

**PSYCHO-SPATIAL READING OF KAZUO ISHIGURO’S SHORT STORY
“COME RAIN OR COME SHINE”**

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Your mission’s just to get her in a good mood and keep her that way. So when I come in and say, ‘Hello darling,’ and hug her, she’ll just reply, ‘Oh hello, darling, welcome home, how was everything,’ and hug me back. Then we can carry on as before. Before all this horrible stuff began. That’s your mission. Quite simple really(30).

Thinking as a concept of psycho spatial element plays a predominant role in the life of the characters. In *Psychoanalysis: Topological Perspectives New Conceptions of Geometry and Space in Freud and Lacan*, Michael Friedman, Samo Tomšič says that, Freud meticulously manifested that thinking is crucial “... forms of alienation a conflictual process, which consists of complex spatio-temporal relations. (7). Ishiguro’s characters in the short story experiences a sense of estrangement even in the presence of their beloved ones, friends and colleagues. They also experience a sense of disagreement in their personal or professional life.

Psychoanalysis topology can be understood as an analysis of consciousness which reflects the exterior life of the individuals. The conscious self is not a delusion but represents reality. The unconscious self of an individual does not represent the isolated part of a person. It is an intrinsic phenomenon as stated by Michael Friedman, Samo Tomšič in *Psychoanalysis: Topological Perspectives New Conceptions of Geometry and Space in Freud and Lacan* “... on the surface of consciousness, its anamorphosis “(8). The distorted inner image of Ishiguro’s characters appear on their surface of life. It is visible through the part that is played by the characters. The important element that revolves in Ishiguro’s five stories are music and its association in the life of the characters. The presence of music is treated as a sense of profession, entertainment, therapeutic, separation and building up the relationship. The presence of music also speaks about the authors interest in the field of music. Anne Lauppe – Dunbar in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Nocturnes : Five stories of Music and Nightfall* states that, “The writer plays his characters like song, a symphony of hope rising and hope dying. The overriding theme of dreams and aspirations calls to us as much as do the subjects of nostalgia and (thankfully) outright humour” (1).

Kazuo Ishiguro was born on 8th November 1954 in Nagasaki Japan. His father Shigeo Ishiguro was an oceanographer and his mother Shizuko Ishiguro a home maker. At the age of

five Ishiguro along with his parents migrated to England and settle at Guildford Surrey. He was considered as a one of the leading literacy figures. He joined Malcolm Bradburies Creative Writing Programme at the University of East Anglia. He received Winifred Holtby award for his first novel *A Pale View of Hills* (1983). *An Artist of the Floating World* is his second novel for which he received Whitbread Prize award in the year (1989). *The Remains of the Day* is his outstanding novel he was awarded the Booker Prize for fiction in the year (1989) and made it into film. *The Unconsoled* (1995) received Cheltenham prize. *When We Were Orphans* (2000) was shortlisted for Whitbread novel award. His collection of short stories *Nocturnes: Five stories of music and Nightfall* (2009), *The Buried Giant* (2015), *Klara and The Sun* (2021) For his contribution in literature, he was awarded Noble Prize for Literature in 2017. He is an eminent short story writer novelist and screen writer. In 2018 he was knighted.

Nocturnes was critically acclaimed and was successful. It is a clear indicator that as a writer he has the ability to touch upon different genres. Sean Matthews and Sebastian Groesstates in *Kazuo Ishiguro: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, “At the heart of Ishiguro works is a series of grand, dialectical oppositions: between History and the Present; Objectivity and Subjectivity; Reality and Imagination; Individual and Collective; Contingency and Universality; Realism and Surrealism (7). “Come Rain or Come shine and Cellists both the short stories bring out the inner most depth of their characters. Raymond in “Come Rain or Come Shine” recalls his stay at his friend’s house and where at the advice of his friend he takes up the role of a dog and enacts himself like a dog in making the house mess and makes effort to build the relationship between Charlie and Emily. Topology is a branch of mathematics. It is used as a part of psychoanalysis. Topology is extended to structuralism. In *Lacan: Topologically Speaking*, Ellie Ragland and Dragan Milovanovic brings out the views of topology, Levi-Strauss defined topology in sixties with a “. . . symbolic dimension beyond the levels of the imaginary and the real. . . . As Levi-Strauss rigorously states they have nothing but a direction (*sens*), a way, or meaning (*sens*) which is necessarily and uniquely one of position in a set” (1).

