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Human Relationships and Memory in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*: A Critical Analysis

Assist. Lect. Noora Mazin Shakir*

Tikrit University- College of Education for Women

nmazin@tu.edu.iq

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Abstract

This study offers a critical analysis of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, and focuses on its portrayal of human relationships, specifically those associated with the main character, Stevens. Ishiguro, a well-known figure in contemporary English literature, is known for his insightful exploration of missed opportunities, a theme central to this novel. Within the narrative, Stevens inability to express his love for Miss Kenton, represents one of these missed chances. Like Ishiguro's other novels, this one shows a large interest in the relationship between individual and collective memory. This study adopts a character analysis approach to examine Stevens' personality throughout his life career at Darlington Hall. The analysis aims to highlight the complexities he encounters in his relationships and demonstrate how he becomes aware of them by the end of the novel. This self-awareness develops as Stevens reflects on his past, helping him identify the errors he made in his relationships. This paper is structured into three sections. It starts with an introduction

* Corresponding Author: Assist. Lect. Noora, Email: nmazin@tu.edu.iq

Affiliation: Tikrit University - Iraq

which addresses Ishiguro's status as a novelist, with special attention on his main novels, including *The Remains of the Day*. The second part discusses the relationships in the novel by conducting a textual analysis of its important passages. Finally, the paper ends with the conclusion which sums up the findings.

Keywords: Human relationships, Kazuo Ishiguro, Memory, Miss Kenton, Stevens, *The Remains of the Day*.

العلاقات الإنسانية والذاكرة في رواية كازو إيشيجورو "بقايا اليوم": تحليل نقدي

م.م. نوره مازن شاكر

جامعة تكريت/ كلية التربية للبنات

المستخلص

تقدم هذه الدراسة تحليلاً نقدياً لرواية كازو إيشيجورو "بقايا اليوم"، وتركز على تصويرها للعلاقات الإنسانية، وبالتحديد تلك المرتبطة بالشخصية الرئيسية ستيفنز. تعتبر هذه الرواية من أعمال إيشيجورو الشهيرة في أدب اللغة الإنجليزية المعاصر، حيث يتناول فيها مفهوم الفرص الضائعة كموضوع مركزي. في سياق السرد، نجد ان عدم قدرة ستيفنز على التعبير عن حبه للآنسة كينتون تعتبر إحدى تلك الفرص الضائعة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، وكما هو معتاد في روايات إيشيجورو، تسلط الرواية الضوء على العلاقة بين الذاكرة الفردية والجماعية. تعتمد هذه الدراسة نهج تحليل الشخصيات لفحص شخصية ستيفنز على مدى مسيرته المهنية في قصر دارلينجتون. التحليل هو إبراز التعقيدات التي يواجهها ستيفنز في علاقاته، وكيف يصبح مدرغاً لها بنهاية الرواية. ينمو هذا الوعي الذاتي بداخل ستيفنز عندما يتذكر ماضيه، مما يساعده في التعرف على الأخطاء التي ارتكبها في علاقاته. تنقسم هذه الدراسة إلى ثلاثة أجزاء. حيث تبدأ بمقدمة تلقي الضوء على مكانة إيشيجورو ككاتب وتركز بشكل خاص على رواياته الرئيسية، بما في ذلك "بقايا اليوم". يأتي الجزء الثاني ليناقد العلاقات في الرواية من خلال تحليل نصوصها المهمة. وأخيراً، ينتهي البحث بالخاتمة التي تلخص النتائج النهائية للدراسة.

الكلمات الدالة: العلاقات الإنسانية، كازو إيشيجورو، الذاكرة، الآنسة كينتون، ستيفنز، بقايا اليوم.

