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Tetyana Tyshchenko****MULTICULTURALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY  
IN KAZUO ISHIGURO'S NOVEL *THE REMAINS OF THE DAY*****Анотація**

Дві протилежні тенденції – глобалізація, що прагне нівелювати відмінні одна від одної культури, і мультикультуралізм, який намагається протидіяти цим процесам і зберегти культурну різноманітність, – значною мірою впливають на розвиток сучасної літератури, в першу чергу англійської. Це пов'язано з появою протягом останніх десятиліть великої кількості письменників – вихідців із різних регіонів світу, які пишуть англійською мовою. У результаті в рамках їхньої творчості співіснують дві культурних парадигми – та, що зумовлена країною їхнього походження (у випадку з Казуо Ішігуро це Японія), і англійська. У свою чергу, така ситуація актуалізувала проблему англійської національної ідентичності, яка є центральною в романі Ішігуро «Залишок дня». У статті здійснено методологічний підхід, що передбачає виявлення та аналіз основних культурно-історичних складових феномену «англійськість» у романі Ішігуро «Залишок дня». Англійськість розуміється як квінтесенція національної ідентичності. Репрезентація англійськості в творчості Ішігуро розглядається в зіставленні з традиційними уявленнями, сформованими в межах вікторіанської системи цінностей. Метою роботи є аналіз феномену «англійськість» в романі Казуо Ішігуро «Залишок дня». Багатоаспектність прояву англійськості розглянута з точки зору співвідношення традиційних уявлень про англійський менталітет і авторської позиції щодо даного явища. Автори статті дійшли висновку, що оповідь про приватне життя звичайного англійського дворецького в романі Ішігуро поступово перетворюється в деконструкцію міфу про велич англійської нації, її бездоганність і, як наслідок, перевагу над рештою світу. Ішігуро не боїться кинути

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виклик традиційним уявленням про суто англійський характер, послідовно викриваючи парадну сторону священного міфу. Відверто демонструючи такі непривабливі риси, як ностальгія, ксенофобія і сліпота, письменник відмовляється вихвалити псевдореальність і прикрашати помилково пишність втраченої епохи.

**Ключові слова:** мультикультуралізм, національна ідентичність, англійськість, Казуо Ісігуро, «Залишок дня».

### Аннотація

Две противоположные тенденции – глобализация, стремящаяся нивелировать существующее в мире множество отличающихся друг от друга культур, и мультикультурализм, пытающийся противодействовать этим процессам и сохранить культурное разнообразие, – оказывают значительное влияние на развитие современной литературы, в первую очередь английской. Это связано с появлением в последние десятилетия большого количества писателей – выходцев из разных регионов мира, пишущих на английском языке. В результате в рамках их творчества сосуществуют две культурных парадигмы: английская – с одной стороны, и обусловленная страной происхождения писателя (в случае с Казуо Исигуро это Япония) – с другой. В свою очередь, такая ситуация актуализировала проблему английской национальной идентичности, которая является центральной в романе Исигуро «На закате дня». В статье осуществлен методологический подход, предполагающий выявление и анализ основных культурно-исторических составляющих феномена «английскость» в творчестве романа Исигуро «На закате дня». Английскость понимается как квинтэссенция национальной идентичности. Репрезентация английскости в творчестве Исигуро рассматривается в сопоставлении с традиционными представлениями, сформировавшимися в рамках викторианской системы ценностей. Целью работы является анализ феномена «английскость» в романе Казуо Исигуро «На закате дня». Многоаспектность проявления английскости рассмотрена с точки зрения соотношения традиционных представлений об английском

менталитете и авторской позиции в отношении данного явления. Авторы статьи пришли к выводу, что рассказ о частной жизни обычного английского дворецкого в романе Исигуро постепенно превращается в деконструкцию мифа о величии английской нации, ее безупречности и, как следствие, превосходстве над остальным миром. Исигуро не боится бросить вызов традиционным представлениям об истинно английском характере, последовательно разоблачая парадную сторону священного мифа. Откровенно демонстрируя такие его неприглядные черты, как откровенная ностальгия, ксенофобия и слепота, писатель отказывается прославлять псевдореальность и приукрашивать ложное великолепие утраченной эпохи.

