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**Ozu in Ishiguro: Elements of Japanese Culture in
Kazuo Ishiguro's Work**

Bakalářská práce

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1. Introduction: Kazuo Ishiguro in context of contemporary British prose

Kazuo Ishiguro is very often listed as one of the most popular fiction writers in the United Kingdom. Many of his works were nominated for very prestigious Man Booker Prize. His novel *The Remains of the Day* (1989) won the prize and with the help of this novel, Ishiguro was listed 32nd among 50 best British writers since 1945 by The Times.¹ Novels *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), *When We Were Orphans* (2000), and *Never Let Me Go* (2005) were also nominated for Man Booker Prize.

According to British Council all but one of Ishiguro's novels have been listed for major awards, including Winifred Holtby Prize for *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), and Whitbread Book of the Year Award for *An Artist of the Floating World*, which, as Ishiguro's critic Gregory Mason claims, 'confirmed his position as Britain's leading young novelist.'² Kazuo Ishiguro was also granted the Order of the British Empire for Services to Literature (1995), and Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France (1998). In March 2015, Ishiguro published highly anticipated novel after ten year break, *The Buried Giant*.

Knowing how few works Ishiguro has written the success of his books is quite spectacular. Judging by his popularity in the United Kingdom it might be assumed, that Kazuo Ishiguro belongs to the mainstream of the contemporary British prose. And yet many readers agree, that he is not a typical British writer. Seeing the name of the author the reader might not await such a British atmosphere as is portrayed in *The Remains of the Day*, and yet his style is very often described as carrying the signs and elements of Japanese culture. As Mason claims, "the author evinces an extraordinary control of voice, an uncannily Japanese quality emanating from his perfectly pitched English prose."³

Some of his works take place in Japan, however Ishiguro stated, that his memories of Japan are fictional.⁴ He describes himself as neither Japanese nor British writer, but simply an international one. He usually denies any influence his

¹ The Times, "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945," <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/books/article2452094.ece>.

² Gregory Mason and Kazuo Ishiguro, "An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro," *Contemporary Literature* 30, no. 3 (1989): 334.

³ Mason, 336.

⁴ Brian W. Shaffer and Cynthia F. Wong, *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro* (Oxford: University of Mississippi Press, 2008), 4.

Japanese origins could have on him, however he very often lists Japanese film director, Yasujirō Ozu, as his influence. Being asked what aspect of Japanese culture influenced him, Ishiguro replied, “I’m probably more influenced by Japanese movies. I see a lot of Japanese films.”⁵ Gregory Mason claims, that “[Ishiguro] has put his Japanese sources to work at the service of his craft as a Western writer to create a distinctively personal style of unusual resonance and subtlety.”⁶

In my thesis I would like to compare Yasujirō Ozu and Kazuo Ishiguro, particularly I will focus on the element of *mono no aware*⁷, which I assume to be a prominent joining element of the works of both artists, since it is the essence of Ozu’s films which Ishiguro incorporated into his style. I will analyse Ishiguro’s books and specify which elements he has taken from Ozu’s filmography, and verify my argument, that Ishiguro did not gain his Japanese literary style from his origins but from art.

⁵ Gregory Mason and Kazuo Ishiguro, “An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro,” *Contemporary Literature* 30, no. 3 (1989): 336.

⁶ Gregory Mason, “Inspiring Images: The Influence of Japanese Cinema on the Writings of Kazuo Ishiguro,” *East-West Film Journal* 3, no. 2 (1989): 51.

⁷ (Italics mine), all Japanese words and terms will be written in italics

2. *Mono no aware*, film style of Yasujirō Ozu and his influence on Kazuo Ishiguro

2.1 *Mono no aware*

Boyé De Mente in his *Elements of Japanese Design* argues, that one of the most important aspects of early Japanese art was an “appreciation for the ephemeral nature of human existence.” He lists *mono no aware* as the example of such feeling in art, further defining the feeling: “it means giving oneself up to tender, sorrowful contemplation of a thing or scene that is the opposite to sunny, happy, and bright.”⁸

Mono no aware as such was for the first time used (in literature) by Japanese Shinto religion scholar, Norinaga Motoori, in Edo period dating from 1603 to 1868. Motoori coined the term in his criticism of *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*), a classic Japanese work and the first world’s novel, written in 11th century.⁹ Motoori described the work as *mono no aware*, a term which corresponds to phrases like “sensitiveness to things”¹⁰ or “a capacity to be moved deeply by things”¹¹. Motoori was the first one to name the feeling which was, however, perceived by Japanese a long time before.

Mark Meli comments on the term in greater detail, “[t]he term *mono no aware* has been often used by both Japanese and Westerners to exemplify an important aspect of what is seen as a traditional Japanese aesthetic consciousness, or *bi-ishiki*. In the spoken language, the component ‘*aware*’ depicts sorrow or misery; ‘*mono no*’ attributes this ‘*aware*’ to the things of the world, taken either in the particular or more usually the abstract sense. This literal sorrow or misery of things is taken often to signify a sad, fleeting beauty that is conspicuous in traditional Japanese cultural expressions.”¹²

⁸ Boyé De Mente, *Elements of Japanese Design* (North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2006), 126.

⁹ “The Tale of Genji,” in Encyclopædia Britannica Online, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/581365/The-Tale-of-Genji>>.

¹⁰ “Motoori Norinaga,” in Encyclopædia Britannica Online, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/394277/Motoori-Norinaga>>.

¹¹ Haruo Shirane, *The Bridge of Dreams: A Poetics of ‘The Tale of Genji’* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 31.

¹² Mark Meli, “Motoori Norinaga’s Hermeneutic of *Mono no Aware*: The Link between Ideal and Tradition,” in *Japanese Hermeneutics*, ed. Michael F. Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002), 60.

There are many definitions concerning the aesthetical concept of *mono no aware* (literally “the pathos of things”), for example Tomiko Yoda describes the phenomenon as “a profound feeling with which one spontaneously responds to a myriad of things and occurrences in the world.”¹³ Various internet sources associate the term with beauty of life, that does not last, or beauty of things passing.

In De Mente’s book it is stated, that apart from literature, *mono no aware* is realized in many aspects of Japanese art, such as film or design. In 20th century *mono no aware* was especially associated with Japanese cinema, many Japanese directors tried to catch the feeling and project it on the screen. De Mente comments, “[t]he mono-no-aware theme is very popular in Japanese movies, too, the purpose being to evoke the greatest possible feelings of sorrow and sadness, tempered here and there by little acts of kindness.”¹⁴

2.2 *Mono no aware* in films of Yasujirō Ozu

Yasujirō Ozu (1903 – 1963) is usually listed as the representative of *shomin-geki* “a genre dealing with lower-middle-class Japanese family life.”¹⁵ As is also written in Encyclopædia Britannica, “[o]wing to the centrality of domestic relationships in his films, their detailed character portrayals, and their pictorial beauty, Ozu [is] considered the most typically Japanese of all directors [...]” Term *shomin-geki* was invented by Western film scholars and it literally translates as “common-people’s drama.”¹⁶

In his films Ozu portrays the ordinary lives of ordinary people, he focuses on mundane objects and ordinary events in our lives, and makes them look special because people overlook them most of the time. Ozu is known for being obsessed with family life, even though he never had family of his own. His critiques wrote,

¹³ Tomiko Yoda, *Gender and National Literature: Heian Texts in the Constructions of Japanese Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 113.