1. Introduction

Human memory has been a topic of research for many psychologists in the 20th century and remains an active subject for cognitive scientists today. Memory is the ability to remember and use some particular events that happened in the past in the service of the present. From a psychological perspective, it is the ability of the

human brain to encode and store past experiences and later retrieve or reproduce them when needed in life. Freudian theory, in simple terms, proposes that human behavior is affected by unconscious urges, thoughts, and memories. The human mind, according to this theory is divided into two essential portions: the conscious and unconscious. While the conscious mind contains all memories, desires, wishes, and urges that we can easily bring into awareness or of which we are aware, the unconscious mind includes all of them outside of our awareness. It also suggests that the psyche consists of three aspects: the Id, Ego, and Superego. While the id is the completely unconscious mind, the ego operates in the conscious. The one that operates both consciously and unconsciously is the superego. Carl Jung disagrees with Freud's idea of the unconscious as "the gathering place of forgotten and repressed contents". He also disagreed with Freud's theory that the unconscious was entirely about personal experiences. He believed Freud's "acting subject," or what Freud referred to as the "personal unconscious," was only one layer. There is a deeper layer, according to Jung, known as the "collective unconscious." This element is not influenced by personal experiences; it is simply something we are born with. In contrast to our individual thoughts, the collective unconscious is the same for everyone, everywhere. For him "it is identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a Suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us" (Jung 3-4). So, the personal unconscious contains different suppressed memories and beliefs regarding individual own experience. Memories, for psychoanalysis, are conscious representations of the past. The unconscious recollections or memories may be concealed by conscious ones, even if the ego accepts them. Sigmund Freud, in his early works, speaks about 'unconscious memories', but later he replaces this term with 'memory traces' (Macmillan 502-504).

Freudians and psychologists emphasize the unconscious aspects of memory. They study how the past information or events are stored and recalled. The Freudian unconscious refers to a repressed collection of images, memories, and wishes. In the *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, Freud, by depending on the theory of repressed memories, declares: "we invariably find that memory is repressed which

has only become a trauma by deferred action" (356). Memories, according to him, constitutes the human psyche and are the constitutive of the unconscious. So what is at the Freudian notion of the human psyche is the memory. Memory can be seen as a means to compare past with the present and to compare between different people and different situations. Because of his focusing on the conscious and the unconscious (Id), his theory is considered a science to some extent. For him, the two most essential components of the theory ego is the conscious and the unconscious. Psychoanalytical studies rests on the fundamental notion that the initial mental state of any being is the unconscious, and the conscious state of any given human being can be either present or absent at any given moment.

The main focus of the novel, *The Remains of the Day*, is the narrator's recounting of his own memories, making the novel psychoanalytical in nature as it is filled with psychoanalytical ideas and hints of psychoanalytical criticisms. What encourages Ishiguro to write this novel is the impact of the phenomenon of 'memory boom'- "a revitalized engagement with memory studies which occupied the closing decades of the 20th century" (Ray 33). Ishiguro, In his style of writing, plays with the realm of memory to fit his stories. In an interview, he talks about his use of the mnemonic technique, emphasizing the significance of memory in his work:

I've always liked the texture of memory. I like it that a scene pulled from the narrator's memory is blurred at the edges, layered with all sorts of emotions, and open to manipulation. You're not just telling the reader: this-and-this happened. You're also raising questions like: why has she remembered this event just at this point?... In say, *The Remains of the Day*, memory was something to be searched through very warily for those crucial wrong turns, for those sources of regret and remorse. (Hunnewell)

The title of the novel, *The Remains of the Day*, suggests a story written with fragments of memory and a journey of the mind. The readers, from the beginning of the novel to the end, get an insight into Steven's characteristics and thoughts. He is formed to an embodiment of the national identity of Britain by his practice of the

concepts of ‘Englishness’ and ‘greatness’ that linked with dignity, and by the influence of historical events on him.

Ishiguro is a Japanese-born British novelist, musician, screenwriter, and short-story writer. Having been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2017, he is considered as one of the most highly praised contemporary writers in English literature. Even the Swedish Academy, in its citation, described him as "a writer who, in novels of great emotional force, has uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world" (Jen 2). In his works, Ishiguro’s protagonists attempt to overcome the absences and the chasms left by the absence of family members or loved ones by constructing a sense of past through acts of remembrance. While Ishiguro’s novels consistently challenge genre expectations, with each new work swerves from the past conventions, what unites all of those protagonists is their engagement with the abyss of memory and its potential to distort, shape, silence, and even forget.

