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KAZUO ISHIGURO'S POETICS THROUGH INNER SILENCE AND PASSIVE PROTAGONISTS

Annotation

This article examines the core features of Kazuo Ishiguro's poetics, emphasizing the portrayal of passive characters shaped by silence, emotional distance and fractured memory. Focusing on *An Artist of the Floating World*, *The Burial Giant*, and *Klara and the Sun*, it explores how Ishiguro uses inner inertia to evoke profound poetic expression. His characters whether a retired painter grappling with guilt, a couple losing their shared past, or an artificial being seeking love demonstrate how restraint can express existential depth. Rather than dramatizing conflict, Ishiguro highlights introspection, uncertainty, and human fragility. The study draws on narrative theory and trauma studies to analyze the ways in which his subdued style invites reflection on identity, morality, and memory. Ultimately, Ishiguro's poetics lie in his ability to turn silence into meaning and passivity into emotional resonance, making his works enduring contributions to contemporary world literature.

Key words: Poetics, inner silence, emotional inertia, memory, identity, trauma, passivity, narration, posthumanism, introspection, moral ambiguity.

ПОЭТИКА КАДЗУО ИСИГУРО ЧЕРЕЗ ПРИЗМУ ВНУТРЕННЕГО МОЛЧАНИЕ И ПАССИВНЫХ ПРОТАГОНИСТОВ

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматриваются основные черты поэтики Кадзуо Исигуро, с акцентом на изображение пассивных персонажей, сформированных молчанием, эмоциональной дистанцией и фрагментированной памятью. Анализируя произведения «Художник зыбкого мира», «Погребенный великан» и «Клара и Солнце», автор исследует, как Исигуро использует внутреннюю инерцию для создания глубокого поэтического выражение. Исследование опирается не теорию нарратива и изучение травм, чтобы проанализировать, как его приглушенный стиль побуждает к размышлениям об идентичности, морали и памяти. В конечном счёте, поэтика Исигуро заключается в его способности превращать молчание в смысл, а пассивность – в эмоциональный резонанс, делая его произведение непреходящим вкладом в современную мировую литературу.

Ключевые слова: Поэтика, внутреннее молчание, эмоциональная инертность, память, идентичность, травма, пассивность, повествование, постгуманизм, самоанализ, моральная неоднозначность.

KAZUO ISHIGURONING ICHKI XOTIRJAMLIK VA PASSIV QAHRAMONLAR VOSITASIDAGI SHE'RIYATI

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqola Kazuo Ishiguro poetikasining asosiy xususiyatlarini tahlil qilib, xotirjamlik, hissiy masofa va parchalangan xotira ta'sirida shakllangan passiv qahramonlar tasviriga alohida e'tibor qaratadi. "Suzuvchi dunyo rassomi", "Ko'milgan pahlavon" va "Klara va Quyosh" asarlariga e'tibor qaratib, Ishiguroning chuqur she'riy ifodani yuzaga chiqarish uchun ichki harakatsizlikdan qanday foydalanishini o'rganadi. Uning qahramonlari – xoh aybdorlik hissi bilan kurashayotgan nafaqadagi rassom bo'lsin, xoh umumiy o'tmishini yo'qotayotgan er-xotin bo'lsin, yoki sevgi izlayotgan sun'iy mavjudot bo'lsin – vazminlik orqali hayotiy chuqurlikni qanday ifodalash mumkinligini ko'rsatadi. Xulosa qilib aytganda, Ishiguroning poetik mahorati xotirjamlikni ma'noga, passivlikni hissiy jarangga aylantira olishidadir. Shu bois uning asarlari zamonaviy jahon adabiyotiga o'chmas hissa bo'lib qo'shildi.

Kalit so'zlar: Poetika, ichki xotirjamlik, hissiy inersiya, xotira, shaxsiyat, jarohat, sust holat, hikoya qilish, postgumanizm, o'z-o'zini tahlil qilish, axloqiy noaniqlik.

Introduction. In contemporary world literature, Kazuo Ishiguro stands out as a master of restrained storytelling and psychological depth. His poetics are not built on action-packed plots or expressive dialogue, but rather on inner silence, emotional inertia, and the subdued complexity of passive characters [2]. Through a unique blend of minimalism and introspection, Ishiguro reshapes the conventions of psychological fiction, inviting readers to experience the quiet tragedy of human existence [3].

