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The Theme of Englishness in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* and Julian Barnes' *England, England*

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis, titled — The Theme of Englishness in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* and Julian Barnes' *England, England*, is the result of my own work and that I used only the cited sources.

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Abstract

The aim of the work is to analyse the theme of Englishness in *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro and *England, England* by Julian Barnes. The theoretical part of the thesis deals with the theme of Englishness in context of national identity and introduces other works employing the same theme. The practical part is concerned with a comparison of the approaches to the theme of Englishness in the above mentioned novels.

Key words: Englishness, Britishness, national identity, irony, Ishiguro, Barnes

Abstrakt:

Záměrem této práce je prozkoumání přístupu k tématu “angličanství” v *Soumraku dne* od Kazua Ishiguro a v *England, England* od Juliana Barnese. Teoretická část práce se zabývá tématem “angličanství” v kontextu národní identity a představuje další práce zabývající se stejným tématem. Praktická část se zaobírá srovnáním přístupu k tématu “angličanství” ve dvou výše zmíněných románech.

Klíčová slova: Angličanství, Britičnost, národní identita, Ishiguro, Barnes

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Introduction

In my thesis I would like to concentrate on the analysis of the theme of Englishness in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989) and Julian Barnes' *England, England* (1998). The aim is to analyse and compare the approaches towards the theme of Englishness which may be regarded as one of the central themes in both of the novels. The structure of the thesis will consist of a theoretical part, a practical part and a conclusion. The theoretical part introduces Englishness as a sociological and demographical term.

The theoretical part deals with Englishness and its perception in contemporary British society. In order to provide an insightful image of contemporary British society I will use a sociological research focused on the phenomenon of multiculturalism in Great Britain. Englishness as a national identity is explored on two levels. Firstly, it is the English nation as one of the main constituting nations of Great Britain and, secondly, as an analysis of the difference between Englishness and Britishness in context of contemporary multicultural society highly influenced by post-colonialism. A significant part of the theoretical part is devoted to Englishness in contemporary British literature with focus on the influence of post-colonialism and multiculturalism. The first part of the thesis is also concerned with the life and work of the two authors and stresses their works which touch upon the theme of Englishness.

The practical part offers a closer insight into the conception of Englishness provided by Kazuo Ishiguro and Julian Barnes. The plots of the novels are described briefly in order to provide an image of the settings which the authors use to employ the theme of Englishness. The aim of the second part, which deals mainly with the primary sources, is to analyse and compare the ways of employment of the theme of Englishness. The aim is to compare the similarities and differences in connection to the theme of Englishness.

1. Theoretical Part

1.1 Englishness vs. Britishness

The theme of Englishness does not only feature in literary works but also, very significantly, in political and sociological debates. Englishness and Britishness are one of the themes discussed in connection with nationhood, citizenship, migration or state politics. This chapter will be concerned with the outlining of the difference between Englishness and Britishness as well as characterizing each of these in a broader sense of British society, which is, in term of its nation, very diverse and multicultural.

Lynch stresses the fact that the United Kingdom is a multinational state and, as such, it is necessary for the politicians to bear in mind the necessity to maintain a balance between the constituting nations. The British politicians are traditionally concerned with the multinational constellation of Great Britain and they deal with it in their party programs or speeches repeatedly. As Lynch presents, the Conservative Party has historically been representing the integrative state patriotism but, at the same time, an afford to maintain devolution of each constituting state administration. The devolution of the administration is secured by ministries within the sub-states (Scotland, Wales) which have a dual role – implementing the decision of central government in the territory as well as defending the territorial interests of the specific sub-state (Lynch 103). The sub-ministries provide each of the territories with an own decision-making process where they can act on behalf of their sub-state interests and still maintain the autonomy within Great Britain. This causes that “the component nation of the UK have retained their own identities, plus varying degrees of political, cultural and institutional distinctiveness” (Lynch 103). This eventually also lowers the number of separatists and separatist organizations. A customary step which is used when deciding about devolution or whether sub-state should or should not remain part of the United Kingdom is referendum. For example, referendum concerning sovereignty of Northern Ireland on 8th March 1973 whose results showed that majority of Irish citizens wishes to remain part of the UK. As Cohen

says, from the historical point of view the Irish resistance to English dominance was the most challenging to the central government. The example is the self-declaration to be Lord of Ireland of Henry I. or the rebellions in the 18th and mid-19th century. The Irish nationalism's force has been far more conundrum to the English than a barely recognized Scottish nationalism or a harmless Welsh nationalism (Cohen).

