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CORRELATION BETWEEN TRUTH AND FICTION IN K. ISHIGURO'S NOVEL "THE BURIED GIANT"

Lanova Viktoriia Volodymyrivna,

Postgraduate
Odessa I. I. Mechnikov National University
victoria-lanovaya@yandex.ua
orcid.org/0000-0002-8448-3884

Purpose. The present paper is aimed at investigating the characteristic features of the author's perception of history in K. Ishiguro's novel "The Buried Giant". The central issue of the article is the problem of correlation between historical facts and fiction. The main focus here is on the artistic means and functions of the historical and fictitious layers and their interconnection. The objectives of the article could be summarized as follows: 1) to determine the characteristic features of the author's poetics within the postand metamodern discourse; 2) referring to the works on the history of medieval England, to draw a parallel between the generally accepted interpretation of historical events and their interpretation in the novel; 3) to analyze the intertextual connections between the novel and chivalric literature; 4) to determine the specifics of the author's concept of history in connection with the phenomenon of historical memory.

Methods. The methodological consideration of the study includes a complex combination of the culture-historical and comparative methods, as well as the intertextual approach. The comparison of the factual-historical and artistic plans of K. Ishiguro's novel has been carried out on the basis of the historical-comparative method. The multicultural identity of the writer, as well as the general philosophical and aesthetic orientation of his works, necessitates the involvement of the cultural approach. Within the research of the intertextual relationship between the novel and Medieval literature, methods of intertextual analysis have been used.

Results. Within the process of our research the peculiarities of the author's reception of historical material have been defined. In K. Ishiguro's novel the authentic reconstruction of the particular historical epoch (that is the depiction of daily routine, landscapes, historical events etc.) is combined with an urge to reflect on the contemporary problems. The correlation between such concepts as "history" and "memory" emphasizes the humanistic aspect of the analysed novel (overcoming of interethnic animosity, ending the war, the role of memory in the process of identity formation). The present paper also reveals some characteristic features of K. Ishiguro's prose such as intertextuality, genre synthesis, the retrospective character of narration, the usage of the concept of unreliable narrator, as well as the appeal to the poetics of Japanese literature, including wabi-sabi, one of the basic principles of Zen-Buddhism.

Conclusions. Turning to the techniques of the postmodern literature straightforwardly, in his last novel K. Ishiguro distances himself from the postmodern concept of history. The analysis of the novel proves that, being a humanist, K. Ishiguro perceives memory and history as a means of creating one's own identity. The intersection of historical facts and fiction, the coverage of issues related to the role of collective memory in the process of national identity formation allow the author to transcend the traditional limitations of historical prose. However, it should be noted that the problem of correlation between historical facts and fiction in literature is quite complex and requires further consideration.

Key words: metamodernism, Contemporary English Literature, multiculturalism, multicultural novel, national identity, collective memory, intertextuality, Japanese poetics.

ІСТОРИЧНА ПРАВДА ТА ВИГАДКА В РОМАНІ КАДЗУО ІСІГУРО «ПОХОВАНИЙ ВЕЛЕТЕНЬ»

Ланова Вікторія Володимирівна,

аспірант

Одеського національного університету імені І.І. Мечникова victoria-lanovaya@yandex.ua orcid.org/0000-0002-8448-3884

Мета. Метою даної роботи є дослідження особливостей авторського сприйняття історії в романі «Похований велетень» британського письменника-мультикультураліста К. Ісігуро. Центральне місце в роботі посідає проблема кореляції історичного факту і фікції. Основну увагу приділено художнім засобам і функціям поєднання історичного і фіктивного планів роману. Поставлена мета зумовлює вирішення таких завдань: 1) визначити характерні риси поетики сучасного британського письменника в контексті дискурсу пост- і метамодернізму; 2) звертаючись до історичних праць із історії середньовічної Англії, провести паралель між загальноприйнятим потрактуванням історичних подій та їх авторською інтерпретацією в романі; 3) проаналізувати інтертекстуальні зв'язки роману з лицарською літературою; 4) визначити специфіку авторської концепції історії у зв'язку з феноменом історичної пам'яті.

