

A GUIDE TO AN ARTIST OF THE FLOATING WORLD

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About the Author

Born in Nagasaki, Japan in 1954, Kazuo Ishiguro later moves to England at the age of five and returned to Japan twenty-nine years later. Ishiguro grows up under the care of a traditionally Japanese mother; hence she influences his writing when reflecting on Japan. Kazuo read a number of Japanese novels and comics that connect him to the Japanese heritage. He sees the differences between Western and Japanese society.

Ishiguro was inspired to write *An Artist of the Floating World*, after writing his novel *A Pale View of Hills*, and *The Remains of the Day*. Since Ishiguro moves out of his country in childhood and lacked connection to his country, he wrote in a globalized and international way, while exploring his own background and heritage. Generally, the novel reflects Ishiguro's personal feelings of Japanese heritage, and a fictional reflection of his sense of identity, as presented through a youthful reconstruction of an imagined Japan. Ichiro, a boy character in this novel has a cowboy obsession, which emerges from the writer's own fascination with cowboys during his youth.

Synopsis

An Artist of the Floating World (1986) as a novel is authored by Kazuo Ishiguro, a British. The book was published in 1986 by Faber and Faber Publisher. Its setting revolves around post-World War II Japan. The story takes the four different times namely; October 1948, April 1949, November 1949, and June 1950.

The novel centers around the elderly Masuji Ono, is an ageing painter, who reflects on his life and how he spend it. He remembers his once great reputation that has faltered since the war and the change in the attitude towards him and his paintings.

The main conflict is the need of Ono to accept responsibility for his past actions, rendered politically suspect in the situation of post-War Japan. The novel ends with the narrator expressing good will for the young white-collar workers on the streets at lunch break. The novel too covers the role of people in a rapidly changing political situation and with the assumption and denial of guilt.

The novel is global literature and a historical fiction in whose past preludes personal experiences of the author, and it draws from historical facts *An Artist of the Floating World* distinctly looks at different years, with the memories of the narrator going back to his own childhood, when his father opposed his wish to become an artist.

In the buildup to World War II, Ono, a promising artist, breaks away from the teaching of his master, whose artistic goal was to acquire an ultimate aesthetic ideal in representations of the 'floating world' of night-time entertainments. Ono becomes involved in far-right politics, and begins making propagandistic art. Later, as a member of the Cultural Committee of the Interior Department and official adviser to the Committee of Unpatriotic Activities, Ono becomes a police informer, taking an active part in an ideological witch hunt against a former student,

Kuroda. After the 1945 defeat and the **collapse of Imperial** Japan, Ono becomes a condemned figure, one of the "traitors" who "led the country astray". In the meantime, the victims of state subjugation, including individuals Ono himself had once deplored, are restored and allowed to lead a normal life. In the whole story, Ono appears to be progressively acknowledging his past "errors", as he declares the uncertainties in his memory of past events and a high degree of unreliability.

The novel is written in the first person perspective and pivots on the limited use of a single, unreliable narrator, articulating a viewpoint which the reader identifies as limited and fallible. Ono clearly says he is uncertain of the accuracy of his narrative, but that might either make the reader vigilant or, on the other hand, prove that Ono is very honest and, hence, trustworthy.

The self-image Ono expresses in his narrative is immensely different from what the reader builds of him while reading the narrative. Ono indicates how others admire and are indebted to him. He seems to be in a state of denial so that his interests and hierarchy of values are at odds with the reader's. Ono describes pictures by focusing on pictorial technique, mentioning the subjects with less significance, as they help bring out the propagandistic nature of Ono's work.

Similarly, when Ono narrates an episode in which he was confronted with the results of his activities as a police informer, it is debatable whether his attempt to mitigate the brutality of the police is a retrospective fabrication devised to avoid his own responsibility, or whether he actually did disapprove of the treatment of the person he had denounced, distancing himself from his actions and refusing to recognize the abusive treatment as a direct and foreseeable consequence of those actions.

Relevance of the title

The title *the Artist of the Floating world* is a reference to the Japanese art of prints. It could simply be considered "a printmaker" or "an artist living in a changing world," because of the narrow understanding of Ono and the drastic global changes that affect the first half of 20th C.

The title focuses on Ono an artist who used to be popular, but he no longer has his art standing art after taking part in the imperialist propaganda.

The title also refers to an artistic genre hence bringing out both the plot and themes. Ono's master is especially interested in portraying scenes from the pleasure district adjacent to the villa in which he and his students live. Ono mentions the momentary nature of the [floating world](#) that could be experienced every night. His master experiments with innovative softer Western-style painting practices, eliminating the hard black outlining that was considered more traditional. He says he cannot remain an artist of the floating world. Under the influence of right-wing political ideas about tradition, Ono becomes alienated from his master and forges his own career. He is

delighted when the paintings of his master lose the favor of people during a return to the use of more prehistoric bold lines in the paintings used for nationalistic posters.

Characters and their personalities

a. Masuji Ono

Masuji Ono is the narrator and protagonist in the novel. He is an elderly artist, father and grandfather at the time he narrates the events in the novel. The story sets when his main concern is the marriage negotiations of his daughter, Noriko.

He is portrayed as a:

1. *Hardworking, Zealous and industrious*

He works so hard in art until his earning enable him to buy Sugimura's house (P. 2).

He renovates his house after the war when he notes it has been ruined. He says he had make progress in restoring its early appearance (P. 8).

He testifies before Matsuda that he had enough wealth.

He had worked hard in the villa and at Takeda's even when they needed many paintings. He says he commanded considerable respect for his output was unchallengeable in terms of both quality and quantity (P. 76).

Even at old age, Ono has to make sure his trees and compound is clean and well-trimmed (P.122).

2. *Patronizing and a male chauvinist*

He tells Ichiro he is tired to talking to women all the time and wants to talk to Ichiro (P. 10).

He tries to force Ichiro to take to his art, but fails

From what Noriko comments, Ono was tyrannical and used to order them around (P. 8).

When talking to Ichiro about the film, he insinuates that if Setsuko and Noriko watch they will be scared because they are women.

Setsuko seems shrewd in her father's presence (P.9).

He quits from Takedas, indicating that with his ambition he must look for his livelihood elsewhere instead of toiling under his teacher (P. 80).

Noriko asks him whether he is an authority on cutting shrubs (P. 121). Ono responds that women including his wife have no artistic eye.

He refers to his daughters as women most of the times. Even when he wants Ichiro to taste sake, he says women never understand about men drinking (P. 173 and P. 178).

3. Focused, ambitious, and responsible

He reveals that his father denied him his interest in the painting career which he still pursued regardless. He shares how his father rejects his early studies with Mori-San, but later Ono works with the nationalist government in the creation of wartime paintings and become the applauded subject of prizes.

He also reveals that although his teacher Mori-san destroyed some of his paintings and told him to bring the two last ones or leave the villa, his urge to explore the new world of art makes him leave and try his luck elsewhere.

He reveals that he acquired Akira Sugimura's house so that the marriage prospects of his children be good.

He also takes it as his responsibility to renovate his house after the war (P. 8).

He quits from Takedas, indicating that with his ambition he must look for his livelihood elsewhere instead of toiling under his teacher (P. 80).

He does not see how he should work and not earn loyalty (P. 80).

He comments that in the light of Noriko's marriage negotiations, his duty as a father made him press on with matters, however, unpleasant he thought they were. He goes to visit Kuroda and even writes a letter to him so that he corrects past mistakes (P. 129).

4. Kind

He sees it as his responsibility to defend Tortoise when everyone else is against him. Ono himself says it is rare to find such kindness amongst colleagues (P. 78).

He recommends tortoise to Mori-san as a unique artist and Tortoise considers such as an extreme kindness (P. 78).

He recommends for Shintaro's brother even though he hardly knows him.

5. Opportunistic, schemer, and strategist

Ono says in the story that when his circumstances seemed to improve with each month, his wife had begun to press him to find a new house. Then he heard of the procedure Sugimura were using to sell their house and tried his luck. Finally he got it (P. 1-3).

He used his position as a member of the arts committee of the state department to make Migi-Hidari P. 70-1.

Ironically, currently, Ono is involved in propaganda hence his renowned reputation is lost.

Ono lives with a great internal conflict and even his own students and a son in law critique his choices and ways.

He knows very well the Saito's would want to know his opinion about people who have never apologized about their past actions and so he decides to talk about his art, how it was a mistake, his failure to have known its effect and buys their mind (P.139-141).

He refuses to be confined to Mori-san's art because he wants a different kind of art.

6. Evasive

When the Sugimura's come to him and inform him that they would have to conduct closer investigation of his background and credentials he does not see anything objectionable about it (P. 3).

