

# The Significance of Preservation of Memories in Yasunari Kawabata's *God's Bones*

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## Abstract

*This paper investigates the matters of preservations of memories in Yasunari Kawabata's God Bones. This flash fiction tells about a girl who has never married but already has a baby in her womb. That condition reminds her and her surroundings about the history of the past, especially when she gives the ashes of the baby's bones to many men. Through qualitative method, this study explains about a person's memory that has happened and will continue to overshadow her. In analysis, memories are not merely collections of events or repositories of knowledge, those are also identities that shape further decision making processes. In conclusion, this story shows how memories link past with present and future. Those are the results of circulation of signs, regarding various concepts and contexts of the past.*

**Keywords:** *God's Bones, Preservation of Memories, Yasunari Kawabata*

## 1. Introduction

One of the Japanese writers, Yasunari Kawabata, created a literary work with a statement about a person's personal memories of a past life that she did not really want to happen. This paper argues that historic preservation is playing an increasingly important role in shaping collective memories as shown in the story of *God's Bones* (Kawabata, 1927). Historic preservation encompasses the range of strategies by which historic structures are maintained, manipulated, and managed. These strategies include preservation, restoration, conservation and consolidation, reconstitution, adaptive reuse, reconstruction, and replication (Wills, 2021; Salerno, 2021). Notions of time—memories can be recent or from far back in time, and people can also project themselves forward in time (so-called mental time travel). Over time, recollections move and alter in a nonstop preparation of mental amendment. A few critical recollections stand out, impacting our choices and conclusions, whereas others blur into the foundation, overlooked with the section of time (Baddeley, 2020; Christophel & Klink, 2017).

In this story, Kawabata tells about how the main character lives a life that she does not really want to happen. The main character named Yumiko denies what happened to her. So she thought that the child in her womb would be better dead after he was born. It was basically because the baby does not look like anyone (Kawabata, 1927). Yumiko sends the bones of her dead baby to the three men. The bones are called God's bones or *Kami no Hone*. Yumiko posed the question to them as to whether the baby was destined to have an unfortunate life and had told herself that she could not resemble anyone. Yumiko also mentions the priest Hakuin who held the baby of an unmarried girl and says that God saved the baby.

This fiction indeed also highlights that women also have rights over themselves and the baby in their wombs (Kawabata, 1927; Madan, 2024; Wills, 2021). It makes women honorable

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and can be respected in everyday life and even a much more meaningful later life. This article explores various strategies in enhancing human memory, especially how such events may always shadow, haunt, and even follow the people until unlimited time in life (Miller, et al., 2018; Squire & Dede, 2015).

This research explains the problem of Yumiko's denial of the life that befell her. It underlines that different perceptions of denial are always possible. Apart from that, the memory concept applied makes it easier for Yumiko to remember bad things that happened to her. In the end, Yumiko was able to make that decision although her feelings will continue to haunt her even before and after the child is born (Kawabata, 1927). Without a heavy heart, Yumiko quickly made a decision. Yumiko herself did not want to keep the child's ashes, but instead she gave them to all the men.

Furthermore, there are three main researches in the forms of journals about preservations of memories that have been done by other researchers. The first one is done by R. Jamil in 2021 entitled *Trading Voices: Indigenous Storytelling and the Preservation of Cultural Memory*. This research speaks about storytelling and exchanging experience are crucial mediums in enhancing resilience of indigenous cultures (Jamil, 2021). The similarity between the previous research and this one is that both underline matters of preservations of memories. The difference is shown in how the former underscores storytelling while this one emphasizes memories in Japanese flash fiction. The second one is written by F. Santi and D. Bianchi in 2023 entitled *Bereavement in the Digital Age: The Challenges of Online Sharing and Digital Memory Preservation*. This journal explores about how digital presence could bring more effective ways in preserving memories of the deceased ones (Santi & Bianchi, 2023). This former research expands matters of beneficial aspects between memories and digital contents, while this journal shows how memories are stated through a very short story of Kawabata's. The third one is composed by M. Werning in 2020 entitled *Predicting the past from minimal traces: Episodic memory and its distinction from imagination and preservation*. This interesting writing underlines how imagination could play significant roles in preserving memories of human beings (Werning, 2020). Then, Werning's paper is different from this journal that tends to analyze preservations of memories in a flash fiction. Even so, both journals indeed have similarity in amplifying the crucial aspects of preservations of memories in humans' minds.