Методо. Методологічні засади дослідження полягають у комплексному поєднанні культурно-історичного і компаративного методів, а також методики інтертекстуального аналізу. Порівняння фактуально-історичного і художнього планів роману К. Ісігуро здійснюється на основі історико-порівняльного методу. Мультикультурна ідентичність письменника, а також загальна філософсько-естетична спрямованість його творчості зумовили необхідність залучання культурологічного підходу. У дослідженні інтертекстуальних зв'язків роману з літературою Середньовіччя були використані методи інтертекстуального аналізу.

Результати. У процесі дослідження було визначено специфіку авторської рецепції історичного матеріалу. Достовірність у відтворенні історичної епохи (описи побуду, ландшафтів, історичних подій тощо) поєднується в романі К. Ісігуро із прагненням

осмислити проблеми сучасності. Взаємозв'язок концептів «історія» і «пам'ять» підкреслює гуманістичний аспект роману (подолання міжетнічної і міжнаціональної ворожнечі, припинення війни, роль пам'яті у формуванні ідентичності). Виявлено характерні особливості прози К. Ісігуро, до яких належать інтертекстуальність, жанровий синтез, ретроспективний характер оповіді, використання фігури ненадійного оповідача, а також звернення до поетики японської літератури, зокрема одного з основних принципів дзен-буддизму «вабі-сабі».

Висновки. Звертаючись до власне постмодерністських прийомів, в останньому романі К. Ісігуро дистанціюється від постмодерністської концепції історії. Аналіз роману доводить, що гуманіст-Ісігуро сприймає пам'ять і історію як інструменти для створення ідентичності. Балансування між історичними фактами та фікцією, висвітлення питань, пов'язаних із роллю колективної пам'яті в процесі формування національної ідентичності дає змогу авторові вийти за межі традиційної історичної прози. Утім, варто зазначити, що проблема співвідношення історичних фактів та вигадки в художньому творі є досить складною та потребує подальшого висвітлення.

Ключові слова: метамодернізм, сучасна англійська література, мультикультуралізм, міжкультурний роман, національна ідентичність, колективна пам'ять, інтертекстуальність, японська поетика.

1. Introduction

"The Buried Giant" is the latest novel written by K. Ishiguro, a contemporary British writer of Japanese descent. It is necessary here to clarify that the work under analysis is an example of a postmodern genre synthesis. It overcomes the boundaries of traditional historical fiction, combining the features of travelogue, fantasy novel, as well as taking the advantages of philosophical parable where history and myth are properly intertwined with modernity. The mention should also be made that there exists a considerable body of literature on the above-named issue. From our point of view, it is worthwhile paying special attention to the articles written by J. V. Pogrebna (Погребная, 2018), T. L. Selitrina (Селитрина, 2017), and Yu. S. Nesterenko (Нестеренко, 2018). However, no study to date has examined the problem of correlation between truth and fiction in the novel. This fact demonstrates the topicality of our article.

The present paper is aimed at investigating the peculiarities of the correlation between historical truth and fiction in K. Ishiguro's novel "The Buried Giant". The theoretical part of the research is based on the historical writings, such as "The History of England in the Middle Ages" by V. Shtokmar (Штокмар, 2005) and "The History of the Kings of Britain" by Geoffrey of Monmouth (Monmouth, 1999). The later one describes the lives of the Britons' kings over the course of two thousand years. It starts with the Trojan invasion of the British Isles and continues up to the beginning of the 7th century, when the Anglo-Saxons assumes control of much of the country. It is this historical fact that is reproduced in K. Isiguro's novel "The Buried Giant" (Ishiguro, 2015).

2. The notion of historicity in postmodern and metamodern fiction

Being a product of genre synthesis, the novel overcomes the boundaries of postmodern itself. It has to be noted that K. Ishiguro is supposed to be one of the most prominent contemporary postmodern writers. As Lobanov I. G. states, many of the characteristic techniques and strategies of English postmodernism, often called metafiction, appear in the novels of the writer. His works reflect both playfulness, prevailing in the aesthetic program of postmodernism, and restoration of history, one of the key strategies of English prose of the last quarter of the 20th century, as well as genre eclecticism, which implies the usage of techniques of mainly popular genres. Nonetheless, K. Ishiguro can be called an English postmodernist with certain reservations (Лобанов, 2012).

