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# EMULATION OF THE COMPLEXITIES IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS AND REMINISCENCE IN KAZUO ISHIGURO'S “THE REMAINS OF THE DAY”

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## ABSTRACT

*The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro drama displays human relationships within the context of restraint, misrecognition, and ethics of emotional self-erasure. This essay states that the novel adopts a complex relationship by inculcating intimacy among the professional code, time deferral and unreliable narration. The reminiscence of Stevens is rather a belated reckoning than a nostalgic recovery using elements of repression, duty, and ideology by the classes. The role of memory in the novel operates selectively and reveals the way in which affect is subjected to discipline by the institutional loyalty and how moral responsibility is lost by service. The analysis predicts the conflict between the dignity and the desire showing how the missed possibilities of relation especially in the case of the relation between Stevens and Miss Kenton is created by performative professionalism rather than individual incapability. Reading reminiscence as a broken ethical question and not as a confessional form, the paper will place the story by Ishiguro within the late modernist anxieties of interiority, time, and moral agency. Finally, the novel shows

that it is not only circumstance that denies human connection but a proactive process that is molded and predetermined by stories people make in order to maintain the coherence and self-worth.

## KEYWORDS:

Human Relations, Nostalgia, Complexity, Reminiscence, Professionalism, Loyalty.

## INTRODUCTION

The world faced many levels of changes and was full of the psychological mysteries at the post-world war era. Most of the people had struggles in adapting the changes in customs and cultures suddenly. The post-modernistic writings evolved and carry the subject matter of adapting to any situation or transformations they should undergo. Ishiguro in his novels elucidated the themes under human values and tradition. His novels dealt more with human relationships and customs. His narratives are centered in process of digging the sub-consciousness mind of the human. This study focuses on the complexities in human relationships and reminiscence as the major themes of the novel *The Remains of the day* by Kazuo Ishiguro. Nostalgia is more common in Post-modern writings and the story moves around the memory of the major characters. In the post-world war period, most of the families fall apart, lost their identity and moreover the individual minds are filled with depressions and anticipations. Their minds were subtle and filled with nostalgia. The novel depicts the complex relationship between memory and identity and how individuals construct their narratives, sometimes allowing their loyalty or ambition to alter their reminiscences.

## MEMORY, DUTY AND THE QUESTION

The novel *The Remains of the day* is an intense exploration of memory, duty, and the question of what it means to lead a meaningful life. The story was set in the England at the period after the World War II. The story begins from the narrations of life of the protagonist Stevens, an aging English butler who reflects on his years of service at Darlington Hall. The historical setting of the narrative is of the utmost importance since it reflects political and social changes which characterized Britain in the middle of the 20th century. The decay of the British aristocracy, the embodiment of the character of Lord Darlington, is used as a metaphor of the diminishing ideals of honor and obligation that used to govern the English society. Ishiguro skillfully combines personal and historical information, making the readers think not only about the thoughts of the character on his life but also about the cultural changes that took place in a post-imperial Britain.

The novel struggled with the theme of identity and self-deception. When Stevens recalls his memories about the past, he struggles with the repercussions of his unshaken faithfulness to Lord Darlington, a man whose erroneous decisions end up in tragic events. Interrogation on reliability and trust is depicted by the use of the topic of memory in the novel. Stevens is the best example of the emotionally underestimated person, who has a more general social sympathy to duty over individual satisfaction. However, Stevens may be praised for devotion as indicative of a previous era of honesty and professionalism, adapting to the changes, dynamics in the work environment and loyalty exposed in the modern society.

### **STEVENS AS A PERFORMED SELF**

Stevens, the protagonist, decided to go on a journey for six days by road to the Western England, from Darlington Hall, the house in which Stevens lives and worked as a butler for thirty-four years. It's new ownership is with Mr. Farraday now who belongs to America who usually chats and make jokes. Stevens left for journey with a purpose to meet Miss Kenton who was the old worker of his workplace and she had left before twenty years. Stevens decided to meet Miss Kenton because he received a letter from her and hinting there about her marriage life, children and desire to return to her old work place which is well sophisticated at that period.

Stevens also recollects his friendships with the butlers in other houses. His nostalgia is more in work place relationship prevailed between himself and Miss Kenton. He did not convey it but his most of the flashbacks expressed with Kenton shown that he had been infatuated towards her. At his nostalgic state it is evident that during their togetherness in the professional events they had many disagreements for some silly reasons which show their care on each other. Towards the end, Kenton falls nostalgic and said her life might be in a right path if she married Stevens. The words from her mouth broke the heart of Stevens but he never shown it to her which leads them to depart and Stevens started moving to his work place to meet his new boss.