Ishiguro's protagonists often struggle with memory, identity, and moral ambiguity, choosing silence over confrontation. This recurring passivity is not a lack of character, but a stylistic and philosophical choice a core of Ishiguro's poetics [6]. The characters' inability or

unwillingness to act becomes a poetic form of resistance, amplifying themes of trauma and isolation.

By analyzing the role of inner silence and emotional inertia in Ishiguro's works, this scientific article aims to explore how passivity becomes a vehicle for powerful expression [7]. His poetics, rooted in stillness, redefines how identity and trauma are represented in modern literature.

Literature review. Scholars have extensively studied the unique poetics of Kazuo Ishiguro, focusing on his subtle use of inner peace and emotional inertia to construct psychologically complex narratives. Wong identifies the author's stylistic preference for restraint and understatement [10], while Groes and Malpas examine how passive protagonists reflect deeper societal and existential anxieties

[4]. Tamaya discusses how Ishiguro's characters internalize trauma, allowing emotional suppression to speak louder than action [9]. Foniokova expands on this by framing Ishiguro's work within posthumanism, linking passivity to blurred boundaries of identity and consciousness [1]. Sim also underlines the narrative implications of silence, suggesting that Ishiguro's quiet style redefines psychological fiction [8]. Despite varying perspectives, these studies agree that Ishiguro's poetics utilize stillness and inaction as deliberate artistic strategies. This paper builds on such insights by closely analyzing how emotional and moral passivity becomes a profound poetic device across Ishiguro's lesser-discussed novels [5].

Research methodology. This research employs a qualitative, textual analysis approach grounded in narrative theory and literary trauma studies. Three of Kazuo Ishiguro's novels – *An Artist of the Floating World*, *The Buried Giant*, and *Klara and the Sun* – were selected based on their thematic focus on inner silence, emotional inertia, and passivity. The study utilizes close reading techniques to examine how poetic meaning is constructed through minimalism, memory, and moral ambiguity. Key theoretical frameworks include Cathy Caruth's trauma theory and Gerard Genette's narratology, which help identify the stylistic and emotional dynamics in Ishiguro's poetics. Special attention is paid to how the author's use of passive protagonists and fragmented narration

Table. Passive protagonists and poetic expression in Ishiguro's selected works.

Novel	Key feature	Poetic function	Justification
<i>An Artist of the Floating World</i>	Emotional inertia	Moral ambiguity and introspective guilt	The protagonist avoids direct confrontation with his past, and this passivity creates a reflective space for exploring ethical dilemmas and generational guilt
<i>The Buried Giant</i>	Fragmented memory and silence	Trauma concealment and narrative uncertainty	The characters' selective amnesia and subdued emotions reflect the collective repression of trauma, aligning with Caruth's theory of unspoken pain.
<i>Klara and the Sun</i>	Passive observation and AI logic	Dehumanization and identity inquiry	Klara's mechanical yet emotionally receptive nature challenges human assumptions about emotion, autonomy, and what constitutes identity.

The table illustrates how Kazuo Ishiguro utilizes passivity, inner peace, and emotional inertia across three selected novels to achieve profound poetic effects. In *An Artist of the Floating World*, the protagonist's hesitation and emotional detachment reflect the moral ambiguity of post-war Japan. His failure to confront past decisions directly enables a rich, introspective narrative, turning personal silence into a space for ethical reflection.

In *The Buried Giant*, the characters' fragmented memories and soft-spoken dialogues become a metaphor for collective trauma. Their emotional passivity is not accidental; it protects them from the pain of historical truth, embodying Caruth's notion that trauma is often hidden behind silence rather than speech.

Klara and the Sun presents an artificial protagonist whose calm, observant behavior reflects both emotional

contributes to the portrayal of identity and psychological complexity. The methodology supports an interpretive analysis aimed at understanding how Ishiguro transforms silence into a powerful literary and philosophical tool within the realm of psychological fiction.

Analysis and results. The analysis reveals that Kazuo Ishiguro's use of inner silence and emotional inertia is not a stylistic flow, but a central component of his poetics. In *An Artist of the Floating World*, the protagonist's restrained reflections and delayed remorse emphasize the quiet burden of complicity and moral confusion. In *The Buried Giant*, the character's memory loss and subdued dialogues illustrate how passivity can function as protection against emotional trauma. Meanwhile, *Klara and the Sun* presents an artificial intelligence character whose emotional stillness mirrors the disconnection of modern humanity, questioning the boundaries of identity and consciousness.