From the three previous studies above, this journal finds its novelty. The main idea is that this paper gives wider perspectives in memories and its preservations in literary works. The written works are indeed crucial in giving perspectives of how memories may go along with people's life. It is especially indicated through various psychological factors that shadow the main character to maintain the life of the child though his life had to end (Kawabata, 1927; Madan, 2024; Wills, 2021). Besides, analysis of Japanese flash fiction is considered rare since people used to speak more about films, novels, and its adaptations. By uplifting Kawabata's story, this paper would like to widen the functional aspects of fiction not only as matter of gratification, but also reflection of everyday conditions, including pain, regrets, and even also death.

## 2. Method

By using qualitative method, certain concepts and written data are analyzed to answer the question in this paper. Written through description, online and offline scripts are used to explain correlations between The preservation of Memory by Yasunari Kawabata alongside with literary concepts and psychoanalytical ideas. Online and offline scripts are derived from books and journals to understand shown matters. The data analysis includes obtaining sources,

reading sources carefully, comparing with other issues, quoting into paper, and writing down in reference lists. The research data comes from both *God's Bones* and related to the concept of Preservations of Memories. Each of them is read then broken down into its every particular element. The plots and settings of the short story are mainly involved to point out the significant condition of the men who feel the same way as the main character.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1 The Chronicles of An Unwanted Child in *God's Bones*

*God's Bones* is a flash Fiction written by Yasunari Kawabata in 1927. This flash fiction tells about preservation of memory carried out by the main character, Yumiko, with her past life, which she has done so that she received a mandate, namely God's Bones (Kawabata, 1927). Those require Yumiko to remember things in the past to be used as an answer to God's gift (Kawabata, 1927). That was not an obstacle for Yumiko, even Yumiko herself found it difficult to get an answer for it. Yumiko had tried to remember in detail what Yumiko had done with some men (Kawabata, 1927). The gift of God's bones ensures that the men are responsible for Yumiko and her child.

It was explained that Yumiko worked at the Blue Heron coffee shop as a waitress. Meanwhile, she has many customers who often come to her coffee shop. Such as Mr. Kasahara Seiichi as a managing director of a suburban trolley car company, Takamura Tokijiro as actor in historical movies, Tsujii Morio as a medical student at a private university, and Mr. Sakuma Benji as owner of the Canton Restaurant. So, one day God sent bones into Yumiko's womb.

「骨を送ります。それらは神の骨です。」

*"I am sending you the bones. They are the bones of God."*  
(Kawabata, 1927)

The above quotation shows that the bones belonged to the child. Yumiko cremated the deceased body of the child then thought about what she had to do with that. God has sent the bones to Yumiko, which means there is potential for God's bones in Yumiko's womb. Bones here depicts a baby that God entrusted to Yumiko (Kawabata, 1927).

The God's bones are the symbols of what Yumiko says about the deceased child. She does not really know what to do with the child. When the child is gone, she can only rely on God about the child. Therefore, she called it God's bones. No one desires the child, including any man she ever had contact with (Kawabata, 1927). In this sense, Kawabata shows how any child will go to heaven's side to god's hand since she/he belongs to god himself. This is such clarity that Kawabata draws, but he also indicates such mysteries according to the bones, in which later the men of Yumiko will explain it furthermore.

「赤ちゃんは誰にも似ていませんでした。私には少しも似ていませんでした。」

*"The Baby didn't resemble anyone. It didn't even resemble me the least little bit."* (Kawabata, 1927)

The above quotation shows that the baby was born unfortunately. He did not look like anyone, there was not even the slightest sign of resemblance to her mother. The baby is very beautiful, but unfortunately it does not look like anyone (Kawabata, 1927). Yumiko is also not sure about the similarity between the baby and the men she ever had contact with because there

is no resemblance of them whatsoever. She was worried that this beautiful baby does not look like anyone. The baby does not even look like her. Poor thing about this beautiful baby is that how can she appoint one of those men to be his father, if he does not look like him.