The title “Come Rain or Come Shine” is a way or director towards the life of Raymond Charlie and Emily. The three characters have a unique role to play in the given circumstances. Another important aspect of short story is the reliability of the character to their memory. Memory is unreliable. It has a direction at the same time because of the nature of memory it can lose the direction or track of the line of experience stored in the memory. The title of the story symbolically structured and taken from the recording, it was sang by Ray Charles. The song on the surface appears to have happy note, as one prods into the depth of the song, it so has a melancholic aspect in it. It is evident in the words of Raymond as he says, “. . . . We were especially pleased when we found a recording – like Ray Charles singing “Come Rain or Come Shine” – where the words themselves were happy, but the interpretation was pure heartbreak” (26). In *Kazuo Ishiguro* Cynthia F. Wong states “Ishiguro’s focus on the emotional and mental configurations of his characters lined stems from his personal experiences and affinities” (4).

The life of the characters go along with the choice of the title, Raymond, Charlie and Emily are good friends. Charlie and Emily are married and settled at London. Raymond was a teacher by profession. The story is the recollection of Ray staying at the wealthy house of Charlie and Emily. They had everything but they were not happy with each other after staying for years together. Charlie seeks the help of Ray to bridge the relationship with Emilie. Charlie making use of Ray can be viewed as a lack of respect for other human being. Ray becomes puppet in the hand of Charlie and at the instruction of Charlie he takes up the role of a dog by name Hendrix to destroy certain things that Emily valued in her life. Ray enacting like a dog at

the instruction of Charlie can be observed as rich persons symptoms of snobbishness. Charlie knew Ray is not a wealthy person and flaunting his richness through the externality of his house speaks the symptoms of show off. In *Lacan: Topologically Speaking* edited by Ellie Ragland and Dragan Milovanovic states that, “The “symptom” is important topologically because it holds the subject together, knotting the Imaginary, Symbolic and Real orders that constitute the basic associated unit of meaning and memory” (3).

Ray recalls the rich surrounding of the Charlie’s house when he visited his house first. His recent visit to his house makes him recall his previous visit. He was sure that everything will be ready for his arrival. In one situation Ray brings to his mind, Charlie’s exhibition of his house:

A few years ago, Charlie had led me in and with nonchalant pride started flicking switches, causing all sorts of subtly hidden lights to go on and off: behind the headboard, above the wardrobe and so on. Another switch had triggered a growling hum and blinds had begun to descend over the two windows.

“Look, Charlie, why do I need blinds?” I’d asked that time.

“I want to see out when I wake up. Just the curtains will do fine.”

“These blinds are Swiss,” he’d said, as though this were explanation enoughis were. (27)

Lacan associates the real with “.... repressed excitement or trauma” (2). Charlie’s repressive excitement is visible as he shows off his richness. Ray wishes to look at the light coming into the room but Charlie wanted the blinds to cover. The presence of “blinds” not allowing the lights to penetrate is symbolically attributed to the darker side of Charlie. He wishes that, the truth to be hidden behind the “blinds” (21). The external aspects like his unkept house and unprepared room for Ray at his second time symbolically speaks about the concealment of the stability in his life. This external element speaks about the disturbances in the relationship between husband and wife. Ray recalls as he says, “And then I saw the room as I’d never seen it before. The bed was bare, the mattress on it mottled and askew. On the floor were piles of magazines and paperbacks, bundles of old clothes, a hockey stick and a loud speaker fallen on its side. I paused at the threshold and stared at it while Charlie cleared a space to put down my bag” (28). The chaotic state of the room indicates the reality of Charlie’s and Emily’s life. The disturbed state of the house symbolically speaks about their distorted relationship.