¹⁴ Boyé De Mente, *Elements of Japanese Design* (North Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2006), 127.

¹⁵ “Ozu Yasujirō,” in Encyclopædia Britannica Online, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/437255/Ozu-Yasujiro>>.

¹⁶ “Ozu Yasujirō,” in Encyclopædia Britannica Online, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/437255/Ozu-Yasujiro>>.

that “[i]n every Ozu film, the whole world exists in one family. The ends of the earth are no more distant than the outside of the house.”¹⁷

Ozu’s film technique is very often associated with *mono no aware*. Observing his most famous film, *Tokyo Story* (*Tōkyō Monogatari*) from 1953, it is possible to notice many implications of the concept. Wim Wenders explains, “Ozu’s stories convey a sense of *mono no aware*; this awareness relates to the pathos of life as well as its transience. [...] Ozu makes us aware of how the present is *enduring*, the changes that take place in ordinary ways, the movements of love, loss and death.”¹⁸

Concerning the matter how precisely is *mono no aware* visible to viewer’s eye, it is better to consult the works of film critiques. Allison Leonard in his essay states, that “Ozu uses many cinematic techniques, such as ellipses, “pillow shots,” and “tatami mat shots,” to create a film that not only looks like a visual poem or a still photo, but also conveys the *mono no aware* aesthetic using the surface of *mise-en-scene* to convey deeper philosophical ideals.”¹⁹ *Mise-en-scène* is generally defined as an “arrangement of everything that appears in the framing.”²⁰

Leonard names various Ozu’s techniques such as “pillow shots,” referred to as still images of mundane life. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy cites Stanley Cavell and his observation that “film returns to us and extends our first fascination with objects, with their inner and fixed lives.” “[It] applies consummately to Ozu, who often expresses feelings through presenting the faces of things rather than of actors. A vase standing in the corner of a tatami-matted room where a father and daughter are asleep; two fathers contemplating the rocks in a “dry landscape” garden, their postures echoing the shapes of the stone; a mirror reflecting the absence of the daughter who has just left home after getting married—all images that express the pathos of things as powerfully as the expression on the greatest actor’s face.”²¹

¹⁷ Joseph L. Anderson and Donald Richie, *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 359.

¹⁸ Wim Wenders and Mary Zournazi, *Inventing Peace: A Dialogue on Perception* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 83.

¹⁹ Allison Leonard, “Mono No Aware as Mise-en-Scene,” The Cine-files, <http://www.thecine-files.com/current-issue-2/articles/mono-no-aware-as-mise-en-scene>.

²⁰ Elements of Film Directing, “Mise-en-Scène,” Elements of Cinema, <http://www.elementsofcinema.com/directing/mise-en-scene.html>.

²¹ “Ozu Yasujirō: Cinematic Cuts,” in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/japanese-aesthetics>>.

Ozu very often uses scenes of laundry hanging out on veranda in public housing. The way he portrays housing details are in accordance with the idea of pathos of things (*mono no aware*), and Kazuo Ishiguro integrates these images into his novels, “[t]he 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.”²² The importance of public housing in Kazuo Ishiguro’s novels will be analysed in following chapters.

Apart from “pillow shots,” Allison Leonard also describes the technique of “tatami mat shots,” meaning that people are captured from front and from lower perspective than in western filmography. This technique shows character’s feelings through facial reactions, a typical element of Ozu’s films.

With ellipses, Ozu skips major events of the story and only makes characters talk about them. Leonard further explains, “[f]or example, in *Tokyo Story*, there is a conversation between the eldest sister, Shige, and the eldest brother, Koichi, about sending their parents to a hot spring resort in Atami for a few days. The next scene shows a beautiful pillow shot of the water, followed by the old couple sitting in a room drinking tea. The actual trip to Atami is never shown. [...] He finds beauty in the simplicity and banality of everyday tasks, because these are the “events” that constitute the bulk of human lives. Ozu captures this beauty on screen in order to caution the viewers about letting their short lives pass them by through ignoring these little moments.”²³

However might these unexpected shots be disturbing, Yasujirō Ozu’s films do not lack fluency. Previously mentioned techniques provide his films with continuity. “For each cut Ozu has arranged for at least one formal element to provide continuity (*kire-tsuzuki*) between the adjacent scenes. There are of course other directors capable of consummate cuts, but a study of Ozu's show them to constitute what may be “the kindest cut of all” in world cinema.”²⁴

The feeling of *mono no aware* is also expressed by the form of dialogue Ozu’s characters convey. Gregory Mason comments on dialogue, “[s]lipping into the isolation of old age, they are overcome with feelings of wistfulness and regret.

²² Gregory Mason and Kazuo Ishiguro, “An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro,” *Contemporary Literature* 30, no. 3 (1989): 336.

²³ Allison Leonard, “Mono No Aware as Mise-en-Scene,” *The Cine-files*, <http://www.thecine-files.com/current-issue-2/articles/mono-no-aware-as-mise-en-scene>.

²⁴ “Ozu Yasujirō: Cinematic Cuts,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/japanese-aesthetics>>.

The retired couple in *Tokyo Story* review their lives and conclude that “children don’t live up to their parents’ expectations.”²⁵ Ozu’s characters often get sad and melancholic when they realize the cruelty of time being unstoppable. These techniques complete the feeling of *mono no aware* in Yasujirō Ozu’s films.

2.3 Ozu’s influence on Kazuo Ishiguro

In his work, Gregory Mason stated, that “[i]f the style and technique of Ozu have influenced Ishiguro in many ways, it is the form that Ozu perfected, the *shomin-geki*, or domestic drama, that the Japanese cinema has had the strongest influence on him.”²⁶ Rather than describing ground-breaking events he looks at them retrospectively, and emphasizes the floating of life by relying strongly on character’s memory and recalling of the past. As Ishiguro said himself, *shomin-geki* keeps specific pace which reflects the monotony and melancholy of everyday life.²⁷ Ria Taketomi emphasizes the way Ishiguro uses the term “melancholy” to describe Ozu’s “pace,” which is expressed by images from tatami, “pillow shots,” and ellipses.

Gregory Mason argues, that especially in his later films, Ozu “worked to achieve an authentic sense of personal interaction by deflecting the impact of plot.” This style is a visual representation of *shomin-geki*, genre focused on ordinariness, elimination of dramatic devices, and lack of action. Mason says, that Ishiguro has expressed himself in the same terms, “I feel plot spoils a lot of books that are otherwise good.”²⁸

Ishiguro’s characters in melancholy realize, that their lives are passing and one day will end, the deep sadness of realization is even stronger because he does not allow the characters to show it. They accept the fact as a part of life, as well as characters of Yasujirō Ozu do, this represents the entity of *mono no aware*.

