

An Analysis of Come Rain or Come Shine from the Perspective of Spatial Criticism

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Abstract: *Come Rain or Come Shine* is the second story in a collection of short stories *Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall* written by British-Japanese author Kazuo Ishiguro. This novel tells the story of Raymond staging a farce in the home of his old friends Charlie and Emily. Based on the theory of Spatial Criticism, this paper explores the artistic expression and ideological connotation of the concept of space in *Come Rain or Come Shine* from the three aspects: the confusion in physical space, the struggle in social space and the loss in psychological space, and reveals the tragic core of this farce, and finds that "space" and sense of distance presented by the author Kazuo Ishiguro in his works are related to his own identity as an immigrant writer and his early life experiences and ideas. Encouraging everyone to find their own space is the main idea that Kazuo Ishiguro is trying to convey in *Come Rain or Come Shine*.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Previous Study of Kazuo Ishiguro and *Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall*

Kazuo Ishiguro is a Japanese-British writer who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017. *Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall* is Kazuo Ishiguro's first collection of short stories to date, published in 2009. And *Come Rain or Come Shine* is the second story in this short story collection.

There is not much research on this collection of short stories at home, and the main research direction focuses on analyzing the thoughts and writing purposes of the author Kazuo Ishiguro through the analysis of narration, image and themes in the text and the main research perspectives focus on these two: one is the analysis of the musical narration in the novel. For example, Chang Ru tries to reflect the artistic imprint and spiritual resonance of words and music in Ishiguro's creation in many aspects through the study of the musical features of the narrative voice, characters, scenes, language rhythm in this short story collection.[1] And Chang found that for Kazuo Ishiguro, music is not just a sensory experience, a simulation of techniques, or a decoration of texts, but comes from the writer's deep expressive resonance of the human spiritual anxiety contained in music, and from the aesthetic experience of musical spiritual connection.

And another research perspective is mainly focused on the images in the story. For instance,

Zhang Lei and Li Dian analyze the musical instruments, musicians, and specific pieces of music in each of the five stories and explores modern "strangers"'s inventive way of pursuing their selves in their vagrant life.[2] And Zhang concludes that the writer Kazuo Ishiguro, seeks to achieve the unity of mind or the unity of experience, which can be shattered everywhere by historical and current circumstances. Whether as a vehicle for pleasure in suffering or as a means of self-salvation, music not only highlights the writer's efforts to balance reality and imagination, but also conveys the desire of modern "foreigners" to escape from wandering and place their own sustenance.

Although the representative and metaphorical imagery that appears in the *Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall* and the interpretation of the ideological connotation of the novel are worth pondering, most of the domestic research is based on textual analysis, and the research on the origin and influence of Kazuo Ishiguro's creation is still relatively weak. The style and thoughts of writers are closely related to their growth environment, life experience, etc. Kazuo Ishiguro's marginal status as an immigrant writer allows him to be acutely aware of the social oppression presented by geography and borders and the unequal power relations in everyday practice and discourse.

How to establish a connection between Kazuo Ishiguro's ideological source and the ideological core of novel creation on the basis of textual analysis still needs to be explored by scholars.

1.2. The Significance of the Study of *Come Rain or Come Shine*

Come Rain or Come Shine tells the story of a farce: Raymond is a language teacher who, when he was young, befriended Emily because of his love of jazz. Emily and Charlie got married, and the three of them have been in touch ever since. Compared to Charlie, Raymond looks down and failed. One day, Charlie asks Raymond to stay in their home to help Charlie save his and Emily's precarious marriage. The way to help is that Charlie uses Raymond's failure to set off his own success, so that Emily has less complaints about him. Raymond peeked at Emily's purple notebook, and in order to cover up his behavior, Raymond acted as a dog and tore apart the notebook and made a mess of Charlie's apartment.