While Ishiguro’s parents lived in England, they continued to speak their native language at home. By communicating in Japanese at home and attending English schools, Ishiguro acquired proficiency in both languages. Therefore, he declares that he has never truly belonged to any particular society or country and this what has marked him as “a writer without home” and gives him the opportunity to be an international writer (Sim 24-25). After his graduation, he worked at a homeless charity and devoted his spare time to writing fiction. His first novel, entitled *A Pale View of Hills*, was published when he was at the age of 27 in 1982. After its publication, Ishiguro received the Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize from the Royal Society of Literature. This prize has been awarded specifically for its portrayal of English setting. It talks about a Japanese woman, Etsuko, who lived in England. This woman remembers her earlier life in Japan while she tries to come to terms with the suicide of her daughter.

He then published his second novel, *An Artist of the Floating World*, in 1986. Upon its publication, Ishiguro won the Costa Book Award or the Whitbread Book Award. The novel is set in Nagasaki, depicting the post-war period. Its narrator is

a printmaker and painter named Ono. He struggles to live with the consequences of his supporting for the militarist government before the war. Ishiguro writes it from personal experience as he was born there. In this novel, there is tension between the narrator's effort to justify himself and the judgment of the readers. After winning the praise for these two novels that are set in Japan, Ishiguro decides to write another novel set in Britain, where he spends most of his life. Praising this novel, Salman Rushdie claims that this is "Ishiguro's masterpiece in which he turned away from the settings of Japan in his two first novels and revealed that his sensibility was not rooted in one place, but has the ability of travelling and metamorphosis" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazuo_Ishiguro).

Ishiguro spends most of his spare time reading the history of England during the 20th century. Most of his novels are fundamentally historical in nature. As a result of his reading, he becomes fascinated by the style and life of the pre-war aristocracy and their servants especially the conservative nobles and how some of those nobles are sympathetic with Nazi Germany who disagreed the entry of Britain into World War II. While he is sitting in English country house reading numerous memoirs of this period, an idea for writing his third novel has taken hold of his mind. Then he starts writing the first draft of the book that entitled *The Remains of the Day*. Having the ability to write in many genres including historical and science fictions, he has been nominated four times for the Booker Prize. In 1989, he won this prize (now known as the Man Booker Prize) for his novel, *The Remains of the Day*. This prize is considered the highest literary honor in the English-speaking world. In 1993, this novel was adapted into a sensitive film directed by James Ivory under the same name choosing Anthony Hopkins as a star of the film playing the role of Mr. Stevens and Emma Thompson leading the role of Miss Kenton. As a result of achieving a great commercial success, this film received 8 Oscar nominations. The Guardian once declares that "*The Remains of the Day* is one of the books one cannot live without" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Remains_of_the_Day).

After publishing *The Remains of the Day* in 1989, which is a first person narrative, Ishiguro was nominated by Granta Magazine as one of the 20 best-

known young European and British writers and won Britain's top literary honors at the age of 35. The events of this novel take place after the end of World War I. It is set in a house of a wealthy lord, portraying the first-person narrator, Stevens, as a complete human with flaws. Stevens, who is a butler in this house, is caught up between his romantic allure of Miss Kenton, the housekeeper and his call of duty. In his novels, Ishiguro leaves unresolved end for his readers making his characters accept their mental torment. The characters in Ishiguro's novels are unreliable, often tending to deceive rather than reveal themselves. In his novels, he doesn't attempt to portray the past convincingly but rather to explore how individuals try to reconstruct and interpret their lives through history.

In *A Pale View of Hills*, the memories of the narrator's dead daughter and of the past have been triggered by the arrival of her second child to England. The extent to which the narrator is hiding and uncovering the past through her memories is left to the readers to decide at the end of the novel. In *An Artist of the Floating World*, the narrator is also chased by the past. He loses his wife as a result of a bombing raid, and his son dies while he is fighting the Chinese. Like the narrator of *A Pale View of Hills*, he seems oddly detached from his personal losses. In spite of the fact that he doesn't dwell explicitly on these losses, he circles around the past when he wanders through the broken remains of his house.