²⁵ Gregory Mason, “Inspiring Images: The Influence of Japanese Cinema on the Writings of Kazuo Ishiguro,” *East-West Film Journal* 3, no. 2 (1989): 47.

²⁶ Mason, 45.

²⁷ Ria Taketomi, “Kazuo Ishiguro and Japanese Films: Concerning the Visual and Auditory Effects and Images of Danchi,” *Comparatio* 17 (2013): 12.

²⁸ Mason, 43.

Another detail which Taketomi noticed and which reminds readers of Ozu, are names Kazuo Ishiguro used in his early novels (Noriko, Setsuko, Chishu).²⁹

Considering ellipses, Ishiguro very often skips major events by portraying details and objects which are not exactly important for the story. As Gregory Mason claims, the strange continuity is both comforting and deceptive, “[t]he objects appear almost timeless, and yet they are fraught with a transience, a mood summoned by a Japanese term, *mono no aware*.”³⁰ Mathilda Slabbert argues, that these elements appear to be everlasting but are only transient. She mentions cherry blossoms or autumn leaves as the examples, and implies, that “this sense of continuous change also affects the characters.”³¹

The reason why the influence of Japanese cinema on Ishiguro is important was stated in the essay by Mason. He argues, that even though Ishiguro lost his home, moving to different country at the age of five, with the help of film, he was able to create the accurate image of his homeland, “[t]imes change, but films continue to embody the ambience of the period in which they were made. Because of this, Ishiguro has been able, through film, to revisit the Japan of his childhood, while remaining distanced from the actual Japan today.”³²

Ria Taketomi further elaborates the idea with the way Ishiguro uses Japanese dialogue, but his readers are getting it in English. “This is obviously the same mechanism of Ishiguro who could only understand the Japanese movies by reading subtitles.”³³ Kazuo Ishiguro himself said, that his dialogues lack fluency and have certain sense of foreignness, “[i]t has to be almost like subtitles, to suggest that behind the English language there’s a foreign language going on.”³⁴

Kazuo Ishiguro said, “[i]t’s very difficult for me to distinguish how much Japanese influence I’ve actually inherited naturally, and 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

²⁹ Ria Taketomi, “Kazuo Ishiguro and Japanese Films: Concerning the Visual and Auditory Effects and Images of Danchi,” *Comparatio* 17 (2013): 15.

³⁰ Gregory Mason, “Inspiring Images: The Influence of Japanese Cinema on the Writings of Kazuo Ishiguro,” *East-West Film Journal* 3, no. 2 (1989): 47.

³¹ M. Slabbert, “Analysis of the Work of Kazuo Ishiguro, His Biculturalism and His Contribution to New Internationalism” (MA diss., Rand Afrikaans University Johannesburg, 1997), 25.

³² Mason, 40.

³³ Taketomi, 8.

³⁴ Gregory Mason and Kazuo Ishiguro, “An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro,” *Contemporary Literature* 30, no. 3 (1989): 345.

Japanese setting.”³⁵ This fact is very important concerning mainly the first two novels by the author, both being focused on Japanese people.

Ria Taketomi claims, “[t]he Japan which is expressed in Ozu films awakened Ishiguro’s frozen memories, constructed the frame work of Ishiguro’s Japan, and gave him an opportunity to advance as one of the young and energetic writers of the 21st century.”³⁶ However, the element of *mono no aware* remains also in his later novels, which are not set in Japan at all. It might be thus stated, that Ishiguro rediscovered the culture of his ancestors through cinema.

³⁵ The Guardian, “Kazuo Ishiguro’s turn to fantasy,” *Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/feb/19/kazuo-ishiguro-the-buried-giant-novel-interview>.

³⁶ Ria Taketomi, “Kazuo Ishiguro and Japanese Films: Concerning the Visual and Auditory Effects and Images of Danchi,” *Comparatio* 17 (2013): 18.

3. Analysis of Kazuo Ishiguro's work with respect to Ozu's influence and *mono no aware*

3.1 *A Pale View of Hills*

Published in 1982, *A Pale View of the Hills* is the first novel written by Kazuo Ishiguro. It records the memories of middle-aged Japanese woman, Etsuko, who moved from Japan and is currently living in England. Etsuko tells her story and also a story of her friend in Nagasaki after war. She is traumatized by suicide of her elder daughter, although the reader finds these details later in the book as the situation is not explained at the beginning. Gregory Mason describes Etsuko with following words, “[h]er enigmatic recall, tantalizing hamstrung by gaps and inconsistencies, works toward a disquieting and haunting revelation, masterfully embedded in the point of view itself.”³⁷

When comparing Ozu and Kazuo Ishiguro, the joining element, which is very often discussed, is the narrative. Ozu is very often using the technique of ellipses, he “often attends to seemingly irrelevant physical and spacial details such as passageways, hat racks, or teakettles.”³⁸ Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell in their Ozu study comment, that “space becomes a signifier to which the narrative becomes ‘parametric.’”³⁹ In *A Pale View of Hills*, Ishiguro too uses similar technique to disturb the narrative in order “to reveal subtle and surprising aspects of character.” Mason elaborates this statement by saying, “the narrative contains gaps, apparent contradictions, and later emendations. Rather than proceeding in a horizontal line, events appear to be vertically stacked.”⁴⁰

As an example Mason chose a moment from *A Pale View of Hills* when Etsuko is pregnant with her first child, Keiko, and remembers Inasa Hills in Nagasaki. “It offers her a brief escape from the dreary and deprived routine [...]. On being reminded of the outing very near the end of the novel, Etsuko explains why it was so special by saying, “Keiko was happy that day.” The disoriented reader is left to reorder the chronology of events, to [re-evaluate] the actions, and

³⁷ Gregory Mason, “Inspiring Images: The Influence of Japanese Cinema on the Writings of Kazuo Ishiguro,” *East-West Film Journal* 3, no. 2 (1989): 41.

³⁸ Mason, 44.

³⁹ Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, “Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu,” *Screen* 17, no. 2 (1976): 41-73.

⁴⁰ Mason, 44.

to reassess the very identities of the protagonists. And in the end, even though the plot has a startling development, the reader's thoughts return to the enigma of the heroine's personality."⁴¹

With respect to the element of *mono no aware* in film, Ria Taketomi explains, that Ozu often focuses on the face of a character in order to express the character's feelings through facial reactions.⁴² Taketomi stated, that "Ishiguro adopts Ozu's movie directing methods into his novel" and justifies the idea by analysing the scene from the first chapter of *A Pale View of Hills*.