**Ключевые слова:** мультикультурализм, национальная идентичность, английскость, Казуо Исигуро, «Остаток дня».

### Abstract

Two opposite trends – globalization, which is seeking to neutralize the many different cultures existing in the world, and multiculturalism, which is trying to counteract these processes and preserve cultural diversity – have a significant impact on the development of modern literature, primarily English. This is due to the emergence in recent decades of a large number of writers from different regions of the world who write in English. As a result, within the framework of their work, two cultural paradigms coexist – the cultural paradigm of their countries of origin (in the case of Kazuo Ishiguro, this is Japan) and the English one. In turn, this situation has actualized the problem of English national identity, which takes central part in Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day*. The article implements a methodological approach that involves the identification and analysis of the main cultural and historical components of the phenomenon of *Englishness* in Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day*. *Englishness* is understood as the quintessence of national identity in the novel. The representation of Englishness in Ishiguro's work is considered in comparison with the traditional ideas that formed within the Victorian value system. The aim of the work is an analysis of the Englishness in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *The Remains of the Day*. The

multidimensionality of the manifestation of Englishness is considered from the point of view of the ratio of traditional ideas about the English mentality and the author's position in relation to this phenomenon. The authors of the article have come to the conclusion that the story of the private life of an ordinary English butler in Ishiguro's novel is gradually turning into a deconstruction of the myth of the greatness of the English nation, its impeccability and, as a consequence, superiority over the rest of the world. Ishiguro is not afraid to challenge traditional notions of true English character by consistently exposing the hidden (dark) side of the sacred myth. Openly demonstrating such unsightly features of his as overtly nostalgia, xenophobia and blindness, the writer refuses to glorify pseudo-reality and embellish the false splendour of a lost era.

**Key words:** multiculturalism, national Identity, Englishness, Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*.

### Introduction

One of the leading categories of the modern world is globalization. It is accompanied by the processes of decolonization, the formation of new countries that have gained full or partial independence, and so on. All these processes make many people think about the need to establish their own national identity and to preserve the characteristics of different cultures, whose representatives live in a common territory.

The policy of multiculturalism tries to counteract the assimilation of national minorities. It aims to support ethnic and religious diversity and protect the equivalence of cultures that may otherwise be absorbed by the dominant culture. These two opposing tendencies have their followers and critics, reflecting the pressing contradictions of today.

A significant role in this confrontation was played by English literature, which until about the middle of the 20th century usually included literature created by writers living in the British Isles. The rapid development of the economy and the strengthening of the political role of England during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901) contributed to the formation of a system of stable ideas about a special English mentality, correlated with a system of habits, symbols, ingrained myths, stereotypes of behaviour,

features of a typical English character, stable moral principles, cultural norms, everyday realities, features of the landscape, costume and interior, etc. Tina Sklizkova claims that “reflection on Englishness is an important motif of the English novel of the 20th century, predetermining its specificity as a phenomenon of national culture” (Sklizkova, 2021: 3). To one degree or another, the ideological and thematic complex of Englishness is reflected in the work of such famous writers as J. Fowles, G. Swift, P. Ackroyd, J. Barnes, T. Stoppard, J. Austen and many others. The reflection of the most important concepts of Englishness in their work is combined with the deconstruction of the Victorian value system. English writers, such as the W.C. Maugham or E.M. Foster, took a critical position in relation to persistent ideas about the English character.

Gradually, this circle became wider, it also began to include residents of the former colonies, who wrote their works in English – writers from Australia, the West Indies, Africa and Asia. Taking into account the traditions formed in classical English literature and generally focusing on European standards, these authors brought new, unexpected and often completely unfamiliar to the Eurocentric reader themes, plots, characters and issues inherent in the cultures from which these writers came. They not only spent much of their lives (or all their lives) in England, but also wrote in English, often touching on the realities and problems of their second homeland in their works. As a result, this situation has led to different forms of coexistence of two cultural paradigms within the work of one author. For example, Timothy Mo’s novel *Sour Sweet* represents the perception of Great Britain from the standpoint of a person belonging to Chinese culture, *The Buddha of Suburbia* by Hanif Kureishi – from the Pakistani point of view, *Small Island* by Andrea Levy introduces the reader to the view of England, which is typical of the Jamaican diaspora, and in *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro we meet the perception of English culture by a writer of Japanese descent. Such a combination of two points of view in the work of one author gave Olga Sidorova reason to consider the work of the creators of postcolonial novels Timothy Mo and Kazuo Ishiguro as “authors with a hybrid identity” (Sidorova, 2005: 6).