In *Come Rain or Come Shine*, Kazuo Ishiguro's description of the architectural entity in which the protagonist lives presents a contrast: one is a luxurious and high-end apartment, the other is a messy "dog kennel"; Through a specific change in one certain image, Kazuo Ishiguro also presents the social status of the protagonist metaphorically; In showing the psychological changes of specific characters, he also paints a "spatial map" of the protagonist's self-perception. All these physical, social or psychological contrasts and descriptions present in a specific "space", which allow reader to have a glimpse of the strangeness and aesthetics of Kazuo Ishiguro's work. "Space" has a profound ideological connotation in the narrative of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel, which points to an abstract spatial map, which not only contains many objectively existing social phenomena, such as the contest of Anglo-American culture, colonialism, social constraints and cloning of men and women, but also contains subjective human complex factors. "Space" can be an important entry to the study of Kazuo Ishiguro's work, which is closely related to his special position in society as an immigrant writer and his psycho-spatial cognition in dealing with social relations.

And this paper will start from the text of *Come Rain or Come Shine*, analyze the physical, social and psychological space in the text, interpret the ideological connotation that the author wants to express in the novel, and find the connection between the ideological connotation of the novel and the author Kazuo Ishiguro through the analysis of the main theme of the novel.

2. Spatial Criticism and Literature Criticism

Before the 20th century, the word "space", as a mathematical concept, had a strict geometric

meaning. In ancient Greece, space was regarded as an objective existence, which needs initiative perception. Plato also expressed space is the mysterious replacement of presence and absence. Aristotle believes that space is the sum of positions been occupied. Space has always existed as a static, fixed, and non-dialectical container in a state of being dominated and covered. [3] It was regarded as a regional consciousness that perceive people's existence and activities, or the way things exist and move. The emphasis on space tends to put things in a certain spatial field, focusing on its presence, composition and simultaneity. Although social space has no clear and systematic theoretical exposition before 1970s, there was no lack of insightful discussion fragments. In a sense, scholars' discussion of social space has laid the groundwork for the "spatial turn" of contemporary western theory. Even if there are different understanding of space in traditional philosophy, they all emphasize the internal homogeneity of space, so the cognition of space tends to be simple, abstract and empty.

After the 1970s, however, with the promote of colonization, commercialization, urbanization and globalization, the traditional philosophy of binary opposition was questioned and challenged by deconstructionism. The dualistic historical determinism of time and existence has been challenged unprecedentedly, and space has become a key word to describe and explore social and cultural forms. With the publication of Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, the contemporary Western academic circles ushered in a "spatial turn", which has greatly challenged and subverted the traditional thinking mode and became one of the most important events in academia. Space is the necessary condition and component in people's daily life and production activities. Space is a mode of production, both a product and a producer of social production. Space itself is formed in various human behaviors and social production processes, but it in turn affects and changes people's behavior in society. On the basis of human practice, space has realized the unity of materiality, sociality and historicity, and has become a multiple dialectical space of materiality, spirituality and sociality.

The first systematic theoretical work on social space was *The Production of Space* published in French by Marxist Henri Lefebvre in 1974. Henri Lefebvre was an epoch-making French sociologist who truly embeds spatial elements in social research. Since 1960, he has continuously written space in his main works. After 1968, Lefebvre began to incorporate spatial issues into all his works. He believes that the space in human society is no longer a kind of natural space. Although natural space is still the source of social process and will not disappear completely, it is social space that dominates human life, which is the product of society like money, goods and capital. Space is fundamentally produced by human behaviors, so every society produces its own space, which in turn implies the accommodation and concealment of social relations. Any space produced by society is dialectically combined by what he calls "space practice", "space reproduction" and "reproduction space", which are connected with the specific cognitive modes of "perception", "conception" and "reality" respectively.

Lefebvre divides the structure of space into three levels: spatial practice, representations of space and representational space.[3] Spatial practice is the process of material form that produces social space. As a material form of social space, the manufacturing process is not only an intermediary of human activities, behaviors and experiences, but also a result. It is connected with daily life, such as urban roads, networks, workplaces, private life and entertainment.

