

*Musicians' Enigma in Kazuo Ishiguro's Nocturnes*

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Abstract

The globe citizens in the highly competitive material world in the twenty-first century immerse themselves in an enigma, an enigma where they inevitably struggle in their career for fame and fortune as success but they insensibly alienate from their family in daily life. Kazuo Ishiguro, a newly-rising Anglo-Japanese novelist, explores musicians' enigma of how they can achieve success in the music circle in relation to how they can live a happy marriage in *Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall* (2009). The novel focuses its attention on what challenges a musician encounters in different stages of career and how he faces the music and struggles for marriage and love in different career situations, either rising or falling in the fierce business world. In this essay, I examine Ishiguro's perspectives on musicians' career, aging from old to youth together with their marital relationships, ranging from separation to reunion, through Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's lens. In my argument, Ishiguro intends to provide his readers with consciousnesses in various examples of musicians and couples in relation in the novel to arouse open-ended meanings of career and marriage in the musicians' world, which the readers comprehend by themselves through the relation of the hero and the characters in each story. He aims to further provide his readers with an insight into both issues and with motives to reexamine, revalue and rectify theirs, from the constant alienation from marriage to the close connectedness to it, leading to true happiness in life. The novel as an utterance consists of five stories, each as an utterance *per se*, embedding Ishiguro's suggestion as authorial intent, in the ongoing dialogue with other utterances in the aesthetic literary world.

Keywords: Kazuo Ishiguro, *Nocturnes*, Bakhtin, Dialogism, marriage, career

It happens. I had been struggling for my essay for months but felt like I could never achieve anything. I felt haunted and overwhelmed by the fear that the deadline approached me, one day after another, until my temper exploded to my dear family. Suddenly, I realized that I was a common victim to no victor, trapped in Kazuo Ishiguro's description as enigma for every globe citizen of all walks in the twenty-first century; fortunately, I was saved by Angus and Sharon in their OPEN-chan waffles, Gangnam Style and ballet.

Kazuo Ishiguro, a newly-rising and award-winning Anglo-Japanese novelist with his serious purpose, prefers themes on universality and people's daily life experience to over-plottiness; his novels share psychological concerns and follow Western tradition, especially English and Russian writers in the nineteenth century like Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Charlotte Brontë, and Dickens (Krider 153-54; Matthews 116, 118; Shaffer 4, 6, 8-11). He includes in *Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall* (2009) themes like fame, love, marital discord, impossibility of perfection, the inevitability of regret, the marriage of convenience, ambition, and the beauty, joy and meaning of music; he portrays acts, emotions and ideas of characters as realistic and vivid, which through repeated encounters and careful study can light up their significance, clarity and power (Robson 44; Garrett 174; Shaffer 11). In this essay, since Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin discusses Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel, I examine Ishiguro's perspectives in the novel on two main directions, the musicians' career, aging from old to youth, together with marital relationships, ranging from separation to reunion, through Bakhtin's lens. In my argument, Ishiguro, in dialogue with readers, provides many examples of musicians and couples in relation in the novel to arouse open-ended meanings of career and marriage in the musicians' world, which readers comprehend by themselves through the relation of the hero and the characters, inclusive of their psychology and emotions; and the novel as an utterance consists of five utterances, embedding Ishiguro's suggestion as authorial intent, in the ongoing dialogue with other utterances in the aesthetic literary world (Matthews 121). There are four sections in the essay: Bakhtin's Dialogism; *Nocturnes* as Musician's Career in Relation to Marital Relationships; Kazuo Ishiguro's Authorial Intent; and Conclusion.