The importance of a nation within the state is crucial for politicians not only in sense of the constituting states, but also when it concerns the policy of immigrants which has become an issue of discussion especially after the era of colonialism. For instance, in 2005 the then Home Office Minister, Hazel Blears, has proposed an idea that "minorities could be described as, for example "Asian-British" rather than simply as "Asian"," (Ford, Rumbelow). This arrangement would stress the British roots (Ford, Rumbelow). The sensitivity towards protecting Britishness is rising together with the rising number of immigrants coming to Britain. The tools for regularisation of the high number of immigrants are tests (of knowledge in English, Welsh or Gaelic and test of life in Great Britain) which an immigrant has to pass to be approved with citizenship. The result of these actions is that people seeking British nationality have many obstacles to overcome before receiving a British identity card. Englishness is generally connected with ethnic purity whereas Britishness is much more understood as something artificial (Bradley 26). "For Crick, Britishness is essentially a political and legal construct. Englishness, Scottishness and Welshness is what people actually feel" (Bradley 26).

The Great Britain in comparison with, for instance France is not unified in term of the nationhood. In France, people are French in politic sense as well as national. On the other hand people in Britain are British in terms of their political belonging but Welsh/Irish/Scottish/English in a sense of their nationality; of course, this can only apply for non-immigrants. The huge number of immigrants living in Great Britain caused that the Britishness is connoted with number of ethnic variability. The collage of different nations has essentially become part of its identification. However, the notion of Englishness/

Scottishness/Welshness/Irishness is present in second or third generation of immigrants as much as their feeling of being British (Bradley). This can be observed from research carried out by Kabir who interviewed British Muslims on their (national) identity. According to his research, concerned with their identity, it appears that a lot of descendants of immigrants identify with the concept of being British. The respondents associate Britishness with multiculturalism, freedom, having Britain as a birthplace or simply thinking differently from their parents. One of these respondents Badrul, a British-born male student of Bangladeshi background, says: "I'm from Bangladesh and I'm British. I feel like it's my country because I was born here [.....] I've been living here all my life, and I've got friends that are white as well," (Kabir 99). Badrul confirms what was said previously, that the descendants of immigrants consider themselves British because they are British-born and because they have been living in Great Britain all their lives.

As it has been already mentioned, the issue of Britishness, Englishness, or national identity in general, is also dealt with on field of sociology. Abercrombie, Warde and co. mention in chapter "Ethnicity and Racism" that sociologists often speak about inequality in term of social classes, but after a big number of immigrants coming to the United Kingdom the inequalities concerning ethnic differences are emphasised (Abercrombie, Warde 246). The problem that occurs together with inequalities is a racial prejudice or discrimination.

The United Kingdom is a multicultural state which is fact that needs to be considered by politicians, sociologists and, of course, by common people. The country has to deal with two levels of the multiculturalism. Firstly it is the issue of nationhood, referring to Scottish, Irish, Welsh or English nation. Here it is very important to identify the proper borderline between the autonomy and the dependence on the central power and, at the same time, to maintain the cultural, historical and traditional features. Secondly, it is the issue of immigrants and their adaptability to life in Great Britain, and of course, the prevention of racism or discrimination which is likely to arise in a multicultural society. The difference between Englishness (also Welshness, Irishness and Scottishness) and Britishness

is obvious and understandable as the British Empire was created later than each of its constituents. This is the reason British citizens tend to identify themselves with one of the nationalities within it. The citizenship is connoted with Britishness whereas nationality with Englishness, Irishness, Scottishness or Welshness.

1.2 Englishness in Contemporary British Fiction

This chapter's aim is to show ways of employment of the theme of Englishness which differ from those in the novels chosen for the purposes of this thesis. The main focus is on the authors who employ the theme of Englishness on the background of colonialism or migrancy.

Nico claims that since the beginning of modern colonialism resistance of the colonized countries can be observed. It is for example the revolt in colonized China at the beginning of 20th century, or the Boer War in South Africa. The colonizing countries occupied their overseas areas up to the two World Wars which were disastrous for the colonizing world. For example, the Great Britain lost most of its African colonies in the 1960s (Nico 84). Hand in hand with the subordination of colonized countries goes the fact that the newly gained territories were exposed to Englishness and forced to acquire it, but, at the same time, still considered as "other" (meaning not English). The post-colonial migration made the definition of national identity problematic. " [...] the development of a genuinely multicultural society will be a very long-term project, a fact that makes the reticence over the persisting 'Englishness' regrettable," (Head 119). Head here points to the fact that after the whole process of colonization it is natural that migrants from former British colonies will as a first place for immigration choose the land of the former colonizer.

