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USING THE FICTION OF KAZUO ISHIGURO TO DECONSTRUCT CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

Bachelor Thesis

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

V Plzni dne 21. dubna 2021 ……………………………….

Barbora Hanzlovská

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ABSTRACT

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Supervisor: William Bradley Vice, Ph.D.

The thesis focuses on the early fiction of a cosmopolitan writer, Kazuo Ishiguro. Born in Japan and living in the United Kingdom since the age of five, Ishiguro used the knowledge of the above-mentioned countries in his early fiction. Among other phenomena, all of the analysed novels comprise numerous cultural stereotypes. Stereotypes can be studied from psychological point of view, or within imagology, the study of generalizations from literature. In both viewpoints, stereotypes can be divided into positive and negative. The analysis proves that the chosen novels work with negative generalizations of the involved cultures, while positive stereotypes are barely used at all. The thesis also works with the idea that Ishiguro built his novels around an imaginary Japan, and uses images of samurai, while analysing the Japanese fiction – *A Pale View of Hills* and *An Artist of the Floating World*, and even *The Remains of the Day* though an English environment and context. The very English novel presents a unique cluster of both cultures, despite appearing very English at first glance. When going deeper in the novel, it is possible to find associations with samurai culture and Ishiguro’s Japanese origins, which is confirmed in the thesis during the deconstruction of the novel’s stereotypes.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Within literature, some writers are considered regional, while others may be labelled as cosmopolitan. Kazuo Ishiguro is often associated with the latter term. He is one of Britain's most notable authors, whose work is appreciated internationally. What makes Ishiguro's novels successful on the international level is his unique style of writing and the themes he works with in his novels. Ishiguro does not construct his novels around a strong plot, on the contrary, he is known for writing slow paced psychological novels, which mostly deal with memories, the "dignity" of the protagonist, repression of his or her emotions and with the idea that people can work hard their whole lives trying to achieve a certain goal, only to realise when they are older that their hard work might have been a complete waste of time or talent. His novels are set in many different locations around the world, from a traditional Japanese house to a mansion in the English countryside. Such locations are not necessarily reflecting the real Japan or Britain; they are metaphorical images of these places. At the same time, the characters of Ishiguro's novels may also be described as metaphorical because they are often presented as national stereotypes, like the very English butler in *The Remains of the Day*. Such unique approaches make Ishiguro's novels not only understandable in the United Kingdom but across all continents.

Ishiguro can be referred to as a cosmopolitan writer not only because of his work, but also because of his Japanese origins. He was born in Nagasaki, Japan, although he spent the majority of his life in the United Kingdom. His family moved from Japan when he was five years old. It was supposed to be a temporary move, but his family eventually stayed in the UK, and Ishiguro grew up in a suburban environment, outside of London. Ishiguro studied English and Philosophy at the University of Kent and later finished his studies with the Creative Writing Program at the University of East Anglia, where he started writing the first of his eight novels, *A Pale View of Hills*. Besides novels, Ishiguro has published several short stories, and one of his early stories, "A Family Supper", has a great significance for this thesis, because it works with many ideas, which are further elaborated in Ishiguro's earliest novels.

Ishiguro's short story "A Family Supper" was first published in 1983 as a part of a collection of short stories called *Firebird 2.* It is a short story situated in a traditional Japanese house. The narrator of the story is a young man, who is originally from Japan, but currently lives in California. During the story time, he goes back to Japan after several years, to visit his father and his sister. The story appears to be very simple at first, but it unleashes a lot of mystery around the family. The narrator's mother has died couple years back due to being poisoned by a fugu fish and the father's business partner committed suicide after the collapse of their firm. The family discusses the circumstances of the suicide while the father prepares supper. "A Family Supper" serves as the keystone to this thesis.

The thesis further deals with an analysis of three of Ishiguro's earliest novels. The first novel, *A Pale View of Hills*, was published in 1982. *A Pale View of Hills* is a novel about Etsuko, a middle-aged Japanese woman living in England. The story begins quite recently after the suicide of her older daughter, Keiko. Etsuko feels guilty about what happened to her daughter, and while trying to find salvation for herself, she brings readers back into her past, when she was living in Nagasaki, Japan, during the postwar era. In particular, she shares memories of a summer, when she was pregnant with Keiko and created a strong friendship with a rather mysterious woman, Sachiko, and her daughter Mariko. Back then, Sachiko planned on leaving Japan with an American man, while her daughter Mariko hated the man and did not want to leave Japan with him. Through the story of Sachiko, Etsuko is able to reveal the truth about her own past, because their stories overlap in many aspects.

Ishiguro's second novel *An Artist of the Floating World*, was published a few years later, in 1986, and it is Ishiguro's last novel until this date, which takes place in Japan. More specifically it is a novel situated in after-war Japan. Its main protagonist is an elderly artist Masuji Ono, whose paintings were rather influential during the war. At least that is what Ono believes in. In the present time, his younger daughter, Noriko, is going through her second marriage negotiations and his older daughter, Setsuko, suspects her father of being the reason why Noriko's first negotiation a year ago ended up in a withdrawal of the groom's family. Therefore, Ono is asked to take certain precautionary steps to make sure that everything would end well this time. In doing so, he takes readers back into his past and shares memories of his childhood and of his career as an artist in the floating world.

Ishiguro's third novel, *The Remains of the Day*, was published in 1989 and it differs from the previous novels in several ways. *The Remains of the Day* takes place in England in 1956. It is a story of an elderly butler Stevens, who dedicated his entire life to his occupation. In particular, he dedicated his professional life to Lord Darlington, an English gentleman, living in Darlington Hall. When Lord Darlington died, an American gentleman Mr Farraday bought Darlington Hall. At the beginning of the novel, Mr Farraday gives Stevens an opportunity to take some days off and Stevens decides to use these days off to travel to the West country, to visit the woman of his life and a former housekeeper of Darlington Hall, Miss Kenton. During his motoring journey, Stevens takes readers back to his memories from 1920s and

1930s, when Darlington Hall was a place of important international affairs. It is also the period when both Stevens's father and Miss Kenton worked there. The memories make Stevens question, whether it was a good choice after all, giving up on his personal life, in order to serve Lord Darlington, a man who turned out to be a Nazi sympathizer.

The third novel may differ in location, but it shares many similar traits with the previous novels. The narrators of all the novels are older people, who while dealing with their personal or professional crisis, bring back memories of their past. While reminiscing of the past, the narrators are trying to find some sense of appreciation for their past actions as well as convince the readers, as well as themselves, that their past actions or their whole careers were not a complete waste. All of the novels also share the historical element, because they all take place during an important time in history, either after World War II, or during the Suez crisis. Dealing with such events is one of the aspects which makes Ishiguro's novels international, because these historical events, which affected the whole world, are introduced from the perspective of more or less ordinary people in their everyday life.

On top of that, all of the novels, as well as the short story contain stereotypical images of British and Japanese culture. When dealing with cultural stereotypes in the novels, it is important to realise that Ishiguro's perception of Japan, when writing the novels, was not based on his own experiences, because he left Japan as a little boy. Therefore, the Japan described in his work is mostly based on speculation and imagination. It is most likely that even if Ishiguro were personally more familiar with Japan, he would still use the imaginary, metaphorical Japan in his novels instead, as it serves his style of writing better and shifts the focus on the psychological aspect, instead of a perfect description of a particular place. This idea is supported by the fact that despite being very familiar with England, he used the metaphorical, imaginary England in his third novel as well.

With the ability of shifting from reality, Ishiguro's novels open up the world of cultural stereotypes. Cultural stereotypes have the ability to bring a sense of familiarity to an unfamiliar place, because people generally do have preconceived notions about various cultures. In the case of the thesis, it is the British and Japanese cultures, which are being stereotyped. In a simple way, Japan can be described as a land of geishas, cherry trees and samurai. The most prominent stereotypes, which are introduced in the novels, are built up on this mythical Japan. Japanese suicides, arranged marriages, and the position of Japanese wife within a family are discussed in both Japanese novels. In contrast with that, the third novel, *The Remains of the Day*, presents the most stereotyped images of the British culture

– the butler, the English gentleman, and the English country house. However, I would argue that Ishiguro smuggles in hidden samurai images into his most English novel as well.

No matter what culture the stereotypes are associated with, whether Japan or England, they have one thing in common – negative stereotypes. Especially the stereotypes more or less connected to the narrators, such as suicides, Japanese wives, or the figure of the English butler, could all be considered unflattering generalizations. In order to support this argument, it is important to study the phenomenon of stereotypes from multiple points of views, which is the focus of the theoretical part of the thesis. Throughout the study of stereotypes, I will use the short story “A Family Supper” as an instructional case, which will serve as a foundation for the further deconstruction of the three novels.