### **I. Bakhtin's Dialogism**

Bakhtin bases his idea of self-other relationship, author-hero relationship and utterance on dialogism or Dostoevsky's polyphony, where communication, interaction and dialogue are significant for identity construction and truth generation; and the social, cultural and historical background plays important in a literary text. Bakhtin

emphasizes *transgredience*, or *extralocality*, the idea that the external elements of consciousness in its surroundings are indispensable for the making of its completion. Accordingly, this idea manifests itself clearly in Bakhtin's dialogism, where self and other stand separately in different positions simultaneously with their surplus of seeing/vision respectively to each other; where other is defined as other value, consciousness or perspective which he bears on self; where self constructs his identity through other's consciousness, and vice versa; and where the discourses of self and other penetrate each other as co-consciousness or "co-being of being" in their dialogical relation without directly finalizing or explanatory word and judgment (Todorov 94-98; Slater 3; Clark and Holquist 63-73, 77-79, 245-46; Holquist 1990: 18-22, 32-33, 35-37, 68, 164-169; Dentith 12-13, 41-44).

The dialogic self-other relationship in Bakhtin's inference can be applied to the author-hero relationship; from this dialogic relationship between author as other and hero as self, the aesthetic form is generated with moral values, where authors and characters are co-authors and are not objects but independent subjects in their interaction and contention (Dentith 5; Clark and Holquist 63, 245-46). On one side, like the hero, characters themselves carry values or perspectives and are "a *plurality of consciousnesses, with [equal weights and] equal rights and each with its own world, combined but [unmerged] in the unity of the event*"; each of them is important as a fact directed to the hero (Emerson 6-7; Todorov 103-04). On the other, the author as other, in a privileged position with creative reaction to the hero, serves as a reflector for emotional and volitional position of the hero as self, accompanies his life path, and makes him express himself in his identity construction toward the locus, where truth is generated through his perspective without making author's direct judgment but with author's rearrangement of consciousnesses as transgredient to him in the aesthetic literary discourse (Holquist and Liapunov 90; Clark and Holquist 88-89, 244-46; Todorov 100; Patterson 57-58; Bonetskaia 15; Dentith 44; Bressler 46).

Bakhtin emphasizes "nonauthoritarian," signifying that a polyphonic or dialogic novel has "no overall outlined structure or prescribed outcome, nor ... a working out of the author's worldview or understanding of truth;" and the novel is "a process that never achieves a resolution" but refuses "to unify the various points of view expressed in the various characters," which neither merge with nor subordinate to the author's but "retain an integrity and independence" (Selden 40; Dentith 44; Bressler 46). For Bakhtin, an utterance is suffused with "*dialogic overtones*" and expressive intonation, to convey the authorial intent and attitude toward other utterances in concrete reality,

and a literary work is an utterance and a rejoinder, responsive to other utterances, preceding and following in its manifestation of the specific historical situation and provides an arena where people utter their consciousnesses or values, agreeing or contending in a dialogical relation of the “complexly organized chain of other utterances” (Emerson and Holquist 67-71, 84-87, 90-93; Holquist 1990: 38, 68; Dentith 44, 46; Todorov 52-54; Morris 76-78; Holquist 1981: 279-80). An utterance, a double-voiced discourse, provides readers with unsecured position, since the becoming of dialogization cannot be secured, nor can the angle and knowledge of the utterance (Dentith 48). Accordingly, a polyphonic novel emphasizes a dialogic relationship among a plurality of consciousnesses in their truth generation, “an active creation in the consciousnesses of the author, the readers, and the characters” as equals (Bressler 46; Holquist 1981: 253). The truth in a polyphonic novel is neither single nor certain, but instead there are many truths in many characters’ articulating consciousnesses in their manifestation and performance from their perspectives, all directed to the hero as self and to one another in their dialogical influence, all of which in the reader’s watching and hearing, the reader is shaped into his value as the truth from his own perspective, comprehension and judgment (Bressler 46; Holquist 1981: 254).

## **II. *Nocturnes* as Utterance of Musicians’ Career and Marital Relationships**

Criticisms on *Nocturnes* are various but partial. Firstly, Barbara Hoffert is right not that the novel conveys scary insights into human misbehavior but that it is about the characters’ lives in music (55). Also, John Salinsky stands neutral that the “quintet” in it shares certain common themes with one another, particularly “a tangential relationship” between a musician and a woman in their encounter without her entering his life (419-20). Besides, Stefan Beck plays fair that Ishiguro “forces his creations[, characters,] to tell us more than they know about themselves,” and success “will be worse than the alternatives;” but biased that characters lack self-awareness, the theme is in variations of success and failure, or happiness and self-hatred, and “Ishiguro’s dialogue, and even his [narrators’] voices, can have an almost spookily stilted quality” (31, 32).

