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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Kazuo Ishiguro: The International as A 'Third space'

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Abstract

This article envisages Ishigurian fiction as a site of compromise where linguistic and non-linguistic ingredients are mobilized to engage with the international bookmarket and its exigencies. This paper, thus, addresses Ishiguro's texts as commodities, and sets out to uncover the complex and intricate processes whereby the author negotiates his status as a 'language migrant', cognizant of the aesthetic dilemmas inherent in World Literature as well as of the stakes involved in writing for a global audience. It will similarly undertake to interrogate the ambivalent position of Ishiguro as a Japanese-born Briton, and to explore the way 'otherness' translates in his works, while coping with the tensions inherent in his bicultural profile ; it further examines the motivations of the Western prize machinery in establishing Ishiguro as a literarymegastar through the authentification of his oeuvre with a strinkingly lavish over-awardedness.Concurrently, it seeks to probe the hijacking of the majority- if not the totality- of his works by the mighty movie industry which perfectly and faithfully encapsulates the essence of capitalist consumerism. This recuperation inevitably calls into scrutiny the very nature and substance of Ishiguro's fiction, besides interpellating us to the canibalizing tendencies of the entertainment business in the West, while at the same time problematizing Ishiguro's stance caught between marketability imperatives, audience expectations and authorial integrity.

Introduction:-

If Proust's oft quoted phrase 'Great books are written in a foreign language of sorts'(my translation) unequivocally celebrates the linguistic 'foreigness' of literary works, and by the same token posits estrangement in literature as a sine qua none of 'greatness', such a conceptualization could equally be understood beyond the aesthetics of linguistic unfamiliarity, exoticism even,occasi. oned by 'une grammaire de déséquilibre'(a grammar of imbalance) (my translation)-to borrow from Deleuze(1993)-wherein the essential prospect would ultimately target the redirection ofemphasis not only to the intrinsic and ineluctable subjectivity of literary works, translating into an infidelity of sorts, but also and essentially to the extrinsic aspects involved in literary creation. Accordingly, if critics are unanimous about the requisite to read British-Japanese-born author Kazuo Ishiguro's fiction against tradition incarnated above by the Proustian heritage – an affiliation claimed by the writer himself-there seems to be a consensus not only about the originality of the author, who, by carving out a unique aesthetic space, has managed to inaugurate the genesis of a 'strangely'atypical voice in the contemporary literary scene, but mostly about the multi-faceted versatility of his oeuvre and its connection to different literary traditions. Yet, granting that the singularity of Ishiguro's fictiondwells

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not solely in itsmanifestreconnectionwithModernism -though in an admittedlylate version- but equally and in more overt forms,with Postmodernist aesthetics,critics have evidenced a keen interest in tracing 'Japaneseness' in his body of work, while speculating on the author's capitalization on his Oriental origins.