In *The Remains of the Day*, the narrator, Stevens, a butler in Darlington Hall, discovers the fact that during the war, the late Lord Darlington was himself a Nazi sympathizer. This fact makes Stevens struggle in order to reconcile with his own view of his master as a noble man. Darlington Hall has a new owner in 1956, an American businessman, Mr. Farraday, who encourages Stevens to go on a trip. Stevens agrees to go for the aim of visiting Miss Kenton, a former housekeeper. As he travels by motor car, his memories are revealed in the form of a travelogue. The flashbacks of Stevens help the readers to understand and make sense of his past and at the same time expose it as unreliable, partial and provisional. The readers sympathize with him because he is a deluded character, but at the same time, they cannot fully believe in him.

In *When We Were Orphans* (2000), Ishiguro explores the theme of memory and a return to realism. It tells a story of Christopher Banks, a detective, in London. This novel takes readers on a trip into the past and personal memory through returning the detective to Shanghai, attempting to find a solution for the mystery of his absent parents who vanished when he was 10. The title of another novel by Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (2005), is taken from a fictional song to which Kathy H., the protagonist, dances to when she was at Hailsham, a mysterious boarding school. The innocent and youthful protagonist visualizes the lyric as a mother who calls out to her child. There was a mysterious figure named Madame who looks at Kathy. She turns the dancing scene into tears. Much later the readers discover the reason behind her crying when Madame explains to Kathy that the dancing girl appears to her as if she asks from more humane world not to let her go.

2. Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*: Exploring Essential Relationships

The Remains of the Day revolves around the life of Mr. Stevens, who serves as both the protagonist and the narrator. He works in Darlington Hall as a loyal butler for his master, Lord Darlington, but after the death of his lord, the house is owned by an American lord, Mr. Farraday. Stevens faces many problems and difficulties in interacting with his new lord because he can't get accustomed to the manner of talking and joking of Mr. Farraday.

One evening, Mr. Farraday suggests to Stevens to take a journey around England, a trip that will change the whole life of Stevens. At first, Stevens doesn't take Mr. Farraday's suggestion seriously until he receives a letter from Miss Kenton, a former housekeeper who worked with Stevens for fifteen years at Darlington Hall, and then she gets married to Mr. Benn and has a child, Catherine. In other words, he takes the matter of trip into consideration because of Miss Kenton's letter. When she sends a letter to him, after twenty years of her marriage, he repeatedly reads the letter thinking that she hints to a failed marriage and wants to come back to her work as a housekeeper at Darlington Hall. In 1956, he begins a six-day trip to visit her. During his journey, he recalls all the events of the past that had happened with him during his service career at Darlington Hall; he recollects and remembers his experiences and his relationships to his father, to Lord Darlington,

and to Miss Kenton. Recalling past memories is an act of remembering "a past that remains deeply buried until the point of revelation"(Toe 63). It is a real test for the narrator's mnemonic abilities which shows that he is between force of forgetting and mastery of memory.

Instead of mentioning frankly the romantic attraction of Stevens to the housekeeper, the writer alludes to it on different occasions. At the end of the novel, she, in her last meeting with Stevens, admits to him that she has always wished and dreamt of life that joining them together. Her confession has broken the heart of Stevens changing his self and the whole view of his life. When he realizes that there is no chance or future with Miss Kenton, he decides to focus on his life as a dignified butler for his current lord, Mr. Farraday.

In fact, Stevens devotes his life to achieve 'greatness', 'dignity', 'glory', and 'professionalism' that is why he lives as a prisoner at Darlington Hall. These terms are the key for him because they are closely related to each other and thus directly related and liked to his profession as a butler. His inquiry into the meaning of 'dignity' is his trying to answer an essential question for him which is "what is a great butler?" (Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, 31). According to him: "the great butlers are great by virtue of their ability to inhabit their professional role and inhabit it to the utmost" (*The Remains* 42-43). He believes that dignity may be acquired "over many years of self-training and the careful absorbing of experience" (*The Remains* 33). He suppresses all his feelings and beliefs in order to maintain the role of a great English butler. He spends most of his life wearing the mask of greatness, believing that being a butler means portraying pure greatness. He wears the mask of an identity that the society imposed on him. He wears the mask of greatness in order to behave properly in society and to create a persona based on societal expectations. He creates it as an ideal image to please his society. His persona is as Jung describes it, "one which in reality one is not, but which one self as well as others think one"(123).