When his wife views the proposals as negative he tells her that there is no harm in it and they have nothing they would want them not to discover and whatever they will find might be to their advantage (P.4).

Ono testifies that he has never at any point in his life been very aware of his own social standing (P. 16).

Ono does not see why both Miyake and Suichi were emotional about men who lived even though they had taken part in supporting the war. He does not understand why they can such men cowards.

During Kenji's burial, Ono does not seem to show any grief directly.

He does not see why people can beat an idiot like Hirayama on grounds of singing patriotic songs to praise the war of Japan P. 65.

When Ono meets Dr Saito he avoids talking about marriage negotiations because they were just at early stages P. 91.

7. Admirable and respectable

He testifies that his students always respected him (P. 2).

Daughters of Sugimura tell him that they have decided to give him the house on grounds purely of good character and achievement (P. 2).

Many people including elderly daughters of Sugimura address him as Mr. (P. 3).

Ono reveals the admiration Shintaro had towards him that he had he made him recommend for someone P. 16-17.

Matsuda had come for him to the villa because he admired his work (P. 100).

After realizing that other colleagues are tormenting Tortoise, he defends him on matters of integrity P. 77.

Dar Saito says it is a real honor to have someone of stature in their neighbourhood (P146).

8. Keen and observant

He observes the daughters of Sugimura when they come to his house to inform him that they had decided to sell the house to him as being two haughty grey-haired (P. 2).

Once Sugimura's daughters inform him that their father was a cultured man who respected artists, he makes inquiries on the same and ascertains that the man had supported a lot of exhibitions (P. 4).

He also discovers that the odd way of selling the house was caused by bitter arguments amongst Sugimura's children and they had financial pressures too (P.4).

He observes that after acquiring Sugimura's house some of his relatives were hostile towards him and instead of greeting him they would stand and interrogate about the state of the house (P. 5).

When one of the Sugimura's daughter visits him he realizes that she is emotional to be back to the house because her eyes roam involuntarily around the room, and she occasionally pauses abruptly in the midst of one of her measured and formal sentences (P. 6).

Ono observes that Setsuko is uncomfortable with Noriko's frank and blunt statements about her father. He also observes that Setsuko's gaze turns demurely away and she gives him an enquiring look P. 9.

Ono observes how restless Ichiro is and decides to talk to him (P. 10).

Ono observes his daughter Setsuko during one of her visits and notes that she is becoming better in her looks that she used to be in her adolescence (P.13).

He observes that Setsuko is insinuating something about him when she asks about the former marriage negotiations and why Miyake's pulled out (P. 13).

Ono observes his father's reception was on the days he used to call him and how he could talk and produce from his 'Business box' small fat notebooks with figures, then talk in measured grave tone (P. 44).

Ono is keen to see that Miyake is dressed in a tired looking raincoat a little too large on him, he has a briefcase and he looks like a young man who is accustomed to be bossed around. That his posture seems to be fixed on the verge of bowing and he laughs nervously as if he had caught him coming out of some disreputable house (P. 58).

He observes that when he met Matsuda he was a lean-featured young man. That day there were puddles of water and wet leaves falling from the cedar trees overlooking the villa? He was dressed too dandyishly to be a policeman; his overcoat was sharply tailored with a huge upturned collar... (P. 99).

While at Matsuda's home, Ono is keen to note that Matsuda is a different man whose body is broken by ill-health and his once handsome, arrogant face has become distorted by a lower jaw that seems no longer able to align itself with the upper (P. 102).

Ono later he notes that Matsuda's garden is small, arranged with much taste: a floor of smooth moss, a few small shapely trees and a deep pond (P. 104).

He mentioned that Arakawa district had cleanly swept residential houses set apart and with the general air of countryside (P. 68).

When Ono mentions Dr Saito, he discovers that his daughters stop eating and exchange glances. (P. 94).

Ono notes that Ichiro had carried the raincoat so that when the film gets boring he does not see (P.93).

Ono recalls a self-portrait Tortoise had made of himself with such vivid details. He says ' It shows a thin young man with spectacles , sitting in his shirt sleeves in a cramped , shadowy room, surrounded by easels and rickety furniture, his face caught on one side and by the light coming from the window...(P 75).'

He observes Kuroda at the old pleasure district and realizes that there are workmen. Kuroda turns and watches him expressionlessly in his dark raincoat. The charred buildings behind him drip and remnants of some gutter make a large rainwater splash down not far from him. He has hollowed cheekbones (P. 88).

He is keen to determine that Kuroda did not live in a good quarter and the alleys around his residence are little and dilapidated with lodging houses. Then there is a concrete square resembling the forecourt of a factory and there are trucks parked around that place (P. 123).

He also notices that Kuroda's apartment is small without an entryway with its tatami starting a little way inside the front door with only a shallow step up. There was a tidy look to the place too with a number of paintings and walls adorning the walls (P. 124).

He observes how nervous Noriko is in the second marriage negotiation meeting with the Saito's and recognizes Enchi as a boy he had met at Kuroda's. He also senses that this boy is uncomfortable with him and he has a sense of hostility towards him (P. 132).

9. Emotional

When he finds out the suffering and troubles amongst the Sugimura's he is set to sympathize with them P.4.

Ono feels that his father made his life dreadful by burning his first paintings (P. 49).

When one of the Sugimura's daughter visits him he realizes that she is emotional to be back to the house and feels pity for her that most of the family members were dead now (P. 6).

Ono testifies that he experiences a wave of irritation to remember how Setsuko had asked him to take 'Precautionary steps' so that there are no more disappointments (P. 54).

He is also irritated that his daughter Noriko questions on his artistic eye when he cuts the bamboo tree (P. 120-122).

Ono says as he reflects on the conversation he had with Setsuko at Kawabe Park he found himself becoming increasingly irritated by certain things she had said to him that day (P. 147).

Ono says he was quite annoyed with his elder daughter (p. 219).

10. Judgmental

Ono thinks his father's business is unsound and that his father usually called him around so that in case he inherits it he does not have questions (P. 47).

Ono thinks Setsuko is more masculine at her adolescence.

Ono thinks that Sugimura's relatives are hostile to him for having bought their house.

Ono thinks Noriko is a bit difficult to handle.

Thinks Setsuko is being influenced by Suichi is how she thinks about her father. Ono thinks Suichi is turning Setsuko against her father and even making her speculate about why Miyake's pulled out on marriage negotiations (P. 54).

During the meeting with Saito's, Ono suggests that Taro is intelligent, responsible and possessing all assured grace and manners. He also says Taro's mannerisms were more like Suichi's (P. 132).

11. Firm and persistent

He shares with his students that he learned from Takeda that it was important to question the authority of teachers and never follow the crowd blindly (P. 82).

When he visits Kuroda Enchi tells him he should not wait if he is Ono because Kuroda might not wish to meet him, but Ono insists to wait (P.128).

b. Ono's wife

1. Persuasive

Fifteen years ago, she had pressed Ono to find a new house and she had argued the importance of their having a house in keeping with their status, for the sake of their children's marriage prospects p. 2.

2. A Schemer

She sees the need of acquiring a good house so that the marriage prospects of their children are good P. 2.

3. Indifferent

Ono testifies that when the wife heard that the Sugimura's were to investigate on Ono before deciding to sell to him the house, she did not take it kindly (P. 4).

c. Ono's Father

1. Cruel

He burned all paintings his son Ono had made in the belief that he can prevent him from having a misfortunate artists' life (P.50).

2. Patronizing

He commands the career his son should have

Ono says on that dreadful day, his father's voice was needlessly loud (P. 48).

3. Superstitious

He believes a wandering priest who predicted that Ono's heart shows his weakness as a person with a little malice and they would have to combat his laziness, his dislike for useful work. This makes his stop his son from pursuing art (P. 49).

d. Noriko

Noriko is the younger daughter to Ono. She is depicted as a character that is:

1. Indignant

Noriko is a character who is easily angered. She lives with her father in his house and the father perceives her as exhibiting the personality of an indignant and bad-mannered lady.

There are times she is bitter to her father when the novel begins because she suspects her original marriage arrangement were canceled as a result of her father's past.

2. Content

All the same, she soon becomes enamored with her second marriage arrangement and is content when she finally marries.

She already tells Mori-san that her marriage negotiations are settled. He also tells Setsuko the same (P. 130).

When Ono meets her at Kawabe Park, she looked cheerful and said a woman needed not to dress drably simply because she marries (P. 151).

3. Temperamental, bitter, unforgiving and antagonistic

Noriko views her father, Ono, as someone she must care for forming a small bitterness and antagonism towards him.