The dialogue above underlines Yumiko's worry for the child. She could not find any resemblance to other human beings. the baby may only have resemblance to God, as he is the symbol of purity. Through this sense, it is reasonable that Kawabata wrote this paragraph since he would like to show that despite being unwanted, the child is still so pure as the God's face is (Kawabata, 1927). The child may not resemble anyone, but he has own uniqueness that could not be reduced even by any deed that Yumiko and her men did in the past. The child indeed is the reflection of the past that even if the deed is untrue, the child is innocent at all senses.

「もしそれが不幸な子だったとしたら、もし生きていても弱っていたなら、私のミルクを飲む前に、笑う前に死んだ方が良かったと思います。」

*"If it was meant to be an unfortunate child, if it would have been weak even had it lived, I think it is better that it died before it drank my milk or laughed."* (Kawabata, 1927)

The above quotation shows that even if the baby is alive, it is better not to. In this sense, it is better for him to die before starting to live like a newborn baby in general, namely drinking his mother's milk and even laughing (Kawabata, 1927). The child is the unwanted one. Even Yumiko denies him consequently. The child may be strong, but the circumstance where he will live never approves him to do a better life. Later on, even if Yumiko tries to nurture the child, he never gets successful in living a life. Then, the child is gone.

The child is the unfortunate one. He is only a thing to remind everyone about his existence. He is the one that will make anyone remember her/his past. The child is the symbol of the memory. He may not live for a long time, but his existence is crucial for Yumiko and her men whom she had contact with (Kawabata, 1927). The child is remembered not because he lives a short life, but because he is born without resemblance to anyone. Even later Yumiko and her men detest his existence in its fullest sense.

「私は誰にも似ずに生まれたこの子のことを思って泣きました。この赤ちゃんは、お腹の中にいたとき、心の中で「私は誰にも似ない」と言っていなかったでしようか？そんな情けない思いでこの世に生まれてきたのです。そして、誰かに似るようになる前に死ななければならない、と思いながらこの世を去ったのではありませんか？」

*"I wept for this child who was born not resembling anyone. Didn't this baby, in its baby's heart, while it was still in the womb, say to itself, I can't resemble anyone? It came into this world with that kind of pathetic thoughtfulness. And*

*didn't it leave this world thinking, I have to die before I start to resemble anyone?"* (Kawabata, 1927)

The above quotation shows that she cried for the baby because he was so poor and did not resemble anyone. Therefore, he must die because it was only in vain that he came into this world with such sad concerns (Kawabata, 1927). Yumiko even wondered why the baby would live if only to be pitied. Even if the baby grows up, he will never understand who his father is and why no one resembles his own face.

At this scene, it is noted that Yumiko is having empathy for her baby. She knows that the baby will never live a good life. No one resembles him which means that no one will approve of his existence. Yumiko even asked the reason for his unknown position (Kawabata, 1927). The world is already full of pity, but the baby's condition is pure and should not live in pathetic condition. Therefore, the way for the baby to die is not such a pain for him. Yumiko thinks that death is the way to bring the baby to freedom. The existence of the baby will only preserve memories of bad deeds of the past, not the goodness of any future.

「白隠和尚は昔の話ですが、未婚の女の子の赤ん坊を腕に抱いて『これは私の子です』と言いました。」私の子ども神様が救ってくださいました、お腹の中の赤ちゃんが誰に似たらいいのかと悲しそうに考えていた時、神様は「私の愛する子は私に似ている。神として生まれなさい。あなたは神の子だから」と言われました。」

*"Hakuin, the priest-it's a story from the old days, but he took the baby of an unmarried girl in his arms and said, 'This is my child.' God has rescued my child, too. To the baby in the womb, when it was sadly thinking about whom it should resemble, God said, 'My dearly beloved child, resembles me. Be born as a God. Because you are God's child.'"* (Kawabata, 1927)

The above quotation shows that Hakuin was a priest who was holding the baby of a girl who had never been married. The priest thought that this baby was a blessing from God because he did not resemble anyone (Kawabata, 1927). Even though he does not resemble anyone, he is still the bone of a God as she should be.