During the year of serving, Stevens' personality was very strict. He puts strict rules and margins for everything that can be done in Darlington Hall and for the

staff, who work under his control. Everything, for him, must be respected and has rules. Because he is a professional butler, who never thinks of anything else than the accomplish mastering of his job, the idea of going on a journey outside Darlington Hall never comes into his mind. In fact, it is Lord Farraday who suggests to him the idea of going around England: "I don't expect you to be locked up here in this house all the time I'm away. Why don't you take the car and drive off somewhere for a few days" (*The Remains* 3). His relationship with Lord Darlington reveals the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. In addition to that his journey of memory detects England as a colonial power. Although that taking a trip around England is Farraday's suggestion, Stevens doesn't take this idea seriously until receiving a letter from Miss Kenton. He considers Farraday's offer as "instance of an American gentleman's unfamiliarity with what was and what was not commonly done in England" (*The Remains* 4). In spite of the fact that he goes on his trip in order to meet Miss Kenton, he tries to hide this idea that may sneak to the head of the reader:

I found myself reconsidering Mr. Farraday's kind suggestion of some days ago. For it had occurred to me that the proposed trip in the car could be put to good professional use; that is to say, I could drive to the West Coutry and call on Miss. Kenton in passing, thus exploring at first hand the substance of her wish to return to employment here at Darlington Hall. (*The Remains* 10)

On many occasions, Stevens expresses that he doesn't like to remember terrible events, he only wants to remember happy moments such as the two hours meeting with Miss. Kenton and those related to Lord Darlington: "predominantly [they] concerned [themselves] with very happy memories" (*The Remains* 10). He expresses his willingness to remember the recollection of those great moments at Darlington Hall. He refuses to remember the terrible reports about his lord published in the newspapers during the war:

Oh yes, Mrs. Benn. But enough of this. I know you remember Darlington Hall in the days when there were great gatherings, when it was filled with distinguished visitors. Now that's the way his lordship deserves to be remembered. (*The Remains* 10)

From a psychological perspective, Stevens' mind is programmed in a way that he finds rest in living within the past memories with little regard for the future. He seeks to remember events happened in the past rather than forget them. When he decides to go on his journey, the first thing that comes into his consideration is the manner of clothing: "Then there was the question of what sorts of costume were appropriate on such a journey, and whether or not it was worth my while to invest in a new set of clothes" (*The Remains*10). He wears an elegant suit because he is afraid that someone will see him driving the car with inappropriate clothes. According to Marshall Berman, one of the butler at Darlington Hall, clothes "become an emblem of the old, illusory mode of life; nakedness comes to signify the newly discovered and experienced truth" (*The Remains* 106). In fact, there are two reasons for Stevens' dressing elegant clothes, firstly he wants to wear a mask that will hide his real self with all its emotions and beliefs, and secondly because the 'Greatness' is a definitive principle that the personality of Stevens is based on, he wants to look great. He thinks that living in a land called 'Great Britain' or a country like England gives him another reason to be great. In addition to that, his work of serving a political man who has a great position in England is also encouraged him to do that. Once he comments on the "Greatness" by declaring:

I distinctly felt that rare, yet unmistakable feeling-the feeling that one is in the presence of greatness. We call this land of ours Great Britain, and there may be those who believe this a somewhat immodest practice. Yet I would venture that the landscape of our country alone would justify the use of this lofty adjective. (*The Remains* 29)