"Etsuko observes Mariko skipping school, fighting with children in the neighbourhood, and getting hurt by one of them in the face. Etsuko runs to find Mariko's mother, Sachiko." Ishiguro then shows character's reaction before the dialogue begins. Etsuko is interested in Sachiko because she has moved in the area recently together with her American boyfriend. Etsuko thought, that this way she might know Sachiko better, but Sachiko has seen through her intentions and shows mixed feelings. "She was gazing at me with a slightly amused expression and something in the way she did so caused me to laugh self-consciously."

Taketomi continues, "[t]hese series of non- verbal pictorial expressions recall Ozu's directing technologies. It is natural for a protagonist to explain what he/she feels in a novel, but Ishiguro uses more of a motion picture method and lets the reader predict what the characters are thinking. Particularly, the method of showing the way Japanese read each other's facial reaction during conversation matches the method of Ozu's film making. Ishiguro sufficiently utilized Ozu's method in his novels. Ozu's visual images contributed greatly to stimulate Ishiguro's fragmental memories of the first five years of his life in Nagasaki."⁴³

One of other common features of Ishiguro and Ozu is relationship between parent and child. Ria Taketomi compares two dialogues from Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* and Ozu's *Tokyo Story*. In *Tokyo Story* children send their parents to a hot spring resort which is very noisy and unsuitable for old people. Parents decide to return back to Tokyo very next day to the great displeasure of their daughter. She says she will not provide them a place to sleep, because she has a

⁴¹ Gregory Mason, "Inspiring Images: The Influence of Japanese Cinema on the Writings of Kazuo Ishiguro," *East-West Film Journal* 3, no. 2 (1989): 44.

⁴² This technique was mentioned in chapter 2 as a "tatami mat shot"

⁴³ Ria Taketomi, "Kazuo Ishiguro and Japanese Films: Concerning the Visual and Auditory Effects and Images of Danchi," *Comparatio* 17 (2013): 13.

meeting with other beauticians in her salon, and her parents decide to go and find another place. “She makes a show of trying to stop them from leaving but doesn’t forget to mention that they are not wanted at home that night.”⁴⁴

To compare two artists, Taketomi picks a dialogue between Jiro, Etsuko’s first husband, and his father, Ogata-san, from *A Pale View of Hills*. Ogata-san decides to leave and terminate his visit. “Jiro uses the term ‘busy’ as an excuse to end conversations with his father many times. On the other hand, just like the daughter in *Tokyo Monogatari*, Jiro doesn’t forget to feel disappointment [...]” Taketomi argues that it is very typical for Japanese to say things they do not really mean in order to “save their faces” and not hurt the others, “Ishiguro captured the characteristics of Japanese conversations. It is the fruit of his efforts of studying Ozu films.”⁴⁵

As was mentioned in previous chapter, the dialogue often attributes to Ishiguro’s translation process from Japanese to English, looking almost like subtitles. Taketomi analyses protagonists’ careful and stiff speech as a result of Ishiguro learning Japanese daily customs and dialogues through films. Kazuo Ishiguro said, that, “Etsuko, in *A Pale View of Hills*, speaks in a kind of Japanese way because she’s a Japanese woman. [...] [I]t becomes clear that she’s speaking English and that it’s a second language for her. So it has to have that kind of carefulness, and, particularly when she’s reproducing Japanese dialogue in English, it has to have a certain foreignness about it.”⁴⁶

The scenes where parents and children argue are often being connected to film genre of *shomin-geki*, with which is Ozu very strongly associated, as was mentioned in previous chapters. Mason explains that these conflicts in extended family setting with comic overtones are typical for the genre. He mentions boisterous and disrespectful Mariko, who has “clear precedents in *shomin-geki* classics like Ozu’s *Good Morning*”⁴⁷ (*Ohayō*) from 1959. Mason also compares a scene from *A Pale View of Hills* where Jiro’ drunken colleagues invade his home at night to almost an identical scene from Ozu’s *Early Spring* (*Sōshun*) from 1956.

⁴⁴ Ria Taketomi, “Kazuo Ishiguro and Japanese Films: Concerning the Visual and Auditory Effects and Images of Danchi,” *Comparatio* 17 (2013): 11.

⁴⁵ Taketomi, 11.

⁴⁶ Gregory Mason and Kazuo Ishiguro, “An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro,” *Contemporary Literature* 30, no. 3 (1989): 345.

⁴⁷ Gregory Mason, “Inspiring Images: The Influence of Japanese Cinema on the Writings of Kazuo Ishiguro,” *East-West Film Journal* 3, no. 2 (1989): 45.

Shomin-geki is typical for artists who are portraying *mono no aware*, and is also one of the key elements Kazuo Ishiguro adopted from Japanese filmography. “An elegiac mood often prevails in the *shomin-geki*, and certain images recur characteristically. Passing trains conjure a sense of dislocation and longing. This exoticism is offset, in turn, by an equally powerful domestic image on the landscape.”⁴⁸ Gregory Mason further notices how laundry hanging out to dry occurs in almost every Ozu film, and compares the scene to the scene from *A Pale View of Hills*, “[b]lankets and laundry hung from many of the balconies.”

3.2 An Artist of the Floating World

An Artist of the Floating World was published in 1986 as the second novel written by Kazuo Ishiguro. The book covers very controversial theme of post-war Japan and the changes of opinions and politics in the country. The protagonist of the book is an old painter, Masuji Ono, who throughout the story recalls his experience from war. Ono, being “an artist of the floating world,” describes the crucial events of his life, for example being involved in the far-right wing propaganda during the Second World War, and being recognized as a traitor when Japan lost the war.

As he gets old Ono more and more thinks about the events from the time he was younger and fully engaged as a painter. He experiences melancholic feeling when he recalls the past on “the Bridge of Hesitation,” “one evening not so long ago, I was standing on that little wooden bridge and saw in the distance two columns of smoke rising from the rubble. [...] But the sight of those columns against the sky put me in the melancholy mood. [...] A graveyard, Mrs Kawakami says, and when one remembers all those people who once frequented the area, one cannot help seeing it that way.”⁴⁹

Gregory Mason argues, that the order of events portrayed is determined by narrator’s stream of consciousness, and as the reader tries to put events into order, the significance of temporal trajectory is challenged by the resonance of the place

⁴⁸ Gregory Mason, “Inspiring Images: The Influence of Japanese Cinema on the Writings of Kazuo Ishiguro,” *East-West Film Journal* 3, no. 2 (1989): 46.

⁴⁹ Kazuo Ishiguro, *An Artist of the Floating World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 27 – 28.

– in this case “the Bridge of Hesitation.” Similar technique is typical for Ozu, who often portrays seemingly irrelevant physical and special details. “He lingers on these spaces or objects to subvert the linear trajectory of the narrative and to challenge its dominance as an all-consuming focus of viewer interest.”⁵⁰ The power of narration makes Ishiguro as well as Ozu very emotional and immersive.