She is quite emotional when she realizes her father has cut the bamboo tree and accuses him of thinking he is an authority (P. 122).

She keeps indicating that her father mops around when in reality that is not true.

4. Frank, candid, and outspoken

When she comes to her home and realizes the father has trimmed a maple tree she quickly asks why he had to destroy it. Later she comments in the presence on her sister Setsuko that the tree is not looking splendid (P. 8).

In the presence of Setsuko she says her father no longer does anything. All he does is to mope. She even says she is happy that Setsuko has come around and the father will be off her hands now because he takes a lot of looking after now (P. 8-9).

She also comments that Ono is now gentle, and domesticated. He is no longer a tyrant who orders them around (P. 8-9).

She meets Miyake a man who pulled out on her in marriage negotiations and goes ahead to ask him how he is doing with new marriage arrangements now.

When the father is taking her to the meeting with Dr Saito's she comments on the delay by her father to dress and on his failure to really consider her marriage negotiations as important (P. 130).

5. Animated and boisterous

He father thinks she is a bit unruly

Setsuko observes that her sister is always so good with children and that is why Ichiro likes her.

e. Setsuko

Setsuko is Ono's elder daughter. She is married to Suichi and has a son named Ichiro

1. She is a discreet/unobtrusive and a traditional woman.

Disagrees that Ichiro cannot take Sake until he is of age and only when Suichi wished so (P.179).

She thinks her father has a great role in the success Noriko's marriage negotiations.

She believes that Noriko should be married off soon before she ages.

2. Supportive, understanding, and helpful

She supports her sister Setsuko so that her second marriage prospect does not fail.

She tends to support her father compared to her sister and other people.

She supports her father during her brother's burial and even makes him forgive Suichi for his emotional outrage.

3. Strong-willed

She has a strong relationship with her father Ono and she helps him in the entire marriage arrangement events and dealing with his guilt that haunts him after the war.

She writes to her father after Kenji's remains are brought from the minefield indicating that even if the ash was mixed up with others, they must be his comrades and they cannot complain about it P.62.

She is strong during Kenji's burial and even talks to her father.

4. Keen

Whenever her father speaks to her she pays attention and asks about some details she is not sure of at all.

5. Sensitive

When her sister Noriko starts to talk bluntly about her father, she looks uncomfortable; she smiles nervously and has shifty gazes. P. 8-9

Though she intends to ask the father about why the previous Noriko's marriage negotiations failed, but she apologizes a lot p. 12-13.

6. Loving

Setsuko is also strongly connected with her sister Noriko, even though they are different temperamentally. She comes to spend with her after her marriage negotiations fail.

She also helps her prepare for the second negotiations and ensures the father meets all the expectations from Dr Saito's family.

f. Ichiro

Ichiro is Ono's grandson, Setsuko's child and Noriko's nephew. In the present of the novel, he is a young boy with an active imagination. He is about seven years.

1. Alienated

To Ono, Ichiro can be confusing and alienating owing to his adoption of Western culture, including some English words and an obsession with cowboys, the movie Godzilla, and eating spinach for strength (a reference to [Popeye](#)) (P.172).

He thinks he should start taking sake as early as now.

He sits in a manner that Setsuko thinks is unmannerly but he finds it fun (P. 11).

He does not want to listen to Ono who talks of art and instead focuses on cowboy mannerisms (P. 30-31). When he starts drawing, he draws characters he has seen in a film.

2. Outspoken and talkative

He tells off his grandfather on grounds that he is playing a cowboy (P. 31). He also reveals that his father says because the war lost, Ono had to finish his art (P. 33).

He comments on everything and talks about everything he experiences. He even says the mother stops the father from many things (p.218).

He comments that her aunt must have been drunk after taking sake because women cannot withstand it (p.217).

He bursts out telling Noriko how scaring the film was (P. 94).

3. Inquisitive

He asks his grandfather about a film poster he saw at the railway station and where monsters come from (P. 11).

He asks her grandfather about his art.

He asks whether the mother and aunt are drunk (P.217).

He asks the grandfather whether he will go home or spend with them when he comes to their home.

4. Sociable and Friendly

Ichiro and Ono nonetheless have a good relationship, and frequently bond over their masculinity.

5. Brave

Ono observes that Ichiro is not at all shy like a lot of children of his age (P. 35).

g. Suichi

Suichi is the husband to Setsuko and son-in-law to Ono. He symbolizes the new and changing ideals of Japan and is quite candid regarding the role of Ono in the war.

He often speaks out his sentiments concerning the war.

Before the war he appeared to be a well-mannered and happy man

After the war he transforms into a relatively angry and bitter man because of the encounters he had as a soldier.

1. Polite and Friendly

During the Saito's meeting, Ono recalls that Suichi exhibited personalities such as politeness and friendliness (P. 132).

2. Emotional

During burial of Kenji's remains he walks away from the service (P.62).

3. Opinionated

He says real people who caused war walk around as if nothing happened and young people die for no cause (P. 65).

Ono suspects that he has been influencing Setsuko and turning her against her father

4. Outspoken

He tells Ono that it is not the likes of Kenji to die but people who caused war (P. 65).

h. Kuroda

Kuroda is presented as a former protégé and student to Ono. At the beginning presented in a flashback, Kuroda has a strong relationship with his teacher.

Nonetheless, when Ono condemned the direction of Kuroda's art and later reported the issue to the Committee of Unpatriotic Activities, a dramatic twist follows. Kuroda is punished and his paintings are burned.

1. Hateful

Kuroda strongly dislikes Ono, hence rejects meeting or seeing Ono again. When he sees Ono at a distance, he turns and walks away (P. 88 and P. 129).

2. Loyal

While working together with Ono, he used to admire Ono and even prospect the great future of this man. Ono reports that Kuroda had taken part in making speeches of loyal nature to him (P. 23).

He praised him and indicated that they would see their teacher become great and could tell other people about him (p 23).

3. Emotional and unforgiving

He does not seem to have any interest in meeting Ono. Ono says he had turned and walked off in another direction when he saw Ono at the tram station (P.88).

When Ono writes a friendly and conciliatory letter after having missed him at home, Kuroda simply writes a cold, offensive brief reply in which he says he has no reason to believe a meeting between them would produce anything of value (P. 129).

4. Helpful

Enchi testifies that he had been of help to him when he lost a residence; he welcomed him to his house (P.126).

i. Chishi Matsuda

1. Visionary

Matsuda is presented as a nationalist that encourages Ono to come up with politicized paintings.

He mocks artists that avoid handling social and political issues in their art.

He considers such artists to be naive.

Immediately after the war, Matsuda falls sick and in his old age he receives Ono as a frequent visitor.

2. Regretful

He regrets for having remained unmarried and lacking heirs to succeed him.

3. Proud and arrogant

Unlike, Ono he does not regret the political aspects of his past (P. 102).

He is happy that he has enough wealth which he can use to help a stuck friend (P.105).

Ono says Matsuda has an arrogant nature (P. 99).

4. Appreciative

He appreciates the presence of Miss Suzuki and when he dies he writes a will of what he has for her.

He says Miss Suzuki is responsible for his life (P. 104).

He recognizes the good art by Matsuda.

5. Frank

He tells Ono that he appears have held to his health (P.105).

He tells Ono that he should be fast in saying why he came because he will need to rest soon.

When he comes to the villa he also tells Ono to think about how he can put his art to use elsewhere instead of building a name (P. 99).

j. Seiji Moriyama

Seiji Moriyama is also referred to as Mori-san in the novel, is Ono's art teacher during his younger years.

1. Conventional and rigid

He believes strongly in painting the 'floating world' and teaches students in his villa. His central artistic technique is the desertion of traditional Japanese techniques like the use of dark lines in favour of shading.

He orders anyone who cannot maintain his kind of art to leave the villa, including confiscates their paintings (P. 206).

2. Influential

Ono testifies that he had a lot that he had borrowed from his teacher. He uses statements like ‘As the new generation of Japanese artists, you have a great responsibility towards the culture of this nation (P.171).’

He makes many people see a diversion of art from his in the villa it as traitorous.

Mori-san devoted so much time and wealth in nurturing of pupils and Ono testifies that his influence over them was not merely to the realms of painting but values and lifestyle (P. 163).

Even at the Migi-Hidari Ono and Maki reminisce the merriment that used be at Mori-san’s place (P.164).

3. Optimistic

He indicates that he knows Ono will be successful and might find work illustrations, magazines, and comic books to work on, or even later own a firm (P.208).

4. Opinionated and vindictive

He thinks Ono should not move out of the villa because of the kind of art he wants to pursue.

Ono finds his comments unnecessarily vindictive (P. 208).