II. STEREOTYPES AND IMAGOLOGY

Kazuo Ishiguro is known for working with memory, emotions, and for writing psychological novels using a first-person narrator, one who is reflecting on his or her past experiences and choices. On top of that, Ishiguro's novels are full of generalizations. Such generalizations are audible as echoes of nationalism and cultural stereotypes. The term stereotype is defined in the journal article "Stereotypes, prejudice, and depression: The integrated perspective" as "almost any thought that oversimplifies a person or group" (Cox et al., 2012, p. 429). The article was published in the journal *Perspectives on Psychological Science* and the authors study stereotypes from a psychological point of view. Cox et al. claim that stereotypes are often oversimplified and fixed overgeneralizations. Such stereotypes can be about many people or just one person, and they can exist in the minds of many people or only one person, which is also the reason why it is so easy to create a stereotype in the first place (Cox et al., 2012).

In the case of studying stereotypes from literature, the term imagology may be more accurate. The editors Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen in their critical survey *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters* (2007) define imagology as simply the analysis of national stereotypes in literature. In his newer article called "On using ethnicity to make sense of the world", Leerssen (2016) claims that: "Imagology studies national characterizations as a cross-national dynamics and from a transnational point of view" (p. 14). Imagology is a method of humanities, with the aim to "understand the discursive logic and representational set of cultural and poetic conventions" (Leerssen, 2016, p. 19). When putting it in context with Ishiguro's fiction, readers can see how his texts stand for the characteristics of the cultures they represent.

Ishiguro's first novels are set in Japan, despite the fact that Ishiguro left the country at the age of five. In fact, the image of Japan that Ishiguro had created in his mind over the years was one of the reasons why he decided to pursue the career of a writer in the first place. In his *Nobel Lecture*, Ishiguro explained that:

> [L]ong before I'd ever thought to create fictional worlds in prose, I was busily constructing in my mind a richly detailed place called 'Japan' – a place to which I in some way belonged, and from which I drew a certain sense of my identity and my confidence. The fact that I'd never physically returned to Japan during that time only served to make my own vision of the country more vivid and personal… For the time I reached my mid-twenties, I was starting to accept that 'my' Japan perhaps didn't much correspond to any place I could go to on a

> plane… the Japan that existed in my head might always have been an emotional construct put together by a child out of memory, imagination, and speculation. (Ishiguro, 2017, para. 15-16)

It is arguable, that Ishiguro's image of Japan that he had created as a child resembled a mythical land of samurai and geisha. In a sense, samurai culture affected the real Japan, as well as the Japan described by Ishiguro in his novels. The stereotypes that essentially make the novels and the short story so Japanese, from *seppuku* to arranged marriages, may have originated in the samurai culture, which was part of Japan for centuries. Samurai can be pictured as a "stoic warrior, who holds bravery, honour, and personal loyalty above life itself, with ritual suicide by disembowelment representing a respected alternative to dishonour or defeat" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021, para. 2). It is possible to find many of these concepts in the novels. The concept of loyalty and honour follows to some extent all of the narrators. Ironically, the idea of blind loyalty is most apparent in the case of the butler in *The Remains of the Day*. That suggests that the British butler may be connected to the Japanese samurai in a way. Moreover, some critics claim that even though *The Remains of the Day* takes place in England, and has the most stereotypical English characters, it is still a very Japanese novel in the core.

With or without the image of samurai in mind, Ishiguro's early novels have an apparent feeling of Japaneseness, from the choice of characters to locations. The same applies for the Englishness in his third novel. Christine Berberich, the author of *The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth-Century Literature: Englishness and Nostalgia* (2007), claims that, "Ishiguro's novel uses quintessentially English stereotypes, such as the gentleman, the butler, and the trope of the country house, in order to reflect on national identity and, crucially, a national consciousness" (p. 135).

Despite growing up in England, Ishiguro did not describe the real England in *The Remains of the Day*. Ishiguro stated in an interview with Allan Vorda that:

> [T]he kind of England that I create in *The Remains of the Day* is not an England that I believe ever existed… What I'm trying to do here is to actually rework a particular myth about a certain kind of England. I think there is this very strong idea that exists in England at the moment, about an England where people lived in the not-so-distant past, that conformed to various stereotypical images. This is to say an England with sleepy, beautiful villages with very polite people and butlers and people taking tea on the lawn. (Vorda et al., 1991, p. 139)

Ishiguro used the mythical England, in order to convey the psychological aspects of the novel and highlight the generalized images.

The language Ishiguro uses in his novels in order to describe the cultural generalizations that I have mentioned, is a so-called ethnographic language, which is working with ethnotypes. It is apparent from the term that ethnotypes deal with ethnic identity. Ethnotypes are almost interchangeable with stereotypes, as “they are both present in our minds even while we are not conscious of their presents” (Leerssen, 2016, p. 25). Moreover, “ethnotypes never function by themselves, they always work in conjunction with other frames, especially gender, age, and class” (Leerssen, 2016, p. 26). Leerssen (2016) also writes about ethnotypes in “serious” literature as being used “backhandedly, as part of a more troubled or conflicted psychological profile or as an ironic interplay between how people see themselves, what the world expects from them, how these expectations are anticipated upon, and what misunderstandings or self-beguilement ensue from them” (p. 23). This defines the narrators of Ishiguro’s novels, because they often struggle with the way they perceive themselves and how other people might view them or their actions.

On the contrary, Ishiguro’s short story “A Family Supper” uses stereotypes (or ethnotypes) very obviously, considering the fact that the whole story is constructed around Japanese suicides. There are several explicit references to the samurai culture in the short story as well. Rebecca L. Walkowitz, who specializes in modernism and globalization at Rutgers University, analyses “A Family Supper” and other Ishiguro’s early fiction in her book *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation* (2006). In the book, Walkowitz (2006) studies how stereotypes function in “A Family Supper”, as the story provides “a good example of the relation between what may be called insider and outsider ethnographies” or more specifically “Japan’s stories about itself as opposed to the stories told about Japan” (p. 117).

As Ishiguro’s narrator explains at the start of the short story, “Fugu is a fish caught off the Pacific shores of Japan. The fish has held a special significance for me ever since my mother died through eating one” (Ishiguro, 1983, p. 207). Fugu fish, as said in the story, became popular in Japan after the war. People would serve it at home and invite neighbours and friends for dinner parties. Walkowitz points out that “after the war it was ‘all the rage’ to serve the poisonous fish as if to replace the traditional *seppuku* with a more sociable form of collective remorse” (2006, p. 117). What Walkowitz indicates is that people in Japan, who felt at loss after the war, were seeking for other ways of ending their suffering, than the “traditional” suicide.

The story is narrated by a young man who was born in Japan but spent the last couple of years living in California. At the beginning of the story, he returns back to Japan for a family visit, several years after his mother's death. Walkowitz points out that "since Ishiguro's name sounds Japanese, since he is writing in English and publishing his story in *Esquire*[1] magazine, since he seems to know about Japanese rituals and describe them much as one who has been living far from home, readers might imagine that the story of poisonous fish and hazardous dinner parties is true" (2006, p. 118). Perhaps some of it is true, but the story is expected to be a sort of parody or grotesque with the central topic being the Japanese suicide (Walkowitz, 2006). Ishiguro himself stated in an interview with Gregory Mason that: "The story was basically just a big trick, playing on Western readers' expectations about Japanese people who kill themselves. It's never stated, but Western readers are supposed to think that these people are going to commit mass suicide" (Ishiguro & Mason, 1989, p. 343).

With the parodic interpretation in mind, one enters the body of the short story. Readers learn that there are many unresolved conflicts within the family that Ishiguro presents indirectly. The father is ready to forget his son's "behaviour" in the past, the son recalls his father striking him when he was a boy, the sister contemplates immigrating to the United States with her boyfriend. However, these conflicts are not what the family talks about, "[w]hat the family does talk about, in implicit and explicit terms, is suicide" (Walkowitz, 2006, p. 118) In a conversation between the narrator and his sister, readers find out that after the collapse of the business, the father's business partner committed suicide by "cutting his stomach with a meat knife" after he turned gas on his wife and his two little girls (Ishiguro, 1983, p. 210). What the business partner performed on himself was *seppuku*, which is the suicide connected to the samurai. The narrator also points out in the beginning of the story, that his father is "particularly proud of the pure samurai blood that ran in the family" (Ishiguro, 1983, p. 207). Therefore, it does not come as a surprise, that while the narrator discusses the partner's suicide with him, the father calls his partner "a man of principle and honour" (Ishiguro, 1983, p. 208). The father also shares his belief that the mother's death might not have been an accident after all, as she had many worries and disappointments in her life. The irony is that "[w]ith the mother's death as background and the partner's suicide as foreground, one learns that the family is having a fish for dinner, which the father prepared by himself" (Walkowitz, 2006, p. 118). Perhaps if the story took place in a different environment, nobody would give a second thought about what kind of fish that was, but because the story takes place in Japan, and the samurai blood runs in the family, one may question whether it is the infamous fugu fish that the father prepared, or just a regular one.