The impact of the post-colonial world on literature was very significant. British literature was inspired by many new themes for example: "[...] diaspora, hybridity, migrancy, mimicry, hyphenated identity, magic, colonizer/ colonized relations [...]," (Nico 94). As Nico says, the number of Anglophone writers who were not British-born increased. It was, for example, V. S. Naipaul, who was born in Trinidad. Naipaul is a laureate of the Booker Prize and the Nobel Prize. He is

concerned with themes of colonialism especially in India, Africa or the Caribbean, where he pictures “poverty, stupidity, political corruption, and ruling class doing a very poor imitation of Englishness,” for which he is sometimes criticized as it suggests his affection to the times of colonialism and confirms the stereotypes of the “Third World” (Nico 90). Naipaul was raised and educated in Trinidad, where he could learn about the Englishness only from textbooks and English literature (Head 176). He is a good example of a writer from former British colonies but he is specific in his approach because of his positive attitude to colonialism. Head points out his eagerness to be identified with Great Britain and England (Head 5). *In a Free State* (1971), a book which was awarded the Booker Prize, is a collage of three short stories about travels around Asia, Africa, America and Europe (King 87). King says that Naipaul is full of pessimism about the fall of the Empire and the disorder that goes with it. For example, sexuality, which is also an important theme in his works, is according to Naipaul a cause for dangerous hybridity of cultures and races, incompatible relationships or financial ruin (King 86-7). Another author who employs the theme of colonialism is for example Anita Desai. Desai is of Indian and German origin and born in Delhi (Nico 91). One of her early novels is *Clear Light of Day* (1980) which pictures women as an elementary constituting point of family and national identity. The story is drawn on the background of Indian independence and partition after the end of the colonial period (Ahmad 84-5). The above mentioned authors and books belong, according to Nico, to the group of “early postcolonial” or “exotic” because the setting of the stories take place in the colonized countries. Such stories provide an image of exoticism to western readers (Nico 91-2).

Another way of employing the theme of national and individual identity is its picturing on the background of migration. Bentley suggests that since the 1950s Britain has been noticeably multicultural because of people who moved from the Caribbean, Africa and South East Asia (and other territories). “The immigrant experience tends to involve a mixture of assimilation and multiculturalism, which is often dependent on other issues such as class, gender and religion,” (Bentley 18). The problem of adopting and integration of immigrants into the new society, which Nico calls “domestic”, is a significant part

of postcolonial literature. Nico highlights that “the filiations between the ‘exotic’ and ‘domestic’” is what shaped the “the postcolonial literature in the 1990s and early 2000s,” (Nico 92).

A specific example of the cultural clash is *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) by Hanif Kureishi, which deals with Englishness as opposed to Indianness on the background of immigration. The main themes of the book are (sub)urbanism and national identity. Karim, the main protagonist and also the narrator, is of mixed origin. His father is an Indian and his mother English, but he considers himself to be an Englishman.

My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don’t care – Englishman I am (though not proud of it), from the South London suburbs and going somewhere. (Kureishi 3)

The aforementioned citation covers the first lines of the book and it serves as an introduction of the narrator. The Buddha in the title of the novel refers to his father Haroon who is performing Buddha for middle/class white friends of his mistress Eva. His performance is not derived from his personal interaction with the religion in India but from books (Procter 109). The book traces the process of Karim’s growing and, because of his presence in multiple social classes, it “allows Kureishi to comment on various issues of cultural politics including class, race, sexuality and gender,” (Bentley 161)

Salman Rushdie is an Indian-born author writing in English. He is a laureate of the Man Booker Prize which he received for *Midnight’s Children* (1981). Rushdie’s collection of short stories which employ the theme of Englishness is called *East, West* (1994). The book consists of three sections of short stories and its main concern, as the title suggest, is the relationship between the Eastern and the Western world. Rushdie analyses the prejudices and the assumptions of the religious East and the secular West. The first one is called “East”, and it contains three stories which take place in India. The title of the

second part is “West”. And the last part, which is according to Taylor the most successful, is called “East, West”. Taylor says that the story called “The Courtier”, which is about an Indian boy trying to gain British citizenship, can be considered a highpoint of the book. (Taylor). “The Courtier” is Rushdie’s exploration of the chaos which occurred after the end of the Empire. Rushdie uses an immigrant community in London to illustrate the interaction of immigrants and British citizens.

Another example of a novel which employs the theme of migrancy is *White Teeth* (2000) by Zadie Smith. The main plot is based on a relationship between a Bengali Muslim Samad and an Englishman Archie who were brought together by serving in the army during the Second World War. The book’s main themes are various ethnicities and the consequences of colonialism but, at the same time, Mullan mentions that the “ethnic and cultural identities of the characters are so various that Smith seems to be taking and enjoying new liberties rather than plotting the consequences of empire” (Mullan). Head sees *White teeth* as a celebration as well as a cautionary of English multiculturalism (Head 183).