5. Frank and honest

Ono has a dialogue with Seiji Moriyama, a rich and talented artist who takes on young pupils when he is intending to leave the villa. Seiji suggests that Ono is talented and can thrive anywhere (P. 207).

k. Dr. Saito

Dr Saito is a major art professor and a man of a high social standing. He remains as the only long-standing neighbour to Ono.

Even though he seems to be quite conversant with his work, the novel reveals through Setsuko raises questions about the validity of Ono's memory when he talks about Saito’s work.

1. Friendly, warm, and Sociable

Ono reports that Dr Saito initiated a conversation between them when he was fixing his gateway and later they could greet each other respectfully (P.146-7).

Ono says that Dr Saito has a warm, genial manner.

He asks Ichiro how he was enjoying his visit and about the movie they were about to see (P. 90).

He says he was with Kuroda and he had mentioned Ono and in case he meets him he will mention having been with him.

Ono enjoys interacting with him in three different meetings; as a neighbour, when they meet at the tram, and in the marriage negotiations.

2. Admirable

Ono testifies that in comparison to the Miyake's he noticed the assured way Dr Saito had responded to the slightly awkward situation (P. 91).

Ono also says he was reassured to be dealing with the likes of Saito's family (P. 91).

During the marriage negotiation meeting with the Saito's Ono says that Saito was an expert in generating a relaxed atmosphere (P. 135).

l. Mrs. Kawakami

Mrs. Kawakami is the owner of a bar in the pleasure district that Ono commonly visits. She is a good friend to Ono.

1. Optimistic and hopeful

She remains hopeful all through the novel that the pleasure district will be reborn however; by the end of the novel she sells her bar for redevelopment as offices.

She still rejects selling her bar because she hopes business will recover.

2. Hardworking and industrious

Looking at how her bar started and how it grows, she surely is hardworking and determined.

3. Friendly and sociable

She talks to her customers so much in a friendly way.

4. Emotional

When she sees Shintaro squeezing his cap on her doormat, she shouts at him and scolds his mannerisms (P. 20).

m. Yasunari Nakahara

Nakahara is also called 'The Tortoise' in the story, is known for slow painting. He is a friend of Ono in his youthful days at Mori-san's villa.

1. Unique

While working at Takeda, he was extremely slow in how he made his paintings (P. 76).

2. Humble

Even when other artists criticized his slow pace in art, he could politely tell them to be patient with him for he intended to produce quality work. He says 'I beg you to be patient with me. It is my greatest wish to learn from you, my superior colleagues, how to produce work of such quality so quickly (P. 76).' He pleads with these people three times over but they persist to abuse and accuse him of laziness.

3. Honest

His painting that Ono recalls is an extremely honest picture of himself (P. 750).

He agrees that he is slow and that might be creating his poor standing in their eyes (P. 76).

4. Appreciative

Many of Mori-san's pupils mock him for being too slow in painting. Ono defends him on the painting. He thanks Ono for defending him against abuses and accuses of his tormentors at Takeda firm (P. 78).

5. Opinionated

When Ono changes his painting style into a political one on the nationalist side, Nakahara distances himself from Ono whom he believes is a traitor.

n. Shintaro

1. Naïve

Ono testifies that he was ignorant about the cynicism about some things he talked about. Once he had run to Mrs Kawakami's bar and joked about having liked a radical man who had been executed in war (P.20).

He is also said to be childlike P. 19.

2. Humble and Polite

He often greeted Ono politely.

Even when he came to request that Ono recommends for his brother, he was so humble in his approach.

He comes back to Ono seeking his own recommendation and he talks to him so politely (P.112-114).

3. Unique

He no longer looks at real art, he is working on book illustrations and fire engines (P. 19).

o. Enchi

1. Emotional, accusative, and vindictive

He thinks Ono is the Cordon Society and invites him so warmly promising that Kuroda would come in any time and he should wait, however, on realizing that Ono is an old friend he rises to his feet and goes over to the window (P. 127).

During the meeting Ono says, he notices that this boy looked at him with some sort of hostility and accusation (P 133).

2. *Pretentious*

Although he had said Kuroda would not wish to see Ono because he had shared a lot about him, during the meeting with Ono and Noriko before his family, he denies having talked with Kuroda in details about the same (P. 19-140).

3. *Appreciative*

He reveals to Ono that Kuroda had been so helpful in housing him after he was thrown out of his previous lodgings (P. 126).

p. **Jiro Miyake**

A potential husband for Noriko

1. *Shrewd*

Ono says he was not confident about himself and must have pulled out of negotiations because he believed Noriko was far above him (P. 56).

When he sees Ono near his place of work, he is quite worried (P. 58).

2. *Treacherous*

Pulls out of marriage negotiations when they were almost coming to an end and never reveals to Noriko why they did so even though they had shown they were a love match.

Noriko makes him reveal that his current marriage negotiations were almost coming to an end after he jilts on her.

3. *Opinionated*

He thinks people who had past mistakes relating to war should kill themselves just like their company president do (P. 59).

4. *Alienated*

Ono reveals that during the meeting of the Miyake's in the former marriage negotiations, Miyake had exchanged mischievous glances with Noriko as if mocking the formalities (P. 138).

Themes and Key concerns (Virtues, Vices, and Values)

An Artist of the Floating World discusses several concerns in Masuji Ono's memory.

Among the themes explored in this novel are family ties, friendship and betrayal, imperialism, intergenerational conflicts, the changing values, arranged marriage, the changing roles of women, and the declining status of "elders" in Japanese society since 1945. Most of these concerns are interwoven. The narrator is a father, grandfather, and a widow who is known for his art.

1. Politicization of art

Art is a central theme of the story as Ono serves as a propaganda artist during the war. He came up with art that inspired or triggered war.

The novel questions how able of art can influence and instigate political action within a community. There is a great conflict between whether art should be politicised or whether it should be simply a source of pleasure and gratification. 'The Eye of the Horizon' unlike 'the Lantern' aim to politicize what the current leaders are doing and inspire a war in Japan (P. 191-193).

The novel highlights how politicized art was become functional and vital in the society during the times of war.

Many people who were on the frontline, however, question how art can actually serve in the war and they feel that it is both ineffectual and unable to influence events.

According to the people who took part in the war actively war could still have occurred whether Ono's art was there or not.

Kuroda's paintings are destroyed by the police who believe it is bad art. They consider his art conspiracy.

2. Responsibility

In the novel there is the role of responsibility through the narration of Masuji Ono.

Ono is responsible for his family welfare; hence he buys a better house when the wife tells him why he should do so.

Ono takes care of the house he bought from the Sugimura's and even when it is ruined during the war he renovates it.

Ono also takes **responsibility to educate his children and** make their marriage negotiations successful.

The author highlights the conflict between actions and culpability that stands out in Ono's inability to take responsibility for the political aspects of his past work.

Ono's refrains of responsibility manifest through his attempt at concealing his actions and their ensuing consequences.

An Artist of the Floating World refers to the liability of leaders after the war shows the various leaders being held responsible.

Unfortunately, Ono implicitly disassociates himself with them until he is reminded of how close he was with the group. Later, he decides to own his past mistakes before the Saitos.

Still, there is an abstract consideration the concept of responsibility as the reader is put at task to determine how the novel will end; the reader should determine whether Ono is guilty for his actions or if he is simply overstating his importance and role in the war.

The narrator says he receives news of Matsuda's death; he makes himself a light lunch then goes for a little exercise (P.226).

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their children grow up well and display the best habits. Ono's father having heard the warning of a wandering priest ensures that he stops his son from being lazy by countering his art (P 49).

Matsuda thinks it is the responsibility of all artists at that time to work on something that will change Japan (P.228).

Taro believes in the current times, it is the responsibility of young had a responsibility to change their perspectives and make Japan a better place (P.213-214).

Miss Suzuki is responsible for Matsuda's life.

3. Disillusionment and Pessimism

Ono observes that in the last visit to Matsuda after talking for a while, he observes that this man is disillusioned because his art and participation in war had all gone to drain and all people could see currently was an old man with a stick. He shares that they are the only people who care about what they did in war (P. 231).

Ono too suggests he was himself disillusioned immediately he had been presented with the Shigheta Foundation Award in May of 1938. That day he had finished the New Japan campaign and it had proved a great success but as speeches, drinks, and tribute were given to him, he failed to field deep triumph and fulfillment the award should have given him. He had also left Wakaba afraid that the future held nothing for him (P. 232).

Ono shares that disillusionment had also caught up with Morison his old teacher whose endeavours to bring European influence into Utamaro tradition had been considered unpatriotic leading to him holding his exhibitions at less prestigious venues. His reputation had declined in town and he had opted to make illustrations for popular magazines to maintain his income (P. 233).