Particular attention should be paid to the concept of historicity and narrative form of his novels. First of all, it is important to bear in mind that postmodern movement undermines "the ideas of logical coherence in narration, formal plot, regular time sequence, and psychologically explained characters" (Wagner, 2003: 194). Though both modernist and postmodernists employ the fragmentariness of the prose, the purpose of their using the above-mentioned technique is significantly different: while modernist tries to take the form of the chaos, postmodern writers consider the chaos as something insurmountable, and thus, the only way to deal with it is to play within the chaos. Despite the fact that K. Ishiguro is traditionally treated as postmodernist, the perception of time is linear in his latest novel. The assumption makes it possible to study the analysed novel within post-postmodern or metamodern fiction, which "oscillates between the modern and the postmodern" (Vermeulen, 2010: 5) being each one at once and neither of them. Speaking about postmodernism, "quite often writers abandon chronological representation of events and thus break the logical sequence of time/space and cause/effect relationships in the story <...> in other words, postmodern literature replaces linear progression with a nihilistic post-historical present" (Fedosova, 2015: 77). History turns out to be a way of seeing, beyond which it makes no sense to talk about history.

In that connection, literary criticism has witnessed the appearance of the so-called "pseudo-historical" or "quasi-historical" novel within postmodern literature. So while, there exist certain "transgression of the boundaries of reality, increasing illusory <...> gradual awareness of the imaginariness of the previous constructions" (Эпштейн, 2000: 31) in pseudo-historical prose, metamodernists in their manifesto appeals to pragmatic romanticism: "We propose a pragmatic romanticism unhindered by ideological anchorage. Thus, metamodernism shall be defined as the mercurial condition between and beyond irony and sincerity, naivety and knowingness, relativism and truth, optimism and doubt, in pursuit of a plurality of disparate and elusive horizons. We must go forth and oscillate!" (Turner, 2011). Thus, K. Ishiguro's return to linear perception of time and historicity can be explained by genre fatigue, on the one hand, and by desire to put in order the chaos of the reality, where the reconstruction of history is one of the possible way to preserve one's identity and wholeness, on the other hand.

3. The interconnection of historical and fictional layers in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel "The Buried Giant"

The action of the novel takes place in the late V – early VI centuries in the Sub-Roman Britain. The protagonists, Axl and Beatrice, an elderly Briton couple, set off to find their son, who seems to live in a village several days' walk away.

However, they remember neither his appearance nor the cause of their not seeing each other for so long. The couple's amnesia is caused by the mysterious mist capable of dissolving not only the old but also the hour-long memories. Along the way, Axl and Beatrice meet a Saxon warrior Wistan, the elderly nephew of King Arthur Sir Gawain, the she-dragon Querig, and a twelve-year-old boy, Edwin, who has been rescued by the protagonists.

It should be borne in mind that the exact time of the depicted events can be easily determined. This is possible due to the historical clues placed by the author on the pages of the novel. England, inhabited by Britons, has been a Roman province known as Britain for 400 years. However, due to the invasion of the Huns and the weakening of the Roman Empire, the legions of Romans left Britain in the early 5th century: "...the two wicked leaders of the Picts and Huns, Guanius and Melga, being the partisans of Gratian and Valentinian, when they had learned that the island of Britain was drained of all its soldiers, made a speedy voyage towards it; and, taking into their assistance the people of the adjacent islands, arrived in Albania. Then joining in a body, they invaded the kingdom, which was left without either government or defence, and made miserable destruction among the common people" (Monmouth, 1999: 87). Taking all into account, the Saxons and Angels were driven out of the territory by the Huns, the Germanic tribes who arrived from the mainland and were encouraged by local rulers to participate in internecine wars. This, in turn, allowed the newly arrived tribes to gain a foothold in England and marked the beginning of a fierce war that lasted more than hundred years between foreign invaders and the indigenous Celtic population. The asylum seekers were forced to flee to the mountains of Wales and Cornwall. The heroes of popular resistance were the Knights of the Round Table and their famous leader - King Arthur. Thus, there already exists a certain dual nature of the historical and the fictional in the chronicle, since it is not known to date whether King Arthur actually existed: "With regards to the whole question of historicity and historicisation, it has been suggested that, rather than ask whether there is any justification for postulating a historical Arthur, we should ask whether any candidate fits the 'facts' - certainly the undertaking of such an exercise is very beneficial but it probably doesn't actually show anything, at least with regards to historicity" (Green, 2009: 23).