The truth is that the majority of works concerned with the theme of Englishness is drawn on the background of multiculturalism and national clashes. However, the authors of the novels which were chosen for the purposes of this thesis deal with other than multicultural aspects of Englishness. Another example of an author dealing with theme of Englishness with no regards to multiculturalism is Peter Acroyd. Acroyd is famous for his succession of tales about London from *The Great Fire of London* (1982) to recent works such as *The Lambs of London* (2004). He uses the theme of history of England, blurs it with present days and emphasises the interactions and similarities between present and past lives and/or the interaction of fictional and real events and figures. An example of his work which uses the interaction of fictional and real features is *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994) which interlocks serial East End murders committed by the so-called Limehouse Golem and the Victorian music hall. The narration of *Chatterton* (1987) takes place concurrently in three

centuries. The central theme of the book is plagiarism and, as in most of Acroyd's works, it blurs the real English literary history with fiction.

Postcolonial British literature is enriched by many new themes which are related to "national identity, race, immigration and multiculturalism" (Bentley 65). Although the theme of Englishness or English national identity occurs in contemporary fiction quite regularly the ways of its employment differ significantly. The theme of Englishness can serve as a tool of reflection of the disillusion and national confusion after the end of colonialism, as a reaction to the raising migration of citizens from the whole world and its consequences.

1.3 Julian Barnes and Kazuo Ishiguro

Julian Barnes, was born on 19th January 1946 in Leicester. After finishing the City of London School he started studying modern languages at Magdalen College in Oxford from which he successfully graduated in 1968. For three years after graduation he was working as lexicographer and later as a literary editor and a television critic (Ryan). Some of his books were published under his pseudonym Dan Cavanagh. He uses genre of novels or short stories (British council). Kazuo Ishiguro was born on 8 November 1954 in Nagasaki. At the age of his 5, the family moved to Great Britain. While studying at University of Kent (field of English and Philosophy) he was working as a community worker. He met Angela Carter during his postgraduate studies of Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia. Since the early 80's he has been devoted to writing of fiction, drama and short stories (British Council).

Shibata and Sugano imply that Kazuo Ishiguro's goal is to be readable in the whole world. He also tailors his works for translation in order to avoid translation errors and further incomprehension of a novel or a short story. For that he is often called "an international novelist" (Shibata, Sugano 20). Ishiguro and his themes are non-offending whereas Julian Barnes is concerned with much more controversial themes. For example, *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* satirises the story of Noah's ark when the first chapter is narrated by a woodworm which may be offending to Christian readers as it deconstructs the biblical way of narration of the story of Noah's ark.

None of the authors employs the theme of Englishness and national identity only in the books chosen for the purposes of this thesis. Two of the early Ishiguro's novels deal with national identity as well. *A Pale of the Hills* (1982), Ishiguro's first novel, is narrated by in-England living Japanese widow, Etsuko, who recalls her life in Japan. Other novel employing the motif of Japan after Second World War is *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986) which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. The main character is Ono, a retiring artist, who is haunted by his past (British Council). The two aforementioned novels by

Ishiguro deal with what could be called “Japaneseness” and Japanese identity in personal and national sense. According to Childs, *Flaubert’s Parrot* (1984) and *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* (1989) are Barnes’ most experimental works. The second named is “a novel of history and a series of generic experiments,” (Childs 72). Englishness as a theme is dealt with in the second chapter called “The Visitors” which is about a hijacked ship. The end of this particular chapter is about separation of the people on board according to their nationality. Other Barnes’ work which employs the theme of Englishness and national identity is *Arthur and George* (2005). The main plotline of the story, which is set in Edwardian England, is concerned with false accusations of George Edalji based on racial prejudice. The other character introduced in the title is Arthur Conan Doyle who is trying to help George.

Julian Barnes has been nominated for the prestigious Booker Prize for fiction three times (*Flaubert’s Parrot*, *England, England*, *Arthur and George*) and finally has won it with *The Sense of an Ending* in 2011 (British Council). The third novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, was awarded the Booker Prize in 1989 (British council).

2. Practical Part

2.1 The Remains of the Day and England, England

The historical backgrounds of the novels chosen for this thesis vary. *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro is set on the background of the inter-war period of the 1920s and the 1930s whereas *England, England* by Julian Barnes takes place in late 1990s. Bentley suggests that the second named book resembles the policy of Margaret Thatcher which stressed free market and importance of economy as such (Bentley). The first mentioned may be regarded as a historical novel as it refers mostly to the first half of 20th century whereas *England, England* is a dystopian vision of post-modern society.