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[1] The short story was published in Esquire magazine in 1990, 7 years after its first publishing in *Firebird 2*

After the supper, the narrator has a confronting conversation with his father, about the circumstances of his partner's death. The narrator asks his father, if he believes that his partner made a mistake, to which the father answers: "Why, of course. Do you see it otherwise?" (Ishiguro, 1983, p. 212). Walkowitz describes the ending, saying: "Ishiguro's story closes a few paragraphs later without resolution or consolation, it ends, moreover, without the sense that suicide is consolation for what cannot be found or retrieved, either as national past or even as national difference" (2006, p. 119). The father and the son do not suggest that suicide is a positive act, but they do acknowledge that the business partner valued different things than they did, and for the partner, it must have felt like a right thing to do.

Perhaps for the business partner, suicide was a positive act, after his professional failure, but in general, suicides cannot be considered a positive stereotype for the Japanese. It is essential to point out now, for the further references, what exactly a negative and positive stereotype is. From a psychological point of view, stereotypes can link people to characteristics that are negative, neutral, or positive (Cox et al., 2012). The most common stereotypes, I would argue, are the ones belonging to the group of negative stereotypes. An example of a negative stereotype is that Black people are uneducated. Neutral stereotype is for example the stereotype that the British enjoy football. An example of a positive stereotype is that Asians are good at maths. However, it is important to realise that even positive stereotypes can have negative undertones, because they set up unfair expectations on members of the stereotyped group (Cox et al., 2012). An Asian who is not good at maths may feel under pressure for being stereotyped in such category. Furthermore, despite Asians are great at maths, they are also stereotyped for being very emotionally cold. Black people may be generalized as unintelligent, but they are also stereotyped as great athletes. Therefore, it is arguable, that for every group, there is an opposing negative stereotype to the positive one (Czopp, 2008). In connection with the short story "A Family Supper", one can say that the Japanese are viewed as very hard-working people, who are devoted to their professions, but then there is a stereotypical view of committing suicides as an apology for a professional failure opposing it.

Walkowitz points out within her analysis that: "Ishiguro's story is about Japanese suicide, though not because the story is solely about Japan and not because Ishiguro thinks that suicide is a natural inclination of the Japanese. Rather, Ishiguro’s tale is about the expectation that suicide is likely to figure in any narrative of Japanese life and about how this expectation, in its generalization about Japanese people, obscures conflicts within Japan and within a Japanese family” (2006, pp. 118-119).

In the three studied novels, stereotypes are used as part of a much more complex narrative. However, as well as in the short story, the negative stereotypes are more significant than the positive ones. Within every novel, Ishiguro somehow connects a negative stereotype to the narrator of the novel, which does not necessarily make every negative stereotype a central topic, but it makes readers aware of it and aware of its connection to the particular culture. When it comes to the use of positive stereotypes, they are presented in minor episodes, which are not exactly essential for the novels. For example, in both *A Pale View of Hills* and *An Artist of the Floating World,* the narrators make remarks about how fast Japan is recovering from the war, which emphasises the diligence of the Japanese. If these remarks were not mentioned in the novels at all, it would not change the course of the narratives or affect them in any way. The same cannot be said about the negative generalizations, which are entangled in the novels.

In the study of imagology, which is the second viewpoint within the study of generalizations, there is also the division of positive and negative images. The positive and negative images are often triggered by cultural differences, such as language, mentality, habits, or religion (Beller & Leerssen, 2007). Cultural difference, or in other words, the clash of cultures plays as large of a role, as the portrayal of the individual cultures itself: “From early on in history, the encounter with other cultures, languages and customs has been governed by selective perception, which inspires curiosity, stimulates the imagination and evokes fascinating images in people’s minds” (Beller & Leerssen, 2007, p. 6). Ishiguro’s portrayal of Japan in “A Family Supper”, which can be in a simplified way described as a land of samurai suicides, fugu fish and traditional Japanese houses with sliding doors and tatami is most definitely stimulating one’s imagination.

Furthermore, “the aim of imagology is to describe the origin, process and function of national prejudices and stereotypes, to bring them to the surface, analyse them and make people rationally aware of them” (Beller & Leerssen, 2007, pp. 11-12). As I already mentioned, with connecting the stereotypes to the narrators of the novels, Ishiguro manages to make people aware of the generalizations. Additionally, Walkowitz (2006) brings up the thought that while using generalizations, Ishiguro also promotes double consciousness, because readers may understand his work in two ways, depending on how they view the particular stereotype. On the example of “A Family Supper”, Walkowitz explains that: “If readers see suicide as an essential, defining characteristic of Japaneseness, they may miss its fictionalization, but if they see it only as a Western fiction, they risk underestimating the position within Japanese culture” (2006, p. 119). The position of suicides within Japanese culture is very important for Ishiguro’s fiction. Many of the ideas that “A Family Supper” introduces, from samurai suicide to the dynamics within a Japanese household, are further developed in Ishiguro’s novels. These novels are analysed in the following chapters.

III. DECONSTRUCTION OF JAPANESE STEREOTYPES

Ishiguro’s first two novels, *A Pale View of Hills,* and *An Artist of the Floating World*, are both narrated by Japanese characters and most of the novels take place in Japan. Keeping in mind that Ishiguro’s description of Japan derives from imagination, one can find many associations with the samurai culture in the novels. Besides the Japanese suicide, which presumably comes first to mind, Ishiguro also works with the idea of Japanese arranged marriages along with the dynamics within a Japanese married couple. Such images help to increase the Japaneseness of both novels, yet they contribute to each novel in a different way.

In the previous chapter, I have mentioned the short story “A Family Supper”, which introduces the issue of Japanese suicides. In the short story, the Japanese suicide works as a parody of Japanese culture, while dealing with *seppuku* and fugu fish. In the novels, suicides become part of a much more complex narrative. In the first novel, *A Pale View of Hills,* suicidal images haunt the entire story. The novel is narrated by Etsuko, a middle-aged Japanese woman, who lives in an English country house. The novel begins shortly after her older daughter Keiko committed suicide by hanging herself. Keiko was born in Japan and spent her childhood there, before she moved with her mother to England. Unlike Etsuko’s younger daughter, Niki, Keiko was supposedly pure Japanese. When the newspaper found out about her death, her identity of a Japanese woman was enough of an explanation for her action, which indicates that the Western world sees suicides as a common act of Japanese people. Her mother, Etsuko, said that: “the English are fond of their idea that our race has an instinct for suicide, as if further explanations are unnecessary, for that was all they reported, that she was Japanese and that she hung herself in her room” (10)[2]. This incident is an example of how the cross-national dynamics of stereotypes work, because it explains how British people see the Japanese in the matter of taking one’s life.

The idea of Japanese woman committing suicide is rather rare within Ishiguro’s work, as it is mostly men, who commit suicides. This idea is also connected to the fact that not a single woman in Ishiguro’s novels commits *seppuku*, which is the samurai suicide, that the business partner committed in “A Family Supper”. The concept that a woman would rather hang herself instead of committing disembowelment shows that the Japanese warrior is only supposed to be a male figure, while female figures are housewives and geishas. In Keiko’s case, there is also a very different reasoning behind her act of suicide. In “A Family Supper”, the business partner committed suicide as an apology for the business failure, while Keiko committed suicide as a result of being forced to live outside of Japan and the inability to assimilate with the English environment. This reasoning is not explicitly stated in the novel, but it becomes apparent due to her mother's quilt about bringing Keiko to England. Etsuko's quilt is noticeable from the beginning of the novel, when Etsuko's younger daughter, Niki, comes to visit her mother only to assure her that she should not take blame for what happened.

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[2] As primary sources, the three novels are cited only by page numbers.

With Keiko's suicide in mind, Etsuko starts reminiscing of her life in Nagasaki, Japan. She brings back memories of a particular summer, when she was pregnant with Keiko and created a friendship with a mysterious woman, Sachiko. Readers find out through the memories that Sachiko planned on leaving Japan with an American man, while her daughter, Mariko, wanted to stay in Japan. With the help of Sachiko's story, readers can uncover the reasoning behind Etsuko's departure from Japan. While never explicitly mentioning it in her memories or in the present time, Etsuko left Japan with a British man, who she eventually married and had her second daughter, Niki, with. It is neither stated when the departure happened, but it is most likely that Keiko spent a lot of her childhood in Japan, because she had a deep connection to her homeland.