It is worth mentioning that one can easily distinguish the attributes of a particular historical time in the novel. The first such attribute indicates to the reader that the events of the novel occur after the escape of the Romans, but not earlier than 400 AD. To support the above-mentioned opinion, it is necessary to resolve with reference to landscape description that starts the storytelling: "There were instead miles of desolate, uncultivated land; here and there rough-hewn paths over craggy hills or bleak moorland. Most of the roads left by the Romans would by then have become broken or overgrown, often fading into wilderness. Icy fogs hung over rivers and marshes, serving all too well the ogres that were then still native to this land" (Ishiguro, 2015).

It should be pointed out that this passage is almost literally identical to the description of the famous historian A. Ya. Gurevich: "The landscape of Western and Central Europe in the early Middle Ages was significantly different from the modern one. Much of its territory was covered with forests <...> A considerable part of the forestless area consisted of swamps and tops: the old Roman roads <...> gradually became unusable <...> Forest frightened by its dangers: wild beasts, robbers and other evil people, ghostly mysterious creature and werewolves by which human imagination eagerly inhabited the surrounding villages" (Гуревич, 1984: 56). In addition to the abandoned Roman roads, the writer also carefully describes the settlements of Britons and Saxons, as well as the elements of everyday life: "If you were coming down the steep valley slope, as Axl and Beatrice were that evening, you would have seen below you some forty or more individual houses, laid out on the valley floor in two rough circles, one within the other. You might have been too far away to notice the variations in size and splendour <...> And if the Saxons were happy to sacrifice a little security for the benefits of open air, they were careful to compensate: a tall fence of tethered timber poles, their points sharpened like giant pencils, completely encircled the village. At any given point, the fence was at least twice a man's height, and to make the prospect of scaling it even less enticing, a deep trench followed it all the way around the outside" (Ishiguro, 2015). Moreover, it is necessary to mention that K. Ishiguro depicts with historical accuracy not only the buildings and landscapes, but also the traditional clothes. According to V. Shtokmar, "Saxon clothes were tunic, jacket, pants, cloak. Sometimes on images of that time you can see people with naked legs" (Штокмар, 2005: 28). On their way, Axl and Beatrice meet their cousin, who offers to spend the night at his place. Dressed in "a thick long coat of the sort a shepherd might wear during a cold night's watch", with "the exposed lower parts of his legs" he is what a typical Saxon looks like (Ishiguro, 2015). Speaking about the correlation between truth and fiction in the novel, the background descriptions and historical facts make the story more reliable and trustworthy.

However, apart from real-time attributes, the novel contains allusions to various works of world culture. Thus, "The Buried Giant" is a paraphrase of chivalric romance about Arthur and his knights. The cycle includes the novels by Chrétien de Troyes, "Yvain, the Knight of the Lion" (1176-1181) and "Lancelot, the Knight of the Cart" (1169–1188), as well as an alliterative poem written by an unknown author of the fourteenth century "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight". The folklore heroes create the particular fictitious layer of the novel. The Arthurian motives permeate the fabric of the novel. On their way to son Axel and Beatrice have to overcome mountain peaks, paving the way through thorny shrubs. In the end, they find themselves in a Saxon village, which has suffered a terrible disaster. Local fishermen and a twelve-year-old boy were attacked by a fearsome dragon called Querig. The fishermen were killed, but the boy was lucky: he was rescued by a Saxon warrior Wistan, who happened to be in the village at that time. It turned out later that the she-dragon managed to bite the boy, which means that, according to local beliefs, he could hear the call of the mysterious creature, or even turn into the latter. So the Saxons decide to get rid of Edwin, and Wistan, in order to save the boy, offers Axel and Beatrice to bring him to the village where their son lives.

It should also be noted that Wistan and the she-dragon Querig are not the only folk characters in the novel as on the way to their son Axel and Beatrice meet Sir Gawain, one of the greatest knights and closest companions of King Arthur. K. Ishiguro

hints at the knight's previous acts of bravery through the description of his appearance: "His armour was frayed and rusted, though no doubt he had done all he could to preserve it. His tunic, once white, showed repeated mending. The face protruding from the armour was kindly and creased" (Ishiguro, 2015). At the same time, the above-mentioned description performs th function of intertext and refers the reader to the image of the Knight of the sorrowful Figure, who, like Sir Gawain, protects the disadvantaged people: "And yet Arthur charged us at all times to spare the innocents caught in the clatter of war. More, sir, he commanded us to rescue and give sanctuary when we could to all women, children and elderly, be they Briton or Saxon. On such actions were bonds of trust built, even as battles raged" (Ishiguro, 2015).