Stevens, throughout his trip, meets some people who mistakenly took him of a great man or a gentleman because of the luxurious car he is driving and the elegant clothes he wears. Once in the street, he meets a man who tells him: "you talk almost like a gentleman, And what with you driving an old beauty like this" (*The Remains* 125). He tends to stick to the persona of greatness because he thinks that society will reward people not for what they truly are, but for what they show. That is why he tends to bury his self deeply to the extent that he forgets about himself completely. He spends most of his time trying to make his past fit with the present. Ishiguro uses Stevens' journey from Darlington Hall to the West Country by

making it on the level of Stevens' consciousness. His persona is faced by the shadow. The shadow could dominate a large part of the unconscious mind. It is somehow similar to the Id of Freud. It can be described as composed of the dark elements of Stevens' personality. The shadow, as opposed to the persona which seeks the perfection in order to be as the society expected it, wants the person to adopt his reality and to confronts it. Thus, Stevens adopts the greatness seeking for the perfection and to match what is expected from him in the society. In his speaking, Stevens uses formal language by employing polite speech of the British upper class during the interwar period for two reasons; to distance himself from his deep emotions, and to maintain an air of professionalism and formality.

Stevens has the habit of discussing the aspects of dignified butler and the word of 'dignity' with his fellow butlers. For having a dignity, he considers some of them like Mr. Lane and Mr. Marshall as 'competent'. For him, dignity "is something one can meaningfully strive for throughout one's career" (*The Remains* 33). He believes that the dignified butler are those, like him, who relinquish their special life for the professional one. That is why there is a great connection between dignity and professionalism. 'Professionalism' is deeply related to dignity. Stevens uses professionalism as a standard to measure the dignity not only of his fellow butlers, but also his father and his own lord. One can conclude that he takes pleasure in his role as a dignified butler from the following text:

It is sometimes said that butlers only exist in England. Other countries, Whatever title is actually used, have only manservants. I tend to believe this is true. Continentals are unable to be butlers because they are as a breed incapable of the emotional restraint which only the England race are capable of..... In a word, 'dignity' is beyond such persons. We English have an important advantage over foreigners in this respect and it is for that reason when you think of a great butler, he is bound, almost by definition, to be an Englishman. (*The Remains* 32-33)

One way which proves that Stevens is unreliable narrator is his recalling of the past events and his selective memory. Memory is like a moving camera or a data recorder which films everything seems to be stored in it and shares the sounds Stevens' ears hear and the scenes his eyes witness. Even the smallest details of his

experiences are chronicled in it. He recalls many people by depending on his referent bin which contains the values they represent, the behaviors they do and the traits they exemplify. He has what is called a memory location which indicates the knowledge and the description about each people. He recalls his past events in a way that fits his self-image as a proper and dignified butler. For instance, in his mind, his father and Lord Darlington are associated with the concepts such as professionalism, aristocracy, greatness, and dignity. In order to show that he prefers his job over his relationships, he recalls his father, Mr. Stevens senior, in a highly idealized manner by depicting and describing him as upholding the values of the British aristocracy, a dignified butler, and a paragon of professionalism. This means that the emotional dimension of Stevens is because his father who was emotionally distant man.

Stevens has another relationship which proves that he is, like his father, emotionally distant man. This relation is with Miss Kenton. Although their obvious affection for each other sharing a deep emotional connection, he remains emotionally detached and denies his feelings toward her giving the priority to his professionalism and his duty as a butler. In fact, she tries many times to engage with him, but her efforts are in vain. He repeatedly dismisses her attempts causing his missed opportunity to make a meaningful relationship. His denial for his true feelings in order to protect his self-image as a professional and a butler who prioritizes his duty over all is what contributed to his unreliability as a narrator.

He ignores Miss Kenton by declaring that he must attend his duties and his task as a butler because "events of global significance are taking place in this house [Darlington Hall]" (*The Remains* 218). This vividly highlights the fact that he wants to find an excuse for escaping from his deep feelings. During his trip, he is disturbed by the memories and painful recollections of his relation with Miss Kenton: "For the first time in his life, Stevens is forced to wonder if all his actions were for the best after all... A sad and humorous love story, and a witty meditation on the democratic responsibilities of the ordinary man" (*The Remains* 2).