Representations of space is a kind of conceptualized space, linked to relations of production. It controls, translates and interprets the means of spatial practice, and then controls the production of space knowledge. Lefebvre believes that representations of space is the dominant space in any society, the power of epistemology, and the warehouse of intellectual power.[4]The social elite regards it as "real space", and makes it become the planning, design and architecture of the city, so as to maintain their political domination. The "spatial practice" of the lower class has been brutally

changed by the "representations of space", which is planned by those upper class who support urban space planning and transformation. This is a serious spatial control and exploitation of the poor by the capitalist production relations in modern society and urbanization era.

Representational space is a fiction of spirit. It contains a complex symbol system, so as to provide some imagination with brand-new meaning or possibility for spatial practice, such as codes, symbols, Utopian plans, imaginary landscapes, and even symbolic spaces, special architectural backgrounds, paintings, museums, etc. The three dimensional dialectics of space are inseparable and coexist at the same time, which are correspond to physical space, social space, and spiritual space respectively.

In addition, Lefebvre pointed out that it is necessary to reveal the theoretical unity of three fields that were usually considered to be separated from each other—material field, spiritual field and social field. He believes that the spiritual, physical and social dimensions of space should not be separated from each other, and we should establish a three-dimensional thinking mode. Therefore, the theory of ternary space has been formed, which integrates material space, spiritual space and social space.

Before the early 20th century, there was a tendency to attach importance to the time dimension and neglect the space dimension in literary criticism under the strong discourse of historicism. Historical factors such as narrative time, plot structure, story logic and character development, narrative cause and effect were repeatedly mentioned and explained in literary theory and literary criticism, while space became a performance stage for the development of characters and stories. With the acceleration of urbanization, urban daily life, urban spatial experience, urban landscape and a series of urban issues have entered the field of literary and artistic creation and research, and the spatial thinking of literature has thus been elevated to an eye-catching position. The process of urbanization promotes the contemporary space problems increasingly complex and changeable. The traditional historical time narration is not only difficult to explain the complexity and variability of contemporary space production, but also obscures the vision of space reflection. Space is never empty, and it always contains some meaning. In terms of writing content, various spaces in the novel have been infiltrated with important connotations such as geographical landscape, power will and ideology. Its notable feature is that the social and cultural attributes of space are increasingly valued, the theories and methods of space research have become more and more mature, and the theory of Spatial Criticism has also emerged, which provides a new critical path and interpretation platform for literary research. Besides, as for narrative methods, space has become an important means to explain the theme and promote the narrative process. Space has become a tool and mode of thinking to control and interpret social phenomena. The interpretation of the space gives the novel a brand-new perspective, and the profound significance in various space cannot be underestimated, which is worth further exploration. Therefore, it is of great theoretical significance to construct a spatial thinking mode of literary theory for understanding contemporary spatial problems. The space in literary works not only exists in the physical space, but also exists in the interpersonal communication space, social space, psychological space and other fictional world of the novel. It gradually transforms into the representation of time and history and give expression to the living experience of the characters. The focus on space has gradually entered the literary research, such as the perspective of post-colonialism and feminism. It also calls for a more inclusive attitude and multi-dimensional vision to interpret the literary space.

Therefore, to interpret the spatial connotation of a literary work, one should highlight the symbols, forms, signs and images that constitute the space. In literature, especially fictions, space is regarded as a metaphor with multiple historical, political, cultural and social attributes. Social relationship intervenes in the form and molds of space and social relationship in reverse. Articles in space is appended with images.

3. The Analysis of "Space" in *Come Rain or Come Shine*

3.1. The Confusion in Physical Space: Order and Mess

Physical space refers to static physical space, including geographical landscapes with natural attributes and architectural entities with humanities. The novel, as a literary form, is inherently geographic. The world depicted in the novel is composed of orientation, place, scene boundaries and perspectives. The characters are in a variety of places and spaces, as are the narrators and readers. The "geographic" mentioned here are the physical space in the novel, that is, the actual material background in which the protagonist lives. As the basis for the development of texts, physical space is the geographical representation of social power institutions and the external display of the emotional world of characters.

