



ACADEMICIA
**An International
 Multidisciplinary
 Research Journal**
 (Double Blind Refereed & Peer Reviewed Journal)



DOI: 10.5958/2249-7137.2021.01006.5

KAZUO ISHIGURO AS AN INTERNATIONAL NOVELIST

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ABSTRACT

The article is a creative portrait of the 2017 Nobel Prize in Literature Kazuo Ishiguro. The author reveals the peculiarities of the author's prose, his writing style, which makes the work of K. Ishiguro unique against the background of the existing variety of contemporary prose in Great Britain. The Nobel Committee's decision to award the 2017 Literature Prize to Kazuo Ishiguro, a Japanese-born British writer, has been welcomed by critics and admirers of his work, especially given the publicly controversial awards of previous years. The reasons for this unanimity are obvious. Firstly, Ishiguro's works are really popular and loved by various readers, both in the UK and far beyond its borders. Secondly, Ishiguro is a writer in the most direct, original sense of the word: he does not engage in politics, does not give interviews on sensitive issues of current international relations, but for several decades now, for several decades, he has published quite regularly, albeit at rather large intervals.

KEYWORDS: *K. Ishiguro, Nobel Prize, Unreliable narrator, Englishness, Memory, History.*

INTRODUCTION

The Nobel Committee's decision to award the 2017 Literature Prize to Kazuo Ishiguro, a Japanese-born British writer, has been welcomed by critics and admirers of his work, especially given the publicly controversial awards of previous years. The reasons for this unanimity are obvious. Firstly, Ishiguro's works are really popular and loved by various readers, both in the UK and far beyond its borders. Secondly, Ishiguro is a writer in the most direct, original sense of the word: he does not engage in politics, does not give interviews on sensitive issues of current international relations, but for several decades now, for several decades, he has published quite regularly, albeit at rather large intervals. Book light. He does not write columns in periodicals and is not a well-known literary critic like David Lodge, does not create a literary double and does not release under his name detective stories full of frank details, like Julian Barnes, does not

participate in political debate and does not write political journalism like Martin Amis. Unlike the works of other leading British writers, Ishiguro's prose does not contain explicit erotic episodes; his novels, as a rule, are small in volume and outwardly eventless. We also add that he was not among those writers to whom journalists and critics predicted the prize in 2017 for a number of reasons.

The reaction of the writer himself to the award of the prize is significant: when asked by the BBC correspondent, he said that the Nobel Committee had not informed him of anything in advance, so Ishiguro, having learned about the prize from the press, was not sure that this was not a joke. He later commented on the event as follows: “This award is a huge honor for me <...> it means that I am following in the footsteps of the greatest authors who have ever lived, so this is an amazing award” [1] [Ellis-Petersen, Flood 2017].

Ishiguro's external biography has developed smoothly and successfully. Japanese by nationality, he was born in Nagasaki in November 1954. The post-war Nagasaki, which survived a terrible nuclear explosion, will be described in his very first novel - moreover, it can be argued that he is part of the Ishiguro family history, since the writer's mother, who is still alive today, was among those who managed to survive the nuclear disaster. In 1960, when the future writer was five years old, the family moved to England, to Surrey. Ishiguro's father, an ocean scientist, at first did not plan to stay in England for a long time, but later the family stayed there permanently. According to the writer's recollections, in Surrey in the 1960s, any foreigner was a wonder, and there were simply no foreigners from Asia, except for the Ishiguro family. The future writer went to a local elementary school and even sang in the choir of a local church, that is, familiarization with British culture became a natural process for him. Let's clarify: K. Ishiguro's English is the language of the British intellectual, the language in which he creates his literary works and gives interviews even to Japanese journalists.

Repeatedly answering the question about his belonging to the Japanese culture and about knowledge of the Japanese language, Ishiguro states:

By their upbringing, my parents remain true Japanese, and when you are brought up in a family, you perceive the style of behavior adopted in it. I still communicate with my parents in Japanese. I start speaking Japanese as soon as I enter their house. But I am not very good at this language. My Japanese is a mixture of 5-year-old's Japanese speech with many English words, and I make grammar mistakes all the time ... [Mason 1989: 336]

In England, Ishiguro first received secondary and then higher education - at the University of Kent in Canterbury, where he majored in English and philosophy. Later, in 1979, Ishiguro entered the University of East Anglia in Norwich with a degree in writing and graduated with a master's degree. The creative workshop that Ishiguro taught and from which many famous writers have emerged was led by Malcolm Bradbury.

