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**Abstract**

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*Ishiguro's novel an Artist of the Floating World is the story of an artist who shifts his values and self-representation. The narrator is verbose about the intolerable cruelty of the atomic bomb. Ono, the protagonist painter's artistic integrity becomes suspicious as the novel proceeds. Following epigraph has irony that he is an artist,*



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Masuji Ono: '...looking at the portrait, you would probably take him to be the sort you could confidently elbow aside for an empty tram seat. But then each of us, it seems, has his own special conceits. If the Tortoise's modesty forbade him to disguise his timid nature, it did not prevent him from attributing to himself a kind of lofty intellectual air – which I for one have no recollection of. But then to be fair, I cannot recall any colleague who could paint a self-portrait with absolute honesty; however accurately one may fill in the surface details of one's mirror reflection, the personality represented rarely comes near the truth as others would see it.' (67).

Ono can not give truthful representation through his self-portrait. He tries to survive with self-esteemed artist in Japan of the post world war 2. Ono narrates the story in the first person, is a retired professional artist, growing as an old man with nostalgia he backs to the past of the post-war Japan. His thoughts goes back to childhood of 1913. Furuwaka where he reached peak of his success as a war propagandaa artist in 1938. this narrative divided in 4 sections,.....

Part 1. 1948, October, Ono has been depicted as an out-of-favour military artist with a daughter to marry.

Part 2. 1949, April, he has betrayed the students and the Miai.

Part 3. 1949, November, he has supported different schools of arts.

Part 4. 1950, June, Matsuda's death's epilogue who is his colleague and friend.

The narrative of the novel is slight because Ono should negotiate remarriage of her second daughter Noriko. Because his first attempt failed due to his not acceptance of art posters in Japan's support for wars of imperial expansion. Ono's quest for re-affirm and re-find his broken self as an independent painter. Ono comes to know that for groom's family, the Saitos he has not been well-known, and Dr. Saito neighbour, an art critic and relative-in-law never considers him the great artist. Planning of the marriage goes ahead. Ono tries to solve, psychologically a social, violent and personal crisis in the changing Japan and tries to stable the unsafe position emotionally. He has anxiety for his identity in the world. Once his painting is ignored, his grandson asks him,.... 'Father says you used to be a famous artist but you had to finish....Because Japan lost the war.' (32), Ono can only reply, 'They're all [paintings] tidied away...' (79, my emphasis). Ono suffers trauma of failed as a child of egoist father during producing his first painting. He has to suffer from ww 2 in the Japan where he lost his beloved wife, Michiko and son Kenji. He remember his son-in-law, suichi during Kenji's burial ceremony. Suichi's wife Setsuko comments on his leaving of the ceremony that he has a touch of malnutrition. Ono recalls that at Kenji's burial ceremony, his son-in-law, Suichi, who had been a soldier himself, was contemptuous of Ono's generation. Kenji's ashes had taken a year to arrive and then were only part of the mangled remains of the twenty-three other young men, lost in 'that hopeless charge across a minefield' in Manchuria. As Suichi walked out of the burial ceremony in disgust, Setsuko, his wife, excused him with the unlikely comment that he had a 'touch of malnutrition.' The absurdity of Ono's wife's death is mentioned as an aside to Matsuda,.... 'A cruel thing ...And with the war all but over.. something of a freak raid ....Hardly anyone else was hurt. It was, as you say, a cruel thing.' (90-1).

According to Ishiguro Ono is not able to mourn, can not be transform through symbolisation.(see Segal, 1981: 52-65). Ono allows to digress that his artistic mind will be drift, drifting, drifted between memories of past and present. His mind is telling contradictory statements in words and behaviour. He imposed his own failure on others unconsciously. Britton believes patient,..... "internally menaced by a hostile super-ego, particularly when they show signs of independent, personal development, sexual maturity, or creativity. ... [the parental] continuing love is complicated by envy of the child's personal capacities when there is separate development...." He uses self-enhancing words such as prestige, celebrity, reputation, honour, distinction, superiority, admiration, renown, status,

and élite, he also used narcotic delusory which is called ‘a lord must gather his men’ of himself in the Migi-Hidari café.