The narration of *The Remains of the Day* is set in 1956 but most of the novel covers the 1920s. The main protagonist is an ageing butler of Darlington Hall, Stevens, who is also the narrator. His life is fully devoted to his job and his lifetime goal is to be one of the greatest butlers. Stevens has dedicated his best years of service to Lord Darlington, who turns out a sympathizer with the Nazis and Hitler's Germany. After Lord Darlington's death his new master is Mr Farraday, an American who bought the Darlington hall. Stevens is a person of past and the book is collection of his memories concerning mainly the service in Darlington Hall and his relationship with Miss Kenton. The background of his narration shows the political setting after the First World War and the Versailles Treaty. The main themes of the book are Englishness, memory and love. The whole novel is basically constituted of flashbacks to the 1920s and Stevens' recollection of his service in Darlington Hall and his relationship with Miss Kenton. Stevens identifies his relationship with Miss Kenton as a friendship but may be seen as a platonic love. The theme of Englishness is pictured here as a heritage of the imperial period which Stevens sees as "the good old times".

Julian Barnes' *England, England* is a satirical image of postmodern consumer society set in the late 1990s. The main plot is about a creation of a theme park on the Isle of Wight which contains all typical features of Englishness

which are derived from the tourist interests. The park is a project of Sir Jack Pitman, a successful businessman, and it is named simply England, England. The park is a replica of things associated with England and English identity. One of the main protagonists is Martha Cochrane, an employee of the theme park, whose mostly blurred childhood memories are also the book's concern. The main themes of the novel include Englishness, history and consumer society. Englishness and English history are objects of merchandizing. The novel is a satirical image of consumer society whose ignorance is repeatedly exaggerated.

2.2 The Image of English Land in *The Remains of the Day* and *England, England*

The Remains of the Day employs the image of the English landscape especially during Stevens' travels around England. On his journey Stevens travels through Salisbury, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall. He admires the countryside while he drives through it in his Ford and repeatedly stresses its uniqueness and beauty. The qualities Stevens assigns to English landscape are noticeably similar to the qualities he connects with his own personality and occupation of a butler. In fact after describing the English countryside he fluently transforms to characteristic of a butler. In both cases he uses the same attributes, such as restraint or calm. Another denominator which the landscape has in common with the qualities of a butler is, according to Stevens, "greatness".

The English landscape at its finest - such as I saw this morning - possesses a quality that the landscapes of other nations, however more superficially dramatic, inevitably fail to possess. It is, I believe, a quality that will mark out the English landscape to any objective observer as the most deeply satisfying in the world, and this quality is probably best summed up by the term 'greatness'. [...] What is a 'great' butler? I recall many hours of enjoyable discussion on this topic [...]. (Ishiguro 28-29)

The aforementioned citation illustrates that the attribute "great" is used by Stevens in connection with landscape as well as with the occupation of a butler. It is customary to use the attribute "great" in connection to a dramatic, impressive

and spectacular landscape which is the exact the opposite of Stevens' opinion. "Dramatic" and "spectacular" are qualities usually assigned to the most beautiful places of the world but using the attributes "calm" or "restrained" to describe the English landscape serves Stevens much better as he is able to switch directly to the qualities of a great butler. In addition, the comparison of the English landscape with the landscapes of other nations may seem preposterous as Stevens has never travelled abroad and knows foreign countries only from encyclopaedias and the *National Geographic Magazine*. Despite this he is firmly sure the English landscape is the most beautiful.

The image of the English land can also be detected in *England, England*, however, the way of its description is significantly different. While Ishiguro describes the actual countryside, Barnes uses a map and focuses the description on the shape of the country or its parts. The opening part of *England, England* is about Martha Cochrane and her childhood memories. She has a very vivid memory of her playing with jigsaw puzzles of the counties of England. The counties are described according to their geographical shape and position in England.

Then there was Kent pointing its finger or its nose out at the continent in warning – careful foreigners over there; Oxfordshire playing spoons with Buckinghamshire and squashing Berkshire flat; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire like side-by-side carrots or pine-cones; the smooth, sea-lion curve of Cardigan. (Barnes 5)

The above provided citation is part of the prologue which is concerned with Martha's childhood and her first memory. The image of the jigsaw puzzles is very important for Martha for two reasons. Firstly, she regards it her first vivid memory which is one of the concerns of the first thirty pages and, secondly, she associates the memories of it with memories of her father who abandoned her. The image of jigsaw puzzle may be also understood as an attempt to construct her own identity on the background of the national identity. Martha is deeply sure that her father has the missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle and when they meet he would give it back to her. The missing piece symbolizes the unresolved situation

with Martha's father as well as the construction of her identity as a child in relationship to her father and in broader context to her country (England). The description of English lands as a map reoccurs. Another example is the part of deciding where to place the theme park.