Charlie seeking the “favour” (29) is a topological symptom. This symptom creates in Charlie seek the help of his friend Ray. Ray putting his heart and mind to fulfill the help sought by Charlie makes the reader to view Ray as a trained animal. Charlie seeking the help is not to mend his strained relationship with Emily. His ultimate aim is to express his traumatic angst towards Emily by breaking her beloved things. The rift in their relationship is articulated by Charlie as he says:

“The truth is, Emily and I have been going through a bit of a sticky patch. In fact, just recently, we’ve been avoiding one another altogether. That’s why she wasn’t there just now to welcome you. Right now, I’m afraid, you get a choice of one or the other of us. A bit like those plays when the same actor’s playing two parts. You can’t get both me and Emily in the same room at the same time. Rather childish, isn’t it?” (28-29)

In *Lacan: Topologically Speaking*, edited by Ellie Ragland and Dragan Milovanovic states that, “The Real of the symptom “speaks” the topological language of contradictory and paradoxical meanings that compose impasses or knots in the meaning of any person’s life”(3).

The language used by Charlie express his distressed state and his desire to be united with his wife has a complex meaning. With the help of Ray, he wishes to mend his marital life. His desire to build a stable home has a “. . . contradictory and paradoxical meaning. . .” his phone calls to Ray from Florida speaks about the divergent attitude of Charlie. Incongruity in his attitude is visible in two occasions. First when he requests Ray to make Emily happy by being “. . . a pleasant guest” (30). He expects his friend to make his wife happy, which sounds a bit contradictory. This speaks about Charlie’s invalidity in making his wife happy and entrusting this work to another person. Charlie further says to Ray, “Your mission’s just to get her in a good mood and keep her that way. So when I come in and say, ‘Hello darling,’ and hug her, she’ll just reply, ‘Oh hello, darling, welcome home, how was everything,’ and hug me back. Then we can carry on as before. Before all this horrible stuff began. That’s your mission. Quite simple really” (30).

The second occasion occurs when Ray happens to see the diary of Emily. His fear leads him to seek the help of Charlie. Charlie uses this occasion to make Ray to do all that he intended to do. Ray is expected to make Emily happy but he is expected not to speak anything about music. Charlie makes Ray to assume the role of a dog by name Hendrix. The dog becomes a symbol of destruction. Ray slowly begins to understand the hidden motives of Charlie as he says, “So you decided to invite me for a visit. To be Mr. Perspective” (33). Charlie induces his superiority over Ray. He expects Ray to imitate like a dog in destroying the stability of the house and peace of Emily. Ray agrees to act according to Charlie’s wish is mainly because of the fear that he got into for peeping into Emily’s diary.

Charlie makes use of his fear to express his vexation. Ray feels it as ridicules at the idea of dog chewing only the diary. At first Ray thinks whether to do it or not but Charlie’s call had a mesmerizing effect on him. Ray recalls it as he says, “But once Charlie had gone, I found his call had had a kind of hypnotic effect on me. Even as my head was dismissing his idea as idiotic, my arms and legs were setting out to put his “solution” into action” (41-42). Ray performed all that was asked of him. His real space creates a vacuum, it produces in him anxiety. The role of the dog that he puts on to destroy the stability of the house instills in him uneasiness. He expresses his anxiousness at the condition of the house. The real space of Charlie is his traumatic self. He exhibits his chaotic self as he asks Ray to destroy the following things:

You’re bound to be inhibited. So listen, I’m going to name a few items I’d dearly love to see damaged. Are you listening, Ray? I want the following things ruined. That stupid china ox thing. It’s by the CD player. That’s a present from David bloody Corey after his trip to Lagos. You can smash that up for a start. In fact, I don’t care what you destroy. Destroy everything!”