Keiko's connection to Japan becomes obvious, when Etsuko admits later in the novel, that she always knew Keiko would not be happy in England. This statement contradicts Etsuko's previous remarks about always having Keiko's best interests at heart. Keiko's unhappiness is apparent from her behaviour in the more recent years. Etsuko mentions that:

> She rarely came out, although I would sometimes hear her moving around the house after we had all gone to bed. I surmised that she spent her time reading magazines and listening to her radio. She had no friends, and the rest of us were forbidden entry into her room. At mealtimes I would leave her plate in the kitchen and she would come down to get it, then shut herself in again. (53-54)

Moreover, when Keiko would actually encounter Niki or her stepfather, it would always end up in a fight.

Eventually Keiko decided to move out into her own flat in Manchester. The family thought this move would help her and they did not mind her leaving the family house. However, besides moving from her room to a flat, nothing else changed. Eventually, she was found dead several days after committing the suicide by her landlord, who thought that Keiko left the flat without paying rent. The image of Keiko hanging in the room haunted Etsuko for a long time. Etsuko said exactly: “The horror of that image has never diminished” (54).

Ishiguro uses the stereotype of suicide as part of Keiko’s Japanese identity. Keiko was purely Japanese, and she was taken out of her comfort zone when she had to leave Nagasaki. She never managed to assimilate with the new environment of the English country house and on top of that, she had a bad relationship with her stepfather and sister, which might have been the reason for her closing herself off. Therefore, the suicide is not Keiko’s apology to the world, but an act for which her family should feel apologetic.

Besides Keiko’s suicide, there are numerous negative images throughout the novel, especially in Etsuko’s memories of Japan. Ishiguro hints the idea of people committing mass suicides after World War II, as a result of losing everything during the war. On top of that, there appear reports of dead children and hints of child-neglection, which not only build up the mystery of the story but keep reminding the reader of Etsuko’s quilt about Keiko’s death (Wong & Yildiz, 2015).

While the suicide in *A Pale View of Hills* is contrasting the suicidal images of “A Family Super”, Ishiguro’s second novel, *An Artist of the Floating World,* works with the same ideas as the short story, as the novel deals with suicide of an unnamed business president and the idea of suicide as an apology for failure in one’s profession. The novel is narrated by a former artist Masuji Ono, whose family is now involved in his daughter’s second marriage negotiations. The family is still shaken by the fact that the first marriage negotiations ended up in withdrawal of the groom’s family. With that in mind, Ono brings up a memory of his conversation with the potential groom, Jiro, who Ono randomly ran into on a tram stop. Jiro, who was just going from work, mentioned that the president of their firm committed suicide the other day. Jiro revealed that: “He was found gassed. But it seems he tried *hara-kiri* first, for there were minor scratches around his stomach… It was his apology on behalf of the companies under his charge” (55). The image of *hara-kiri* already appeared in “A Family Supper” in the context of the business partner’s suicide. Ishiguro suggests the idea of *hara-kiri* symbolising Japanese suicides, considering that Japanese often associate themselves with the samurai blood and *hara-kiri* is a way a samurai would end his life. Ono, being distressed by the news, responds to Jiro’s remark about the apology: “That seems rather extreme. The world seems to have gone mad. Every day there seems to be a report of someone else killing himself in apology” (55). This statement not only indicates that it might have been common at that time, as the novel is situated in postwar Japan, but it also indicates that there would be more such cases in the novel.

Indeed, later in the novel, Ono's family discusses suicide of a Japanese musician, Mr Naguchi, who presumably ended his life, because his songs became a symbol of the war in Japan. His suicide therefore served as an apology to the families that lost their children or parents during the war. The act symbolises that "by choosing death, the composer recasts his 'mistake' as a 'brave and honourable' life" (Walkowitz, 2006, p. 121).

Such images of influential people committing suicides have a much bigger significance for the novel, than what it might seem at first. The narrator, Ono, presents himself as a prestigious painter, who believes that some of his paintings during the war were of a negative influence. Later in the novel, he admits that he had made many "mistakes" in his career (123). In fact, such remarks in combination with all the images of suicides throughout the story, make readers wonder, whether or not is Ono thinking of committing suicide himself. Towards the end of the novel, his family starts wondering the same thing. Setsuko, Ono's older daughter, has a conversation with her father, where she shares her concerns:

> "It would seem Father was drawing a comparison between Mr Naguchi's career and his own. We all felt concern at this news."
>
> "You can put your mind at rest, Setsuko. I am not for one moment contemplating taking the sort of action Mr Naguchi did."
>
> "From what I understand, Mr Naguchi's songs came to have enormous prevalence at every level of the war effort… But Father is wrong to even begin thinking in such terms about himself. Father was, after all, a painter."
>
> "Let me assure you, Setsuko. I wouldn't for a moment consider the sort of action Naguchi took. But I am not too proud to see that I too was a man of some influence, who used that influence towards a disastrous end."
>
> "Forgive me, but it is perhaps important to see things in a proper perspective. Father painted some splendid pictures and was no doubt most influential amongst other such painters. But Father's work had hardly to do with these larger matters of which we are speaking. Father was simply a painter." (192-193)

This conversation illustrates the contrast between how Ono sees his career and how others see it. The image of suicide in this case works as part of Ono's psychological profile. Ono sees his career as very influential and his involvement in a certain propaganda as a mistake, which he openly admits. His relatives know what Ono's view on his career is, and they are worried that he might think of committing suicide as an apology. On the other hand, they believe Ono's career is simply a career of a painter, who could not have done any serious damage during the war, therefore they try to convince Ono that there is no point in doing such action. They also try to save themselves from the embarrassment that would certainly follow. Evidently, Ishiguro manages to leave two interpretations of the novel possible, because it is up to the reader to decide how important Ono's career really was.

The novel ends, just like the short story, without a resolution. Ono says at the end: "Our nation, it seems, whatever mistakes it may have made in the past, has now another chance to make a better go of things" (206). This saying not only expresses Japan's chance to recover from the war, but it also works as a metaphor for Ono's life. Whatever mistakes Ono made in the past; he now has a chance to make up for it in the present time.

* * *

Besides suicides, both novels portray the dynamics within a Japanese couple and an idea of arranged marriages. Arranged marriages have been a part of Japanese culture for centuries, and it is believed that samurai would undertake such marriage as well, needing a wife that would take care of the household. Therefore, we can still work with the mythical Japan in mind, while deconstructing these generalizations. Ishiguro worked with the old-fashioned image of arranged marriages in his second novel, *An Artist of the Floating World*.

Noriko, Ono's younger daughter, is almost twenty-six years old and because of the war, she is still unwed, which is described to be rather nonstandard. The nineteenth century manual *The Japanese Bride*, which explains the tradition of arranged marriages to non-Japanese readers, mentions that "a Japanese father is under obligation to marry off his sons and daughters when they reach a certain age, and if a daughter remains at home unmarried after she is twenty years of age, it is a disgrace to the family" (Tamura, 1893, p. 8). This custom clarifies why the family is desperately trying to make sure that Noriko's marriage negotiations go smoother than the events which took place the year before. The marriage negotiations a year ago ended up with the groom's family withdrawal, for an unknown reason, despite Noriko claiming that it was a "love match" (18).

Setsuko, Ono's older daughter, is convinced that her father may have had something to do with the turn of events of the previous year, and she asks her father to do some precautionary steps, to prevent the groom's family from detecting any misunderstandings during their investigations. Solely the fact that the families would hire detectives gives off the impression that the negotiations are taken very seriously in Japan. Even more so when realising that the investigations are only the first part of the negotiations.

Once the investigations are successfully finished, the marriage negotiations reach the point of a *miai*. *Miai* is an event, where the bride and groom should see each other for the first time. In the novel, it is established in a form of a dinner, with both families present at the table. Prior to the event, Noriko was extremely stressed, because she wanted to make a good impression on the groom, Taro Saito. Despite her father trying to lighten up her mood, Noriko remained nervous and very much silent throughout most of the actual *miai*. Whenever someone from the groom's family asked her a question, her answers would only be a simple "yes" or "indeed" (121). On the contrary, Ono noticed that the groom's mother, Mrs Saito, conversed more than her husband during the evening. Ono remarked that "the Saitos were not the old-fashioned sort of family who preferred their female members to be silent and demure" (119). With this remark, Ono suggests that there are changes in society, where the new ways replace the old-fashioned ones. On top of that he suggests that Noriko represented the old-fashioned ways during the *miai*, with her shy demeanour.