‘The Isle of Wight,’ they answered in straggly unison. ‘Exactly. Look at her, snuggling into the soft underbelly of England. The little cutie. The little beauty. Look at the shape of her. Pure diamond, that’s what struck me straight away.’ (Barnes 62)

The speaker in this citation is Sir Jack Pitman, a highly materialistic person looking for the best way to make a fortune. His comparison of the Isle of Wight to a diamond resembles his own nature – to see money and fortune in everything possible.

Regardless whether the image of the English land refers to a map or to actual countryside it emphasises the theme of Englishness in both of the books. Ishiguro's presentation of the countryside is traditional, however, the image of English landscape provided by Stevens is rather ironic for the reader for its falseness. Stevens is challenged by Ishiguro to make self-justification basically throughout the whole novel and the image of the English landscape works in line with this concept. Stevens attempts to convince the readers that the English countryside is the “greatest” in the world but a reader relying on Stevens point of view may, very likely, regard the English landscape boring and flat which is the exact opposite of great.

The image of a jigsaw puzzle in *England England* is symbolic. It points to the unclosed situation with Martha's father as well as to the construction of her personal identity in relationship to her family heritage and in broader context to her country (England). The corresponding map-like description provided by Sir Jack is a complementation of the describing device and resembles his own personality. Ishiguro uses a traditional way of describing the English land(scape) as such whereas Barnes is in his perception of English land much more unconventional. The concept of England as a jigsaw puzzle is a unique image.

2.3 Genuineness and Alternation of Englishness

The Englishness to which Stevens refers in his narration is only an illusion which he uses to protect his personal identity. The reason for the life in memories and persistent admiration of the old manners lies in the fact that if he admitted that he lives in an overcome illusion it would make his whole life meaningless and useless. Stevens is a pitiable character whose world is long overcome and outmoded. Stevens and his beliefs are challenged by Ishiguro throughout the whole novel. Ishiguro plays with him and puts him in situations which should disillusion him from the world of Lords, butlers and English gentlemen in which he lives. The Englishness to which Stevens refers in *The Remains of the Day* is fabricated and rather artificial. Ishiguro uses irony to mock the Englishness that Stevens represents and marks it as something outdated. However, although Stevens believes that the inspiration of the old (imperial) times can be a source of the true Englishness, the impression that a reader has after reading the book shows Englishness as artificial, a no longer existing feature that has from Stevens' times changed very significantly. Throughout the book Stevens stresses the importance of originality and the uniqueness of specific English features such as the butler or the English gentleman. He attempts to deal with the problem of self-identification by defending his precious values which he claims to be exclusively English. An example of such defending is his seriousness when he speaks about his profession.

It is sometimes said that butlers only truly exist in England. Other countries, whatever title is actually used, have only manservants. I tend to believe this is true. Continentals are unable to be butlers because they are as a breed incapable of the emotional restraint which only the English race is capable of. [...] when you think of a great butler, he is bound, almost by definition, to be an Englishman. (Ishiguro 43)

The intentional irony provided by Ishiguro in the aforementioned citation shows his narrow-mindedness and also the protection which Stevens uses to maintain the idea of a butler which he has in mind. The genuineness of the English house to which an English butler is bound is also an object of concern for

Stevens' new American master. Mr Farraday is concerned whether or not he possesses a genuine English house with genuine butler after a small misunderstanding caused by Stevens, after he denies having worked for Lord Darlington in order to avoid unpleasant questions concerning his lordship.

‘I mean to say, Stevens, this is a genuine grand old English house, isn't it? That's what I paid for. And you're a genuine old-fashioned English butler, not some waiter pretending to be one. You're the real thing, aren't you? That's what I wanted, isn't that what I have? ’ (Ishiguro 124)

Mr Farraday's reaction shows how important it is for him to have an authentic English butler and an old English house where once a real Lord lived. Mr. Farraday's wish may be caused by the fact that as an American he wants to interact with the history of Great Britain or Europe in general. What Stevens does not realize is the fact that Mr. Farraday regards him as a historical artifact and part of a glorious English history which is now over its zenith. The kind of Englishness presented by Stevens is outdated as he is perceived as a representative of the old times of the colonial world.

The main aspect of Englishness presented in *England, England* is concerned with replicating and alternating the original England. The alternation of English cultural heritage as a main theme of the book is also a device of the deconstruction of the authenticity of Englishness. The concept of Englishness in *England, England* may seem only as a replication and alternation but on a personal level of some characters a concern with English national identity can be detected. Sir Jack Pitman is a founder and a leader of the whole project of replication of England. He is a person only interested in money, the absolute opposite of a gentlemanly behavior. His reaction after the presentation of the “Fifty Quintencenses of Englishness” is an illustration of his rude manners and his working-class language.