Literature Review:-

As a matter of course, critical appreciation of Ishiguro's fiction has been chartered along two major bifurcations;namely'Japan-novels' and 'post-Japan ones'(Jerrine Tan, 2018 :47),whereby APale View of Hills(1982) together with An Artist of The Floating World (1986) stand for the first template,whereas all his subsequent texts :The Remains of The Day(1989), The Unconsoled (1995),WhenWeWere Orphans(2000),Never Let Me Go(2005) and The Burried Giant(2015) down to Klara and The Sun (2021),herald his presumable entry into the transnational 'whitefacing' (Ma qtd in Dasgupta2015 :12) sphere. Beyond the obvious conclusion that this categorization operates an oversimplistic manichaeism which might nonetheless carry a certain degree of significance for understanding Ishiguro's texts, literary experts have proved overzealous in tagging the author and his writing,while the former has outspokenly and reiteratively been resisting any reductive labelling, opting instead for an 'international' affiliation,which undeniably detains a number of merits as Cheng rightly argues :'To define Ishiguro as an international writer or a World writer encourages readers to view his Japanese ancestry as one force among others enriching his composition and thereby to appraise him within a much broader spectrum of contemporary writers'(Cheng qtd in Dasgupta 2015 :16).Having said that, Ishiguro's readers are nevertheless confronted with the impasse of engaging with the prescriptive tendencies of critical parlance in apprehending an 'overstudied' author on the one hand, and the aesthetic challenges posed by his fiction per se, on the other.In claiming the 'worldliness' of his fiction,populated as it stands by 'characters who jet across continents but may just easily be set firmly in one small locality'(Ishiguro, British Council,18/12/2017), not only does Ishiguro resist pigeonholing, but also reaffirms his consciousness of the local/global dialectic inherent in World literature through emphasizing the deep-seated transnational vocation of his texts, thus broaching the vexed debates surrounding the material conditions of literary production. Such an awareness- if we are to believe Rebecca Walkowitz-substantiates his own art of fiction leading him thereby to focus on 'shape, structure and vision, on what he calls architecture, rather than on sentences or phrases'(Walkowitz,2015 :219).This 'architecture' upon which rests Ishiguro's 'macro-narrative'-to borrow from Murakami solicits readings that interrogate the contingency between 'the ontology and phenomenology of World literature'epitomized by the 'translationese' model (Walkowitz,2015).

Materials and Methods:-

This article investigates Ishigurian fiction as a site of compromise, where linguistic and non-linguistic ingredients are mobilized to engage with the international book market and its exigencies. It thus addresses his novels as commodities, and sets to uncover the complex and intricate processes whereby the author negotiates his status as a 'language migrant'(Mary Besemeres qtd in Dasgupta 2015 :13)cognizant of the aesthetic dilemmas inherent in World Literature as well as of the stakes involved in writing for a global audience,while probing Ishiguro's aesthetic share in the current worlding of the literary.Thus, the present paper will undertake to interrogate the ambivalent position of Ishiguro as a Japanese-born Briton, and explore the way 'otherness' translates in his works, while coping with the tensions inherent in hisbicultural profile ; it will further examine the motivations of the Western prize machinery in establishing Ishiguro as a literary megastar through the authentification of his œuvre with a strikingly lavish over-awardedness. Concurrently, it seeks to investigate the hijacking of the majority-if not the totality- of his works by the mighty Western movie industry, which perfectly and faithfully encapsulates the essence of capitalist consumerism. This recuperation inevitably calls into scrutiny the very nature and substance of Ishiguro's fiction, besides interpellating us to the cannibalizing tendencies of theentertainment business in the West, while at the same time problematizing Ishiguro's stance caught between marketability imperatives, audience expectations and authorial integrity.

Findings and Discussion:

Kazuo Ishiguro : An international writer caught between'Japeneseness' and Britishness :

It's very difficult for me to distinguish how much Japanese influence I've actually inherited naturally, how much I've actually generated for myself because I felt I ought to (……) I think I certainly do have a tendency to create a Japaneseness about my writing when I do write books in a Japanese setting.(Kazuo Ishiguro'sTurn to Fantasy, The Guardian, Feb 19 2015)

If we agree with Chu Chueh Cheng that : 'Asian origin did pave Ishiguro a shortcut to success'(Cheng, 2005 :9),benefiting from the multicultural trend in Britain which eventuated in the burgeoning of 'a whole line of