With respect to *mono no aware*, Gregory Mason stated, that what typifies many later Ozu’s films is the continual revelation, when some aspects of the character are hidden and reader is not sure whether they will be revealed. “Ono gropes toward a realization of the ironies of history in which his own erstwhile sincere convictions have enmeshed him. The gently ironic conclusion leaves Ono both humiliated and dignified, a kind of comic everyman figure, wistfully trapped within his own horizons. [...] with this novel [Ishiguro] moves toward a refinement of focus reminiscent of a filmmaker he greatly admires, the late Yasujiro Ozu.”⁵¹

Mason exemplifies the feeling of sadness and transience (*mono no aware*), by comparing two dialogues from Ozu’s *Tokyo Story* and Ishiguro’s *An Artist of the Floating World*. In *Tokyo Story*, “the newly bereaved daughter, Kyoko, complains to her sister-in-law Noriko, herself widowed from the war.” She is shocked by the fact, that her older siblings discussed the distribution of their mother’s clothes such shortly after the funeral. Noriko explains to her, that “children do drift away from their parents,” on which Kyoko comments, “[i]sn’t life disappointing.” Noriko ends the dialogue with “[y]es it is.”

As a comparison, Mason picks the dialogue between Ono and his grandson Ichiro, where Ishiguro also portrays “tact and compassion, as the older speaker seeks both to teach a gentle lesson and to protect his own and others’ feelings.’ In the dialogue young Ichiro asks his grandfather about the suicide of war propaganda composer, Naguchi, to what Ono responds, “The songs Mr. Naguchi composed had become very famous, not just in this city, but all over Japan. [...] And after the war, Mr. Naguchi thought his song had been – well – a sort of mistake. He thought of all the people who had been killed, all the little boys your age, Ichiro, who no longer had parents. [...] And he felt he should

⁵⁰ Gregory Mason, “Inspiring Images: The Influence of Japanese Cinema on the Writings of Kazuo Ishiguro,” *East-West Film Journal* 3, no. 2 (1989): 44.

⁵¹ Mason, 42.

apologize. [...] He was brave to admit the mistakes he'd made. He was very brave and honourable.”⁵²

As Ria Taketomi and Gregory Mason imply, the arguments between parent and a child are what links Kazuo Ishiguro with Yasujiro Ozu, and are one of the typical elements of *shomin-geki* genre. Taketomi compares *Tokyo Story* and *An Artist of the Floating World*, particularly the behaviour of Minoru and Ichiro.

Taketomi uses following scene from *An Artist of the Floating World* as an example. Whole family is supposed to go on a trip but it is postponed because of an emergency patient, “[t]he children become peevish and Minoru sits on his father’s desk waving his feet while nagging, “It’s not fair!” or “You liar!” The grandmother enters the room with a smile and tells him, “There’ll be another time.” But Minoru says “*Iyadai!*” (No subtitle).”⁵³

As a comparison Taketomi mentions following part from *Tokyo Story*, “I had not meant this remark to be provocative, but its effect on my grandson was startling. He rolled back into a sitting position and glared at me, shouting: “How dare you! What are you saying!” “Ichiro!” Setsuko exclaimed in dismay.”

“These family conversations between a parent and a child or grandparents and a child injected new life into Ishiguro’s memories that had been frozen since he was five years old.” The behaviour of Japanese children towards the elders might seem shocking for a western society, however, this is the way Ishiguro spent his childhood and revived it through Ozu’s films. “Many English readers might have felt somewhat awkward when reading Ichiro’s lines [...]. It seems too strong a thing for a grandson to shout to his grandfather. However, if we compare Ichiro with Minoru, it makes sense.”⁵⁴

As well as in case of Ishiguro’s first novel, Taketomi mentions the idea of dialogue making the impression of subtitles. This might be a result of Kazuo Ishiguro’s study of Japanese life through Japanese film. The author said in an interview, that, “[t]he thing about Ono in *An Artist of the Floating World* is that he’s supposed to be narrating in Japanese; it’s just the reader is getting it in English. In a way the language has to be almost like a pseudotranslation, which

⁵² Gregory Mason, “Inspiring Images: The Influence of Japanese Cinema on the Writings of Kazuo Ishiguro,” *East-West Film Journal* 3, no. 2 (1989): 43.

⁵³ Ria Taketomi explains at the end of the work, that “*Iyadai*” is very strong Japanese word for “No”

⁵⁴ Ria Taketomi, “Kazuo Ishiguro and Japanese Films: Concerning the Visual and Auditory Effects and Images of Danchi,” *Comparatio* 17 (2013): 10.

means that 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 foreign language going on."⁵⁵

Concerning *shomin-geki*, Taketomi compares the novel to Ozu's last film, *An Autumn Afternoon* (*Sanma no Aji*) released in 1962. "Ozu inserts stationary picture which symbolizes the trend of that era, such as clothes, blankets, and *futon* hanging out on veranda of *danchi*, which is public housing." The trends in public housing are also captured by Ishiguro in *An Artist of the Floating World*, "Noriko, however, seems very proud of her apartment, and is forever extolling its 'modern' qualities. It is apparently very easy to keep clean, and the ventilation most effective; in particular, the kitchens and bathrooms throughout the block are of Western design and are, so my daughter assures me, infinitely more practical than, say, the arrangements in my own house."⁵⁶

In addition, Gregory Mason also finds many similarities between the novel and Ozu's film *Early Spring*. "The novel harkens again to the same film in the noodle shop scenes, which offer the female characters a convenient occasion to confer and commiserate. Bar scenes, conversely, feature repeatedly as the locales for male characters to unburden themselves in Ozu; and Ishiguro makes equal use of this *shomin-geki* convention [...]."⁵⁷

3.3 *The Remains of the Day*

The Remains of the Day was published in 1989, and is listed as Kazuo Ishiguro's third novel. Plot focuses on memories of Stevens, a butler at Darlington Hall in the service of Lord Darlington, who became involved in controversial German Nazi ideology. Stevens remembers all conferences taking place at Darlington Hall and shift of owners of the house. He watched all the changes which affect the world around him, however, Stevens still remains being the same person, performing his duties every day, without a change, evoking the feeling of order but also loneliness. The atmosphere in the book suggest terms like,

⁵⁵ Gregory Mason and Kazuo Ishiguro, "An Interview with Kazuo Ishiguro," *Contemporary Literature* 30, no. 3 (1989): 345.

⁵⁶ Ria Taketomi, "Kazuo Ishiguro and Japanese Films: Concerning the Visual and Auditory Effects and Images of *Danchi*," *Comparatio* 17 (2013): 16.

⁵⁷ Gregory Mason, "Inspiring Images: The Influence of Japanese Cinema on the Writings of Kazuo Ishiguro," *East-West Film Journal* 3, no. 2 (1989): 46.

“sensitivity to ephemera,” or “the sadness of being human,” which are synonyms for *mono no aware*, which perfectly describes unchanging Stevens in a changing world.

As well as in Ishiguro’s first two novels, also this novel is written from first person point of view, and is very retrospective, but the setting and characters of the novel are very different. The location of the story is in very conservative and traditional British environment, and characters are typical British citizens of the 20th century.