Interestingly, the priest sees different perspectives from Yumiko's. While Yumiko understands that this child could not bear any good thing in the world, the priest says that the resemblance to anyone never matters at all (Kawabata, 1927). The child has resemblance to God himself in which purity and innocence are fully reflected in the self of the child. The preservation of memories of the child in this sense is different from the former. Here, the child reminds people of God himself. Though he comes from an impure womb and even bad deeds, he still never separates himself from the divine qualities of God (Kawabata, 1927). Therefore, when he is cremated, the remains of him are indicated as the God's bones.

...「それなのに、私が妊娠したとき、皆さんはなんて大騒ぎしたのでしょうか。紳士の皆さん、まさにそれをするのがあなたたちと同じでした——男性的な大きな顕微鏡を持って女性の秘密を覗いてきました。」

... *“Yet when I got pregnant, my, what a fuss you all made. All of you gentlemen-it was just like you to do it-came with a big masculine microscope to peer at a woman's secrets.”*  
(Kawabata, 1927)

The above quotation shows that when Yumiko was declared pregnant, the men's enthusiasm was no joke. The men fighting over the baby's similarity test to herself. They thought that the baby would be unexpectedly born perfect and even very beautiful (Kawabata, 1927). They are also amazed at how Yumiko could give birth to such a beautiful baby from some different men. Surely the men also want to have the child, but only the biological father can have it. However, Yumiko does not know who the baby's father is because he does not look like anyone else.

The explanation above shows how the baby reflects the deeds of Yumiko and even her figure completely. The men know that Yumiko slept with many men, but they never think that the child soon does not resemble anyone. It is as if Yumiko has given a birth to a God in which he only resembles Himself (Kawabata, 1927). The baby reminds the men of Yumiko's secrets. Nevertheless, they could not do anything since they are not the father. It is Yumiko herself that must decide what kind of memories should be indicated to the self of the child.

「この子の悲痛な心遣いのせいで、この子をどちらに似てほしかったかは言えません。そこで、遺灰の分け前を皆さんに送ります。」

*“Because of the heartbreaking thoughtfulness of this child, I cannot say which of you I wanted the child to resemble. And so I am sending all of you a share of the ashes.”* (Kawabata, 1927)

The above quotation shows that when the baby was born with heartbreaking attention, Yumiko thought that she could not say which one of you wanted the baby to be like, or similar to one of the men. She does not want the baby to live, and even die, with any bad thought of any people. She just wants peace for the child (Kawabata, 1927). There was no other choice but Yumiko sent all the baby's ashes to them.

Yumiko knows that it is her fault that the child could not fully live well. She is also known to blame herself due to the death of the child. Later, she also thinks that she could not leave the ashes of the baby to herself. She needs the baby to know any kind of possibility of his biological father (Kawabata, 1927). The ashes are the remaining memories of the child with Yumiko. Those are pointing to any deed of the past and any possible memory that may come if the child were still alive.

「その遺骨はお寺に埋めたほうがいいですよ。なぜそれらにしがみついているのですか？誰、私？遺骨はすべて皆さんにお渡ししました。なぜそれを持たなければならぬのですか？」

*“You should bury those ashes at a temple. Why are you holding onto them? Who, me? I gave all of the ashes to all of you. Why should I have that?”* (Kawabata, 1927)

The above quotation shows that some men reject the ashes, but some of them advise Yumiko to put the ashes in the temple. Kasahara Seiichi told Yumiko and asked her to bury her ashes at the temple (Kawabata, 1927). However, it should be the father’s responsibility to do so, and Yumiko could not do otherwise than that.