Who the fuck did they think they were, going around saying things like that about England? His England. What did they know? Bloody tourists, thought Sir Jack. (Barnes 86)

The aforementioned passage expresses Sir Jack's hypocrisy. His indignation over the fact that foreigners decide what is and what is not truly English seem preposterous as he later accepts the list as it was presented and therefore lets the "bloody tourist" decide the quintessences of Englishness. Sir Jack Pitman is a vulgar eccentric person and a leader of the megalomaniac project and the English national identity means only money to him. Martha Cochrane's sentiment for the English identity is mainly covered by her childhood memory of jigsaw puzzle of the counties of England and by the memories of the rhymed important events of English history which she learned at school.

Barnes stresses the artificiality of the concept of Englishness which leads to the extreme situation of alternating it. The novel can be read as a warning against people such as Pitman who believe in stereotypes created over the time and who are never satisfied with what they have. In this sense Pitman is an exaggerated prototypical person of contemporary consumer society which is criticized for its preference for replicas and artificiality rather than originality. *The Remains of the Day* employ the theme of Englishness also among the main once, however, unlike in *England, England*, it is used as a tool for justification of the meaningfulness of Stevens' life. The novels seem to use different approaches towards the theme of Englishness but they have certain aspects in common. The novels share a non-serious concept of Englishness. Barnes approaches the theme of Englishness in a way of its replication and uses clichéd associations of Englishness which results in a dystopian parody of contemporary consumer society. Ishiguro, on the other hand, uses clichéd associations of Englishness such as politeness, calmness, restraint or dignity as a top values of the main character whose point of view he challenges on a personal level regarding his relationship with Miss Kenton, on a political level regarding his problematic link to a collaborating Lord, and on a level of the new world arrangement after the fall of the Empire.

2.4 The “Fifty Quintessences of Englishness” in *The Remains of the Day*

The main difference between the presentation of Englishness in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *The Remains of the Day* and Julian Barnes’ *England, England* is their explicitness. Ishiguro works with the Englishness on the background of the story. He uses, Stevens, to represent stereotypical image of a genuine English butler. The English landscape is described while Stevens travels around England. The elements are not considered crucial for the story but they provide the novel an English outlook. On the other hand the explicitness and straightforwardness of Barnes’ *England, England* is much more noticeable. Although Ishiguro does not describe Englishness forthrightly as Barnes does, it is to some extent applicable to the list of typically English features, traditions, events and personalities.

The list of everything associated with Englishness, so called the “Fifty Quintessences of Englishness”, may be regarded as one of the best examples of straightforward, though of course satirical, presentation of Englishness.

They were not being asked to free-associate; there was no pressure of time on the respondents, no preselected multiple choice. ‘If we are giving people what they want,’ Sir Jack had insisted, ‘then we should at least have the humility to find out what that might be.’ (Barnes 83)

The results of the survey present a list of top fifty associations of Englishness. Ishiguro uses many of the quintessences in *The Remains of the Day*. Number four on the list presented in *England, England* is “Class System” which can be observed in Ishiguro’s book as well. The English class system is referred to when Lord Darlington speaks about the importance of strong leadership which has Germany or Italy.

‘Look at Germany and Italy, Stevens. See what strong leadership can do if it’s allowed to act. None of this suffrage nonsense there. [...] The man in the street can’t be expected to know enough about politics, economics, world commerce and what have you.’ (Ishiguro 199)

Lord Darlington proves his elitist stand and argues against democracy. The image of social classes is also embodied by Stevens who as a butler represents the intermediate stage of the social classes. He speaks almost like an aristocrat, the countryside people even mistake him for one, but at the same time, he sits at the table with the rest of the employees of Darlington Hall. Number ten is “Imperialism”. Though imperialism is not directly mentioned by Stevens the whole story covers last decades of the British Empire. Very important is also the present year of Stevens’ narration, 1956, the year when Britain was going through the Suez Crisis. Number twelve on the list of quintessences is “Snobbery”. Snobbery is presented in *The Remains of the Day* indirectly when Stevens describes his time on duty, habits of Lord Darlington and it takes part in nearly the whole plot. Stevens’ dialogue with Mr Farraday at the beginning of the first chapter can be regarded as a good example of Stevens’ snobbery opposed to Mr Farraday’s casual behaviour.

‘My, my, Stevens. A lady-friend. And at your age.’ This was a most embarrassing situation, one in which Lord Darlington would never have placed an employee. But then I do not mean to imply anything derogatory about Mr Farraday; he is, after all, an American gentleman and his ways are often different. (Ishiguro 14)

Stevens’ snobbish manners are here opposed to Mr Farraday’s casualness. Snobbery is, to some extent, closely connected to the whole concept of having a butler and servants in Darlington Hall and with the regularity of tea-drinking which is pictured several times in the novel. “Cup of Tea” is also number nineteen on the list. Stevens’ emotional flatness corresponds with number forty-six which is “Emotional Frigidity”. Stevens shows his emotional frigidity throughout the whole novel. His way of speaking and behaving is deprived of emotions and his reactions to personal interactions are rather robotic. Stevens’ reaction to the news of his fathers’ death may serve as the best illustration of his aforementioned emotional flatness.