ethnic writers'(Cheng,2005 :19),and if Ishiguro himself acknowledges that 'if I (he)didn't have a Japanese name and if I(he)hadn'twritten books (….) set in Japan, it would have taken me (him)years longer to get the kind of attention and sales that I(he)got in England with my(his) first two books',critics nonetheless have registered the author's 'irritation at this packaging of him as an exotic writer'(Dasgupta,2015 :13),and at being reductively categorized as an 'ethnic Japanese', a label he perceives as 'a straightjacket, restraining him from growing as an artist and a serious writer'(Dasgupta,2015 :9). Indeed, Ishiguro's Japanese heritage 'often envelops his works with Oriental mystery' as his texts are thus 'deciphered in the codes of Japanese aesthetics'(Dasgupta2015 :9), an aesthetics notoriously informed by a taste for 'the nuanced, the understated, elegant but significant gesture'(Bruce King,10).As a matter of fact, the majority ofcritics are accordingly keen on apprehending the author through the lens of discursive otherness, strangeness and unfamiliarity, sincehe :'evinces an extraordinary control of voice, an *uncannily* (my stress)Japanese quality emanating from his perfectly pitched English prose'(Mason,1989). This holds particularly accurate for Ishiguro 's early fiction namely A Pale View of Hills(1982) and An Artist of the Floating World (1986), which concurrently reveal, according to most critics, his capitalization on his ethnic background through essentializing aesthetic strategies which invite the Western reader to a journey into the depths of otherness. Yet, if this capitalization is unambiguous in his early texts, his 'post-ethnic' works deemphasize his Japanese ancestry by moving to more universal foci and themes,while continuing to be 'an undercurrent', to borrow from Romit Dasgupta, in the form of 'textual and subtextual reference'(Dasgupta2015 :12).Indeed, 'being situated between cultures' enhances the multicultural or rather bicultural dimension of Ishiguro's profile, and further problematizes critical endeavours to categorize him either as a British , postcolonial, Anglo-Japanese, Japanese writer or else as a 'language migrant'. This, in turn, poses challenges to understanding his fiction beyond cultural determinism and the exotic appeal it is liable to generate as Chu Chueh Cheng aptly argues : ' What the making and marketing of Ishiguro's alterity reveal of the cultural context in which his texts are so voraciously consumed and yet so fallaciously categorized'(Cheng,2005).At any rate, apprehending Ishiguro's fiction seems to be enmeshed at the intricate nexus of 'racial identity, commercial strategies, thematic concerns and authorial intention'(Cheng,2005),hence the difficulty to discern the extent to which the author is actually responsive to market imperatives, and how the design of his texts takes into account readers' expectations. At another level, the ubiquity in his texts of the 'uncannily' quality mentioned above, and which critics agree is a common denominator in all his novels, does not solely drive home the Proustian dense of 'strangeness' and unfamiliarity, but mostly emphasizes the exotic profile of the writer and his body of work, and somehow foregrounds- if in a distinctive way- his difference or his alterity per se.

In 1982, Ishiguro gains British citizenship after residing in the United Kingdom for more than two decades as a Japanese expatriate, three years later he is appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) six yearsafter the release of The Remains of The Day(1989),winning him The Booker Prize and eventuating in a huge commercial success after the blockbuster film adaptation.As a matter of fact, Ishiguro's third novel , The Remains of The Day, initiates a new phase in his career, as the author realized that :

By then , I (he) was very consciously trying to write for an international audience. It was a reaction, I (he) think, against a perceived parochialism in British fiction of the generation that preceded mine. Looking back now I don't know if that was a just charge or not. But there was a conscious feeling among my peers that we had to address an international audience and not just a British one. One of the ways I thought I could do this was to take a myth of England that was known internationally—in this case, the English butler.(Paris review interview, August 17th 2012)

In truth, by reappropriating 'the myth of the butler' as emblematic of the British culture, Ishiguro performs a wilful act of anglicizing, whereby his fiction would break loose from the Oriental optic Western critics have endorsed so far in understanding his narratives , and though the novel undeniably performs a caesura with his first two 'Japanese' texts in opting for English themes, characters and locale, critics persist in considering the author through the prism of his ethnicity. Thus,RD is perceived as nothing more than a 'perfectly English novel that could have been writtenonly by a Japanese'(Pico Lyer),'a Japanese novel in disguise'(David Gurewitch) or 'an extraordinary act of mimicry '(Hermione Lee). On the other hand, if Ishiguro's 'post-ethnification process'(Ma qtd in Dasgupta 2015 :15)could be understandably deemed a case of 'whitefacing' as Ma argues : ' Indeed his whitefacing could at one level be seen as both potentially subversive of hegemonic white power structures, reverting the long-standing stereotypical depictions of East-Asian characters (often played by white actors) like Fu Manchu or Mme Butterfly in Anglo-American popular culture, and as a reaction to the earlier Orientalist constructions of himself and his works by critics…..'(Ma qtd in Dasgupta 2015 :79/80), and if this presumed whitefacing is in itself perceived as Ishiguro's failure to acknowledge his position as Anglo-Japanese(Ma, 79/79), it stands to reason that the writer is charged with '…..a deliberate apolitical evasion of the everyday realities of being a non-white immigrant person in contemporary Britain…..' (Ma qtd in