It might seem very unlikely for *The Remains of the Day* to carry any signs of Japanese culture, especially the ones adopted from film, yet even reserved and completely dedicated butler, Stevens, has certain qualities, that are associated with Kazuo Ishiguro’s style. As Ria Taketomi stated, “*The Remains of the Day*, is completely severed from Japan and is based in England. However, many critics praised Ishiguro’s emotionally-controlled voice of the protagonist, Stevens, who is a British butler, in the same way he was praised with the Japanese characters.”

Ishiguro was informed of this association between characters from Japanese environment like Etsuko or Ono, who do not show their emotions openly, and try to save their “face.” In an interview he said, “I came to the painful conclusion that perhaps this was something to do with me.”⁵⁸ It is clear that even when trying to portray different culture, Ishiguro cannot restrain himself from his Japanese influence.

Adam Parks in his book quotes many critics and their opinions on the novel. For example he quotes Anthony Thwaite who claims, that indirectness in *The Remains of the Day* is an evidence of Japanese influence. Hermione Lee argues, that the novel is “an extraordinary act of mimicry” and “a Japanese novel in disguise,” and she highlights Ishiguro’s “un-English insistence on the link between paternal inheritance and honor.” David Gurewich explains, that the way Stevens praises beauty of the landscape without any drama or spectacle, evokes “some of the Japanese criteria for beauty.” Gurewich also highlights Stevens’ “fine Japanese sensibility.” Parks also mentions Salman Rushdie, who “wonders

⁵⁸ Ria Taketomi, “Kazuo Ishiguro and Japanese Films: Concerning the Visual and Auditory Effects and Images of Danchi,” *Comparatio* 17 (2013): 9.

in *The Observer* whether ‘England and Japan may not be so very unlike one another, beneath their rather differently inscrutable surfaces.’⁵⁹

It might be thus assumed that Ishiguro did not adopt the Japanese atmosphere from Japanese film only for the sake of his first two novels, but he also, unconsciously, used this technique in his later novels. As Pico Iyer said, “*The Remains of the Day* is a perfectly English novel that could have been written only by a Japanese.”⁶⁰

3.4 *Never Let Me Go*

Never Let Me Go was published in 2005 and after *The Unconsoled* and *When We Were Orphans*, it is the sixth novel written by Kazuo Ishiguro. It is also the second Ishiguro’s novel to be adapted to the screen, after *The Remains of the Day*.

Novel focuses on controversial topic of human cloning and the value of human life, themes, Ishiguro previously did not cover. Novel offers three protagonist, all of them clones, who consciously await being organ donors and then dying. Plot is narrated by Kathy, who becomes a “carer” and takes care of other donors, while she awaits her own time of becoming a donor. She takes care of her childhood friends, Ruth and Tommy, who become donors sooner, and watches them die. Even though *Never Let Me Go* differs significantly from previous novels by the author, it still carries many elements, which are typical for Kazuo Ishiguro.

The novel is again very slow-paced and retrospective, which is set accordingly to narration techniques Ishiguro presented in his previous novels. In an interview, the director of film adaptation said, that this novel has very typical Japanese atmosphere and evokes many Japanese aesthetic concepts which are to be explained in the following chapter. Very few sources analyse influence of Yasujirō Ozu on this novel, however it is still associated with Japanese aesthetics.

In an interview Ishiguro again cited cinema as one of the biggest influences on writing process of *Never Let Me Go*, “I’m not very aware of where my influences are. Just intrinsically, I’m influenced by cinema, because I grew up

⁵⁹ Adam Parkes, *Kazuo Ishiguro's The Remains of the Day* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 73.

⁶⁰ Pico Iyer, “Waiting Upon History,” *The Partisan Review* 58, no. 2 (1991): 586-589.

watching so many films. I didn't read much when I was young, I watched films. So my idea of storytelling comes from film storytelling, to a large extent." He also mentions Yasujirō Ozu, however, primarily as an influence on his early novels, "Ozu particularly was a huge influence on my teens and my early days of writing fiction. [...] when I saw Ozu's films, domestic dramas as opposed to Samurai films, I could see my childhood. Those were the rooms I remember from my childhood. Those family relationships were relationships I knew – the women will speak in the way that my mother spoke. So for me it was a very intense, private thing as well, and it did have a huge impact on the way I wrote my early novels."⁶¹

Ironically, there are no publications saying, that *Never Let Me Go* is tied with the concept of *mono no aware*. However, the theme and feeling emerging from the book very strongly evokes the concept, like none of Ishiguro's previous novels do. Many internet discussions are often merging *mono no aware* and the title off the novel together. Phrases like "the bittersweet realization of time passing," or "the beauty of life that does not last" are often associated with the book. Typical Ishiguro's melancholic ending of the novel without solution, bringing ending to mental anguish is again present, and is usually described as a literary reflection of *mono no aware*.

3.5 Other novels

Even though first two Kazuo Ishiguro's novels are usually cited as a primal source of the theme this thesis is focused on, the concept of *mono no aware* is present in all books Ishiguro has published. It is not easy to determine exact moments where Ishiguro creates, even unwillingly, Japanese atmosphere.

Ria Taketomi mentions Yasujirō Ozu's influence on Ishiguro's interest in Japanese public housing, which origins in genre of Ozu's films, *shomin-geki*. Taketomi mentions *The Unconsoled*, novel published in 1995 taking place in unknown central European city. Plot focuses on a famous pianist, Ryder, who arrived to the city to perform a concert. Taketomi uses following extract from the novel to show Ishiguro's interest in public housing, "[o]n our left-hand side were

⁶¹ Vicki Thurley, "Interview: Kazuo Ishiguro," The Ooh Tray, <http://www.theoohtray.com/2011/06/27/interview-kazuo-ishiguro>.

the apartments, a series of short concrete stairways linking the walkway to the main building like little bridges across a moat.” Taketomi further implies, “[t]he room of the apartment in *The Unconsoled* plays an important key role to imply Ryder’s childhood.”⁶²

The influence of *shomin-geki* on importance of housing in novels of Kazuo Ishiguro is also notable in other novels. The same analysis was provided by Ria Taketomi regarding *The Unconsoled*, could be provided with *When We Were Orphans*. While they live together in Shanghai, housing is very important for the childhood of both, the protagonist Christopher Banks and his Japanese friend Akira. When Banks’ returns to Shanghai after many years, in order to reveal the mysterious disappearance of his parents, he experiences strong emotions linked with recall of the places he used to know as a child.