But almost immediately, she [Miss Kenton] resumed her composure and asked in a steady voice: ‘Will you come up and see him?’ ‘I’m very busy

just now, Miss Kenton. In a little while perhaps.’ ‘In that case, Mr Stevens, will you permit me to close his eyes?’ ‘I would be most grateful if you would, Miss Kenton.’ (Ishiguro 106)

After this conversation, Stevens continues his work just as his father would wish him to do. Stevens proves his emotional frigidity also in terms of his relationship with Miss Kenton to whom he is not able to express his feelings. Other items on the list which can also be found in *The Remains of the Day* are for example “The Times” which Stevens mentions while defending Lord Darlington’s interactions with Germans.

And again, you will hear these same persons talking as though Lord Darlington did something unusual in receiving hospitality from Nazis on several trips he made to Germany during those years. I do not suppose they would speak quite so readily if, say The Times were to publish even one of the guest lists of these banquets given by the Germans around the time of the Nuremberg Rally. (Ishiguro 136-37)

Stevens’ justification of Lord Darlington can be read as a step away from Lord Darlington’s collaborative tendencies and in fact a self-purification of Stevens. He even stresses his innocence later.

It is hardly my fault if his lordship’s life and work have turned out today to look, at best, a sad waist – and it is quite illogical that I should feel any regret or shame on my account. (Ishiguro 201)

The fact that Stevens stress mentions that he has no regrets appears untrustworthy. Another example of an image of Englishness in *The Remains of the Day* which matches the list is Winston Churchill who is also one of the real political figures that Stevens mentions in his narration.

Barnes provides a satirical image of features usually associated with Englishness. Some of the quintessences feature in *The Remain of the Day* which implies that Ishiguro intentionally uses clichéd associations of Englishness. The fact that *The Remains of the Day* refers to the past must be considered as the “Quintessences of

Englishness” are dealing with a modern perspective of Englishness which significantly influences the selection of the items on the list.

Conclusion

The theoretical part of this thesis showed that the way of approaching towards the theme of Englishness is generally bound to works concerned with the phenomenon multiculturalism. However, both of the novels chosen for the purposes of this thesis can be excluded from this group as they employ the theme of Englishness as a self-reflexive image of the English identity and not on the background of cultural clashes.

As the first chapter of the practical part established, the settings of the novels differ significantly. *The Remains of the Day* can be regarded as a historical novel whereas *England, England* is a dystopian vision set present and near future. Ishiguro is concerned with the Englishness which is long overcome and chooses Stevens as a representative of the old times and, to make his memories and believes more personal, also as the narrator of the plot. Consequently, the Englishness to which Stevens refers can be regarded rather fabricated and artificial. Ishiguro deals with the theme of Englishness mainly on a personal level and Stevens is the main representative of the personal attachment to the English identity. Barnes, on the other hand, refers to the Englishness as to the national identity and epitomizes it by the cultural heritage which is an object of touristic interest. Barnes criticises the consumer society by exaggerating the contemporary tendency to make the world as efficient as possible, which inspires a reader to think about the life-style of contemporary world. In this aspect *England, England* may be regarded as a philosophical novel, which may seem preposterous, but the truth is that the book delivers negative prognosis of the society aiming.

Despite the fact that the setting of both of the novels is not linked at all, they have certain aspects in common when it comes to the conception of Englishness. One of the aspects that the novels have in common is their ironical tone. The persistent emotional stubbornness of Stevens is the most significant source or irony in *The Remains of the Day*. His inability to express feelings, his robotic interpersonal reaction and constant praise of traditional English features may be considered as a high point of Ishiguro's irony regarding the fact that

Stevens' world is a only an illusion. While Ishiguro points to the changes which society underwent after the end of the British Empire, Barnes refers to changes that mankind suffers from with the uptrend of globalization. His ironical tone pervades the whole book. The central theme of replicating Englishness is itself a mockery of contemporary consumer society. The criticism of consumer society is evident and it works in line with sociological criticism of contemporary society. The thesis titled "McDonaldization" written by George Ritzer, an American sociologist, who points to the over-efficacy of contemporary society, particularly of tourism, may serve as a good example of a work with similar message as Barnes' novel. Ishiguro, on the other hand, does not criticize the whole after-war society but he points to the human tendency to suppress the reality and to live in memory, in this case - Stevens' memory.

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