Later that night, while discussing political matters, Ono performed a speech, where he stated how he felt about his own career. The speech astonished Noriko completely and as a result of her astonishment, she was finally able to relax and started enjoying herself. Ono believed that his actions saved the evening, saying:

> I would not wish to claim that the whole engagement had hung in the balance until that point, but it is certainly my feeling that that was when the *miai* turned from being an awkward, potentially disastrous one into a successful evening. We went on talking and drinking sake for a good while after the meal, and by the time taxis were called, there was a clear feeling that we had all got on well. Most crucially, although they had kept an appropriate distance, it was obvious that Taro Saito and Noriko had taken to one another. (124)

The negotiations went well after all, as Noriko ended up marrying Taro Saito. In this particular case, the arranged marriage may not be understood as a negative image at first, because the couple ended up being fond of one another. However, that is not always the case, because the traditional Japanese marriage is not a celebration of love. It is a celebration of marrying within a certain social status to secure a family line (Tamura, 1893). Even in the case of Noriko, I would argue, once analysing the negotiation in a deeper way, that it belongs among the negative generalizations. Especially when keeping in mind the idea of hiring detectives with the intention of finding any "dirt" on the other family and the overall social pressure that comes with the negotiating. As a Western reader, the idea of arranged marriages also presents something very alien and unknown, therefore the clash of cultures plays a large role in the way one views this stereotype.

Apart from the negotiating itself, there occurs the image of the old-fashioned sort of family. This image of old-fashioned families with demure wives is more widely discussed in *A Pale View of Hills*. Most of the novel takes place in Etsuko's memories of after-war Japan. At that time, she was living with her husband Jiro in a flat in Nagasaki. Etsuko described her life at the time as a life of a woman, who takes care of the household, while her husband, Jiro, goes to work, and lets Etsuko serve him, while he is at home. In these memories, Etsuko represents the traditional Japanese wife, who as well as a wife of a samurai, has a duty of taking care of the household. The position of a Japanese woman in a society is explained in *The Japanese Bride*: "The wife gets up first, and goes to sleep late, and she will work all day long, looking after the kitchen… cleaning the rooms, and sewing a great part of the day and night" (Tamura, 1893, pp. 68-69). Perhaps Ishiguro drew inspiration from this book, because Etsuko is a perfect example of the old-fashioned Japanese woman described by Tamura. She even does her sewing.

The line between the old-fashioned and modern Japanese women is illustrated on one occasion from Etsuko's past. One night, Jiro and his father, Ogata-San, were playing chess, while someone knocked on the door. It turned out that two of Jiro's colleagues from work were drinking that night and came to visit Jiro, because they were afraid to go home to their wives. At first their conversation was built around jokes, but then the conversation shifted to a rumour from work:

> "By the way, Hanaba," my husband said to him. "I heard an interesting story the other day at the office. I was told during the last elections, you threatened to beat your wife with a golf club because she wouldn't vote the way you wanted."
> "What rubbish. Besides, I don't have golf clubs anymore. I sold them all last year."
> "But it's true you couldn't get her to obey you."
> "Well, it's her personal right to vote any way she pleases."
> "Then why did you threaten her?" his friend asked.
> "I was trying to make her sense, of course. My wife votes for Yoshida just because he looks like her uncle. That's typical women. They don't understand politics. They think they can choose the country's leader the same way they choose dresses." (62-63)

This conversation is the only time in the novel when Ishiguro explicitly describes the idea of Japanese women having their own opinion, and interestingly he does so, from men's point of view. The conversation suggests that the men do not approve of such behaviour. Most likely, they would prefer their wives to be the stereotyped submissive Japanese women, whose job is to serve tea to their husbands. Indeed, that is what Etsuko has to do while this conversation is in full swing, because Jiro commanded her to serve tea for the guests. This action underlines the idea of a wife having to obey her husband. In fact, Tamura (1893) explains: “Young women are educated from childhood to believe that it is a noble virtue for any wife to obey whatever her husband commands” (p. 73). Therefore, there is no surprise, if women are taught that at a young age, that men would expect them to act as they say, or at least vote for the same political party.

Once Jiro’s colleagues leave, Ogata-San, disturbed by what he heard, starts discussing the way things have changed in the Japanese society:

> Quite extraordinary, what your friend was saying… about him and his wife voting for different parties. A few years ago, that would have been unthinkable… But that’s what’s meant by democracy, I suppose. It's a sad state of affairs when a wife can’t be relied on in such matters anymore. A wife these days feels no sense of loyalty toward the household. She just does what she pleases, votes for a different party if the whim takes her. That’s so typical of the way things have gone in Japan. (65-66)

Ogata-San sees the golf-club story as a sign of loss of tradition in contemporary Japan (Burton, 2007). He is so astonished by the fact that a wife would vote differently than her husband because he is used to the old-fashioned ways. Furthermore, being a former teacher, he continues discussing the matter from a schoolboy's point of view: “Just imagine what it must be like being a young boy today. He’s taught no values at school – except perhaps that he should selfishly demand whatever he wants out of life. He goes home and finds his parents fighting because his mother refuses to vote for his father’s party” (66-67).

The figure of Etsuko from her memories is exactly the woman that Ogata-San thinks all women should be. She listens to her husband’s commands and does not question his authority. In general, Etsuko’s memories are filled with negative images of a wife having to obey her husband and the overall feeling of inequality between husband and wife. The inequality is not only suggested in Etsuko’s case, but also in Sachiko’s remarks about what her marriage was like, with the example of her former husband prohibiting her from learning English (110). These images are clearly negative, especially from Western reader’s point of view and nowadays, when gender equality is a topic of many heated debates.

Nonetheless, what becomes apparent to the reader in Etsuko’s case is that the way she portrays herself in her memories contradicts her actions later in life, such as leaving her husband, leaving Japan, and starting her new life in England. These actions are very far from obeying her former husband. Ishiguro stated in an interview with Gregory Mason: “That’s the gap in *A Pale View of Hills*. We can assume that the real Etsuko of the past is somewhat nearer the mousy Etsuko she talks about in the forties than she is to the Sachiko figure” (Ishiguro & Mason, 1989, p. 338). The Sachiko figure is the person who presumably inspired Etsuko’s departure and her story possibly awakened the bravery in Etsuko to leave as well. Ishiguro leaves out all the details of the actual departure from Japan. There are certain pieces throughout the novel though that one can put together, in order to figure out at least what was the reason for her departure. The reason being an unnamed British man, who wanted to bring Etsuko to England with him. It might have been a journalist, as Etsuko mentioned that he wrote several “articles about Japan” (90).

In the novel, there is also the contrast in the way Etsuko describes Japan, in connection with all the negative images, and the idealised way in which she describes England towards the end of the novel: “When your father first brought me down here, Niki, I remember how truly like England everything looked. All these fields, and the houses too. It was just the way I always imagined England would be and I was so pleased” (182). Etsuko keeps thinking of England in an idealised way, regardless of it being the country where her daughter took her own life. It is almost as if she is wearing rose-coloured glasses, which she refuses to take off. In the novel, Ishiguro touched up on the idealised picture of England, which he perfected in his third novel, *The Remains of the Day*.

IV. DECONSTRUCTION OF STEREOTYPES IN THE REMAINS OF THE DAY

The Remains of the Day differs from the other novels in one key aspect. It is Ishiguro's first novel that does not take place in Japan. It takes place in England, a country that Ishiguro grew up in. Yet, as I already explained before, Ishiguro does not describe the real England in his novel, instead, he created a mythical version of England, with beautiful fields and country houses. The mythical England is highlighted by the choice of characters. The narrator of the novel, Mr Stevens, represents one of the most stereotyped figures when it comes to England, the old-fashioned butler. As Stevens himself explains in the beginning of the novel, "it is sometimes said that butlers only truly exist in England" (42). He believes that other races are incapable of emotional restraint, which is an essential quality that a butler needs to possess.

Stevens is very dedicated to his profession. He works as a butler in Darlington Hall, a large mansion in Oxfordshire, which serves as yet another English stereotype itself. Stevens spent the best years of his career there. He dedicated his years of service to Lord Darlington, an English gentleman, who passed away three years before the beginning of the novel. In the present time, the year 1956, Darlington Hall is in the ownership of an American gentleman, Mr Farraday. In the beginning of the novel, Mr Farraday, who is about to travel to the USA for a couple of weeks, gives Stevens an opportunity to take several days off. For Stevens, it means that he would leave Darlington Hall for personal reasons for the first time in over thirty years of service, and it would mean that Darlington Hall would be completely empty for the first time in decades. After hesitating over the matter for a couple of days, Stevens comes up with an elegant solution. He would use his days off to travel to the West Country and while doing so, he would solve the issue of staff shortage in Darlington Hall. In other words, he would propose a professional offer to Miss Kenton, former housekeeper, and the unexpressed love of Stevens' life, who just recently sent Stevens a sentimental letter, in which she expresses, among other things, leaving her husband. With that in mind, Stevens, who as well as any first-rate butler does not express his emotions, states the trip to be of a strictly professional character. Hiding any deeper purposes of the trip behind professional matters prevents Stevens from feeling guilty about leaving Darlington Hall.