None abovementioned can be sufficient enough to illustrate the novel. Since an utterance, declares Bakhtin, is the manifestation of thought and deed and is sized from a single word to a literary work, I argue that *Nocturnes* is an utterance, composed of five stories, i.e. five utterances, themed on both musicians’ career and marital relationships (Emerson and Holquist 81; Clark and Holquist 64). The novel, an utterance, portrays musicians’ five different stages of career as a reversed life

direction, aging from old to youth, similar to Benjamin's reversed life in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* by Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald; they are five utterances: old age, ambition, perseverance, talent/efforts, and education, respectively and sequentially. The novel, an utterance, also conveys in itself among all the characters as consciousnesses the produced message of significant elements in marriage management: communication, reliance, tolerance, sacrifice, and responsibility.

### **“Crooner” as Utterance of Old Age and Communication**

Each story in *Nocturnes*, in my suggestion, consists of many characters, bearing their consciousnesses in the position of others, joining their dialogical relationship with self for his identity construction toward the truth generation; each is an utterance, forming a meaningful sequence with Ishiguro's authorial intent in the novel.

“Crooner” is the first utterance, a musician's old age in relation to his marital relationships lack of communication. As self, Janeck, a young café guitarist from Eastern European in Venice's Piazza San Marco on his journey to music, encounters many consciousnesses in Ishiguro's plan. He bears his nostalgia for Mother, consciousness of love and admiration, who appreciates Tony Gardner's music and always keeps his worn-out albums in the communist days (5-6; Beck 31). He meets Tony in his sixties, consciousness of fame, “some crooner from a bygone era,” who invites him to team up for a croon in a gondola to Lindy in her fifties in his attempt to divorce for a career comeback; it is a send-off “to commemorate the end of their loving marriage (a divorce of convenience),” believed beneficial to both (12, 16, Beck 31-32; Garrett 174; Seaman 9).

Then, Janeck experiences Lindy, consciousnesses of vanity, in her marriage of convenience. Lindy seems ambitious and determined to stand in spotlight to hook a rich and famous husband since youth in a restaurant in California like “her Harvard,” where she learns tricks and maneuvering from Meg the “fountain of wisdom” (20, 21). Lindy marries Dino Hartman, whom she divorces in his falling career to remarry Tony in Vegas in his rising, neither accused by Dino nor anyone (21-22). Obviously, Tony and Lindy follow marriage of convenience, the trend that marriage in the music circle is business; they get married for “the trophy the other partner represent[s],” despite true love ensued (Robson 44; Hagen 66).

It is lack of communication in marriage of convenience that leads to divorce of convenience, the turning point where Tony turns from consciousness of fame to loss and Lindy, from vanity to sacrifice. Because of business and love, they both agree on

their divorce and remarriage to others to “stay at the top of their respective career paths” before too late (Hagen 66). Namely, they expect their divorce to create another sensation, fame for Tony and vanity for Lindy in another successful career and rich marriage simply like theirs; otherwise, their career in Tony’s falling and Lindy’s fading beauty will be disadvantaged in music business.

However, I believe that Janeck disagrees on their divorce. It is pitiful that they follow the business trend and lack communication but sacrifice their true love and happy marriage for an illusional and uncertain career in music business despite Tony’s greatness in Janeck’s eyes (33). It occurs to me how many times of comebacks a life can achieve and what can be better to live in happiness at an old age. If they reach full communication in their achieved true love, they will realize the worthlessness to risk their true love and marriage for another unguaranteed career comeback in divorce. Regrettably, the couple neither seize the timely moment nor take instant action to cancel their agreed divorce after the song “One for My Baby,” but one awaits the other to change each mind, in his hesitation and her sobbing (28-29). Janeck is constructed by consciousnesses to the truth that no musician, even Tony the greatest, can always keep the highest status in the cruel real music circle throughout his life and that despite “schlemiel” in his peers’ crooked eyes, he with Mother’s love is more successful than those materially successful (Beck 32). “Crooner” is an utterance of a musician’s falling at old age combined with a produced significant element of marriage, communication. It is a tragedy that the couple’s happy marriage, without communication, end in divorce and that they jump in an endless vicious circle in career and marriage, from falling to rising and rising to falling, leading to an enigma of meaningfulness.