“Charlie, I think you need to calm down.”

“Okay, okay. But that apartment’s full of junk. Just like our marriage right now. Full of tired junk (43).

Ray understanding the attitude of Charlie realizes that he is using him as his confidant to take out his anger on Emily. Instead of building his relationship with his wife he is destroying the relationship with his wife, as he expects him to destroy all that was imported to his wife. Realizing the hidden motive, he openly says to Charlie that, “You’re just using me as a tool to express your rage and frustration . . .”(43). Charlie exhibits his superiority over Ray because of the status that he holds in the society. Ray is seen as inferior person because of his lack of economic status in the society. Charlie made Ray a pawn in his hand, he was expected to carry

out all that was commanded to do. Charlie's act of suggesting to create a stinkin the house exhibits the unhealthy stink in his relationship with another person.

In *Lacan: Topologically Speaking*, edited by Ellie Ragaland and Dragan Milovanovic states that, "The unconscious is a function of writing and of inscribing physical events; the conscious is another way of bringing, the same traces work"(1). Charlie's words unconsciously triggered the life of Ray and Ray consciously made use of it in his assigned duty. He consciously crouches to the position of a dog. He viewed the things through the eyes of Hendrix and started executing the plan of Charlie as he says:

So I got down on all fours, and lowering my head towards the same magazine, sank my teeth into the pages. The taste was perfumy, and not at all unpleasant. I opened a second fallen magazine near its center and began to repeat the procedure. The ideal technique, I began to gather, was not unlike the one needed in those fairground games where you try to bite apples bobbing in water without using your hands. What worked best was a light, chewing motion, the jaws moving flexibly all the time: this would cause the pages to ruffle up and crease nicely. Too focused a bite. . . (48)

Unconsciously he was moved from within to carry out what was ordered him to do. He consciously performed it. He was absorbed in his work that he failed to notice the arrival of Emily. Her touch made him feel her presence. The chaotic condition of the house did not disturb her, neither she asked for an explanation from Ray. This attitude of Emily indicates that the chaotic condition in her martial relationship is nothing compared to the disturbed state of her house. Ray looking into diary had no issues with Emily, Charlie used this opportunity to frighten Ray to express his anger and frustration towards Emily. In "A Pragmatic-Stylistic Analysis of Fictional Dialogues in Kazuo Ishiguro's Short Story "Come Rain or Come Shine" ZHANG Tong-tong says, "Charlie has circumvented the truth all the way only because he wants to make use of the "not-so-successful" Raymond to save his endangered relationship with Emily. After all, Raymond doesn't look "the highest of achievers" compared to Charlie and Emily. . ." (467).

The distorted familial relationship and the pain of it, is experienced by Emily and she takes the aid of the music to soothe her life. Ray makes effort to build the bridge between Emily and Charlie. Finally, Emily exhibits her painful self as she says, "I don't know why. Because when I stop and think about it, I realize I don't really want anyone else" (52). She exhibits her real and traumatic space of her inner life to Raymond. She uses music of Sarah Vaughan to help her to sooth her wounded self. Music becomes a therapeutic measure in healing her past traumatic life. As they dance to the rhythm to the notes of music, she experiences a kind of healing and finally she comes up saying, "You're right, Raymond," she said, quietly in my ear. "Charlie's all right. We should sort ourselves out" (53-54).

Ishiguro artistically brings out the psyche of his characters. The Psycho-spatial element brings out the external elements and its effect on the life of the characters. Music and its therapeutic impact are artistically brought by the author. Music is used by the author for the purpose of building up the relationship. It is used to hide the deep-seated wounded at the same time to express the hidden feelings of the persons. Emily and Ray both loved music and finally with the help of music she decides to reunite with her husband.

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