Eventually Stevens truly decides to undertake the trip to the West Country. It is the first time he gets to appreciate the beauty of English landscape outside of the walls of Darlington Hall. Despite hardly ever leaving Darlington Hall, let alone the country, Stevens claims that: "the English landscape at its finest possesses a quality that the landscapes of other nations, however more superficially dramatic, inevitably fail to possess… and this quality is probably best summed up by the term 'greatness'" (28). Stevens's remarks about the greatness of Great Britain, along with his beliefs that butlers can only be found in England increase the Englishness of the novel. Ishiguro supports the connection of the landscape and the butler in an interview with Allan Vorda:

> When Stevens says that about the British landscape, he is also saying something about himself. He thinks beauty and greatness lie in being able to be this kind of cold, frozen butler who isn't demonstrative and who hides emotions in much the way he's saying that the British landscape does with its surface calm: the ability to actually keep down turmoil and emotion. He thinks this is what gives both butlers and the British landscape beauty and dignity. (Vorda et al., 1991, pp. 141-142)

The apparent Englishness of the novel may be contrasted by Stevens's way of communicating and further by his way of thinking. His style of communication, which is very stiff and unemotional can be explained in two ways. One way is to explain Stevens's voice as "curiously stilted 'butler-speak' in which he not only talks but also thinks" (Wong & Yildiz, 2015, p. 26). The second way of explaining Stevens's voice is simply that it may reflect the hidden Japaneseness of the novel. The fact is, Ishiguro is Japanese, his mother tongue is Japanese, though he admits he still speaks it like a child. Despite that, Ishiguro's way of writing reflects this elemental connection with the language. It is possible to compare Stevens's way of narrating to Ono's, the Japanese narrator of *An Artist of the Floating World*. They both fail to show emotions, they both speak in a rather stiff manner and after all, they both share worries of wasted careers.

When accepting the fact that the very English novel may have hints of Japaneseness in it, we can uncover many more such associations with the Japanese culture. While analysing the previous novels, I have worked with the image of samurai and its metaphorical and literal use in the novels. It may seem unlikely to say the same with *The Remains of the Day*, yet Stevens in a way is like a samurai, who instead of using a sword, uses his perfectly cleaned silver. Stevens is so proud of his silver-cleaning skills, that he dedicates a lot of his time reminiscing about moments, when his remarkable skills changed the course of events. He goes so far to say that his silver may have been the single reason why one international meeting of Lord Darlington went from a potentially disappointing evening into a triumphant one. He further expresses satisfaction of being able to "comprise a contribution to the course of history" (136). Having clean silver is without a doubt a good start, but it is hardly the determining factor of international affairs. Steven's beliefs about his contribution may be compared to Ono's speech during the *miai* in *An Artist of the Floating World*, which in Ono's opinion completely changed the course of the evening.

Stevens's connection to the image of samurai is much deeper than I have suggested thus far. Samurai are supposed to hold honour, bravery, and personal loyalty above everything else. Loyalty, shall I add, towards the master. Stevens believes loyalty and honour to be, along with dignity, among the most essential qualities a good butler needs to have. He believes that a butler should serve someone with complete loyalty, once they can say to themselves: "This employer embodies all that I find noble and admirable. I will hereafter devote myself to serving him" (201). That is certainly how Stevens feels about Lord Darlington, an old-fashioned English gentleman, who Stevens openly admires. Therefore, just like a samurai, he decides to serve him with loyalty and without questioning his decisions.

Lord Darlington is without a doubt a gentleman, and the image of gentleman itself is yet another very British stereotype. However, Lord Darlington is a gentleman, who is involved in great international affairs. Many of such international affairs take place under the roof of Darlington Hall and over the years, Stevens becomes a witness of Lord Darlington's fall from grace. Through Stevens's memories, readers discover that Lord Darlington is revealed to be a Nazi sympathizer, who may have been "the single most useful pawn Herr Hitler has had in this country for his propaganda tricks" (235). Yet despite being aware of this, Stevens's blind loyalty towards Lord Darlington makes Stevens overlook Darlington's wrongdoings and remain in his service until his death. Stevens's loyalty goes so far that he defends his lordship even after his death, saying that the majority of what is being said about Lord Darlington is utter nonsense, based on "ignorance of the facts" (125). At the same time, it becomes apparent in Stevens's interactions with other people, that he is somewhat ashamed of being associated with Lord Darlington. Later in the novel, he denies not once, but on three different occasions ever working for him.

It takes the entire novel for Stevens to finally admit his failure of judgement not only to himself, but to a stranger, who is sitting next to him on a bench:

> Lord Darlington wasn't a bad man. He wasn't a bad man at all. And at least he had the privilege of being able to say at the end of his life that he made his own mistakes… As for myself, I cannot even claim that. You see, I trusted. I trusted his lordship's wisdom. All those years I served him, I trusted I was doing something worthwhile. I can't even say I made my own mistakes. Really – one has to ask oneself – what dignity is there in that? (243)

For Stevens, dignity is the most valuable quality, that is not only associated with gentlemen, but with the greatest of his own profession. He strives his whole life to be the embodiment of dignity, yet he somewhat admits failing in that area, while admitting the truth about Lord Darlington.

Stevens's loyalty may not only be associated with the image of samurai, but also with the Japanese belief that a wife has to obey her husband, which I touched up on before: "Wife thinks that it is a duty and an obligation to obey her husband, no matter whether it be right or wrong" (Tamura, 1893, p. 73). Stevens seems to be functioning with the same idea in mind. One of the events where Stevens shows such devotion is in connection with the Jewish staff in the 30s. Lord Darlington believes that there should not be any Jew employed in Darlington Hall. Despite showing minor signs of disagreement, Stevens informs Miss Kenton, the main housekeeper, that he has to dismiss the two Jewish housemaids. Miss Kenton is absolutely furious, and she cannot believe what just came out of Stevens's mouth. Stevens, however, does not wish to discuss the matter and without voicing his own opinion, he says: "His lordship has made his decision and there is nothing for you and I to debate over" (148). Stevens ends up dismissing the two housemaids the next morning. Only a year later, when Lord Darlington himself admits that it was wrong to dismiss the housemaids, Stevens opens up about never agreeing with that decision in the first place. It is questionable whether he would give the matter such thought without Lord Darlington openly admitting his mistake first. For Stevens it is the simple fact of obeying his employer and not questioning his decisions, even if they are ethically questionable.

Lord Darlington is an important figure in the novel, as well as in Stevens's life. Yet his death remains unspecified for the reader. That is rather suspicious, because it almost feels as if Stevens is hiding the truth behind Darlington's death. In connection with passing, there is a minor suicidal image in the novel, which yet again serves as a reminder of Japaneseness. Lord Darlington's friend, Herr Bremann, who was a common guest in Darlington Hall over the years, "had shot himself in a train between Hamburg and Berlin" during the twenties (73). It was further discovered that he was homeless, and his family dispersed, as there were no signs of them. Even though this incident was not discussed later, Bremann's suicide could be more significant than what it seems. With the figure of Lord Darlington, one can only assume that he died of old age in shame, but there is still the open possibility that he could have committed suicide and the suicidal image of his German acquittance could be hinting that. Moreover, Lord Darlington is the only person in the novel, whose death is not further specified.

With that in mind, it is perhaps important to discuss the matters of Stevens's father, who suffered a severe stroke in 1923. There are only two people, besides Lord Darlington, who are dearly important to Mr Stevens - Mr Stevens senior and Miss Kenton. Even though he is close to these two figures, he still maintains mostly professional relationships with them. Or it could be said that he hides his feelings behind the professional mask, because "[f]or Stevens, keeping his dignity goes hand in hand with repressing his emotions" (Berberich, 2007, p. 144). Dignity is something that Stevens strives for and it is the main goal of his professional life. As the Hayes Society of butlers, which Stevens quotes many times in the novel, claims, "the most crucial criterion is that the applicant be possessed of a dignity in keeping with the position" (33). Stevens is convinced that in order to be a great butler, he cannot show any signs of emotions, otherwise, he would lose his dignity. Stevens's inability to show emotions can be again in a way connected to the stereotype of Japanese people being unemotional. Ishiguro worked with that idea especially in his second novel, *An Artist of the Floating World*, where the narrator, Ono, fails to show emotions on numerous occasions connected to his career.

In the case of Stevens, he takes repression of emotions a bit too far. That becomes apparent while he goes deep in his memories, into the 1920s and 1930s. In the early 1920s, within a one-week period, both Mr Stevens Senior and Miss Kenton started working in Darlington Hall. It is obvious from the beginning that Stevens does not have a very good father-son relationship with Mr Stevens Senior. In fact, more than anything, he views his father as the embodiment of dignity and looks up to his successful professional career as a butler.