Ishiguro's first stories appeared in print in 1980. To date, he is the author of a number of short stories, several television scripts and seven novels, each of which (!) Was awarded prestigious literary prizes: “Where the Hills Are in the Haze” (1982), “Artist of a Shaky World” (1986), “The Rest of the Day ”(1989),“ Inconsolable ”(1995),“ When We Were Orphans ”(2000),“ Don't Let Me Go ”(2005) and“ Buried Giant ”(2015). The writer's novels have been translated into many languages, based on the novel *The Remains of the Day*, director J. Ivory made a film of the

same name in 1993 (the script was written by Harold Pinter), which brought together a stellar cast that received wide audience success and a considerable number of prestigious awards (only for the "Oscar" he was nominated in eight nominations). In 2010, the novel "Don't Let Me Go" was also filmed.

The reception of Ishiguro's works by British critics has been more than benevolent from the very beginning of his writing career: twice, in 1983 and in 1993, his name was included in the list of the best British young writers of the decade according to the influential magazine *Grant*. It makes sense to note the remarkable literary flair of the critics: in 1993 their choice was understandable and obvious, but in 1983 Ishiguro, the youngest of all the writers on the list, was the author of only a few short stories and one short novel.

Today, the analysis of Ishiguro's works is included in all studies on the history of British literature, without exception, where the author's work is viewed from different points of view and in various contexts. For example, the influential critic F. Tew examines it in the chapter of his monograph on the image of modern British identity in literature, *Contemporary Britishness*, in the chapter *The Rise and Decline of the Middle Class*, where *The Remains of the Day* is clearly inscribed in the tradition of the English social novel. along with the novels of K. Amis, D. Barnes, M. Bradbury, J. Coe, D. Lodge and other writers of the late XX - early XXI century. Curiously, however, Ishiguro's works are not mentioned by Tew in the chapter "Diversity and Hybridity" [Tew 2007].

In the monograph by F. Tolan "New Directions Literature after 1990 Texts, Contexts, Relationships" There are several chapters devoted to Ishiguro's novels, including "Memory and Identity" and "Dystopia of the New Millennium" [Tolan 2010]. The collective monograph "Contemporary British Literature" states that the novels of K. Ishiguro, G. Swift, J. Barnes, J. McEwen and some other contemporary British writers "despite all their postmodernist strategies can be interpreted within the framework of the tradition of the psychological novel on the basis of that psychological and ethical significance <...> which they represent" [Contemporary... 2007: 41].

Along with several stories, the first two novels of Ishiguro can be called his Japanese works - their action is completely, as in the novel "The Artist of a Shaky World", or partially, as in the novel "Where the Hills are in the Haze," takes place in Japan, and almost all the characters these works are Japanese. In his Nobel Lecture, Ishiguro gratefully recalled that it was Bradbury who endorsed his Japanese works in an era when British multicultural literature had not yet formed as a direction of British literature.

After the publication of Ishiguro's first novels, critics and journalists repeatedly asked him about the literary tradition to which he considers himself. The answer - for several decades - has remained unchanged:

I believe I belong to the Western literary tradition. And I am very surprised that critics so often mention that I am Japanese, and try to remember two or three writers they heard about, comparing me to Mishima or someone else. It seems to me that this is inappropriate. I grew up on Western literature: Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Charlotte Brontë, Dickens [Mason 1989: 336].

The same thesis was voiced by the Secretary of the Swedish Academy Sarah Danius, who said: “Mix Jane Austen and Franz Kafka, and you, figuratively speaking, get Ishiguro. Although it may still need to add a little of Marcel Proust and mix gently” [Ellis-Petersen, Flood 2017]

It is interesting that Ishiguro, recalling in the Nobel lecture the period when the novel *The Artist of the Shaky World* was written, says that the novel was created under the influence of the prose of Proust, whom he was reading at that moment. Obviously, in the prose of multiculturalist writers, to whom Ishiguro belongs for objective reasons, complex relations between linguistic and cultural traditions arise, a synthesis of heterogeneous mental foundations of literature arises, as Bradbury wrote about back in 1987: “... we rank them> as British authors but, living in Britain and creating works in English, they belong to a culture that feels wider than we consider ours” [Bradbury 1987: 363].

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