The youngest daughter of Sugimura seems to be emotional when she visits her former home now possessed by Ono. Ono thinks it is because most of the family members had died (P. 6).

Matsuda is disillusioned that he never married and got children and for having taken part in art propaganda (P.231).

Ono thinks Mr. Maguchi a famous singer in Japan who had composed songs and inspired people to go to war, kills himself because he thinks his art was a sort of mistake (P. 176).

4. Loss and Grief

Sugimura's daughter is full of pity when he comes to visit Ono possibly because majority of the family members had died by now (P. 6).

Ono testifies that he never came out of the dreadful night when his father burnt his first paintings.

Suichi has attended many burials of his friends who died in Manchuria that he is hurt to see another being buried and wishes all those who started the war should die. He walks away during the burial of Kenji's remains and tells Ono brave young men had died for the stupid causes when the real culprits were still there (P. 64).

Kuroda is a completely transformed person after Japan loses in war. He does not even want to relate to his old friends like Ono.

5. Betrayal

Ono speaks about Kuroda's paintings and the police come for him. He says he hoped they would just advise him, but instead they destroy all his paintings and consider that he is on a conspiracy.

The exit from the pavilion by Ono seems to Mori-sans as some sort of betrayal. The tortoise calls Ono a traitor since he was going against master Mori-sans teachings (P.188) the conversation between Ono and Mori-san depicts utmost betrayal from Ono (P 202,203,204,205,207)

Ono feels his father betrays him by burning his first painting however impressive they are when he is young in an attempt to stop him from pursuing art.

Kuroda and other young people seem to feel that Ono and his likes betrayed them by causing the war then after it they appear as if nothing happened.

Mr. Enchi reports how Kuroda used to be beaten and called a traitor during war (P.129).

Mr. Enchi believes real traitors are everywhere and known (P. 129).

Any artist who goes against Mori-san standards is considered a traitor including Sasaki (P. 162).

6. Hope and Optimism

Ono, Setsuko and possibly Suichi have hope in the new changes Japan is facing. Setsuko suggests that America has helped Japan learn a number of things including democracy and the past have taught them to overcome challenges. She says a future will be splendid (P. 215-216).

Ono says that he looks at pleasure district and realizes it is rebuilt, unrecognizable, there are wide roads, glass-fronted building, and workers are busy walking up and down, . He feels

nostalgia for what the place used to be, but he is happy that the nation has learned from past mistakes and they have a chance to make things better (P. 326-7).

Noriko already hopes that she will be married to her second suitor hence she tells everyone that negotiations are way off (P. 13).

Matsuda hopes that in future they will hold their heads high about what they tried to do (P. 108).

Shintaro believes the olden times will be regained (P. 86).

7. Admiration, Satisfaction and Reassurance

Ono is admired by Shintaro who later makes him write a recommendation for his brother (P. 16-17).

Ono acquires the Sugimura's house out of the admiration for his achievement. The daughters plainly tell him that (P. 2-3).

Ono admires Sugimura and his schemes. He believes his effort to rise was worth even though he may have failed, but his ambitions were admirable. This man had hoped to transform the district of Kawabe in a cultural balance hence brought in new emphasis to the northern side of the river. He had then run into terrible financial difficulties and sold off his land (P.149-150).

Ono sees satisfaction in seeing Mori-san's villa up on the mountain and how it appeared from far (P. 154).

While working at Takeda firm, Ono testifies that he commanded a consideration respect amongst his colleagues because of the many quality paintings he produced (P. 77).

Ono finally feels some sense of happiness, satisfaction, triumph for overcoming his doubts and being reassured that the hard work undertaken for many years by himself, Matsuda and Mori-san had been something fulfilling. After walking towards the villa and seeing it renovated he sits amongst the wild grass and eats mangoes believing that he had a triumphant life (P.234).

Ono observes what was once the yard to have been rebuilt and engaging as many people as possible. He is excited and glad that the district and state has rebuilt and activities go on as usual (P.235-236).

Ono says he feels he has achieved when people like Mintaro respect him and bring him brothers to who he must recommend.

Ono also reveals that Kuroda and other students used to admire and praise him (P. 23).

Ono admires the entire Dr Saito's family for their mannerisms, liberal interaction, and the diverse opinion they hold (P.133-136).

Once Ono has taken responsibility of his past mistake before the Saito's and his daughter he says there was certainly a satisfaction and dignity he gained in coming to terms with his mistakes made in the best faith (P. 142).

8. Imperialism

Ono's wife argues that they need to acquire a better house to better the marriage prospects of their children (P. 2).

Ono indicates that the Sugimura were an affluent family and the father could buy any flowers he found anywhere. He could also sponsor art.

Matsuda tells Ono that his Okada-Shingen Society was not a society that wished that the society to be turned into a large begging bowl and neither did it want to offer charity (P.197).

Matsuda point out to Ono that businesses get richer and the politicians forever make excuses and chatter (P.199)

.Ono believes that Noriko was far above Miyake and he works at a disreputable house. He says that they had often referred to the great gulf between their families (P. 59).

Ono sees sense in art that can make money and decides to move out of the villa (P. 206).

9. The Changing values in Japan and Intergenerational conflicts

Post-World War II Japan was a time of great change and upheaval of traditional values. The defeat of Japan in the war creates a large division between individuals and generations.

Morisan, Takeda, Ono, and the Suichi's represent the changing values in Japan because each time there is a different focus.

Masuji Ono and his grandson Ichiro have clashing values with Ono representing the traditional values of pre-war Japan, whereas Ichiro represents post-war Japan and the new generation

There are great changes explored that range from the changing attitudes towards the war, the changing views about family hierarchy, the transformed opinion about the geography of Japan and the increasing prevalence of Western culture.

Cultural tension are depicted in different various scenes between Ichiro and Ono. Ichiro fancies watching the Godzilla movie, he is obsessed with cowboys and Popeye and lacks interest in Japanese heroes. On the other hand, Ono is compassionate about ancient art; he even tries to make his grandson draw something on the sketchpad unsuccessfully (P. 31-33).

Women are portrayed throughout this novel from the perspective of Ono and well from the perspective of the changing Japanese society around him. The concept of Japanese masculinity changes when Japan is defeated in the war, and the role of women is no longer what it used to be.

Besides, there is a drastic change in women's stereotypes and gender relations stand out as the plot exposes Noriko's quest for a husband.

Ono deserts Mori-san's teaching in painting and adapts new ones so that he cannot remain an artist of the floating world. His move leads to his being rejected from the Pavilion where he used to work with other artists. This is some sort of change in the artistic values then (P. 206-207).

Mr. Kuroda too in his time, makes paintings Ono thinks are controversial and soon he is taken by the policemen for interrogation. His portraits are referred to as bad, offensive material that generates bad smoke (p. 211-212).

Ichiro is thrilled with monsters as compared to his grandfather who is excited about art.

Ichiro's sitting pose disturbs his mother who believes it is bad manners. He allows his feet to slump lifelessly on the floorboards (P. 11).

Though Ono's father believes in a wandering priest and things art is part of laziness that leads to misfortune, his son, Ono holds to it and becomes a prominent man.

10. Marriage negotiations

[Marriage negotiations](#) are a central feature of this novel. In the house bargain, the investigations on Ono's background make him compare them to what happens in marriage negotiations (P. 3).

Ono refers to the marriage negotiations many times even as the book comes to an end he says he meant to visit Matsuda immediately after Noriko's marriage negotiations (P.226).

Setsuko reminds the father that since Noriko's negotiations will progress soon; he should take precautionary steps and be careful. The father assures him that they will have the same detective they had the previous year and that he has nothing to hide. Setsuko feels precautions will prevent misunderstandings and disappointments minding that her sister is now 26 and there is no more time left (P. 52-3).

The novel starts when Ono is minding about his daughter, Noriko who lost a potential husband, Jiro Miyake, possibly as a result of her father's reputation. Ono reflects on his past and how it could have affected his daughter's marriage negotiations hence that ignites the plot of the story.

Ono takes responsibility for his past actions and regards the changing values of Japan as perhaps being positive. He even talks to the Saito's about his past mistakes to the amazement of many. He also visits people like Mori, Kuroda and many others so that the negotiations are successful.

He surprisingly admits his mistakes in the ironical twist that was less anticipated as the narrative is progressing. The narrator traverses the down memory lane to World War II and touches on diverse themes.

Ono talks about Noriko's marriage negotiations with Setsuko and how Noriko had talked to Mori about the same until she received his congratulations. The father observes that Noriko had believed they are love match with Setsuko is still interested in determining why the Miyakes pulled out in the middle of negotiations. Noriko too tries to infer that their pulling out from her negotiations were causing by something the father might be knowing and not herself (P.56-7).