Dasgupta,15). In 2019, the British transplant is duly and ceremoniously knighted after a laborious literary trajectory, which earned him eight nominations to the Booker Prize, and ultimately a Nobel Prize in 2017, entitling him to be listed thirty second among the fifty best British writers since 1945 by The Times. Significantly, Ishiguro's canonization in Britain and elsewhere begs the question of the Western canon's perviousness to absorb diasporic authors, and the complex mechanisms undergirding canon formation, besides the criteria of selection regimenting award institutions, along with marketing strategies together with the logics of the book industry. Accordingly, the integration of his works into what David Damrosch lucidly calls 'the hypercanon', whilst being technically part of the 'countercanon'(Damrosch,2006), deeply challenges the motivations buttressing canon formation in Western literary and academic circles, and further questions the consecration of Ishiguro's fiction by the Western prize apparatus bestowing him with unprecedented 'prestige'(James English2005). This 'prestige' industry, whereby talent is not only authenticated but also manufactured, enables opportunistic capitalization on cultural capital and artistic achievement which, in Ishiguro's instance, jibes with his wish to anglicize his texts and hence gainsay critical tendencies to regard him through the optic of racial and ethnic affiliations. Such a literary project admittedly envisions otherness in two contradictory ways ; first at the authorial level, as a Trojan horse susceptible to disrupt Western and British literature from within, and to grant further market visibility through strategically staging one's alterity while accumulating 'cultural capital' all the way through ; second, it utilizes one's 'otherness' as a springboard not only to flirt with Western genres and aesthetics, but equally to meet the desiderata of 'the games of culture'(James English,2005). In trying to account for Ishiguro's peculiarity, critics identify his genius in the way he has 'put his Japanese sources to work at the service of his craft as aWestern writer to create a distinctively personal style of unusualresonance and subtlety'(Masonqtd in Niedobova2015 :336). While this amalgam obliquely suggests a subordination of the writer'sethnic influences, it nonetheless confirms the importance of defining Ishiguro as a World writer as Rebecca Walkowitz aptly argues : 'Ishiguro's novels offer compelling examples of the new world literature, and of what I call 'comparison literature', an emerging genre of world fiction for which global comparison is a formal as well as a thematic preoccupation'(Walkowitz 2018 :218). Conversely, Chris Holmes pinpoints a paradox in considering Ishiguro an avatar of World Literature :

The lesson for reading Ishiguro as an example of World writing, and by the objects/ identities of worldliness that inhabit his novels is one of reduction and extraction. Ironically, these modes of knowing the world are the very ones that Ishiguro dismantles; we learn not to trust those who know their place in the equation of the world, and indeed Ishiguro's twenty-first century novels are structured in order to be misidentified and misplaced in the order of the world.(Holmes 2019:3)

Arguably, the disturbing in-built malaise Ishiguro's fiction is imbued with, should be viewed within the author's largest 'affective project of disconsolation' to borrow from Timothy Right , which unmistakably formulates an aesthetics of trauma. Furthermore, Ishiguro's toying with genres obviously lends strength to his desire to integrate the international community of writers, while it illustrates, if need be, his versatility and his mastery of Western generic affiliations. When asked by Brian Shaffer and Cynthia Wong about his literary lineage, Ishiguro is adamant that:

I feel that I'm very much of the Western tradition. And I' m quite often amused
When reviewers make a lot of my being Japanese and try to mention the two or
three authors they've vaguely heard of, comparing me to Mishima or something.
It seems highly inappropriate. I've grown up reading Western fiction: Dostoesvsky,
Chekhov, Charlotte Brontë, Dickens.(Gregory Mason, 2008:4).