Come Rain or Come Shine presents two different forms of architectural entities: one is an orderly and bustling high-end apartment, and the other is a messy and ridiculous house. These two very different physical spaces are actually the same place, and the contradictions and contrasts of this physical space reflect the fate of the novel's characters and contain rich metaphorical meanings.

The orderly and luxurious apartment is not only the residence of Charlie and Emily, but also one kind of social status symbol of Charlie's "success". Every time Raymond came to their house, he would be impressed by the ingenious design and luxury of the furniture. "One time it was some gleaming electronic gadget standing in the corner; another time the whole place had been redecorated. In any case, almost as a point of principle, the room would be prepared for me the way a posh hotel would go about things: towels laid out, a bedside tin of biscuits, a selection of CDs on the dressing table". While compared with Charlie's "success" and wealth, Raymond seemed negligible and out of place in this apartment. But such a high-end apartment still seems insignificant and "no one cares" when compared with the endless streets and bustling cities. In fact, Charlie and Emily are nobody but the people who are trying to survive in such a materialistic society engulfed by capital and desire.

The climax of the whole text, that is, the farce of Raymond playing the dog, takes place in this orderly and bustling high-end apartment. In order to cover himself peeking and tearing Emily's purple notebook, at Charlie's instigation, Raymond made a mess of the apartment to pretend that it was the dog that messed up the flat. "I began by putting the standard lamp down on its side. I was careful not to bump anything with it, and I removed the shade first, putting it back on at a cocked angle only once the whole thing was arranged on the floor. Then I took down a vase from a bookshelf and laid it down on the rug, spreading around it the dried grasses that had been inside. Next I selected a good spot near the coffee table to 'knock over' the wastepaper basket." [5] This farce lifts the mask of this apartment just like Charlie had said "But that apartment's full of junk. Just like our marriage right now. Full of tired junk." Inside the seemingly orderly and bustling house, there is actually a messy and ridiculous core. The order and calm of all this is actually the fragile and sensitive life state that Charlie and Emily painstakingly managed.

As an intrinsic force of narrative, physical space expands and deepens the breadth and depth of the novel's tragic themes, and it also has the strong effect on the shaping the image of the characters. What's more, the action and inescapable fate of the character are destined in the physical space. Kazuo Ishiguro exposes the decaying social life under the bustling city through the contrast of physical space. The novel is cloaked in a farcical shell, but it actually lies at the heart of the tragedy. Raymond had no money, no social status, no place to live, and he was undoubtedly a failure. But Charlie and Emily, the successful people in the eyes of others, are also tragic. They live together, but their hearts are separated from each other. They live in luxurious houses, but they cannot hide the decaying interiors that are constantly collapsing.

3.2. The Struggle in Social Space: The Decay of Dream

Henri Lefebvre pointed out in *The Production of Space*: "Space is full of social relations....Space is not only supported by social relations, but also produced and produced by social relations." Social space is the space of social relations of the protagonist in the novel, that is, the identity and social status of the protagonist.

Raymond's social space refers to his identity and social status. In *Come Rain or Come Shine*, his social space can be judged from the evaluation and attitude of his friends Charlie and Emily towards him and the image of the "CD" in the novel. Charlie and Emily's assessment of Raymond is negative in most of the times. When Charlie need Raymond to do him a favor, he said Raymond "is a promising, potential and talented man" and Raymond is Charlie's best friend. And when Raymond showed a little doubt and resistance to Charlie, Raymond was called a "poor man", a home counties and a complete loser. Charlie showed his superiority and success by belittling Raymond, and took advantage of Raymond's weakness and relatively low social status to make Raymond a tool to set off himself. In fact, for Charlie, Raymond is not a "good friend" at all, but a "dog" under his own control and a ridiculous clown in the farce. And for Emily, Raymond is the "Prince of Whiners" and a loser who achieves nothing. She scolded Raymond to "find a bloody roof to keep over your head", but in fact, the roof here refers Emily's warn: she wants Raymond to find his own place in society and figure out who exactly he is.