The real test for Stevens comes during the international conference in 1923. It is one of the largest events that ever took place in Darlington Hall, and as Stevens claims, he prepared for it as "a general might prepare for a battle" (77). On top of the pressure of the event, Mr Stevens Senior becomes seriously ill. In the middle of preparations, Stevens takes a couple of minutes to talk to his father. While being fully aware that it might be the last time he would ever speak to his father, he does not lose his professional face:

> "I'm glad Father is feeling so much better… Now really, I'd best be getting back. As I said, the situation is rather volatile."
>
> He went on looking at his hands for a moment. Then he said slowly: "I hope I've been a good father to you."
>
> I laughed a little and said: "I'm so glad you're feeling better now."
>
> "I'm proud of you. A good son. I hope I've been a good father to you. I suppose, I haven't."

> "I'm afraid we're extremely busy now, but we can talk again in the morning… I'm so glad you're feeling better now." (97)

Stevens's father finally loses his mask and for once, he does not embody dignity, but shows his sensitive side. Yet Stevens is not capable of showing any kind of appreciation for what his father just said. In order to stay in his professional character, he stresses to be pleased that his father is doing better and rushes downstairs.

His father passes away not long after the conversation. Despite receiving the tragic news, Stevens decides to carry on his duty. However, it becomes apparent from the description of the room, which "appeared to be a forest of black dinner jackets, grey hair and cigar smoke", that he is not present in the moment (106). It is the first time he shows at least a sign of emotions and he is obviously upset about what just happened. Yet while reminiscing of this night, he sees it as a turning point of his career, saying that "for all its sad associations, whenever I recall that evening today, I find I do so with a large sense of triumph" (110).

In the novel, Stevens reminisces of several such triumphant moments of his career. Interestingly, these moments always happen in times of his biggest personal crises. The other significant triumph is connected to Miss Kenton. Miss Kenton came to Darlington Hall in the early 20s and since the beginning, Stevens appreciated her professionalism above anything else. Over the years, they became very close and eventually they would meet every evening for cocoa in her parlour. Stevens explains that these meetings were "predominantly professional in character" (135). Naturally, one can assume that they were not discussing only professional matters and it is yet another example of Stevens hiding his real emotions behind the professional mask.

In any case, their relationship underwent a change around 1936. In a series of events, Stevens ended their meetings over cocoa and Miss Kenton ended up accepting a marriage proposal by her acquaintance, whom she was seeing in her free time for about a year. She accepted the proposal during the same night that Lord Darlington hosted a secret meeting with the Prime Minister and the German Ambassador. Stevens therefore had to make sure that everything would run smoothly that evening, as it was another event of global significance which took place in Darlington Hall. With a lot of work on his hands, Miss Kenton managed to stop Stevens for a moment to share the news of her engagement. The news overwhelmed Stevens, and for once, he was visibly distressed. His companion Mr Cardinal asked him several minutes later:

> "I say, Stevens, are you all right there?"

> “Perfectly all right, thank you sir.”
>
> “Not feeling unwell, are you?”
>
> “A little tired, perhaps, but I’m perfectly fine, thank you, sir.” (234)

Despite staying in character, he is obviously upset about the news, and perhaps for the first time, he somehow manages to accept that Miss Kenton is a very important person in his life. It is said that people realise what they had only when they lose it. The thought of losing Miss Kenton becomes unbearable for Stevens. While allowing himself to feel the emotions towards Miss Kenton, he becomes convinced later that night that Miss Kenton bursts into tears just a few meters away from him. He is standing outside of her room, with a tray in his hands, and despite not hearing any signs of crying, he is convinced that once he would enter Miss Kenton’s room, he would find her in tears. With that conviction in his mind, he still rushes back to continue on in his duty. For readers it might seem like a very cold, inhuman way of handling the situation, but for Stevens, it is the matter of successfully serving Lord Darlington that is first on his priority list.

The recollected memories of that night, as well as of the conference in 1923, are in a sense of a triumph, yet these events leave a bitter taste in readers. While managing to preserve “a dignity in keeping with the position” and doing it in a way his father would be proud of, Stevens deals with his personal matters in a very inhuman way. It becomes obvious that in order to keep his dignity, he goes too far. While claiming that he performed that night in a way his father would be proud of, the only person Stevens tries to please is Lord Darlington. After all, there is a real contrast in Stevens’s open admiration of Lord Darlington and his repressed emotions towards Miss Kenton and Mr Stevens Senior.

Stevens himself realises what he missed on while blindly serving Lord Darlington only towards the end of the novel, when his motoring trip reaches the final point, which is the meeting with Miss Kenton, formally known as Mrs Benn. During the meeting, which lasts for about three hours, Stevens finds out that Miss Kenton did not eventually leave her husband, as she stated in her letter. Moreover, he finds out that their daughter is expecting the first child and therefore, his professional proposal is out of the table. The meeting is simply of a personal character. While no longer hiding behind the professional mask, Stevens realises what a big mistake he had made, especially when Miss Kenton herself expresses that she spent many years thinking about a life she could have had with him. While hearing Miss Kenton say that, Stevens admits that his “heart was breaking” (239).

The end of the novel is a sort of an awakening for Stevens. He no longer hides his real feelings for Miss Kenton. He no longer denies that he gave the very best he had to give to Lord Darlington. And he admits that Lord Darlington was not the ideal British gentleman. Stevens loses his mask and admits all of this to himself very much at one moment. This moment, which shows the human side of Stevens more than any action before, is something that Ishiguro did not at first intend on including at all. He admits in his *Nobel Lecture*:

> I'd unthinkingly made the decision, somewhere way back, that my English butler would maintain his emotional defences, that he'd manage to hide behind them, from himself and his reader, to the very end… I saw I had to reverse that decision. Just for one moment, towards the end of my story, a moment I'd have to choose carefully, I had to make his armour crack. I had to allow a vast and tragic yearning to be glimpsed underneath. (Ishiguro, 2017, para. 25)

That is what Stevens experiences on the bench two days after his meeting with Miss Kenton. At that moment, his whole life appears to be a waste and for once he is not sure what is left for him to do.

His life in many ways resembles the Japanese way of living. The Japanese are believed to be very devoted to their work, and they do not show their emotions very clearly. The only exception in Stevens's case is that despite feeling like he failed, he does not wish to commit suicide like many Japanese figures do when they get themselves into similar situations. On the contrary, he plans on perfecting his bantering skills, in order to please his American employer Mr Farraday. In a way, the excitement of pleasing his new employer suggests that Stevens truly is the perfect British butler, whose goal in life is nothing else but pleasing his employer and doing it with "dignity in keeping with the position".

Stevens is the perfect metaphor. Through the study of his complex psychological profile, it is possible to say, that the English butler is a negative stereotype because in order to be the perfect butler, one has to give up a lot in their life. In Steven's case, he misses out on many life opportunities, such as a relationship with Miss Kenton or a father-son relationship with his father. The butler also has to put their employer's life above their own. The employer in this novel is the English gentleman Lord Darlington, who ends up being no gentleman. When it comes to deconstructing the stereotype of the English gentleman, it is more complicated than in the butler's case, because in general, a gentleman is arguably a positive stereotype. However, when judging solely on the novel and solely on the character of Lord Darlington, it is a different story. He uses the gentlemanly ideas poorly, lets people manipulate him and fails to recognize it or at least pretends that he does not recognize it. Therefore, he turns out to be a negative image of the English gentleman.

In this chapter, I also introduced the Japanese side of the novel. In association with the figure of butler, it is possible to view him as a modern-day samurai in the British environment. Stevens is loyal towards his master, he fights for his master's reputation, he values honour, and uses his silver as a weapon to change the course of events. Stevens's actions and his manners may give readers the feeling of Japaneseness. Once opening up to this idea, the Japanese influence appears to be integrated in the novel in a deep way, despite the misplaced Chinaman in Darlington Hall being the only explicitly mentioned Asian image in the novel.

From what I mentioned thus far, it is possible to understand Stevens and the whole novel in two ways. It can be seen as a novel built up on the quintessential English stereotypes, or it can be read as a novel full of hidden Japanese associations. The double understanding goes along with the two ways of understanding the suicidal images in "A Family Supper", two ways of seeing Etsuko's role as a Japanese woman in *A Pale View of Hills* and two ways of understanding Ono's career in *An Artist of the Floating World*.