This novel depicted theme of nostalgia, regret, and self-deceptions are universally relevant. In an age of rapid societal change, Ishiguro's exploration of the personal cost of allegiance and the complexities of human emotion remains heartbreaking. Stevens had known about the outer world from the pictures he got from the books as he always delve in his duties he never finds to time to come out. Mr. Farraday, his new employer opined him to take a journey to look around the changed world. His reaction in the beginning was

“It has been my privilege to see the best of England over the years, sir, within those very walls” [1]. But in the journey while witnessing the reality he felt alienated. His feeling of alienation is uttered as “I continue to find myself in surroundings with which I had at least a passing acquaintance...But then eventually the surroundings grew unrecognizable and I knew I had gone beyond all previous boundaries...the surroundings grew strange around me” [1]. He felt himself as a stranger in the modern world and went into nostalgia.

Flash back is a technique used by Ishiguro which is used to depict nostalgia in novel. Memories are evidences of past happenings of a human life once he recollects them at any situation of the life. This novel is sumptuously filled with memories in the form of recalling and remembering. For instance, “I am pleased to recall the memory of that moment” [1] then “once, shortly after lunch, I recall” [1] are used frequently. Stevens's nostalgia is further complicated by his interactions with Miss Kenton, a former colleague with whom he had a close but ultimately unfulfilled relationship. Stevens recollection of Miss Kenton is laced with a feeling of yearning and sadness knowing that he had lost an opportunity to be in a relationship with a real partner and even sex. His memory of their old relationship reminds him of the way that they might have been and where nostalgia can be both a consolation and a ache. The fact that Stevens misses the past is an enormous desire to have a more structured and hierarchical society where people understood their role and their responsibilities were well defined. The world he is living in is changing yet Stevens stick to his own recollections of his past and he is unable to accept the fact of the changing society.

Stevens had lost himself in the thoughts of lost chances and the knowledge that he can have lost personal happiness at the cost of professionalism. This nostalgic feeling runs through the life and adds layers to the character of Stevens to the extent to which he struggles with his personal regrets and decisions. He rediscovers the locations of his childhood and meets new people that question his worldview, Stevens gets to face the truth of his feelings of nostalgia and how it has shaped his vision of the world. Ishiguro does a fantastic job of depicting the interior struggle that Stevens is going through as he struggles with his previous decisions and their effects. The uncompromising loyalty of Stevens to the job of a butler may be regarded as a display of his nostalgia to the days when he felt the value of his service.

## REMINISCENCE

The concept of the remembrance, identity and time flow presented in the novel provides useful insights into how human constructed the sense of self and maintenance of relationships with all surrounding people. The theme of nostalgia will continue serving as a strong tool of understanding the past and our expectations of tomorrow after the society continues to struggle with the pace of societal and technological revolution. The greatest idea of complexity of relationships in the novel is represented by the theme of unknown feelings and wasted chances. Although Stevens and Miss Kenton share experiences and have a strong mutual liking, they have difficulties expressing themselves because of established professional barriers and the emotional shyness of Stevens. This conflict is a metaphor of the general societal unwillingness to own their own truth, and their relationship turns into some misunderstanding and remorse. Stevens constantly places his duties as a butler first and foremost above his own emotions which make him suppress emotions that would have allowed him to see more into Miss Kenton. This complexity is a personal tragedy as well as the image of emotional landscapes of many people shaped by their social positions in the society. The trip is a form of self-reflection, which requires Stevens to face the outcome of emotionally stifled life. His ambiguous relationship with Miss Kenton makes him understand that what is more important than duty can be the capacity to acknowledge humanity. This complexity is most clearly shown in the subtle depiction of the relationship between Stevens and Miss Kenton, and the fact that, in many instances, societal demands restrict a person in expressing their pure emotions.

## CONCLUSION

Reminiscence is a more prevalent feature of Post-modern texts and the narrative wanders around the recollection of the key characters. The majority of the families dissolve, lose their identity and more so the individual mind is full of depressions and expectations in the post world war period. They were men of a subtle mind and nostalgic. The novel portrays the tricky interaction amid the memory and the identity and the way people build their own stories, occasionally letting their devotion or aspiration to modify their memories. The exploration of the memory, identity and the time in the novel presents some interesting clues on how human constructed the sense of self and maintaining the relationship with all people they interact with. With the modern society struggling to deal with the swift social and technological advancements, the concept of nostalgia will continue playing a strong role in defining our sense of retrospective and our vision

of the future. The novel is a clear explanation that missed chances and complexity in relationships will result in nothing but recollection, nostalgia, depressions, shells of the feelings and remorse one has had.

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