The image of the CD appears several times in the text, and in general, these images present a metaphor for the 3 transformations of Raymond's social identity. At the beginning of the novel, the CD represents the fulfilling imagination and ideal in Raymond's heart. At the very first beginning, Raymond is a language teacher who has just stepped into society and has not yet suffered from the torture and hard hits of society. And he is ignorant of everything that happened around him. The "CDs" that appeared later became decorations in luxury apartments, which are just dispensable items. "Towels laid out, a bedside tin of biscuits, a selection of CDs on the dressing table. " [5]⁽⁷⁾ And the CD here became a hint: from his friends' perspective was nothing and in the society, he is a hopeless and useless man. The CD is a waste that could be casually placed and discarded, so is Raymond. Raymond can be an "ornament" or a spice of life when he is needed by others. He is like a CD that can be discarded or listened to, but when Raymond is not needed, he is just an "ornament". It puzzled me that Emily hadn't replaced more of her treasured vinyl collection with their CD reincarnations, but I didn't dwell on this, and wandered off into the kitchen. [5]⁽²⁸⁾ When Raymond discovers that his crush, Emily, does not put her most beloved CD in the most prominent position, he gradually realized that his illusions may be about to be shattered. "So listen, I'm going to name a few items I'd dearly love to see damaged. Are you listening, Ray? I want the following things ruined. That stupid china ox thing. It's by the CD player. That's a present from David bloody Corey after his trip to Lagos. You can smash that up for a start. In fact, I don't care what you destroy. Destroy everything! "When Raymond accepted Charlie's suggestion to "destroy everything" including CDs without any objections, Raymond's status was completely trampled by Charlie, which also implied Raymond's real situation in society at this time: he was a loser and a poor bug who could even give up his dreams and hobbies. This section must be in one column.

3.3. The Loss in Psychological Space: The Alienation of Ego

"Mental space" is a space of representation and a space in which the geographical landscape is endowed with individual characteristics. The individual psychological space in the novel refers to the spatial place with the typical characteristics of the character and its personal psychological place: "The psychological space carries the individual characteristics of typical characters' thoughts, emotions and so on, and thus becomes a representative space with distinctive character

characteristics."

Raymond is both a man and a dog in this farce, "So I got down on all fours, and lowering my head towards the same magazine, sank my teeth into the pages. The taste was perfumy, and not at all unpleasant. I opened a second fallen magazine near its centre and began to repeat the procedure. The ideal technique, I began to gather, was not unlike the one needed in those fairground games where you try to bite apples bobbing in water without using your hands. What worked best was a light, chewing motion, the jaws moving flexibly all the time: this would cause the pages to ruffle up and crease nicely. Too focused a bite, on the other hand, simply 'stapled' pages together to no great effect." [5]⁽⁶¹⁾, and it can be said that his perception of himself has split, returning to the toddler in the "mirror stage" as Lacan put forward. And the identity and wholeness of his body has not yet been confirmed, and Raymond's strange behavior is an invisible projection of alienation from ego. Emily's marriage is shaky, because many desires are shaking there fragile cornerstone—love. And only when her husband's wealth continues to increase would their marriage be more stable. So Raymond as a symbol of failure, his downfall life became a tool to strengthen the marriage of friends. When Redmond becomes a dog, he transforms into the destroyer of this vanity world, determined to cut off from his ego as a weak person, and become a person who is unwilling to submit to the false material world. Coincidentally, the dog played by Redmond in the novel is named "Hendricks", the same name as the famous guitarist Jimi Hendrix in the 60s of the 20th century, Redmond gains temporary destructive power in the music, and reveals himself. [6] But the force didn't last, and in the face of Emily, Raymond reverted to being a loser again, pretending to admit to her that he had forgotten their shared love of jazz. In the real world, he cannot be unified with his true self, and he has to distance himself from his inner world as measured by the monetary norm.