Ono engaged in marriage negotiations with the Saito's for Noriko and takes the suggested 'precautionary measures' by visiting all the people he had ever interacted with.

When marriage negotiations are ongoing, both parties hire investigators to keep checking on the whereabouts the family. When the second negotiations set in for Noriko, the father pays attention to how to make everything right including owning his past mistakes.

The Saito's meet Noriko and Ono at Kasuga Park Hotel and they interact while weighing the suitability of each party in their forthcoming union (P.131- 137).

11. Effects of war

Ono says that his house had received its share in the war damage. The bulk of the bomb damage had been to this section of the house, and as they surveyed it from the garden there was damage on the verandah which had billowed and cracked (P. 6-7).

Ono says that Mrs Kawakami had lost in war and she had greatly aged because she seemed broken and sagged. His business too has become increasingly difficult for her that she was considering of closing it up like other old competitors (P. 21). He also reports on how her bar is a desert of demolished rubble and since there are broken bricks, Mrs Kawakami has put up mosquito wiring on her windows (P. 25).

Ono says that The Migi-Hidari has all its windows blows out, part of the roof fallen in and the street is full of rubble.

People begin to kill themselves in apology of having participated indirectly in the war. The young people feel it is alright as that is their responsibility.

Suichi transforms from a polite-self-effacing man to a malicious, cruel being after being in soldier in this war (P. 65).

Many young people including Kenji, Ono's son had died (P. 64-5).

Ono sees how Kuroda has been affected by war. He has hollowed out and there are heavy lines on his chin (P. 88). Enchi reveals too that Kuroda was neglected by warders who failed to report his injured shoulder and kept beating him all the time (P. 128-9).

Mori-sans villa was destroyed during the war (p.201).

12. Religion

Ono's father had a sacred altar in his house.

Ono too has an altar in his own house.

Ono and Tortoise share his intention to quit from Takeda when they are at Tamagawa temple (P.81).

13. Change

Suichi, Kuroda, and Tortoise are fully transformed in their opinion about Ono.

Setsuko too is transformed in her looks.

Ono realizes Pleasure district has changed and the area is rebuilt, the narrow little street that was crowded with people has been replaced by a wide concrete road and heavy trucks. There are office buildings, office workers who are busy around lunch time and cars in the year (p.235-6).

Ono who used to be strict and patronizing now seems soft and with little command before his daughter Noriko.

Ono realizes that Matsuda's looks changed since war.

Ono says Mori-san was no longer persistent with his art instead he was illustrating in popular magazines to maintain his income (P. 233).

14 .Identity

Through the novel we encounter Ono who spends much of his time through out to figure out his own identity and his place in his family and post-war world. He goes back to visit other artists, even Kuroda whom he feels he wronged. Ono had had doubts about Kuroda's loyalty, which he shared with authorities; as a result, Kuroda had been arrested (P 209,210,211)

Ono also struggles with accepting whether he deserved the prestigious house that was owned by the famous artist Akira Sugimura. The house he got through an action of prestige rather than ability to pay P 3,

Ono's daughter Noriko was engaged to marry in the family of Miyake. During the negotiation process they withdraw their interest in Noriko. Ono is left with a lot of questions. Eventually he probably realizes that his involvement in 'artist of the floating world' that involved geishas, alcohol, entertainment and romance (P 14) could have made the Miyake withdraw. Ono's encounter with Jiro Miyake at the tram station foreshadows the doubt people have held for supposed traitors like Ono 'indeed, sir it is a pity. Sometimes I think they are many who should be giving their lives in apology who are cowardly to face up to their responsibilities.....these are the men who led the country astray sir. Surely, it's only right they should acknowledge their responsibilities' (P 61)

Language and Styles

1. Irony

It is ironical that Setsuko insists on precautionary measures in the second marriage negotiations for Noriko, yet the father says there is nothing to hide. After Noriko's marriage, Setsuko shows no recall of what she told the father (P.52 vs. p.54 and later p.220-3).

It is ironical that after Ono acquires Sugimura's house some of his relatives were hostile towards him and instead of greeting him they would stand and interrogate about the state of the house, yet they were willing to sell in and solve their disputes (P. 5).

It is ironical that Ono seems to hold himself as a role model in his city, yet the young people and those who were in the frontline of the war disregard his participation in war. They feel that is high time he even commits suicide like his likes that never helped Japan much during the time of war.

Daughters of Sugimura tell him that they have decided to give him the house on grounds purely of good character and achievement, Ono finds it ironical because such a house could not be purchased by people like himself (P. 2).

It is also ironical Ono is positive for once about the criticism young people hold against him and he surprisingly admits his mistakes at a time and place less anticipated as the narrative is progressing.

It is ironical that at one point Kuroda had indicated that Ono's reputation will be greater and it will be their proudest honor to tell others that they were his student, yet in the story many of his students now show disgust about him.

It is ironical that Suichi or Miyake felt that people who committed suicide as a way of apologizing to Japan after the war that they caused were better than cowards who lived and progressed as if they had nothing to do with the destructive war. In real sense, we expect them to wish for a positive transformation and no more deaths.

It is ironical that Enchi judged Ono and seemed to know much about him when he visited Kuroda in his absence; however, when they meet in the family marriage negotiations he denies knowing much about the same (P. 139-141).

2. Unreliable narrator

The novel is structured as a series of Masuji Ono's interwoven memories. Ishiguro uses diverse techniques to express the unreliability of Ono's memories to the audience; progressively illuminating that Ono is an unreliable narrator and undermining the audience's faith in his story.

For example, Ono makes frequent digressions into unrelated topics and events during his narration, downplaying and concealing his cruel actions and misleading the reader as to the significance of important topic.

When Ono recounts interactions with family members, there is indirect reference to the hence the description contains incomplete information or there is attempt to disguise the truth of what has happened. It is therefore quite hard for the reader to define the degree of Ono's actions and the responsibility he bears for them.

Masuji Ono repeatedly reassesses events from his past throughout the novel, which suggests that he is constantly reconsidering his guilt about his actions and ultimately rethinking both the role of propaganda and the construction of memories.

The reassessment depicts his status as an unreliable narrator whose narration is subjective. Matsuda gets Ono away from the villa where they should build their reputation as artists to political art.

3. Dialogue or Conversation

Ono holds a dialogue with both Setsuko, his older daughter who is - Mannerly, self-deprecating, and indirect. On p 53 Setsuko tells the father to be cautious in the second negotiations so that there are no let-downs as they had been there previously.

Ono talks to his grandson, Ichiro, a strong-willed boy of seven years. When he visits with his mother, Ichiro wants to know about the art the grandfather used to have, the contents of the monster movie, and insists that his grandfather takes him to one (P.10-12). After he visits he comes back and shares his observations too (P.13). Ono and Ichiro have a disconnected dialogue where Ono wants the grandson to draw but he is interested in cowboy performances (P. 29-32).

Ono's father calls him and they talk about his art and the fate of artists, he also reveals to his son about the predictions of a wandering priest and tell him to stay away from wart (P. 49).

Ono talks to Shintaro and his brother as they plea that he recommends for his brother for a certain job that is critical for them (P.19). He comes again to plea with Ono so that he receives a recommendation for his current pursuits (P. 114- 116). It reveals the achievement of Ono in his former days.

Ono shares a conversation that happens between himself and Setsuko's husband (Suichi) during the burial of Kenji's remains. He regards the death of his bother in law as an act of bravery unlike the greatest cowards who did not admit their responsibility in what had faced Japan (P. 64). It reveals how values in Japan are chancing and betrayal as perceived by current youths.

There is a dialogue between Ono and Noriko concerning the bamboo and preparations for her second marriage negotiations. It shows how blunt, hurt, and open Noriko is in her talk (P. 122-124).

Ono talks to his daughter, Setsuko and Noriko on various occasions. When Setsuko comes to visit, Noriko tells the sister the transformation in their father in relation to work, eating, and much more (P.8-9). Noriko shares with the father on how she had met Miyake and how she had asked him about his current marriage prospects (P. 5-6). Noriko starts this conversation to find out why they had backed out of their negotiations. She suggests that the father is aware of why they backed out because it was not her mistake at all.

Setsuko asks the father whether negotiations have gone that far and the father informs her that Noriko has been behaving oddly of late and even told Mr. Mori the marriage were settled (P. 13).

Ono talks to Taro referring to his art and the familiarity between himself and Dr Saito over years. He closely refers to his reputation in art and popular and one someone cannot miss to know (P. 219).

Ono has a dialogue with Seiji Moriyama, a rich and talented artist who takes on young pupils when he is intending to leave the villa. Seiji suggests that Ono is talented and can thrive anywhere.