#### **“Come Rain or Come Shine” as Utterance of Ambition and Reliance**

“Come Rain or Come Shine” is the second utterance of ambition in career coupled with marital relationships lack of reliance by Ishiguro’s broad definition of musicians. As self, Raymond leads a happy and content life in school with his students and colleagues on his journey to happiness. He encounters Emily, consciousness of ambition, and Charlie, consciousnesses of fear in their dissonant marriage, which Charlie claims “superbly well” but counts on him, a reliable mediator to resolve, since he is “the material failure” to sustain their marriage and thus Mr. Perspective for Emily to compare which is the successful (41, 42-52; Seaman 9; Hagen 66).

Emily, consciousness of ambition, marries Charlie in university, because he, a potential success, compared with Raymond, satisfies her requirement and offers her

sense of reliance in the material life. She always expects Charlie talented enough to be a head of some worlds whereas he deems himself ordinary (50). It seeds Charlie's fear that if someday his career cannot meet her high expectation and ambition, he will lose her to those successful possible rivals in his imaginary competition, and it creates their marriage lacking mutual reliance and in long disagreement (59).

Their lack of mutual reliance contributes to their difficult communication in events like phone calls and sawing balls off, even with their mediator Raymond, and reasonably their communication cannot be easier without him. On the phone, the two gentlemen talk about different things. Raymond discusses his trouble about peeping into Emily's intimate diary and crumpling the page whereas Charlie expresses his love for Emily, no love affairs involved, and complains about his possible rivals, those with high status and achievement like David Corey, Michael Addison and Roger Van Den Berg (58-61). Subsequently, the couple interpret the sawing-balls-off event differently to Raymond. In Charlie's version, six years ago, Emily is so annoyed about his opening her diary that she threatens to saw off his balls, this anger triggering his suspicion of her love. However, in Emily's, to make him realize his self-worth, she threatens him last year in his depression and inquiry about her reaction to his committing suicide; the emphasized self-worth exposes her ambition about Charlie's career again (60, 80).

Ironically, the couple, lacking mutual reliance, turn to someone else for reliance. Charlie places reliance on a female dentist by pretending to have tooth problems in their regular appointments because he feels her drawing the real Charlie closer, being trapped inside by Emily, wondering whether he may have a different life with her in marriage (73-74). It explains why Charlie instructs Raymond to conceal the trouble by destroying their living room, the way he frequently releases his pressure as fightback against Emily and the material world where he is long confined, and the way he tricks Raymond into being humiliated before Emily. Likewise, Emily places her reliance on Raymond with love in her keepsake, "her treasured vinyl collection," because music connects them since college and bridges her true self to him, with whose musical taste, she once belittles Charlie; her act of hiding music is in fact hiding love, which Charlie senses and avoids Raymond's discussion about music with her (Garrett 174; 55, 63). However, in his visit, she recalls her old passion for him in her expression of being bothered and disturbed in the handwriting: "Buy wine for arrival of Prince of Whiners," while in fact it is her material world being unwrapped by his spiritual world, which terrifies her (56). When Raymond and Emily share music like their good old days in their dance, he feels remorse in tears and she confesses discontent with her

marriage and desires him in the manifestation of their shared music like Sarah Vaughan (84-86).