In her work, Mathilda Slabbert analyses influence of Ozu’s genre, *shomin-geki*, on Ishiguro’s novel *The Unconsoled*. She mentions conflicts between parent and child, which are also present in this novel, “[a]s is often the case with the *shomin-geki*, Ishiguro deals with the conflict between parent and child. This is evident in the first two novels and also *The Unconsoled*. The children are raucous, often disorderly and even disrespectful – examples of this include [...] Boris in *The Unconsoled*.”⁶³

Slabbert, however, is more critical about the importance of family in Kazuo Ishiguro’s novels. She claims, “[h]owever, whereas Ozu sees the family set-up as most important in his films, Ishiguro takes a more critical stance.” Ishiguro has been often criticized for not being very fluent when portraying the relationship between man and woman (it was criticized by Ria Taketomi), however, this discrepancy might be the result of attempting *mono no aware*, not getting too emotional rather melancholic.

Later in her work Slabbert implies and justifies the feeling of *mono no aware* in *The Unconsoled*. She describes the protagonist, Ryder, and his melancholic and disillusioned aging. She claims, that Ryder “is repeatedly confronted with memories of the past which prompt regret and anxiety.” She ends

⁶² Ria Taketomi, “Kazuo Ishiguro and Japanese Films: Concerning the Visual and Auditory Effects and Images of Danchi,” *Comparatio* 17 (2013): 16.

⁶³ M. Slabbert, “Analysis of the Work of Kazuo Ishiguro, His Biculturalism and His Contribution to New Internationalism” (MA diss., Rand Afrikaans University Johannesburg, 1997), 24.

the speculation with, “[t]he characters in Ozu films experience [...] this disillusionment.”⁶⁴

⁶⁴ M. Slabbert, “Analysis of the Work of Kazuo Ishiguro, His Biculturalism and His Contribution to New Internationalism” (MA diss., Rand Afrikaans University Johannesburg, 1997), 25.

4. Influence on film adaptations

The presence of Japanese cultural concept of *mono no aware* in Kazuo Ishiguro's works, is also noticed by film directors. As a Man Booker Prize winner, Ishiguro is very often adapted to the screen. His novel *Remains of the Day* was filmed in 1993 by James Ivory starring Antony Hopkins and Emma Thompson. The success of the film is well proved by great reception of film critics as well as eight nominations for The Oscars (although the film won none). The second film based on Ishiguro's novel, *Never Let Me Go*, was filmed in 2010 by Mark Romanek, and it stars Keira Knightley and Carey Mulligan. The film was also very well received earning many film festival awards.

The influence of *mono no aware* is very much apparent namely in the second film, *Never Let Me Go*. Even though the influence of another film director, Yasujiro Ozu, was never admitted, the director, Mark Romanek, openly stated, that he strived to evoke the feeling of *mono no aware*. In the interview with *Vanity Fair*, Romanek admitted that he watched many films by Mikio Naruse, another of Ishiguro's influences, who also operates with the idea of *mono no aware*. Romanek verifies visually immersive feeling of his film by saying "I did some research into Japanese art and aesthetics and poetry and tried to have all that infuse the film, concepts of [*wabi-sabi*], [*mono no aware*], and [*yūgen*]."65

Many Japanese aesthetical concepts were drawn by Noh playwright Motokio Zeami who argues, that the value of art is found in *yūgen*, meaning "mystery and depth." Japanese classical scholars emphasize also concept of *wabi-sabi*, which refers to having "the beauty of old, faded, worn, or lovely things."66

The interviewer also notices the very Japanese atmosphere during the final shot, showing the plastic fluttering on the barbed wire fence. To that Romanek answers, "[i]t's somehow Japanese, it's hard to pinpoint what it is about it, but it has a kind of quality about a visual haiku. It's just little hints of what felt to me like Japanese poetry, and imagery. The idea of [*wabi-sabi*] is this notion that things that are broken and worn and frayed and crusted and cracked are more beautiful than things that are new and perfect. Because the film and the book is

65 Vanity Fair Hollywood, "Mark Romanek Talks About Adapting Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* for the Big Screen," <http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2010/09/mark-romanek>.

66 "Aesthetics", in Encyclopædia Britannica Online, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/7484/aesthetics/11693/China>>.

about the preciousness of our time here, that this idea of making a science fiction film, even though it isn't a science fiction film, where everything is old, everything shows the effect of time, it felt kind of right."

In another interview, Romanek again mentions his intention to express *mono no aware*, "[i]t's a very original body of work he's written, and it wants to be that, I think. I did some research on Japanese art and aesthetics and stuff for the film, and one of the concepts I thought was really germane to the film was this idea of "mono no aware," which is sort of what you're saying. It's another way of saying a perpetual sigh, this quality of indefinable eternity that you can find in the most mundane things, and the sense of the transience and the impermanence of things. I think that's a lot of what the book is about in some ways, and I tried to make a cinematic equivalent of [*mono no aware*] in this English world, which is a strange hybrid."⁶⁷

⁶⁷ The A.V. Club Film, "Mark Romanek," <http://www.avclub.com/article/mark-romanek-45803>.

5. Conclusion

Kazuo Ishiguro belongs to the mainstream of fiction in the United Kingdom and there is significant attention given to anything he publishes. Many critics and readers noted, that Ishiguro's novels are very original and different from typical British fiction. According to many sources his novels carry elements of Japanese culture, which is not surprising considering his origin. However, some argue, that Ishiguro re-discovered his culture through Japanese film.

Literary analytics who are also knowledgeable of Japanese culture were able to find parallels between Ishiguro's novels and some elements of Japanese culture. The most discussed element is the element of *mono no aware*, the element which creates melancholic atmosphere and portrays the beauty of life due to its short duration. *Mono no aware* is associated with Japanese everyday life and art. For example *hanami* festival, where Japanese observe falling Sakura leaves and enjoy their time together outside. The beauty of dying Sakura leaf is typical *mono no aware* demonstration. *Mono no aware* is present in every aspect of Japanese art, mainly in Japanese films from 1950s.

The most discussed representative of the film movement is Yasujirō Ozu, the man who distanced himself from the influence of American filmography and was not afraid to create his own Japanese film technique, so different from everything we know from western films. He did not adopt 180° rule, where only 180° of space is captured on the camera, he also captured every character in dialogue separately, making the illusion of character talking to the audience instead of other characters. Ozu furthermore uses pillow shots, for example he shows tea cup with rising steam and viewer only hears a dialogue in the background. He also uses ellipses and skips major and disturbing events in the story. All of these techniques were analysed in previous chapters and create the sensation of absence of the plot and specific pace which Kazuo Ishiguro noticed and was fascinated by. Films of Yasujirō Ozu evoke the feeling of *mono no aware* and earned him the title of 'the most Japanese of all directors.'

As was mentioned in every part of this thesis, Kazuo Ishiguro in his early age was fascinated by film and admired Yasujirō Ozu. He openly stated that the director evoked in him the memories of his early life in Japan, thus when writing his first novels, being focused on Japanese characters, he used many of Ozu's

films as a source. However, many critics discuss, that Ishiguro adopted typical atmosphere of films of Ozu and projected them also into his later novels, which are not being focused on Japan. Ishiguro's dialogue, sense of melancholy and family relations are the demonstration of Ozu influence but they are not identical. Critics often state, that thanks to Ishiguro's fascination with Japanese film, he was able to create his own specific style, which highly evokes *mono no aware* but is original, not copying the original Japanese idea.