In turn, this situation highlighted the problem of English national identity, because the reader was faced with a view of the image of the Englishman, combining two points of view – inside and outside, namely from the position of former British colonies or just other cultures, as in the case of Ishiguro. The collapse of the colonial system that took place in the second half of the twentieth century provoked a crisis of national identity, which is based on the gap between nationality and language. After the English language acquired a global status, the concept of English-language literature has become much broader than the literature of England.

According to one of the leading experts on the modern English novel Sergey Tolkachev, “multicultural literature presupposes a heterogeneous representation of cultural identity” (Tolkachev, 2003: 234). In the works of S. Bellow, K. Ishiguro, J. Lemming, J.M. Coetzee, H. Kureishi, T. Moe, W. Naipaul, S. Rushdie and other migrant writers, the established traditional paradigm that affirms the exclusivity of the English national culture, its superiority over other cultures, receives an ambiguous assessment, shifting towards “lack of integrity of perception, conventions, expressed or latent conflict, irony” (Satyukova, 2011).

The idea of *Englishness* has been the subject of detailed discussion in modern literary criticism (works of Yu. Arkhipova, N. Efimova, Z. Zinnatullina, I. Kabanova, E. Petrosova, D. Polovtsev, E. Satyukova N. Solovyova, L. Khabibullina, M. Tsvetkova, etc.). *Englishness* is perceived today as one of the literary categories, which has entered the scientific conceptual context and requires theoretical justification. It contains “the essence of a stable national tradition, is a form of expression of “oneself” (originality, self-determination, self-awareness, self-identification)” (Satyukova, 2011).

There are a number of different approaches to the national character, although they all follow an interpretation that is not strictly scientific and is based on a set of characteristics that are specific to a particular nation. A person’s national identity is expressed during his or her confrontation with representatives of another nation and with the realities of life characteristic of a new (foreign, unusual) cultural environment.

An important trend in modern English literature is that writers from Eastern countries are playing an increasingly active role in it. According to the famous translator from Japanese Grigori Chkhartishvili, “the new ‘East-West’ literature has clear signs of androgyny: with one head it has two faces (one facing sunrise, the other toward sunset), two hearts, double vision and the most stable musculoskeletal system” (Chkhartishvili, 1996: 258). Ishiguro claims that the part of his intentions was “to set this book in a mythical landscape, which to a certain extent resembled that mythical version of England that is peddled in the nostalgia industry at the moment. This idea of England, this green, pleasant place of leafy lanes and grand country houses and butlers and tea on the lawn, cricket – this vision of England that actually does play a large role in the political imaginations of a lot of people, not just British people but people around the world... I felt it was a perfectly reasonable mission on my part to set out to slightly redefine that mythical, cosy England, to say that there is a shadowy side to it” (Kelman, 1991: 73).

The aim of the work is an analysis of *Englishness* in Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel *The Remains of the Day*. The multidimensionality of the manifestation of *Englishness* will be considered from the point of view of the ratio of traditional ideas about the English mentality and the author’s position in relation to this phenomenon. An attempt will be made to reveal the originality of the interpretation of the English national character in the writer’s work, to determine the basic concepts that form the concept sphere of *Englishness* in *The Remains of the Day*.

### **Methodology and Methods**

The article implements a methodological approach that involves the identification and analysis of the main cultural and historical components of the phenomenon of *Englishness* in Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel *The Remains of the Day*. *Englishness* is understood as the quintessence of national identity in the writer’s work. The representation of *Englishness* in Ishiguro’s work is considered in comparison with the traditional ideas that formed within the Victorian value system.