Raymond's imitation of Hendrix offers the best solution to this dissonant marriage. Under Charlie's instruction, he imitates a dog's habitual action to destroy their living room and finds himself more skilled than Charlie in merging into a dog and its destroying things (68). He sees things from the perspective of a dog in its posture with its vision, hinting a satire that the couple cannot immerse themselves into each other's spirit and vision as the way he does in a dog's (Hagen; 66; 76-77). Conversely, if the couple are in each other's shoe with mutual reliance, they will reach real communication and true happiness. Raymond is constructed by the couple's different values to the truth that career should be based on moderate ambition and marriage, on mutual reliance.

#### **“Malvern Hills” as Utterance of Perseverance and Tolerance**

“Malvern Hills,” is the third utterance of perseverance in relation to tolerance in marriage. To my disbelief, the narrator is an uncreative and selfish young singer-songwriter in his sister's inn (Hoffert 55; Seaman 9). However, I argue that the songwriter, self on his journey to success, encounters many consciousnesses in Ishiguro's organization. He encounters Malvern Hills, consciousnesses of love, belongingness, affection, nostalgia, calmness, warmth, music inspirations and imagination, in his pleasant memory with his parents and Maggie (94, 104). He meets consciousnesses of discipline and loneliness, Mrs. Hag Fraser, a twisted teacher in his teenager's years who treats him meanly and isolates him from peers (95-96).

The songwriter encounters Maggie and Geoff, consciousnesses of disapproval of his music, during his stay in their café to “write a brand-new batch of songs” to play in London in autumn (93). They hold different values toward music from his. They think of a musician as an indecent career in a practical life and expect him to work hard in their café, where he is considered lazy and loose, whereas he values the contrary. He desires to share his music with Maggie as they did in childhood and win her support and encouragement but in vain. She values family time to watch movies more than appreciates his music when he in his room endeavors to write songs, noisy to Geoff's ears. In their quarrel over whether his music composition is as decent as Geoff's café work, she favors Geoff's practical side (115-17). The songwriter, despite his family's disapproval, is perseverant in his music dream.

The songwriter encounters Tilo and Sonja, consciousnesses of encouragement, two



professional musicians from Swiss, tour-playing music across the Europe with their parents's support but at cost of their son Peter (Garrett 174; 113). Unlike the manager in the London audition, Tilo and Sonja, the songwriter's audience on the hill, enjoy his guitar performance of his composition in "a look of happy amazement, the way people gaze at a baby. ...[and] the woman was tapping her foot to [the] beat" (105). Tilo and Sonja, in their big smiles and applause, compliment him on his music and talent, echoing around the hills, as fantastic, splendid and on the radio someday (107, 114). Tilo even shares with him that their professional music career counts not on material comforts but on their music belief, which they feel content with and the same as his (108-09). Conversely, Sonja discusses about the Janus-faced music world and suggests from Tilo's ideal perspective that he should form a band in London and will succeed and from her practical perspective that life is uncertain and sometimes disappointing. She finally favors Tilo's in her reassurance that he, resembling Tilo, can realize his dream even in disappointments and difficulty (122-23).

Sonja and Tilo match each other perfectly in music and they manifest in the marriage their mutual tolerance of disagreement despite their different perspectives, Tilo, the ideal and bright versus Sonja, the practical and realistic, particularly in their different opinions on the real views in Malvern Hills. Tilo considers views wonderful beyond his imagination in Elgar's music; however, Sonja thinks of the real hills as a common park, unmatched with "majestic and mysterious" Elgar's hills, which offends Tilo to walk away from Sonja, in tears, gazing at his figure walking in the distance (121). Sonja, like Mrs. Fraser, is impetuous and critical but learns to tolerate different perspectives in viewing the world and settling disagreement; hence, not in Fraser's example, she saves her marriage. The songwriter on his journey to music is constructed by love, discipline, disapproval and encouragement toward the truth, perseverance and tolerance.