When he delivers a letter from her, this letter evokes a wistful old love that they had at Darlington Hall. As he reads it, he starts to think that she is harboring unhappy feelings because of the sad tone of the letter. This letter gives to his mind a feeling of regret. He feels regret for the past moments he had not in her company. He starts thinking of their happy moments at Darlington Hall wishing to get her back to this house.

Freud's model of the human mind displays how the three components, Id, Ego, and Super-ego are worked together and how they influence each other. In spite of the fact that he was the first one who proposed the idea of 'defense mechanism', his daughter, Anna, in her book *The Ego and the Mechanism of Defense*, outlines a variety of internal defense mechanisms for the Ego (6-7). This reality can be linked with Stevens' life. His recollecting of the past events and his journey into the past is not only a trip into his own past, but also into the past of his country, England:

Like the other novels, *The Remains of the Day*, displays a large interest in the relationship between individual and collective memory, as well as the relationship between personal identity and national consciousness, and how these relationships are shown in the form of historical narrative. (Vyas 206)

As it is known that memory is used as a means to draw comparisons between the past and present as well as between different people. Stevens compares Darlington Hall at the times of Lord Darlington and now by depending on his memories. In the past, the visitors and the guests concentrated their discussions on important events and issues. On the contrary, today they spend their evenings enjoying their drinks and are very much obsessed with the trivial topics like football. Stevens' memories are the means that display the comparison between his personality and Miss Kenton. Although they work as servants at Darlington Hall, they are different in so many respects. She shows herself as a woman who can live independence and has the ability to express her emotions of love that Stevens never dares do. As a way of drawing his attention to her feelings of love, she brings to him flowers, but she gets no response from him except disregard.

Stevens' memory evokes hidden regrets and incidents that demonstrate layers of guilt. In fact, he and Miss Kenton deceive themselves under the name of professionalism and under the mask of setting up the ideal of dignity. Ishiguro, in his writings, focuses on the personal and emotional cost of unstinting loyalty of the servants to their employers. As we have seen, Stevens is utterly devoted to the service of Lord Darlington refusing to doubt him. When young Cardinal tells him that his lord becomes the "pawn of the Nazi" (*The Remains* 222), he doesn't believe stating that: "I'm sorry, sir, but I have to say that I have every trust in his lordship's good judgment" (*The Remains* 225). Even once he describes his trusting in his lord by declaring: "Lord Darlington wasn't a bad man. He wasn't a bad man at all.... was a courageous man.... You see, I trusted, I trusted in his lordship's wisdom. All those years I served him, I trusted" (*The Remains* 243). He gives his unquestioning devotion to his lord. In fact, his trust in his master and his loyalty to him is what put him in a fate that is worse than his lord's because he becomes a 'pawn' of a 'pawn'. What makes Stevens a 'pawn' is his father's opinion regarding the butler: "any dignified butler is brave and able to solve any problems without distractions" (Odeh 6). He believes that the butler can be brave through his loyalty to his lord. In fact, Stevens wants to be as great as his own father.

Stevens gives the priority to his job in order to become a great butler, even he prefers it over his father. Once, he runs about fetching a doctor for the guest of his lord while his father is breathing his last. By his death-bed, Stevens senior was longing for him repeating his words: "I hope, I have been a good father to you" (*The Remains* 101) and Miss Kenton closes his eyes when he dies. Stevens gives an excuse for this shameful situation by stating that he had to cater to the guests of Lord Darlington downstairs. The relationship between Stevens and Lord Darlington resembles that of a wife with her husband. Although he tries to model his life as that of his father choosing the same job and working hard to achieve loyalty and dignity, he prefers his job over his father. In another words, even though he considers his father the personification of good butler and of dignity, he valued his lord more. The reason for his behaving in this way is that Stevens senior never responds to the sentiments of his son. Even when his father is taken ill of a stroke

to the heart, he ignores the statement of his son: "I hope Father is feeling better now" (*The Remains* 101).