He maintains a sententious, controlling, language style, saturated with self-enhancing words such as reputation, esteem, prestige, admiration, celebrity, acclaim, honour, respect, renown, distinction, status, superiority, pride and élite. Then, at the height of his career, he uses the intoxicating, delusory,

‘a lord must gather his men’, of himself and his followers in the Migi-Hidari café. He relaxes the flow only in the short epilogue that is the ending,... “I argue that Ono reconstructs his memories in a non- psychotic form of denial – disavowal, 38 namely, while there is still a splitting of the ego, there is a state of mind which acknowledges events but does not perceive their significance, like living in a double reality” (Pines, 1993: 186; 207-8).

Ono, the name indicates palindrome, the end is the beginning, and the thinking, dual. He is in trouble and hesitation between the indignity of acknowledging past. Name Ono reflects his defending states of the mind. Standing on the Bridge of Hesitation Ono says, ‘...it is not that I am hesitating. It is simply that I enjoy standing there as the sun sets, surveying my surroundings and the changes taking place around me.’(99). By standing in the middle of the bridge he wants to symbolized for psychic situation on which he himself caught. Between reality and imagination, old and new. Ono passed comment on the Hirayama boy who lives in the past, the slow boy, he sang military songs and do mimicry of patriotic speeches for food during the war time. But he has been beaten after the war,...‘No doubt...fixated on those patriotic songs because of the attention and popularity they earned him.’ (61). Ono should not allow patriotic art-work in the post- war world where new culture exist. He believe himself rare by commenting,.....‘I do not think I am claiming undue credit for my younger self if I suggest my actions...were manifestations of a quality I came to be much respected for in later years

– the ability to think and judge for myself, even if it meant going against the sway of those around me.’ (69). The Emperor, Ono’s father and three leaders who are authoritarian, patriarchal, Master painter, Moriami, Takeda dominate Ono. He also himself tries to do control as a leader of his group. Crucial trauma of destruction is the burning and the smell of burning, important motif of the novel. He has smelled of burning garden rubbish.

Ishiguro, through the mouth of Ono, echos the title of the post modernist writer , Italo Calvina, ‘If on a winter’s night a traveller’ at the begining of the nove,... ‘If on a sunny day you climb the steep path leading up from the little wooden bridge still referred to around here as ‘the Bridge of Hesitation’, you would not have to walk far before the roof of my house becomes visible.....you may find yourself wondering what sort of wealthy man owns it.’ (7).

Ono remembers the destruction of artwork with his father. Ono used to listen lectures on accounting by his father. His father came to know his desire to become the professional artist, it is the climax of this story. The climax to these ritual encounters came when Father discovered Ono’s interest in art. He wants to move all his paintings to the room, examined them. When ono return there is a smell of burning. His father declares an old priest’s prophecy about him in the presence of his mother, ‘... born with a flaw in his nature’, a ‘tendency to slothfulness and deceit’, had a ‘weak streak’, ‘dislike of useful work... a weak will’, and unless vigilance was kept over him, he could become a ‘good-for- nothing.’ (45). His mother comments,... ‘The handful with extraordinary resolve and character. But I’m afraid our son here is far from being such a person. Indeed, quite the contrary.... We do after all want him to become someone we can be proud of, don’t we?’

His father has examined his creativity in the art. According to Milner (1971:159),..... ‘...what the painter does conceptualize in non-verbal symbols is the astounding experience of what it feels to be alive, the experience known from the inside, ... with capacities to relate oneself to other objects in space.’ (159).

According to Ishiguro, Ono is supposed to be in Japanese; “it s just that the reader is getting it in English. In a way the language has to be almost like a pseudo translation, which means I can t be too fluent and I can t use too many Western colloquialisms. It has to be almost like subtitles, to suggest that behind the English language there s a foreign language going on. I’m quite conscious of figuring these things out when I’m writing, using a certain kind of translations. Sometimes my ear will say:

‘That doesn’t quite ring true, that kind of language. Fine if these were just English people, but not here’” 5

Ono starts to lost trust in power of nation in the context of the modernization and internationalism. He has clash of his ideology when his daughter Setsuko, comments,.. ‘Father was simply a painter. He must stop believing he has done some great wrong’ (193).