Kawabata perfectly writes about how memories of a child go nowhere but those who still believe in it. Yumiko would like to remember the child but she could not do that without any help from the father of the child (Kawabata, 1927). The man indeed subtly rejects the memories of the child. In this case, it is true that the child belongs to no one anymore. He even never belonged to no one when he lived. He belongs to God now as the ashes as the symbols of death are indications of God himself.

### 3.2 Memories and Its Prolonging Preservations

Matters of memories are never as simple as they seem. Memories work only if there is a past. Those flow into the present and could easily be recalled to the present times (Madan, 2024; Wang, 2021). Those are how events are recorded in human minds. Those never stay out of any space and time since those give meanings are meant for human beings according to their own circumstances. Furthermore, memories are situated in some places where past, present, and future times collide (Miller, et al., 2018; Listyaningsih, et al., 2023; Squire & Dede, 2015). Those do not overlap with any time level, but those keep being there even if someone would like not to know it again.

Then, memories are also related to actions and reactions or remembering and forgetting. Remembering means positive actions towards any event that may affect preserved memories (Wang, 2021; Madan, 2024; Natalia, 2023). Indeed, by doing that action, people will add more to memories. The action could pile up and even modify any memory, but it will never mend the past. Remembering is also an effort to dig into more nuances about any condition in a certain time and space (Salerno, 2021; The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2024). This action is also called as recalling memories in which good and even bad past could be called back to be faced in present times.

The action of forgetting is the negative aspect of memories. This action would like to slowly, or even totally, erase any kind of memory regarding certain circumstances. Not only memories, the action of forgetting is a way to get any space and time out of someone’s head (Miller, et al., 2018; Natalia, 2023; Squire & Dede, 2015). In many aspects, this is also an effort to cleanse people of bad deeds. However, as a nail will always leave a mark after being nailed on a wood, the wound of the past will always remain even if the action of forgetting is done constantly.

Memories and its preservations are located in psychological aspects. Those play big roles in human’s minds, processing indications of time through understood meanings. There are no memories without meanings (Miller, et al., 2018; Squire & Dede, 2015). Therefore,

memories are never neutral at all. At least, memories are about socially constructed things. Even if the memories are solely about individuals, the backgrounds and its prolonging labels are always social. In this case, the psychological aspects of memories are understood in matters of being psychosocial (Listyaningsih, et al., 2023; Natalia, 2023).

Furthermore, preservation of memories works in a dual process. They are matter of unconscious and conscious ways. The unconscious one captures everything based on all senses that every person has. It builds up slowly and intuitively according to what is seen (Salerno, 2021; The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2024). In this part, any deed is remembered if it gives meanings to any desire shown by someone. This understanding works automatically in further everyday decisions. The error in this part always happens every time. The idea is not easily known on the surface if it does not come to the ego (Madan, 2024; Wills, 2021).

In the matter of conscious ways of memories, it may work slower than the unconscious one. The memories in this aspect are indicated as being habituated in everyday activities. If there is something related to any deed, the memories of this kind will stay longer than usual. It is because conscious ways play big roles in effortful decisions. This aspect also underlines memories as results of complex decisions as well (Madan, 2024; Wang, 2021). This is due to the conscious aspect used to think intentionally through what is known in everyday life. The complex part relies not only on the understandings of any background, but also the processed aspects of any deed. The resulting memories may be more reliable, but it will not stay inside the head if it is not stated as an unconscious one (Madan, 2024; Panichello & Buschman, 2021; Wang, 2021). It will not stay longer as memories if any event is not becoming the intuitive one.

Memories also give individuals a framework through which to make sense of the present and future. There are three main processes that characterize how memory works. These processes are encoding, storage, and retrieval or recalling (Clark and Maguire, 2016; D'Esposito & Postle, 2015). The encoding process is where information is learned. It is known through matter of being visual, acoustic, semantic, and tactile ones. The visual is what people see in an event. The encoding process of it is usually accompanied by a matter of acoustic one in which auditory indication is involved. Later, the meanings come through the semantic one alongside the tactile of how psychological feelings come as well (Clark and Maguire, 2016; D'Esposito & Postle, 2015; Listyaningsih, et al., 2023).