## Results and Discussions

In his interviews, Kazuo Ishiguro, who moved from Japan to Britain at the age of six, constantly refutes critics' attempts to see in his novels the overt or covert features of the Japanese mentality and calls himself a "citizen of the world," addressed to readers around the world, not just one specific country. On the one hand, this is confirmed by his English education and the fact that he speaks English much better than his mother tongue. On the other hand, his upbringing and especially his works show that he has very closely intertwined the features of both the Japanese mentality acquired by the writer in the process of upbringing in the family, and the components inherent in the purely English national character. We suppose that biographical circumstances have determined one of the leading themes of the writer's novels, whose characters often follow a path that leads to the definition of their personal and national identity. This fact did not go unnoticed by critics. The overwhelming majority of works devoted to the work of Kazuo Ishiguro in general and *The Remains of the Day* in particular, in one way or another touch on the problem of national identity. For instance, Olga Pavlova notes that the centre of *The Remains of the Day* is the problem of Englishness, which includes such components as national character, English nature, English estate, thanks to which the myth of England, its superiority over other nations has developed in the minds of both the British and foreigners. (Pavlova, 2011). Myroslava Dovganich points to the "differences of the interpretation of mythology of a home within the framework of European and Japanese cultures" (Dovganich, 2019: 238).

In monographs devoted to Ishiguro's works, researchers have mentioned the main features of *Englishness* inherent in Stevens, not analysing them in detail, but considering them within the framework of the concept of the relationship between personal and universal history (Lewis, 2000; Petry, 1999; Shaffer, 1998; Wong, 2000). Among the qualities traditionally inherent in the British, most often called "suppression of emotions, respect for social hierarchy, complacency and respect for English history" (Lewis, 2000: 78), devotion, emotional restraint, self-control and dignity (Petry, 1999: 101). According to Olga Dzhumailo, the dignity of a butler



is the result of Stevens developing such a quality of a real gentleman as true English restraint – a very broad concept that includes impassivity, a horror of emotional display, preoccupation with composure, self-control, fear of self-exposure, self-respect, exclusiveness, wise, etc. (Dzhumailo, 2014: 194). However, the typically English views of the protagonist fail, as his conviction in the existence of a strong connection between dignity and social hierarchy failed the test of time, the cruel truth of the meaninglessness of his devoted service to a person who committed fatal historical mistakes was revealed to Stevens (Dzhumailo, 2014: 196).

The attention of a number of researchers is directed to the study of the peculiarities of the narrative in the first-person novel with the figure of the “unreliable storyteller” and the related problem of memory (Wall, 1994; Westerman, 2004 and others). Many scholars share the point of view of Catherine Charlwood, who believes that Ishiguro continues to “use of memory and nationality as themes, while demonstrating the new departures offered by the conjunction of an ancient setting and a contemporary reading audience” in his new novels (Charlwood, 2018).

The problem of national identity in Ishiguro’s novel *The Remains of the Day* is primarily related to the main character – the butler Stevens. Scientists agree that this character is the true embodiment of Englishness. This is evidenced by such features as “the dedication to his duties, to Lord Darlington, and to becoming the best he can be is what makes Stevens a typical English butler,” “English modesty,” “his endeavour to never speak a bad word about his employer”, his way of speaking (talking like a gentleman), his confidence that “only the English race is able to restrain their emotions and control themselves in strong emotional situations” (Baumann, 2018). Stevens is convinced of the superiority of all English – English landscape, English gentleman, English butler (involuntarily there are associations with the famous play by Eugène Ionesco *The Bald Soprano*) – compared to other nations. Moreover, the constant demonstration of the qualities of the ideal butler (calmness, restraint, ability to control himself despite the circumstances, the absolutization of professional duty to the detriment of personal interests, etc.) becomes the meaning of life of the protagonist and paradoxically