What is clear is that critics have been extremely divided in addressing Ishiguro; ranging from Graham Huggan who lumps him together with 'marketable exotic novelists of canonical status', such as Salman Rushdie and Carl Philips, Pico Lyer who identifies him more as a BookerPrize winner of postcolonial background, or else Sheng-Mei-Ma who foregrounds hisdiasporic affiliation and considers him representative of the Asian diaspora, while considering his writing 'symptomatic of the novelist's 'split personality' and ' burried self ', without failing to mention Dominic Head whofocuses on Ishiguro's immigrant profile, and takes stock of the migratory experience of the writer as 'the multicultural personae in post-war Britain', nor Bruce King's understanding of Ishiguro as part of the New Internationalist trend epitomized by Shiva Naipul, Rushdie, Emecheta or Mo ; authorswho 'write about their lands or the immigrant experiencefromwithin the mainstream of British literature'(193). The way 'The same but not quite' Ishiguro navigates the cosmopolitan literary space reveals an ambivalent attitude in knowingly compromising with market dynamics while taking into account ideologies of reception and readability, strategies of production and

consumption after the 'Rushdie effect', engaging thus with the 'global ecology' through aesthetic choices that fundamentally tend to capsize the assumptions of a literary system thriving on marketing exotic alterity.

Ishiguro and the Entertainment Industry :

This paper equally defends the postulate that Ishiguro's fiction dramatize sitself perfectly well for cinematographical adaptation and ultimately for consumption, in internalizing narrative and semiotic strategies proper to the screen, and that in sodoing manages to cross generic boundaries, conclusively transmuting into popular culture with mass market valence.Yet, if constraints on length and reasons of scope and strategy prevent me from exploring in full detail the cinematographical traits in Ishiguro's texts, my argumentation will focus instead on a few compelling parallels between the author's narrative designs and filmic techniques. Surprisingly enough, Ishiguro asserts that his texts are not initially conceived for cinematographical adaptation, nor are they meant to address thejuicy entertainment industry and its imperatives. As a self-confessed cinephile,he thus contends :' I try to write un-filmable novels' or else,'When I write a novel, I wantit to be completely different from a screenplay. Iam very conscious of the difference and I want novels to work purely as novels' ; however, his long-term collaboration with the filmmaking business provokes serious reflection on his involvement with the movie industry and his acquaintance, if not mastery, of the craft of script writing. It is worth mentioning that three of Ishiguro's novels have been adapted to the big screen namely The Remains of The Day, Never Let Me Go and lately An Artist of The Floating World, while his recently released and much advertised post-Nobel prize book Klara and The Sun(2021)is already being discussed
as a prospective new adaptation by Sonny's 3000 Pictures. In addition to movies, Ishiguro's filmography includes The Gourmet(1986), a screenplay for a TV movie for the BBC, The saddest Music in the World (2003),a scenario for a musical comedy film directed by Guy Maddin , andThe White Countess (2005), a scenario for an American-British movie production directed by James Ivory. Not only does Ishiguro's early and constant flirtation with the entertainment industry contravene the 'Bourgeois' Modernist stigmatisation of visual arts as parasitic to literature , the only merit of which is ' to flatter the vulgarity of the savages of the twentieth century' (Virginia Woolf), but it also ostensibly reveals the author's awareness of and adherence to cinematographical writing in terms of technique, style, structure and thematic approach. An awareness which evidently reverberates throughout this fictional geography, and contributes to shape'The map of Ishiguroland' to borrow from Leslie Forbes, yet forcibly compromises his authorial intentions vis-à-vis market demands, and interrogates his presumed capitulation to the dictates of market consumerism while designing his texts.Ishiguro confesses that :