Ono holds a conversation with a Yasunari Nakahara (Tortoise) An artist who paints very slowly and earns the mockery of Ono's colleagues at the Takeda Firm.

Ono shares that he had talked to Miyake on one evening and he had shared that the president of the Kimura Company Building, who was in his 60's had committed suicide to show his apology in behalf of the company under his charge. He felt he had been responsible for certain undertakings Japan had involved herself in during war. Miyake had felt that the president had been courageous enough to take responsibility of his mistakes unlike some other cowards (P. 61).

Ono, Noriko, Dr Saito, Mrs Saito, Enchi, and Taro have a dialogue when they meet. Saito talks about a variety of subjects and Ono gets to reveal that he has had past mistakes but he is sorry for that. Enchi avoids talking about Kuroda and Noriko is a bit careful on her responses. A number of them show their weakness with music too. However, this conversation helps the group to create friendship (P. 132-143).

Ono, Setsuko, and Taro have a dialogue in which they see a different Japan where things will be massive (P. 212-214). Ichiro too says he will be a president of KNC.

Ono talks to the police who arrest Kuroda and begin to burn paintings in his home. They believe his paintings are unpatriotic and they hold investigations on his. Ono wants to know Kuroda's wellbeing and he overhears the police commenting on the painting, a possible conspiracy (P.211-212).

Ono holds a conversation with his former student Kuroda, his most promising art student on his artwork and tries to make him realize that his work is unsuitable.

Ono talks to Dr Saito in a tram and they talk little about Noriko's marriage negotiations, Kuroda and their general wellbeing (P. 91). He learns that Kuroda is now working under the doctor.

Ono gives the conversation he had with his teacher the last time he decided to get out of the pavilion. Morison holds on to some of Ono's paintings and insists that he should bring other paintings that seem to go against the teacher's standards. Ono insists that he will not bring the paintings and hence he chooses to leave. This is the time Ono thinks he should not remain forever an artist of the floating world and instead accomplish (P.204-208).

There is a dialogue between Chishu Matsuda - A nationalist and art appreciator and Ono

He also talks to Mrs Kawakami, the bar owner when they are discussing why Hirayama was beaten and the nature of Shintaro. They also observe the current situation of ancient artists and the violent nature of the current generation. They hope that soon the artists will come together again.

Matsuda and Ono had shared a conversation about their health and shared the progress in both Noriko and other children when he paid him a visit. They had also talked about their art before and during war (P. 227-9). It shows the politicization of art, regret, irony and the satisfaction the two artists have.

4. Sarcasm

Miyake is sarcastic while talking to Ono. After reporting the death of their company's president he says that he thinks there are many who should be giving their lives in apology that are too cowardly to face up their responsibilities (P. 61). Given that Ono is part of those who engineered the war, the statement is mocking him.

Suichi is also sarcastic as he talks to Ono during Kenji's burial. He says, 'those who sent the likes of Kenji out there to die these brave deaths, where are they today? They're carrying on with their lives, much the same as ever. Many are more successful than before, behaving so well in front of the Americans, the very ones who led us to disaster...' All this is indirectly aimed at Ono who was a propaganda artist used during the war (P. 64).

Enchi addresses Ono sarcastically when he visits Kuroda and indicates that it is Ono who is not informed of details and that the real traitors are known (P. 129).

Most times, Noriko talks to the father sarcastically. She for example says he is an authority in art and has cut the bamboo tree in a way that is not questionable, yet she is annoyed of what the father has done. She puts statements like 'I'm sure Father knows best' about such things. That's beyond dispute, no doubt (P. 121).'

Setsuko is sarcastic about her father and how he brought up Kenji. She says ‘There is no doubt Father devoted the most careful thought to my brother’s upbringing. Nevertheless, in the light of what came to pass, Mother may in fact have had the more correct ideas (P.179).’

5. Imagery

a. Similes

Shintaro is said to have a childlike aspect (P. 19).

Ichiro draws a huge-lizard-like creature (P. 33).

Ono suggests that Kuroda’s face had heavy like lines (P. 88).

While gathered with his students, Ono talks about lessons in life as an artist and one student thinks it sounds more like a firm producing cardboard boxes (P. 82).

Ono says Dr Saito was watching him rather like a teacher waiting for a pupil to go on with a lesson he has learnt by heart (P. 140).

Ono compares the method of piling spinach on a spoon and pouring it in Ichiro’s mouth as resembling someone drinking the last dregs from a bottle (P.172).

Taro says the Japanese have been shown to be like children (P. 137).

Dr Saito says Japan is like a young boy learning to walk and run (P.137).

Barn-like building (P. 187).

b. Symbolism

Ono, Matsuda and other ancient Japanese people who supported war seem to represent the people who messed Japan.

The villa represents Mori-san’s art.

Smell of burning represents bombs in Japan immediately after war (P 230).

c. Metaphors

The slow people in the text are referred to as tortoise.

Those who were fast were called ‘the engineers’. Ono says the intense and frantic way they worked once an idea had struck with an engine driver shoveling on coal for fear the steam would at the moment run out (P. 182). They were also called ‘backwarders’ who moved back with their easel (P.183).

Tortoise as a character is compared to a puppy who had just petted (p. 185).

d. Understatement or Litotes

Matsuda says he hardly thinks the world is extending much beyond his garden (P. 229).

Matsuda and Ono seem to underestimate the impact of an artist on Japan during war. (P. 228)

e. Overstatement

Taro states that in the next ten years, the name of KNC would be recognized all over the world (P.213).

The police indicate that they are coughing because Kuroda's paintings were bad and as a result produced bad smoke (P. 212)

f. Personification

Brave young men die for *stupid causes* (P. 64).

Ono describes Mori-san's lantern as failing to give sufficient light to illuminate his part of the room (p. 165).

Ono describes the day as being pleasantly warm. The usage of pleasant for a day creates personification

He also says objects around him threw exaggerated shadow (P.165).

Ono says the sun was shining pleasantly (P.236).

Ono describes the place Matsuda walks and says stepping stones that ran across the smooth mounds of moss (p.230).

g. Vivid Description

Ono as the narrator has a way of describing items, places, or events in details.

For example, he describes the house as having a fine cedar gateway, with a large area bound by the garden wall, its roof had elegant tiles and with stylishly carved ridgepole pointing out over the view (p. 1).

Ono also talks of the house revealing that Sugimura had built its eastern wing with three large rooms, connected to the main body of the house by the long corridor running down one side of the garden. The corridor was extravagant and in the afternoon, its entire lengths would be crossed by the lights and shades of the foliage outside, so that one was walking through a garden tunnel (P. 6).

Ono refers to the pavilion. He says the eaves of the elegant roof hung all the way round with lanterns. When he met with Mori-san, the sky was pale crimson and the lights were coming on amidst the muddle of roofs still visible down below in the gloom (P. 201).

Ono also says when he gets to Kuroda's place he saw everywhere the contents of cupboards and drawers emptied out over the floor. Some books had been piled up and tied into bundles, while the main room, the tatami had been lifted and an officer was investigating the floorboards beneath with a torch (P. 210).

Ono is keen to see that Miyake is dressed in a tired looking raincoat a little too large on him, he has a briefcase and he looks like a young man who is accustomed to be bossed around. That his posture seems to be fixed on the verge of bowing and he laughs nervously as if he had caught him coming out of some disreputable house (P. 58).

Ono describes vividly the reception on the day his father stopped him from engaging in art. He says the room was lit by the tall candle, and the father was sitting at the center of its light. Instead of a business box, he had a heavy earthenware ash pot that was only produced for guests (P. 45).

Ono reports that when he spends time with Shintaro, he found his memory of it merging with the sounds and images from all those other evenings; the lanterns hung above doorways, the laughter of people congregated outside the Migi-Hidari, the smell of deep-fried, a bar hostess persuading someone to return to his wife- and echoing from every direction... (P. 24).

Ono also indicates that he goes to Arakawa district, the last stop on the city tramline going south, and many people express surprise that the line should extend so far down into the suburbs. The city has cleanly swept residential streets, its rows of maple trees on the pavements, its dignified houses each set apart from the next, and its general air of being surrounded by the countryside (P.68).

Ono describes what Matsuda and him had done the last time he visited him. He indicates that Matsuda had risen to his feet, and put on straw sandals. They had stepped down in the garden. The pod that lay amidst sunshine at the far end of the garden had stone and moss (P. 230).