4. The Connection between Kazuo Ishiguro and *Come Rain or Come Shine*: Space and Sense of Distance

After graduating from high school, Kazuo Ishiguro traveled to Canada and the United States for a year. During his time in North America, he served as the drummer for the band Queen Mother. At the age of 19, Kazuo Ishiguro made it his dream to become a singer. From his hippie wandering experience, Kazuo Ishiguro refused absolute control at a young age and try to pursue a kind of spiritual freedom. And when he officially became a writer, Jazz can be seen in every work, and perhaps this hippie spirit has never left in Kazuo Ishiguro's blood, therefore, the wandering of the spirit makes his works appear alienated and distant from the mainstream world, or values, and also allows him to maintain a unique sobriety in the face of materialistic society.

If Kazuo Ishiguro's hippie wandering experiences in his youth reflect the writer's inner spirit of distancing himself from everything, then Kazuo Ishiguro's modern cultural mood makes the little characters in his *Come Rain or Come Shine* feel a sense of tragedy in a material society under a specific space: Raymond is a busy but numb and inactive suffering bottom figure in material society, who loses his initial expectations for his original dream under the impact of capital and gradually becomes a "walking dead". Charlie is hypocritical and selfish, he painstakingly maintains his image as a "successful person in society", and uses Raymond to make him a tool to set off his success. Charlie's success is actually superficial, and under his flashy exterior is indeed a decaying heart.

The overall cultural atmosphere of the 20th century caused some writers who paid attention to human nature itself to be more or less spiritually alienated and adrift, such as O'Connor, Redmond Carver and Alice Monroe. However, Kazuo Ishiguro's special immigration status brings to the writer the cultural inbelonging, which casts a different color on the "alienation" in his works. Kazuo Ishiguro moved to England from Japan with his parents at the age of five, where he received a

typical British education, and his parents educated him in Japanese culture, so the writer's growth was accompanied by the nourishment of dual culture. After graduating from high school, his travels in the United States and Canada exposed him to a more diverse cultural environment. In a conversation with Kenzaburo Oe in 1989, he said: "I have no clear social role because I am neither a very British nor a very Japanese Japanese. I don't have a clear role, no society or country for me to write, no one's history seems to be my history. I think this necessitates me to write in an international way." [7] Although Kazuo Ishiguro and the other two of the "Three Immigrants in the British Literary Circle", Naipaul and Rushdie, also have immigration experience, Kazuo Ishiguro does not write too much about the embarrassing and painful situations of the identity of immigrant writers in his works, but pays more attention to how the individual himself faces past pain and past self. It can be seen that Kazuo Ishiguro's creation does not only speak for a certain culture, but keeps a certain distance from various overly intimate relationships in an open and diverse way, and writes about the universal state of human existence with a clear mind. This "sense of distance" is reflected in the physical, social and psychological spaces of *Come Rain or Come Shine*.

5. Conclusions

Come Rain or Come Shine may seem like a farce, but its core is tragic. Just like Raymond said in the novel: "Like Ray Charles singing 'Come Rain or Come Shine'--where the words themselves were happy, but the interpretation was pure heartbreak." [5]⁽³⁾ The protagonist of the novel struggles to find his social status and his own "space" in the material society. However, his so-called best friend is only superficially close to him, but in fact he is only used as a tool to set off his friend's success. He gradually loses himself and becomes a dog at his "best" friend's control. The dreams he had when he was young were shattered. All of the confusion, struggle and loss takes place in the author's elaborately designed "space". The author also seems to use the mouth of the protagonist to speak his aspiration: "It's hard to know where to settle. What to settle to." [5]⁽⁷³⁾ Kazuo Ishiguro tries to find his own "space" in society with his sense of spiritual wandering as a modern and his sense of cultural belongings as an immigrant. In the modern society with highly developed material life, how ordinary people can maintain their original intention, not forget their initial ideals, and firmly be themselves in a society full of hypocrisy and desire, and how to retain their independent thinking and sober consciousness are the questions worthy of everyone's consideration.

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