I (he) found myself(himself) rather obsessively comparing pages from my(his) screenplays- essentially dialogues plus directions- with pages from my(his) published novel, and asking myself(himself), ' ismy(his) fiction sufficiently different from a screenplay ?' Whole chunks of Pale View looked to me(him) awfully similar to a screenplay- dialogue followed by 'direction' followed by more dialogue. I (he) began to feel deflated. Why bother to write a novel if it was going to offer more or less the same experience someone could have by turning on a television ? How could the novel as a form survive against the might of cinema and television if it couldn't offer something unique, something the other forms couldn't properly do ? (AFW, IX)

Ishiguro's manifest unease with the hegemony of the cinema industry , and his concern with generic boundaries is by no means to bemistaken for literary purism on his part, for if the author's commitment to the 'novel' as a genre is undeniable as he has oft emphasized : 'If the novel survives as an important form into the next century, it will be because writers have succeeded in creating a body of literature that is convincingly international. It is my ambition to contribute to it'(qtd in Sim,20)- a commitment which implicitly establishes the novel as the most marketable genre for the benefits of the World Literature industry- he has otherwise repeatedly formulated his hostility to hierarchizing genres, advocating instead, a more encompassing vantage point whereby gauging literature should 'take care not to set too narrowly or conservatively our definitions of what constitutes good literature'(Nobel Prize Lecture 2017).Similarly, Ishiguro calls for an inclusive vision of World literature whereby major and minor traditions would be integrated to the international canon : 'We must widenour common literary world to includemany more voices from beyond our comfort zones of the Elite first world cultures' (Nobel Prize Lecture,2017).Such a scholarly claim evidently acknowledges the existence of dynamics of exclusion at the heart of biased literary institutions, responsible for shaping international taste and promoting market visibility, while addressing direct accusations of elitism to Western institutions operating 'a literary racism' of sorts. This digression asside, It is noteworthy that Ishiguro teams with such Nobelized writers as William Faulkner and Harold Pinter who profitably customized their craft to (Hollywood) script/screen writing. A further evidence for Ishiguro's involvement with the entertainment industry is his collaboration as a lyrics composer with Rock singers in the early seventies, which coincide with the thriving of

cultural studies in Britain and the rehabilitation of popular culture in academia as he confesses in his Nobel Prize Lecture :

I have on a number of other occasions learned crucial lessons from the voices of singers. I refer here less to the lyrics being sung than, and more to the actual singing. As we know, a human voice in songis capable of expressing an unfathomably complex blend of feelings. Over the years, specific aspects of my writing have been influenced by,among others, Bob Dylan, Nina Simone, Emmylou Harris, Ray Charles, Bruce Springsteen, Gillian Welsh and my friend and collaborator Stacey Kent.

Such familiarity with the entertainment industry, in its different versions, has actually contributed to confer a chameleon-like quality to Ishiguro's texts as he seems- according to Salman Rushdie- to engage 'a brilliant subversion of the fictional modes in his discussion of large themes such as death, change, pain and evil'(qtd in Wong, 2005).Correspondingly, if we concede that he 'plays a keen game of genre jenga', to borrow from Chris Holmes, Ishiguro's aesthetics forestalls an angst with the problem of generic affiliation, and emphasizes the possibility of considering World literature as a potentially commodified artform.

