ishiguro's other novel, *Never Let Me Go* (1985), Norfolk is called the "lost corner," and it is a place to be claimed that lost stuff can be found. It is very ironic that Keiko survived the nuclear catastrophe but died in the urban wilderness. She incarcerates herself in her bedroom and imprisons herself in her own inner psychological wilderness.

Keiko sinks deep in the mire of family discordance and terrible memories of the bloody scene. Her bedroom is the second fortress and clearing in the wilderness society, while the rental room in Manchester is her last stronghold, in which she hanged herself, just as the little girl was hanged by the murderer in Nagasaki. Ironically, again, it is reported that "Manchester is home to a string of little-known nuclear bunkers" as a nuclear deterrent (Gregson, 2022). Keiko has been presumably haunted all her life, not only by the ghost of a woman who committed suicide but also by the shadow of nuclear power. So, it is undeniable that Keiko stuck in a state of psychological wilderness at the outset.

Inheriting the qualities of classical wilderness, psychological wilderness is a state of mind, in which one feels bewildered, lonely, frightened, and desperate, primarily caused by the social environment. As Short (2005) argues, "the 'left alone' feeling could have come from an ancient folktale of being lost in the forest" (p. 27). It may lead to mental despair if not dealt with properly. Haunted by nightmares of the war and the phantom, Keiko's psychology is in the state of the wilderness. Her psychological wilderness of desolation and insecurity makes her seek companionship from the strayed cats and even spiders and seek consolation in the natural wilderness, where she could find spiritual tranquillity and mental antidotes. When she is displaced from the familiar environment, which is beneficial to her psychology, and transplanted to an alienated urban soil of a different culture, there is no longer the analogous wilderness providing catharsis for her psychological wilderness. With the expansion and aggravation of the psychological wilderness, Keiko chooses to end her life. Therefore, on the one hand, Mariko is generally appeased and sheltered by the natural wilderness; on the other hand, she is afflicted slightly by the natural wilderness and seriously by the man-made and psychological wilderness.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the main characters have ambivalent attitudes toward the wilderness owing to its dualistic characteristics. Etsuko's insights into the wilderness are paradoxical. Firstly, she reveals repugnance toward the wilderness, for nature is aversive and frightening; and secondly, she is obsessed with the natural environment, a haven that is tranquil and restorative. She regularly maintains the gesture of looking out of the window, even gazing into the darkness, to seek salvation and shelter. She nourishes the desire for a satisfying retreat into the wilderness. In the wilderness, tranquillity, affection, and harmony would substitute for the conflict, immorality, and materialism of the urban areas, and reversion to the wilderness would emancipate man from the social yoke that inhibits his sensuous expression to its fullest extent (Nash, 2014). Nevertheless, Mariko (Keiko) seeks to integrate herself with the natural wilderness. She is traumatised by the urban wilderness to the greatest degree, so she pursues sanctuary and consolation in the natural wilderness, which is a therapeutic invigorator and tranquilliser for her psychological wilderness, whereas her displacement from the natural wilderness in Japan to the urban wilderness in England cuts the umbilical cord with her familiar mother nature, aggravating her psychological wilderness and leading to self-destruction.

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