The validity to my arguments was also proved by *Never Let Me Go* film adaptation director, who respected Ishiguro's influences and style, and studied Japanese aesthetics and film. The adaptation carries many specific signs in accordance to Japanese elements including *mono no aware*. The director admitted his wish to create Japanese film instead of a typical British one.

In this thesis I collected as many sources as possible which point to the fact, that Kazuo Ishiguro, although a British mainstream novelist, was influenced by Japanese director Yasujirō Ozu and his novels carry signs of Japanese aesthetic concept of *mono no aware*. Even though Kazuo Ishiguro is in no way a Japanese author, his works are not British either. It can be openly stated, that Kazuo Ishiguro has his own original style significantly differing from British contemporary literature and, that he is a respectful novelist worth of analysing and discussing. The most interesting insight I gained from working on my thesis was the fact, that human might abandon one's culture and find it again through art, in case of Kazuo Ishiguro, through film.

6. Resumé

Kazuo Ishiguro bývá často zařazován do hlavního proudu současné britské literatury, zároveň bývá také označován, jako spisovatel který mezi svými současníky vyniká. Vzhledem k japonskému jménu autora, čtenáři často přisuzují jeho odlišný styl, který neklade důraz na dynamiku a akci, jeho japonskému původu. Ačkoliv Ishiguro skutečně pochází z Japonska, prvky japonské kultury, které se zrcadlí v jeho románech, mají zcela jiný původ, což je hlavním tématem této práce.

První dva romány Kazua Ishigura, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982) a *Malíř pomíjivého světa* (*An Artist of the Floating World*, 1986), se věnují japonským postavám, a v případě druhého románu samotnému Japonsku a jeho choulostivé historii po druhé světové válce. Mnoho zahraničních literárních kritiků a spisovatelů se shoduje, že Ishiguro vykreslil japonské prostředí brilantně, což nebylo překvapivé vzhledem k původu autora. Teprve však po vydání dalšího románu, *Soumrak dne* (*The Remains of the Day*, 1989) si čtenáři začali všimát ojedinělé atmosféry a stylu, který Ishiguro vytváří. Ačkoliv se děj románu odehrává v konzervativním anglickém prostředí, očima komorníka, Stevense, vnímáme svět, ve kterém se příběh odehrává se zcela jinými pocity, které nemálo připomínají filmy jednoho z nejslavnějších japonských režisérů, Yasujira Ozua.

Yasujirō Ozu, často označován jako „nejvíce japonský“ režisér se proslavil zejména svou tvorbou z 50. let minulého století. Jeho filmy se soustředí na japonskou zdánlivě obyčejnou rodinu a běžné události a pocity, které doprovází lidský život. Melancholická atmosféra jeho filmů, nedovolí divákovi se odpoutat od příběhu, ve kterém se paradoxně neuskuteční žádná akce. Ozu dokonale vystihuje japonské filosofické principy, které Japonci vnímají skrze veškerá odvětví umění, od literatury až po film. Jedním z nejzmiňovanějších prvků je *mono no aware*, představující melancholii pomíjivého života a tím jeho krásu. Mnoho esejí věnujících se tématu Japonska v díle Kazua Ishigura, zmiňuje jako vliv filmy Yasujira Ozua, kterého ostatně sám spisovatel uvádí jako svůj umělecký vzor.

S jeho dalšími romány se Ishiguro věnuje různorodým tématům a postavám, avšak proměnlivé prostředí a pomalé tempo nepřestává evokovat scény z „Ozuovských“ stěžejních filmů, jako *Příběh z Tokia* (*Tōkyō monogatari*, 1953)

nebo *Rané jaro (Sōshun, 1956)*. Gregory Mason zmiňuje *Příběh z Tokia*, nejslavnější Ozuův film, jakožto zdroj nejvíce podobností mezi díly obou autorů.

Ria Taketomi, ve své práci považuje vliv Ozuových filmů jakožto klíč ke znovuobjevení kultury a domova, který Ishiguro ztratil v pěti letech. Prostřednictvím filmu, který neměnně zachycuje dobu přesně takovou jaká je, byl Ishiguro schopen nejen dokonale zobrazit Japonsko, které je dominantou jeho prvních dvou knih, zároveň ale znovu objevil kulturu, ve které vyrůstal. Ačkoliv je Ishiguro proslaven spíše romány *Soumrak dne a Neopouštěj mě (Never Let Me Go, 2005)*, které byly také velmi úspěšně zfilmovány, i tyto díla nesou nesmazatelné charakteristické rysy filmů Ozua, což otevřeně uvádí i režisér adaptace *Neopouštěj mě (Never Let Me Go, 2010)*.

Mizanscéna, která odklání průběh příběhu k detailům a záběrům, které zdánlivě s příběhem nesouvisí, je jedním z prvků, které Ishiguro adaptoval do svých knih. Jak Ishiguro, tak Ozu mají v oblibě zobrazovat detaily bydlení, krajiny či dalších předmětů denní potřeby. Dalšími „Ozuovskými“ prvky, které Ishiguro využívá, jsou například konverzace mezi členy rodiny, které neodhalují pocity postav a vytvářejí prostor pro představivost. Tyto typicky japonské prvky vyplouvají napovrch, i v případech, kdy se Ishiguro snaží vyvolat atmosféru tradičního anglického panství. Ishiguro, třebaže nevědomky, dokonale zobrazuje prvek *mono no aware*, který v něm zanechaly filmy jeho oblíbeného režiséra.

Mnoho textů, které jsou uvedené v této práci, uvádí, že prvky japonské kultury, jako je *mono no aware*, jsou skutečně přítomny v románech Kazua Ishigura. Ačkoliv autor žije většinu svého života ve Spojeném království a píše výhradně v anglickém jazyce, stopa japonského umění je viditelná ve všech jeho románech. Tuto stopu zanechala mezi jinými vášeň autora pro japonský film, konkrétně pro filmy Yasujira Ozua.

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Název práce: „Ozu a Ishiguro: Prvky japonské kultury v díle Kazua Ishigura“

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Pavlína Flajšarová, Ph.D.

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Anotace: Bakalářská práce se zabývá vlivem japonského režiséra Yasujira Ozua na britského spisovatele Kazua Ishiguro. Práce analyzuje vliv japonského filmu na vytvoření specifické atmosféry v románech spisovatele, která není spojena s jeho původem nýbrž s uměním, kterým se inspiroval.

Klíčová slova: Kazuo Ishiguro, Yasujirō Ozu, britská literatura, japonský film, *mono no aware*

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Abstract: This thesis analyses influence of Japanese director Yasujirō Ozu on British writer Kazuo Ishiguro. The work concerns specific atmosphere of author’s books, which is connected with art he was inspired by, rather than his Japanese origin.

Key words: Kazuo Ishiguro, Yasujirō Ozu, British literature, Japanese film, *mono no aware*