The storage aspect refers to how, where, how much, and how long encoded information is retained within the memory system. The storage of memories highlights the existence of two types of memory: short-term and long-term memory (Logie, et al., 2020; Irwin-Zarecka, 2017). Encoded information is first stored in short-term memory and then, if need be, is stored in long-term memory. If it is repeated, it tends to be the long-term ones. Long-term memory, however, has immense storage capacity, and information stored there can be stored there indefinitely (Clark and Maguire, 2016; D'Esposito & Postle, 2015; Panichello & Buschman, 2021). It is when the encoding process involves more semantic aspects than any other one.

The recall is how the semantic aspects correlate to present times. This could be done both unconsciously or consciously, but both indeed connect between what has happened and what happens now (Logie, et al., 2020; Irwin-Zarecka, 2017). The unconscious part is indicated when an event is recalled through any sensory and non-sensory aspect of a person. An event somehow has resemblance with what has happened in the past. Many people even called it *deja vu*, but it is not merely coincidental. The conscious part is more intentional by recalling a certain time and space regarding any habituated aspect of reconstruction of memories (Constantinidis & Klingberg, 2016; Cowan, 2017).



Through the above understandings, memories in its preservations never stop in a certain place. It walks together with people. It is such traveling memories that people keep living on understanding the past and the present. Memories live in movements (Baddeley, 2020; Christophel & Klink, 2017). Memory will live in and through its movements, it means that memory will always be there in every moment, no matter how small, if it is still well embedded in memory, it will always be remembered. It is true that people cannot describe these memories clearly in detail, but they may still remember the essence of these memories. It is when people also apply the concept of memory preservation where each memory gives them an effect or impact that brings any mood depending on what memory they remember (Constantinidis & Klingberg, 2016; Cowan, 2017).

By recalling the cruciality of memories, it is also related to how society and individuals live by having commemorations as listed in literary works. This is also correlated to flash fiction written by Yasunari Kawabata entitled *God's Bones*. This fiction elucidates matters of memories by the one who bears a child, the ones that should handle the responsibilities, and assumptions of God within (Kawabata, 1927). The following analysis underlines that memories are not always good since it could be very worst in its deep meanings. Indeed, memories work like a storage that keeps haunting people who have commemorated it furthermore. Memories could never come to consciousness if those are not given such spotlight. However, any light above those memories may shape such ethical responses towards one's self and otherness as well (Cowan, 2017; Yuliastuti & Pasopati, 2021). Memories may travel but those will never escape matters of time. Those play roles like buzzing sounds waiting to be reacted. Furthermore, how Kawabata states about God is not matter of escapism. It is such further explorations of responsibilities and its importance to growing surroundings to various experiences (Madan, 2024; Wills, 2021).

### 3.3 Memories and Its Ongoing Movements in *God's Bones*

In the story by Yasunari Kawabata, the character of Yumiko is described as a woman who has a long term memory in her past. Through the traveling memories concept, a memory will always be remembered while someone is still alive and will not stop until they die, and that memory will remind someone trying to remember something that happened in the past (Constantinidis & Klingberg, 2016; Yuliastuti & Pasopati, 2021). Then, in the process, Yumiko was pregnant with the bones that God gave her, she was very confused later when this baby was born. No one really knows the father of the baby since he does not resemble anyone, including Yumiko and her men at all.

When Yumiko saw what happened before her eyes when the baby was born, Yumiko's memories suddenly came back. When she was working at Blue Heron coffee with many male customers present, Yumiko cried thinking about this baby. It is true that at that time Yumiko really wanted to remember the detailed events of that time, if it was not at all that one of the men was this baby, that would be absolutely impossible (Kawabata, 1927; Madan, 2024; Wills, 2021). Even when Yumiko was pregnant, she still did not have time to think about it at that time. When the baby was born, Yumiko's memories immediately focused on when she was working, because that was the main part that all of this could happen.