Thus, in his novel K. Ishiguro refers not only to the history of medieval England, but also to the particular chivalric romances and English folklore. This view is corroborated by Y. V Pogrebnai's statement, according to which "... historically authentic details of K. Isiguro's novel are transferred to a new reality created by combining the worlds of Arthur's chivalric romances and archaic Anglo-Saxon epics, historically selective details transform into one of the most significant components of the novel myth, which, in its turn, ensures the veracity of the writing" (Погребная, 2018: 194).

Thus, K. Ishiguro does not strive for a reliable reproduction of the historical era though the description of knight tournaments and duels. Historical fact in the hands of the writer serves as the instrument that raises questions that are relevant to modern humanity, such as "Can memory loss put an end to wars once and for all?", "Can people remembering the conflicts of the past overcome them, live in peace with others and be happy?" and "When is it better to remember and when is it better to forget?" By referring to a distant historical era, K. Ishiguro raises the issue of collective historical memory and unconsciousness. This can be seen from the ending of the novel. At the end of their journey, Axel and Beatrice learn that the cause of their oblivion is the breath of the she-dragons Querig. Sir Gawain, who has been accompanying the couple all this time, swears to King Arthur to protect the creature, because if Querig dies, the Britons and Saxons may get their memory back and the country will plunge into a feud of internecine strife again. Instead, Saxon warrior Wistan wants to kill the Querig, because he wants to avenge the Britons for shedding Saxon blood.

According to T. Selitrina, Sir Gawain is a peacemaker and bearer of humanist ideals, while Wistan adheres to the principle "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (Селитрина, 2017: 102). Thus, one of the final scenes of the novel concerns the possible awakening of the buried giant. The image of the buried giant can be interpreted as an allegory of war or memory itself. After the murder of the she-dragon all the memories will gradually return to the island's inhabitants, but it is not known what the return of historical and personal memory will give the Saxons and Britons – happiness or suffering. Therefore, it would be reasonable to emphasize that K. Ishiguro's novel goes beyond the historical novel genre, since it addresses a number of extra-spatial and temporal issues such as love and forgiveness, peace and war, memory and forgetting.

In his turn, B. M. Proskurnin believes that "any historical novelist, no matter how deeply he has plunged into the past, really wants to say something important about the present, to focus on the fundamental problems and issues of his time, the origins of which he sees in the past and the consequences of reckless or controversial decisions that the author wishes to warn the reader about" (Проскурнин, 2013: 216). Such genre hybridization is a characteristic feature not only of the author's poetics, but also of multicultural literature on the whole, within which the works of contemporary British writer are traditionally analysed.

In his latest novel, as in the previous ones, K. Ishiguro turns not only to the long-formed English literary canon, but also to the techniques characteristic of the Japanese heritage. Firstly, he makes usage of the unreliable narrator, whose credibility is objectively compromised. Secondly, the writer appeals to the philosophy of "wabi-sabi", which, according to V. Ovchinnikov, means belonging to ancient times or "archaic incompleteness" (Овчинников, 2011: 51). According to R. Powell, the basic principle of this philosophy is "the impossibility of perfect solutions" (Пауэлл, 2016: 153). This statement, implying the lack of the perfect solutions but the need of any actions, in its turn, tosses the reader back to the question presented in the title of the novel, whether it is better to live with unpleasant memories or to lapse into the state of peaceful amnesia and not to disturb the buried giant. It should be recalled that the working mechanisms of memory itself have always been a matter of the writer's concern: "T've always been interested in memory, because it's the filter through which we read our past. It's always tinted – with self-deception, guilt, pride, nostalgia, whatever. I find memory endlessly fascinating, not so much from a neurological or philosophical viewpoint, but as this tool by which people tell themselves things about the lives they've led and about who they've become" (An interview with Kazuo Ishiguro, 2000).

4. Conclusions

Nowadays literature comes back to sincerity and universal truths. Thus, K. Ishiguro's return to linear perception of time and historicity seems to organize the structure of the narrative pattern. The author managed to create a unique piece of art, standing at the crossroads of different, sometimes quite opposite genres and incompatible literary traditions. The skilful manoeuvring between facts and fiction enables the reader to perceive the narrative of the author as reliable and trustworthy.

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