Conclusion:-

More than likely, when critics like Takayki Shonaka maintain that 'Ishiguro's early works fed into and reinforced existing British stereotypes of an 'exotic' Japan' (Romit Dasgupta, 13), Ishiguro scholars such as Cynthia F. Wong ' warnsagainst the Japaneseness of Ishiguro'swork being over-emphasized' (Wong,2005 :10), the writer himself disavows such non- sequitur accusations, acknowledging instead his debt to Japanese movies : ' The visual images of Japan have a great poignancy for me, particularly in domestic films like those of Ozu and Naruse, set in the postwar era, the Japan I actually remember' (Gregory Mason, 336). Pertinently, Japanese critic Akinori Sakaguchi contends that 'Ishiguro was pursuing normative Japan through Ozu films' (qtd in Taketomi Ria, 1) , echoing Gregory Mason's remark that : 'Ishiguro has been able, through film, to revisit the Japan of his childhood' (East-West film journal,41). If the Japanese cinema happens to be an inspiration that has contributed to reactivateIshiguro'smemories of Japan, the writer feels particularly beholden to Ozu's domestic drama called ' Shomingeki' : ' A profound, respectable genre, and distinctively Japanese, (…) concerned with ordinary people in everyday life, and it has that sort of pace : a pace which reflects the monotony and melancholy of everyday life' (qtd in Taketomi,6). Those fractured reminiscences of a distant homeland surrounded by ambiguity, trauma, separation and uprootedness find their voice in the lyrical quality and artistic sensibilities of Ozu, the most typical of Japanese directors, and more technically in his use of the Mono No Aware, a renowned traditional Japanese aesthetic style translated into a cinematographical technique which explores a certain sensitiveness to ' giving up onself to tender sorrowful contemplation of a thing or scene that is the opposite to sunny, happy, and bright' ' to ephemera or the sadness of being' (qtd in Renata Reich,2013). Such pathos-oriented aesthetics finds parallels in the concept of Huzunin Turkish literature, and more specifically in Orhan Pamuk's fiction- Istanbul is a case to the point- whereby melancholizing as a creative device transfigures human experience into an aestheticizing sublimating process. Constraints on length in the present paper prevent me from elaborating in more detail on the common grounds betweenboth notions, yet it is opportune to note that the motif of the 'wound' is ubiquitous in Ishiguro's fiction if we believe Bowdoin College : ' With the 'wound' as an appropriately macabre polaris, Ishiguro's novels may be collectively figured into an extended commentary on pain theory' (Bowdoin College,2018:4). Yet, this literary 'masochism' of sorts does by no means fall prey to self-indulgent imminent sadness, oft contiguous with an Oriental lyricalquality, nor does it conform to the tenets of Japanese aesthetics as critics would have Ishiguro's readers believe. As a matter of course, the 'inevitable sadness' in Ishigurian fiction is far frombeing a typically Oriental feature, as it draws on the Becketian sense of the futile and the absurd as Claire Messudmaintains in this respect : ' As in Beckett, Ishiguro's characters, in their detached world, show us a version of ourown minute preoccupations and piddling distractions, and raises life's largest questions for all of us. Is this all there is ? must it all end so soon ? Why strive ? Why persist ? What is it all for ?'(qtd in Beedham, 138). Still , if Ishiguro resists the aestheticizing of 'sadness' in his fiction, he nonetheless concedes that the melancholy stamp of his authorial voice 'perhaps was something to do with me (him)' (Ria Taketomi/ ish and Japanese films).

We can further distinguish two major features in Ishiguro's narratives which, on closer inspection, seem to tinge the very substance of the majority of histexts namely the camera eye and the echo effect.Indeed, the design of most of Ishiguro's narratives rests upon a repetitive pattern which introduces the reader to the inner psychological complexity of characters using leitmotifs which are destined to become distinctively recognizable, but what is more intriguing in his fiction is the impression that the author is deliberately reiterating the very same ocurrences, and that the plot is being scaffolded upon interminably similar episodeswith no clear sense of direction, all materializing in an impression

of no déjà-vu. In this respect, Critic Rebecca Walkowitz convincingly argues : 'The way that later scenes or phrases willsound like, or almost repeat, earlier scenes or phrases, and the way these repetitions will in retrospect seem to have preceded or motivated what appeared to be the originals– Ishiguro uses comparative devices like the echo to introducecomplex patterns of world circulation- his comparisons link together a variety of international themes but they also prompt us to examine the shape and scale of that variety'(Walkowitz,2007 :223).

(Ishigurowith the cast of Never Let Me Go)

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