One of situation which proves that the relationship between Stevens and his father is a formal one is that he chooses to write father with capital letter 'F': "I have to come to relate something to you Father" (*The Remains* 68). Another situation is that he climbs up to the room of his father: "I had rarely had reason to enter my father's room prior to this occasion" (*The Remains* 67). This indicates that although they live together under the same roof, his father doesn't invite him to his room, nor does Stevens visit him. In order to obtain the responding for his feelings, he has to submit totally to his lord instead of his father. Accordingly, Brain W. Shaffer claims that Stevens "has two fathers; his natural father, also a butler, and his class father, and master, Lord Darlington" (64). He sees his lord "as one of those great gentlemen of our times in whose hands civilization had been entrusted" (*The Remains* 122). He endorses the greatness of his lord and exalts his moral stature. Once, he describes him: "I can declare that he was a truly good man at heart, a gentleman through, and one I am proud to have given my best years of service" (*The Remains* 64). He considers his career at Darlington Hall as a way of "furthering the progress of humanity" (*The Remains* 107). In order to highlight this point, Cynthia Wong claims that:

Both Stevens and Lord Darlington behave in accordance with what they deem to be the proper social ideals of the time. For Stevens, good service to Darlington is of utmost importance to ensuring world peace. For both, service is to a national cause is the order of the day. (498)

In an interview with Ishiguro, Allan Vorda and Kim Herzinger state that Ishiguro himself points out how the narrator tries to do contribution perfectly for the common good "no matter how small a contribution is it to improve humanity" (152). Accordingly, the reader can understand that that a great butler is not only a someone who serves gentlemen for many years, but also is someone who serves and contributes to humanity. In order to elaborate on the term of 'greatness', Ishiguro tries to make the reader understand how the feelings of Stevens towards

this term or towards being a great butler. Once, Stevens describes English landscape by stating:

It is believe, a quality that will mark out the English landscape to any objective observer as the most deeply satisfying in the world, and this quality is probably best summed up by the term 'greatness. (*The Remains* 103)

Stevens means that English landscape has a quality that other countries do not. He puts himself under great restraint of being a great butler never allowing himself to display neither a reaction nor emotions of any kind. Even he hardly has a chance to see his father when he was ill, always trying to find an excuse based on what Stevens senior would have wanted; to be a great butler. Giving the priority to his career, he suppresses his feelings of love. When Miss Kenton comes to his room carrying a vase of flowers in his time off, he was reading a book of love. When she asks him what kind of book he is reading, he refuses to answer her. She tries to get hold of the book by thrusting her way towards him, but Stevens stands up from his chair. As she continues forward, he decides to go backward. At the end, she forces him into a nook ripping the book's fingers and discovering that he was reading a sentimental love story. Another situation of suppressing his emotion of love is that when Miss Kenton tells him that she decides to accept Mr. Benn's proposal of marriage, he doesn't say anything, he only congratulates her. Unlike Stevens, she is not afraid to express her opinion or to say what is on her mind. That is why she doesn't hesitate to enter his parlor and to tell him that she will accept Mr. Benn's offer of marriage.

Conclusion

Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* is a modern novel that shows the fall of the protagonist, Mr. Stevens, through his relationships. His falling is what makes the novel stand out as a tragedy. Stevens lives by a notion that words like 'professionalism', 'dignity' and 'greatness' can only be achieved through suppressing his relationships and his emotions and giving the priority to his profession as a butler. He sacrifices everything for Lord Darlington, his former

employer and chooses isolation by serving him. The title of the novel indicates a secret.

One might think that either it refers to what is left of the day and what is meant by the day is the glorious past or to what is left of the final years in Stevens' life. The main focus of the book is on the story of the mind depicting Stevens' various scenarios. The readers can see the remains of his day as the ruins of his previous life. Stevens becomes the victim of dignity and loyalty and of isolating himself from everything.

In writing *The Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro purposefully avoids providing a satisfying resolution. He leaves it to the readers to decide whether they are in front of a happy, tragic ending, or both. One can say that Stevens' recollecting of his memories is what enabled him to be more aware about his real personality. So, if he forgets them, he will never have any sense of self or never be able to know the truth of his persona. His life is constituted or shaped in the light of what his memory stores.

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