So, a person's memories can come at any time depending on what moment she was thinking about until the memory appeared (Baddeley, 2020; Christophel & Klink, 2017). Like Yumiko, when she was pregnant she never thought that the baby in her stomach would not resemble her or one of the men Yumiko considered to be her biological father. So there is no need to worry about that. However, it is inversely proportional to the moment when Yumiko

gave birth and otherness comes to life from her own womb (Kawabata, 1927; Madan, 2024; Wills, 2021).

When the preservation of these memories is embedded when the person is still alive, people will always remember that time (De Sousa, et al., 2021; De Brigard, 2023). It is because it is an event that may not be repeated a second time. Every human being has a different memory span, however, if there is a moment that makes that person remember something very much, it means that moment is the most important moment in life (Christophel & Klink, 2017; Listyaningsih, et al., 2022; Panichello & Buschman, 2021). Yumiko keeps remembering any of her past, but she could not find any certain issue of her child including the resemblance of the face of the child.

Until one day Yumiko did not understand what was wrong with the contents of her own memories. It was as if she was confused when the beautiful baby was born. Yumiko had not had time to give it breast milk since the baby was declared dead (Kawabata, 1927). It is when Yumiko keeps being busy by the face of the baby, but she keeps forgetting the existence of the child. In this sense, the memories of Yumiko are stated in the storage, but the process of recalling the memories could not go on because there is a block of time and space (Irwin-Zarecka, 2017; Panichello & Buschman, 2021; Susanto, et al., 2023). Something hinders her effort to dig more memories of her past with any man. The thing is the death of the baby itself which then directs her to the cremation of her own child.

Yumiko chose the last choice which was very appropriate as an independent woman as she should be. Yumiko chose not to keep the baby's ashes and to hand them over or rather distribute them evenly and fairly to all the men who had slept with her as a form of responsibility to Yumiko, the poor baby, and God who had sent the bones that had happened to make Yumiko is pregnant with the baby (Kawabata, 1927). Yumiko shared the ashes with the men because she felt that she had struggled to carry the baby inside her body for months. She has struggled with the memories of finding men that may be responsible to the child. However, she could not find the answer even after she believes that the baby is the bones of God (Kawabata, 1927; Panichello & Buschman, 2021; Wills, 2021).

In this sense, the preservation of memories depends not only on Yumiko herself, but also the child and the men either. The child keeps giving her spirit to go on, even when he already faced death. The ashes are the symbols for Yumiko to keep fighting, not by her own self, but by finding other help (Kawabata, 1927). However, the help from other men will not come. They wash their hands and keep God shaping decisions for the child. Then, the traveling memories for Yumiko end when the baby child dies. She will keep recalling the child's existence. For the men, they totally reject the memories, but no note about it is involved in the story. For the child, he will be still remembered as the pure and innocent one though he was born from an uncanny deed in the past (Kawabata, 1927; Madan, 2024; Panichello & Buschman, 2021). The child is the preservation of God's bones.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The story of *God's bones* is about Yumiko who keeps preserving memories about her dead child. She keeps pushing responsibilities to any man she ever had contact with, but no one accepts the ashes of the child. When Yumiko witnessed the events unfolding during the birth of the baby, a flood of memories surged back into her consciousness. The emotional impact led Yumiko to tears as she contemplated the newborn. It is evident that, during that period, Yumiko harbored a strong desire to recollect the intricate details of the past, rendering it inconceivable that one of the individuals present was the infant. Even during her pregnancy, Yumiko found herself preoccupied and unable to dwell on the matter. The birth of the baby

triggered a swift recollection in Yumiko's mind, particularly focusing on her professional responsibilities as the pivotal element enabling this sequence of events. She must live with the memories that keep traveling without herself understanding the truth. The child is the symbol of memories that Yumiko had to bear, even after his death. The child is the preservation of God's bones in which his purity and innocence will stay forever. She has no choice but to let go of the ashes of her child. She returns the ashes to the side of the unknown father and the certain God.

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