unlike it, his grandson Ichiro appreciates Western superheroes Popeye and Zorro. The gap between Ono as a grandfather and grandson shows the perception of both for positive values in rigorous situation differently in two different historical moments. Ishiguro points out about the protagonists in his work,... “know what they have to avoid and that determines the routes that they take through memory, and through the past. There’s no coincidence that they’re usually worrying over the past. They’re worrying because they sense there isn’t something quite right there. But of course memory is this terrible treacherous terrain, the very ambiguities of memory go to feed self-deception.” 22

Ono’s reenacting past by reinterpreting his past memories, he gets struggles and then gains consolation in future. Here artist gives assurance to the readers that all deeds of past are no doubt noble. By using the word SHAME frequently, we echoed the past, he comments,..‘there is surely no great shame in mistakes made in the best of faith. It is surely a thing far more shameful to be unable or unwilling to acknowledge them’ (125).

The night bar Migi-Hidari is the symbol of the old days of the floating world, but there is now a clear space with trees. He can keep his hope alive for the betterment of his future and nation,... As Ono watches the place where the old night bar Migi-Hidari (Right-Left) used to be a symbol of the old days in the pleasure district of the floating world, now he sees a clear space with a few young trees and a single bench, a place where nobody now has time to stop and rest from their busy lives. While he struggles to come to terms with the new nation of the present, he somehow is able to keep alive his hope for a better future: ‘I feel a certain nostalgia for the past and the district as it used to be. But to see how our city has been rebuilt, how things have recovered so rapidly over these years, fills me with genuine gladness. Our nation, it seems, whatever mistakes it may have made in the past, has now another chance to make a better go of things. One can only wish these young people well’ (206) King says about the differences of older and younger generation,... ‘If the old order is tyrannical and unrepentant, the younger generation is necessarily selfish. The choice seems to be between the living death of the past, which provides protection and guidance, and the new American democratic way, which offers opportunities and insecurity.’ 23

Ono remembers the last meeting this is the point where the novel ends, and that is the moment where he gets triumph in life, the Shigeta prize by Police Chief,... ‘but happy as I was that night, the feeling of deep triumph and fulfilment which the award should have brought was curiously missing.’ (202). He has belief that he and Matsuda struggle to rise like the

Tortoise and Shintaro,... ‘...acted on what we believed and did our utmost.’ When they were old, met last time,...‘It’s just that in the end we turned out to be ordinary men. Ordinary men with no special gifts of insight. It was simply our misfortune to have been ordinary men during such times.’ (200).

Ishiguro has depicted character of Ono as,..’In the first book [A Pale View of Hills], a lot of things that I thought were just going to be subplots took over ... When I finish it, I thought: “Well, the aspect of this book that is most important to me is this bit that has ended up as subplot” which is a story about this old teacher, whose career has coincided to a certain extent with the rise of militarism in Japan before World War II, and who, after the war, in retirement, finds himself in the awkward position of having to reassess his life’s work. I thought I would like to explore that strand much more thoroughly.’<sup>42</sup>

The private memory is odds with public memory; we can see this by comments of Ono’s son-in-law Suichi, who believe Japanese militarists, “too cowardly to face up to their responsibilities”.<sup>46</sup> Ono becomes aggressive and answers, “Those who fought and worked loyally for our country during the war cannot be called war criminal.”<sup>47</sup>

Ishiguro with Mason, has told that Ono comes to know the mistakes of Japanese people but he too believes that nation will recover soon. Author explains again that he used diary method for allowing Ono to write from different emotional angles,...“There are no solid things. And the irony is that Ono had rejected that whole approach to life. But in the end, he too is left celebrating those pleasures that evaporated when the morning light dawned. So the floating world comes to refer, in the larger metaphorical sense, to the fact that the values of society are always in flux.”<sup>25</sup>

Ishiguro has depicted Ono’s identity authentically; he is a Japanese painter struggling to find his identity in ever changing society of the war. His story brings the floating frouds of history and politics of the wartime.

Ono as an artist becomes aware of his role in the changing world of the war. Memory, desire and Self-deception are at the end when painter try to justify his contribution for nation. An artist experiences the floating territory moving from one world to another world. He has hope for best in future.

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