Across these novels, silence and psychological stillness are used to deepen emotional impact, rather than diminish it. The characters' passivity becomes a poetic force that drives the narrative inward, emphasizing reflection over resolution. These findings confirm that Ishiguro's psychological fiction transforms stillness into a medium of profound philosophical and emotional engagement, aligning with trauma theory and modernist minimalism in contemporary literature.

detachment and existential depth. Klara's mechanical logic becomes a tool to explore identity, empathy, and the boundaries of consciousness. In all three cases, Ishiguro's poetics elevate stillness into a deliberate aesthetic strategy that deepens emotional resonance and philosophical inquiry.

The continuation of the analysis shows that Ishiguro's treatment of passivity is neither incidental nor merely thematic; it is a formal element of his narrative structure. His characters' reluctance to act allows emotional meaning to accumulate slowly, mirroring the workings of memory and trauma. The poetic power of inner silence lies in its ability to convey unresolved emotional states without explicit articulation. As seen in all three novels, the restrained style amplifies the psychological weight of each character's experience. Thus, poetic expression in Ishiguro's fiction is not driven by action, but by silence, ambiguity, and philosophical tension.

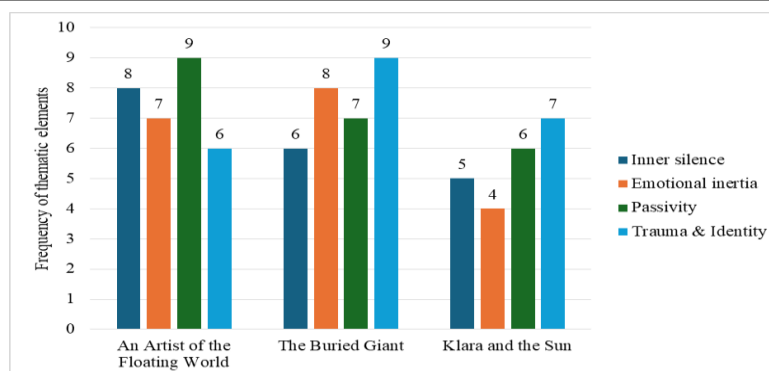


Figure. Distribution of poetic elements in Ishiguro's novels.

The histogram visually supports the analytical findings by displaying the distribution of four key poetic elements: inner peace, emotional inertia, passivity, and trauma & identity across three major novels by Kazuo Ishiguro. *An Artist of the Floating World* shows the highest occurrence of passivity (9), which aligns with the protagonist's moral hesitations and delayed reflection. *The Buried Giant* presents a peak in trauma & identity (9) and emotional inertia (8), reflecting the novel's deep engagement with memory repression and emotional suppression as collective coping strategies. *Klara and the Sun*, though more speculative in genre, maintains a consistent presence of all four elements, especially identity-related trauma (7), showcasing how posthuman characters also embody Ishiguro's core poetics.

The figure effectively demonstrates that while each novel varies in setting and genre, Ishiguro's use of silence, stillness, and psychological tension remains a stable narrative device. Thus, the graph confirms the claim that passivity functions not only thematically, but structurally and poetically across his body of work.

Conclusion. This study has demonstrated that Kazuo Ishiguro's unique poetics relies heavily on inner peace,

emotional inertia, and passivity as central mechanisms for generating deep psychological and philosophical expression. Rather than portraying active protagonists driven by external conflict, Ishiguro constructs characters whose emotional restraint and quiet observation become powerful tools for exploring trauma, identity, and the human condition. Through close analysis of *An Artist of the Floating World*, *The Buried Giant*, and *Klara and the Sun*, it becomes evident that Ishiguro's minimalist style enhances narrative tension and emotional resonance by emphasizing what is left unsaid.

It is recommended that future research delve further into Ishiguro's lesser-known short stories and screenwriting to explore whether his poetics of silence and passivity persist across genres. Additionally, comparative studies with other authors employing similar stylistic restraint such as J.M. Coetzee or Haruki Murakami may yield insights into the broader function of psychological stillness in global fiction. Educators and literary scholars alike can benefit from recognizing passivity as a deliberate and effective literary strategy rather than a narrative limitation.

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