not only contrasts it with everything that is not included. paradigm of *Englishness*, but in the end isolates Stevens from everything that is most dear to him: his “flawless” master discredited himself in public, being accused of collaboration with the Nazis, and the protagonist refuses to have a relationship with his beloved woman, seeing in her an obstacle to his “service” to an illusory goal and preferring stubborn attempts to implement in his life a contrived and therefore unviable ideal. His carefully constructed picture of the world, centered on the perfect image of an English butler, turned out to be an abstract and unviable mental construction. In his interview, Ishiguro confirms that he sought to show the collapse of the protagonist’s illusory representations, who believes that “beauty and greatness lie in being able to be this kind of cold, frozen, butler who isn’t demonstrative and who hides emotion in much the way he’s saying that the British landscape does with its surface clam: the ability to actually keep down turmoil and emotion. He thinks this is what gives both butlers and the British landscape beauty and dignity. And, of course that viewpoint is the one that actually crumbles during the course of Stevens’s journey” (Wong, 2000: 58).

In the novel, *Englishness* as a concept that reflects the essence of the national mentality of the British, serves to oppose the British to representatives of all other nations, and first of all to the Americans. In the novel’s character system, these are two complementary oppositions:

1) the former owner of Darlington Hall, Lord Darlington – the current owner of Darlington Hall, Mr Farraday;

2) Stevens the butler – Mr Farraday.

These oppositions are reflected in the organization of the temporal structure of the novel. The past of Darlington Hall is associated with the greatness of the English nation, because it was the place where, according to the protagonist of the novel, events of world significance took place, and in the present the estate passed to the new owner, the American Mr Farraday, turning into an ordinary mansion. Considering the role of the chronotope in the semantic organization of Ishiguro’s novel *The Remains of the Day*, the scientists noted precisely that it is based on “a basic contrast presented in the text in the form of two text paradigms

opposing two metaphorical fields *DIGNITY* and *BANTERING*, placed by the writer in strong positions of the text – at the beginning (prologue) and at the end (epilogue)” (Medvedkina et al., 2020: 5). Let us emphasize that these metaphorical fields coincide with two oppositional centres, where *DIGNITY* correlates with *Englishness*, and *BANTERING*, in turn, with American culture. The main character of Ishiguro’s novel *A Pale View of Hills* Ogata-san, outraged by the negative influence of American culture on the Japanese, notes “democracy” as a key concept that characterizes American culture: “Quite extraordinary the things that happen now. But that’s what’s meant by democracy, I suppose <...> These things we’ve learnt so eagerly from the Americans, aren’t always to the good <...> The Americans, they never understood the way things were in Japan. Not for one moment have they understood. Discipline, loyalty, such things held Japan together once. People were bound by a sense of duty. Towards one’s family, towards superiors, towards the country. But now instead there’s all this talk of democracy. You hear it whenever people want to be selfish, whenever they want to forget obligations <...> Many fine things were destroyed in our schools. Here was a system we’d nurtured and cherished for years. The Americans came and stripped it, tore it down without a thought. And the Japanese welcomed it all” (Ishiguro, 1982: 57–58). In *The Remains of the Day*, democracy has a lot in common with *BANTERING*. At the same time, the positive traits that, according to Ogata-san, are native to the Japanese – discipline, loyalty, a sense of duty – are repeatedly mentioned by Stevens as peculiar exclusively to the British and constituting the very essence of the concept *Englishness*, which the butler understands as *DIGNITY*. This example confirms the correctness of Ekaterina Belova’s statement about the dual nature of the artistic world in Ishiguro’s novels, where the writer uses the techniques of poetics “immanent in both English and Japanese literature” (Belova, 2021: 3). Perhaps such coincidences became one of the reasons why some researchers find in the novel *The Remains of the Day* features inherent in the Japanese mentality, although the author of the novel hardly had them in mind, focusing the reader’s attention primarily on the fact that these positive qualities, which the British are proud of, at some point turned

into their opposite, creating a myth about England that has little to do with the real state of affairs.

### Conclusions

Thus, the story of the private life of an ordinary English butler gradually turns into a deconstruction of the myth of the greatness of the English nation, its perfection and, as a consequence, superiority over the rest of the world. Ishiguro dares to challenge traditional notions of true English character, consistently exposing the ceremonial side of the sacred myth, frankly demonstrating such unsightly features of it as overtly nostalgia, xenophobia, and blindness. He refuses to glorify pseudo-reality and embellish the false splendour of a lost era.

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