V. CONCLUSION

Kazuo Ishiguro is an accomplished cosmopolitan writer and an author of eight novels. In this thesis, I analysed Ishiguro's early novels, *A Pale View of Hills, An Artist of the Floating World* and *The Remains of the Day*. With these novels, Ishiguro established his unique style of writing, and built a path for his further work, which is often constructed around many of the same themes and concepts. His novels focus on the psychological profile of their characters, instead of dramatic plots. The themes of memory, emotions, wasted time, and dignity appear in all of the early works. On top of that, Ishiguro has the ability to introduce historical events, such as World War II from a different perspective. That is to say, from the perspective of ordinary people, such as the servant in an English country house or the pregnant Japanese woman living in Nagasaki. The novels connect personal experiences with international ones, which makes them deserving of the title "cosmopolitan".

Furthermore, it is clear that Ishiguro often builds characters out of national stereotypes. By introducing the characters as national stereotypes or by connecting the characters to a prominent stereotype, Ishiguro manages to open up his world to an international readership and make it more understandable. Wherever the reader is from, the reader is able to connect Japan to suicides and England to butlers. This is the evidence that stereotypes are absolutely vital for global literature and it is also one of the reasons why I have decided to deconstruct them in this thesis.

Ishiguro arranged his first novels in Japanese environment, which reflects the imaginary Japan that he had created in his mind after the departure from his homeland. Under the assumption that imaginary Japan is full of samurai images, I decided to start looking for associations with these images in fiction. The short story "A Family Supper" introduces the image of samurai in a literal form, while the novels work with the same image in a metaphorical way. In Etsuko's and Ono's story, the detection of samurai images is not so difficult, because the environment is so obviously Japanese that it leads readers to look for the associations almost naturally. On the contrary, Stevens's associations with samurai can be detected only when going one layer deeper into the novel. Stevens is loyal towards Lord Darlington, the same way a samurai is loyal to his master, or the way a Japanese wife is loyal to her husband. The loyalty and other warrior principles did prove that the very English novel has hidden samurai images in it. Moreover, Stevens's narration style resembles the narration of Ono. They are both very stiff and unemotional in their delivery. In Ono's case, people may assume that his narration mirrors the fact that he is a Japanese character. In Stevens's case, his way of thinking and narrating is often explained as a “butler-speak”, but it may just be the reflection of the author’s background and identity.

The fact that Ishiguro was not personally familiar with Japan at the time of writing these novels explains why he used stereotypes so prominently. Basically, he had marginally more knowledge about Japan than most other Westerners and in order to create his “Japan”, he used generalizations and metaphors. That explains why the narrator of his first novel, Etsuko, is the metaphor for a submissive Japanese woman, who is portrayed as a quiet and obedient housewife. The same applies for the character of Ono, who is not only constantly questioned in the matter of committing suicide, I dare say by his reader as well as his family, but who is also actively involved in the process of marriage negotiations of his younger daughter. Ishiguro uses the images of suicides and arranged marriages, because people generally associate these images with the Japanese. People also associate the Japanese with being very intelligent, technically skilled, and healthy, but Ishiguro decided to use the negative generalizations as prominent themes in his novels instead.

One of Ishiguro’s traits as an author is his work with metaphors. Etsuko and Ono work as metaphors in the Japanese novels and Stevens works as a metaphor as well. He is the perfect butler, who appears to have everything an old-fashioned English butler needs to possess. However, the profession of butler, especially when aspiring to be the best in the field, turns out to be a negative image. We can see that at the end of the novel, Stevens has nothing in his life, but the hope to improve his bantering skills. The novel also works with the gentlemanly images. Lord Darlington, who originally appears to be an honourable English gentleman living in a large country mansion, turns out to be no gentleman at all. Ishiguro works here with originally positive stereotype but turns it into a negative one, because he shows the dark side of what it is like to be a man of influence.

Lord Darlington is described as one of the most influential men in the country, who realises his mistakes only towards the end of his life. In a way, there are certain traits that Darlington shares with Etsuko, who realises how influential her decision to leave Japan was, only after her daughter committed suicide due to not being able to assimilate with the English environment. After all, the aspect of realising mistakes is integrated in all three novels. That should not be surprising, because it has been pointed out that the novels resemble one another conceptually. The use of stereotypes is one such repetition of style. It is possible to confirm that the most prominent stereotypes Ishiguro works with in all of his early novels are negative. Ishiguro is known for working with narrators who are sort of outsiders and the negativity comes naturally with that.

The approaches used in the thesis to deconstruct stereotypes could be applied in other fiction as well. Fiction uses stereotypes very frequently. After all, stereotypes, as I mentioned before, are absolutely essential for digesting global literature. With the knowledge learned from the thesis, it is possible to take almost any novel with cultural, or even better with cross-cultural background and deconstruct it. One can use the division of positive and negative stereotypes, or study how stereotypes function within psychological profiles of various characters.

When breaking down some of Ishiguro's more recent work, it is possible to find many metaphors in it. After all, working with metaphors is one of Ishiguro's main qualities. Just recently, in March 2021, Ishiguro published his newest novel, *Klara and the Sun*. Klara, the narrator of the novel, is actually an artificial intelligence in a science-fiction world, which in many ways apparently resembles the world we have found ourselves in during the past year. People are trying to adapt to new changes in society, children no longer go to school and they often have androids as friends. The dystopian novel is narrated by one of these androids.

This is the second time Ishiguro introduced the dystopian world in his work. His novel *Never Let Me Go* (2005), which also takes place in the future, shares some similarities with the newest novel. This could lead to an interesting research, with comparison of the two novels and analysis of stereotypes in the dystopian world.

Moreover, in his most recent novel, *Klara and the Sun*, Ishiguro composes the characters as concepts rather than real people. Klara is not an organic human being; she is an artificial intelligence. However, Ishiguro believes that she is no different from all the other characters in his previous books, because he explains that "characters in books are [always] artificial" (Gross, 2021, para. 8). They are creations of author's mind and readers respond to them metaphorically. Therefore, it could be said that characters are always metaphors as well. The submissive Etsuko, Ono battling his suicidal instincts and the very English butler Stevens are great illustrations of this principle.

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SHRNUTÍ

Kazuo Ishiguro je jedním z nejvýznamnějších kosmopolitních autorů současné doby. Narodil se v Nagasaki, ale většinu života strávil ve Velké Británii, kam se jeho rodina přestěhovala, když bylo Ishigurovi pět let. V této bakalářské práci hrají hlavní roli Ishigurovy první tři romány – *A Pale View of Hills* (nepřeloženo), *An Artist of the Floating World* (česky *Malíř pomíjivého světa*) a *The Remains of the Day* (česky *Soumrak dne*). Tyto tři romány byly publikovány mezi lety 1982-1989 a tvoří dohromady jakýsi celek, jelikož se odehrávají v zemích, ke kterým má Ishiguro nejblíže, tedy Japonsko a Velká Británie. Všechny romány jsou vyprávěny staršími lidmi, kteří po čas vyprávění bloudí ve svých vzpomínkách. Mezi další společné rysy Ishigurovy tvorby patří užívání kulturních stereotypů. Na stereotypy se dá pohlížet z více úhlů pohledu. V této práci jsou stereotypy představeny z psychologického hlediska a zároveň z pohledu imagologie, odvětví studující stereotypy v literatuře. Z obou hledisek se dají stereotypy rozdělit na pozitivní a negativní. Po aplikování znalostí v analýze je ale patrné, že Ishiguro pracuje především s negativními stereotypy.

Když vezmeme v potaz, že Ishiguro při vytváření Japonska ve svých románech vycházel z představ, a ne z opravdových zkušeností, tak se nám před očima otevře svět plný těchto kulturních stereotypů. Během analyzování textu se tedy dá pohlížet na Japonsko jako na mýtickou zemi plnou samurajů. Přesně této myšlenky je využito během analýzy stereotypů o japonských sebevraždách, dohodnutých sňatcích a submisivních japonských ženách, které se hojně vyskytují v prvních dvou románech. S obrazem samuraje se ale dá pracovat i při analýze *Soumraku dne*, a to přesto, že se román odehrává v Británii a zprvu působí až dokonale britsky. Hlavní postava, majordomus Stevens, je loajální ke svému zaměstnavateli stejně, jako samuraj ke svému mistrovi, nebo jako japonská žena ke svému manželovi. To je jeden z důkazů toho, že Ishiguro do britského románu ukryl samurajský odkaz.

Ať se ale příběh odehrává v Británii, nebo v Japonsku, všechny romány mají jednu věc společnou. Všechny pracují s negativními stereotypy. Na sklony k sebevraždě, submisivitu žen a proces sjednávání sňatků je pohlíženo negativně, a to zejména z pohledu čtenáře ze západu. U dominantních stereotypů ze *Soumraku dne*, kterými je majordomus Stevens a anglický džentlmen Lord Darlington, nemusí být polarita zjevná hned. Po důkladné analýze je však patrné, že Ishiguro dokázal udělat negativní stereotyp i z původně pozitivního obrazu britského džentlmena.