### **"Nocturne" as Utterance of Talent/Efforts, and Sacrifice**

"Nocturne" is the fourth utterance of talent/efforts in relation to sacrifice in marriage. Steven, "[a] gifted yet unheralded [jazz and] saxophone player[,] is persuaded [by his wife Helen and by his manager Bradley Stevenson] to undergo plastic surgery to enhance his visual appeal in a [business] world that values image over talent" for the improvement of his career (Seaman 9; Robson 44). Despite whim, sympathy and vanity, I believe that Steven, self on the journey to success, encounters Helen, consciousness of sacrifice (Garrett 175). Out of love, Helen divorces Steven for Chris Prendergast's sponsor to a face surgery for his music career to go right to the top with appealing image and his talent (Hoffert 55; 132). Helen is not simply consciousness

of courage and support, the same as Tilo and Sonja's to the songwriter in "Malvern Hills" but that of sacrifice as Lindy's for Tony. Meanwhile, she saves Steven's dignity by announcing that he deserves the compensation Chris makes due to their happy marriage. Helen sacrifices her love for Steven's success in the same way as Lindy does for Tony's while Steven's divorce with Helen echoes Tony's with Lindy.

Steven meets Lindy as Janus-faced consciousness of talent/efforts in a luxurious hotel in Los Angeles for their recoveries from surgeries. In their encounter, the stereotypes of talent and efforts collapse. On one hand, Lindy believes that everyone has his own position in the hierarchical society, which explains why Jake Marvell, an untalented and even a phony or bluffer in Steven's eyes, wins the statuette, Jazz Musician of the Year, and becomes popular in the music circle. She fights for those untalented or unblest musicians who pay efforts for a place in the world but being unnoticed in her example and Jake's, since they are supposed to be understood by those God-gifted and to deserve recognition, award and honor like them. In her lecture to Steven, both the talented and the diligent have a place in their career or chance to succeed (152, 164-166, 175).

On the other, Lindy appreciates talented musicians. To Lindy's surprise, Steven is as talented as her ex-husband Tony when he plays the proud version of his band's "The Nearness of You" to win her approval. In listening, Lindy sways dreamily to slow beat, stands still sometime, bends her head forward sometime, slumps into the sofa like a tense model, and stays stiff and awkward (153-54). Steven's music reminds her of Tony: She is very astonished at his personal performance and the song interpretation and her love for Tony are aroused at the moment of listening to his CD recording. To her admission, she cannot get the song out of her heart and he is a genius, blessed by God. To express her honor for him, Lindy steals a statuette at night and awards Steven Jazz Musician of the Year. Afterwards, she returns the statuette by stuffing it into a turkey, a hint of failure and an irony itself to compensate or comfort Steven despite fake statuette-awarding, which she intends to make a world of unforgettable meaning to him (Hagen 66; 157-59, 172-73).

Despite a good chance that Steven may succeed with Lindy's admiration and support, he knows that Helen is the price he pays. Lindy comforts Steven by persuading him that he will win a place in the world at the sacrifice of Helen, which reveals Lindy's values of vanity and sacrifice: Helen is great but if she does not come back to you, you should get a perspective that "life's so much bigger than just loving someone" (182). He finally agrees with her that leaving Helen for a surgery is a turning point

with a big league awaiting him (185). Steven is constructed by Helen and Lindy toward the truth that with talent and an appealing image, he is well-prepared to embrace a new career and life.

### **“Cellists” as Utterance of Education and Responsibility**

“Cellists” is the final utterance of education and responsibility in relation. Tibor, self in quest of musician’s success, encounters two different teachers, Oleg Petrovic and Eloise McCormack, consciousnesses of education, formal and informal. Tibor receives formal education from Oleg, formally-educated yet untalented in the Royal Academy of Music in London and lives under his fame and certificate. Later he meets Eloise, informally-educated yet talented, who informs him of his incorrect path but instructs him by inspiration and intuition in their sessions in Excelsior, where they appreciate music, share sense of belongingness and match their talents perfectly. Eloise disapproves of those untalented professionals like Oleg with their teaching approaches and certificates, and to Tibor’s realization, Oleg’s certificate may not carry the supposed weight as he has expected (Hoffert 55; 198-99). Too intangible as her instruction, it does show a great effect on his playing skills for further improvement and he feels being led to a brand new beautiful distant garden (201-02).