Ono says Furukawa district has a number of factories and warehouses belonging to smaller companies... the houses were old and shabby (P. 72)

Ono too says that the house he lived in had no electricity and he had to paint by oil-light and there was hardly space for an easel and he could splash walls and tatami with paint. His attic was also low that he could not stand up fully instead he took the half-crouched position. Similarly, the Master Takeda's 'studio' had an attic that was sagging at the center and windows along the length of the room (P. 73).

Ono describes that when he met Matsuda he was a lean-featured young man. That day there were puddles of water and wet leaves falling from the cedar trees overlooking the villa. He was dressed too dandyishly to be a policeman; his overcoat was sharply tailored with a huge upturned collar... (P. 99).

Ono also reports that Matsuda was a different man whose body was broken by ill-health and his once handsome, arrogant face has become distorted by a lower jaw that seems no longer able to align itself with the upper (P. 102).

Ono later says that when he looked at Matsuda's garden it was small, arranged with much taste: a floor of smooth moss, a few small shapely trees and a deep pond (P. 104).

Ono reports that on coming to Migi-Hidari, he finds new changes with renovations that are skillful and extensive. Everyone strolls after dark and notice the brightly-lit front with numerous lanterns, large and small, hung along the gables, under the eaves, in neat rows along the window ledges and above the main entry-way; then, too, there are enormous illuminated banner suspended from the ridgepole bearing the new name of the premises (P. 72).

Ono describes Matsuda and how he appears after thirty years. His body has broken down by ill-health, and his once handsome, arrogant face has become distorted by a lower jaw that seems no longer able to align itself with the upper (P.102).

Ono imagines of Mori-san's villa and as he climbs up the path he says, the villa would appear down in the hollow below, a dark wooden rectangular set amidst the tall cedar trees. The three long sections of the villa linked to form three sides of the rectangular around a central yard the fourth side was completed by a cedar fence and a gateway (P.154).

On the same page, Ono recalls the villa as having broken roof tiles, decaying lattice work, chipped and rotting verandas. Roofs are forever developing new leaks and after a night of rain, the smell of damp wood and moldering leaves pervade every room.

Ono gives a vivid description of the day of Matsuda's death vividly. Ono says that the sky is a clear blue, and a little way down the bank, along where the new apartment blocks begins, he sees small boys playing with fishing poles at the water edge (P.226).

He observes Kuroda at the old pleasure district and realizes that there are workmen. Kuroda turns and watches him expressionlessly in his dark raincoat. The charred buildings behind him drip and remnants of some gutter make a large rainwater splash down not far from him. He has hollowed cheekbones (P. 88).

Ono sits to watch how pleasure district has transformed. He describes the narrow little street that once ran through the center of the district crowded with people and the cloth banners of various establishments as having become a wide concrete road along which heavy trucks come and go. There is a glass-fronted office building, four -storey high, large buildings with men moving up and down. There are a group of offices, senior employees parking cars in the yard, and there are no bars (P. 236).

Ono describes Arakawa district had cleanly swept residential houses set apart and with the general air of countryside (P. 68).

Ono describes a self-portrait Tortoise had made of himself with such vivid details. He says ' It shows a thin young man with spectacles , sitting in his shirt sleeves in a cramped , shadowy room, surrounded by easels and rickety furniture, his face caught on one side and by the light coming from the window... (P. 75).'

Ono describes that Kuroda did not live in a good quarter and the alleys around his residence are little and dilapidated with lodging houses. Then there is a concrete square resembling the forecourt of a factory and there are trucks parked around that place (P. 123).

Ono also describes Kuroda's apartment as small without an entryway with its tatami starting a little way inside the front door with only a shallow step up. There was a tidy look to the place too with a number of paintings and walls adorning the walls (P. 124).

6. Rhetoric Questions

Ono asks Ichiro questions that he does not respond to all (P.11) and (P. 40).

Ono and his mother are asked questions by his father following his love for art (P. 44-46).

Ono asks what has come over people that they feel inclined to beat a man like Hirayama up (P.66).

Ono asks why can say the old district will not return again (P. 87).

7. Allusion

Shintaro comments that in olden times, if a lord had his troops scattered after a battle, he'd soon go about gathering them together again (P.86).

8. Direct Translation

The old district will not return again (P. 87).

9. Flashback

Ono flashbacks how he acquired the Sugimuro's house in unexpected situations and later how the house was ruined (P.2).

Ono flashbacks how Tortoise was attacked often by his workmates for being too slow (P.75-76).

Ono recalls how Shintaro had come to him seeking his recommendation for his brother.

Ono flashbacks how Mrs Kawakami's bar had come up in ancient times. He says it came up as a place squeezed in amidst so many other bars and it was eating houses. People doubted whether it could survive. That time many people had banners that announced their bars (P.21-24). He says he ensured the bar was sustained and grew. The first time he went into it was when he wanted to talk to Shintaro. He also recalls how the place was sold by Yamagata (P. 69-70).

Ono recalls his father's reception and how sacred it was. He could get into that room and find it well lit and the father could sit cross-legged on the tatami. He had a Buddhist altar where he could hold 'business meetings' with his son. The father hated art and when he learned Ono was interested in it, he destroyed his son's paintings (P. 44-47).

Ono recalls how Setsuko had sat in front of the altar and told her to take precautionary steps in Noriko's second negotiations so that there are no more let downs (P. 54).

Ono hears of the death of Matsuda and he recalls that he paid him a visit and re-established contact in Arakawa.

Ono recalls that when he had visited Matsuda last, he had been received well by Miss Suzuki her nurse. He recalls the conversation they had concerning their health and the possible regrets Matsuda had about his current life. He indicates that Miss Suzuki had received him well and with excitement. Mr. Matsuda had seemed a bit strong and he had taken tea. He had appreciated Matsuda's letter of encouragement during his recent illness and he had observed Ono's recovery (P.226-7).

Ono also recalls how he got disillusioned after receiving the Shigheta Foundation Award in May of 1938. He remembers that they had held the New Japan campaign and it had proved a great success but as speeches, drinks, and tribute were given to him, he failed to find deep triumph and fulfillment the award should have given him. He also recalls how he had left Wakaba afraid that the future held nothing for him (P.232)

Noriko recalls having met Miyake and asked how his marriage negotiations are coming along (P. 55). Ono too recalls the last meeting he had with Miyake before they pulled out of the marriage negotiations and remembers that he had praised their manager who had killed himself as an apology to the state for his past involvements in war.

Ono flashbacks how he influenced the growth of Migi-Hidari when he was a member of the committee of the State Department (P. 70).

Ono flashbacks the times he used to work in Takeda firm and the picture of Furukawa as well as the kind of houses around there (P. 72-3).

10. Local Language/ Dialect

Sensei-teacher

Tatami- verandah

Miami- marriage negotiations

11. Foreshadow

Shigheta Foundation Ward in May of 1938. That day he had finished the New Japan campaign and it had proved a great success but as speeches, drinks, and tribute were given to him, he failed to field deep triumph and fulfillment the award should have given him. He had also left Wakaba afraid that the future held nothing for him (P.232). Indeed after war, many people look at Ono as a traitor.

Ono thinks Noriko will be nervous in her meeting with the Saito's and indeed she is quite tensed throughout that meeting (P. 130).

Enchi predicts that Kuroda would not want anything to do with Ono and even when Ono insists to write and seek reconciliation is response is short, offensive, and cold (P. 129).

QUESTIONS

1. Our present admirers can be our tomorrow's critiques. Referring closely to *An Artist of the Floating World*, write an essay to show this reality.
2. The past and the present put together determine the future of an individual or a country. Show how *An Artist of the Floating World* shows this.
3. *An Artist of the Floating World* shows how disillusionment can kill determination in anyone. Write an essay to prove this.
4. Nothing is permanent is truly depicted in *An Artist of the Floating World*. Discuss
5. It is never late to reclaim one's place. Using Ono in *An Artist of the Floating World* show how Ishiguro has proven this reality.
6. War has irreversible effects that one can hardly do away with. Using *An Artist of the Floating World* show how the author brings out this reality.
7. Ishiguro depicts how marriage is not a one-man affair in his society. Write an essay to show this.
8. It is wrong to stop living because of what other people think about us. Using Ono in *An Artist of the Floating World*, show how true this is.
9. Hatred, animosity, and unforgiveness can only make the world blind. Write an essay using the novel *An Artist of the Floating World*.
10. Reality and speculations are not friends. Do you agree show how true this is in the view of Kazuo's *An Artist of the Floating World*?

11. Man deserves a better judgement that focus on their weakness. Write an essay using situations in *An Artist of the Floating World*.
12. Resilience, determination, and focus make one successful. Do you agree? Write an essay using *An Artist of the Floating World*.
13. The court of public opinion has brought distress to the majority. Justify using An Artist of the Floating World.
- 14.