Tibor encounters Eloise, consciousness of untimely education and proper instruction. She recognizes their talents as inherent, not through instruction and practice, and their music life as diverged. She insists on protecting her talent from being ruined by untalented professionals and refuses formal education until one talented professional’s instruction, which she reminds him to do the same. However, she waits thirty years for regret and lost chance for formal education, unlike Tibor, talented and well-formally-educated, which she feels envious of and ambivalent to. She thus loses temper to him when required to demonstrate her skills in playing the cello since she cannot, but she expresses her inspiration in words. Therefore, he learns not by copying her skill demonstration but by practicing his comprehension of her verbal instruction and inspiration, which opens windows to him (195-98, 207-08, 211-14). Ironically and surprisingly, it is Eloise informally-educated who instructs Tibor well-formally-educated, and without her, he quits his passion for music but works to manage hotel business in Amsterdam (219). Tibor is constructed toward the true education that a teacher teaches not by imposing ideas on students but by inducing them and that students learns not by copying a teacher’s work but by comprehending the instruction, and toward another that the right and timely education is essential.

Eloise is consciousness of responsibility to Tibor. Surprisingly, Tibor gradually grows

love for Eloise under her instruction in their sessions and he fears that she will leave him sooner or later, which “began to haunt him, disturbing his sleep, and casting a shadow as he walked out into the square after another exhilarating session” (202-03). However, she feels sense of mission to train Tibor and correct his misleading way of playing the cello with his potential (195-97). In their sessions, Eloise also interprets love as essential in music and life. She evaluates Tibor performance of Rachmaninov in great emotion of romantic love and abandonment because he once experiences lost love, the German girl in Vienna, despite no physical intimacy (204-05). She shares with Tibor that Peter Henderson, a golfing businessman in Oregon, feels uneasy to live with her because a musician on the music path has difficulty forming a family with someone not there. In her regret for Tibor, she announces her possible marriage with Peter: “she looked at him earnestly, then looked away” (206-07, 218). Eloise finally chooses Peter her secular love in the material world, expressing her responsibility even in audience’s shrug, and in return Peter expresses his with tolerance and persistence in their disagreement, toward which Tibor is constructed (Robson 44; 218).

### **III. Kazuo Ishiguro’s Authorial Intent**

As a reader, I endeavor to probe into Ishiguro’s authorial intent and the dialogic overtone in the novel: Tony at his old age should focus not on comeback but on happy marriage with Lindy in full communication; Emily and Charlie should pay full mutual reliance in marriage with proper ambition; the songwriter in “Malvern Hills” should balance between ideal and practical in his perseverance and seek mutual tolerance with family; Steven, talented, should praise the efforts of the untalented and estimate whether his career is worth love loss; and Tibor should employ his talent and formal education independently and respect responsibility, except love. In Ishiguro’s employment of the characters transgredient to the hero toward the produced truth in each story, he intends to solve an enigma for every globe citizen of all walks in the twenty-first century who pursue fame and fortune, that every career has its rising and falling and it is impossible to always stay at the top; that to pursue a career requires both talent and efforts whereas they are likely to contribute to something as expected, or nothing; and that one may lose life to his ambition and neglect his family.

### **IV. Conclusion**

In *Nocturnes*, Ishiguro’s utterance, he employs the examples of musicians’ career in the reversed life direction intertwined with marriage to create a zoom-in-and-zoom-out effect—zooming in the old and zooming out the young—for readers to shift their focus from what their ambition may lead to in the future to what

they decide to do with their ambition presently, signifying the importance to live a day rather than a life. This way, he provides readers with open-ended meaning of success and happiness; namely, success and happiness should be measured not from one single perspective but from many, where truth will be produced, ensuing a free choice: how one leads a life to achieve success and happiness in his struggle between reality and dream, in thoughtful employment of education, talent/efforts, perseverance and ambition, and in healthy balance of family. It is true that no one can predict the future but the fortune indeed lies in one's hand, which is my utterance, a reader's, in my dialogue with Ishiguro (Hagen 66; Matthews 121).

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