TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Intersection between Postmodernity and Postcoloniality: Liminality in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Narayan Dhakal has completed his thesis "Intersection Between Postmodernity and Postcoloniality: Liminality in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*" under my supervision. He carried out this research work form August 2009 to July, 2010. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for vivavoce.

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Letter of Approval

This is to certify that the thesis entitled " Intersection Between Postmodernity and Postcoloniality: Liminality in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Narayan Dhakal has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research committee.

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Abstract

Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* dramatizes the confluence between the postmodernity and postcoloniality. Steven's narrative connects the personal to the political. By so doing, it offers an alternative to a public historical record. Set in 1956, this novel is tale of a retired British Butler named Stevens. Darlington Hall where he works, places him at the liminal passage. Miss Kenton also puts Stevens into liminal passage and at the same time the Darlington Hall bestows a physical site of Steven's ambiguous social position. This liminality of the social position of postcoloniality is manifested in the postmodern strategies of the unreliability, self-reflexivity, narrative shifts, fragmentation, flashback and self-deception.

Chapter I

Introduction to *The Remains of the Day*

The research veers around the issue of how Kazuo Ishiguro blends postmodernity and postcoloniality by keeping in attention the issue of liminal narrative by making the narrative structure pass the threshold between postmodernity and postcoloniality. The novel *The Remains of the Day* tells the story of Stevens, an English butler who dedicates his life to the loyal service of Lord Darlington. The novel begins with Stevens receiving a letter from an ex-colleague called Miss Kenton, describing her married life, which he believes hints at her unhappy marriage. The receipt of the letter allows Stevens the opportunity to revisit this once-cherished relationship, if only under the guise of possible re-employment. Stevens' new employer, a wealthy American named Mr. Farraday, encourages Stevens to borrow a car to take a well-earned break, a motoring trip. As he sets out, Stevens has the opportunity to reflect on his unmoving loyalty to Lord Darlington, the meaning of the term "dignity", and even his relationship with Miss Kenton. As the book progresses, increasing evidence of Miss Kenton's once love for Stevens and his for her, is revealed. Working together during the years leading up to the Second World War, Stevens and Miss Kenton fail to admit their true feelings. All of their recollected conversations show a professional friendship, which come close--but never dared to cross the line into romance. Miss Kenton, it later emerges, has been married for over 20 years and therefore is no longer Miss Kenton but has become Mrs. Benn. She admits to occasionally wondering what her life with Stevens might have been like, has come to love her husband, and is looking forward to the birth of their first grandchild. Stevens muses over lost opportunities, both with Miss Kenton and with his long-time

employer, Lord Darlington. At the end of the novel, Stevens instead focuses on the "remains of [his] day", referring to his future service with Mr. Farraday.

Kazuo Ishiguro was born in Nagasaki, Japan on November 8, 1954 to Shizuo and Shizuko. When he was six, he and his family moved to England where his father was commissioned by the British government to work on a project. Although the family expected to stay only a few years, his father's work kept them there much longer until England had truly become their home Ishiguro earned a bachelor of arts degree with honors in philosophy and literature in 1987 and then completed his master of arts in creative writing at the university of East Anglia in 1980. he worked as a social worker for a number of years until he was able to make a living as a writer. During his years as a social worker, he met Lorna Anne Mac Dougall, whom he married in 1986. they have daughter named Naomi, who was born in 1992. Ishiguro's interests include music and the cinema.

Despite his youth, Ishiguro has already built an impressive literary career. Each of his first three novels won awards -- the third, *The Remains of The Day* won the prestigious Booker Prize -- and all of his five novels to date have earned critical acclaim. Ishiguro's novels deal with self-deception, regret and personal reflection. His narratives are carefully wrought first-person accounts with a controlled tone that does not deter from the speaker's deep soul-searching. Ishiguro is credited, alongside such high profile writers as Salman Rushdie, with breathing new life into contemporary British Fiction. In 1995, Ishiguro was named to the order of the British Empire for his contribution to literature.

In addition to his critically acclaimed novels, Ishiguro has written numerous short stories and television scripts, and he was a consultant for the 1993 James Ivory and Ismail Merchant cinematic adaptions of *The Remains of The Day*, was nominated

for eight Academy. His first four novels have won important literary prize: the Winifred Holtby Awards of the Royal society of literature for the first; the Whitbread Book of the year for the second; the Booker prize for the third; and the Cheltenham prize for the fourth. Both his second and his fifth novels were shortlisted for the Booker prize as well. And all of his works have been translated into numerous other languages, insuring the author a genuinely international readership.

Ishiguro's *The Remains of The Day*, earned the 1989 Booker Prize, England's highest literary honor. The book is, in effect a character study of Stevens, an ageing buttler who has spent thirty years in service at Darlington Hall. As he considers his past, he forced to come to terms with the gravity of the sacrifices he has made in the name of duty.

Different critics look *The Remains of the Day* in different ways. Christine Beberich writes:

> *The Remains of the Day* is an important contribution to late Twentieth-Century literature. The novel is constructed around quintessential Gentlemanly values, such as tradition honour.dignity and duty, and question their validity. Uniquily, it presents its readers with a view from below,with a servant as protagonist. This gives scope for critical debate, as Ishiguro shows how members of different social classes react to the gentlemanly ideal, how they adopt it, how they adopt to it, andhow they can be broken by it. (136)

Brain Shaffer writes:

> The *Remains of the Day* is one of the most profound novelistic representation of repression mosquerading as proffessionalism, yet it is

> also aimed at an entire nation's mythical self-identity. Indeed, the novel associates Steven's deceptive self-conception with thatof England's at large Stevens equates the significance of events in Darlington Hall with those in England generally, confuses "house knowledge" with world knowledge, and moves freely between the subject of what makes a "great butler" great and what makes "Great Britain" great, arguing that both exhibit "calmness" and a "sense of restraint". (28-9)

Salman Rushdie characterizes *The Remains of the Day* as "a brilliant subversion of the fictional modes from which it at first to descend" (11) while Ihab Hassan maintains that the novel simultaneously "perfects and subverts" (69) its own literary tradition.

Commenting on *The Remains of the Day* Jean-Francois asserts that "The point of using an unreliable narrator is indeed to reveal in an " Interesting way the gap between appearance and reality, and to show how human beings distort or conceal the latter" (15). Gabriel Annan of the *New York Review of Books* finds that "Ishiguro's first three novels are explanations, even indictments, of Japaneseness-- *The Remains of the Day* features no Japanese characters" (4). Similarly John P. McCombe writes:

> The personal concerns of Stevens, the narrator and protagonist of Kazauo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day,* are inextricably bound to the political and social climate that surrounds him. The personal values to which Stevens subscribes -- the benevolent paternalism of his employer Lord Darlington and the rigid hierarchies that structure their relationship -- are shared by a colonialist ideology. (78)

But none of them have analyzed the novel from the perspective of the intersection between postcolonialism and postmodemity. The implementation of the

theoretical modality of the liminality between the postmodernism and postcolonialism will be the prime concern of this research .In addition it the criticisms from the library and frequent consultation with the teachers will be primary ingredients of the research. The first chapter will give the bird eye view of the work .It will put in gist the crux of the writing research. In the same way the second chapter will provide the extensive discussion of the postcolonialism and postmodernism and the liminality between them. Similarly the third chapter is the chapter of textual analysis where depending upon the paragraphs and some of the lines which touch the debate between postmodernism and post colonialism we will try to prove the point. The last chapter will be the chapter of conclusion to conclude the effectively.

Chapter II

The Postmodern Intersects with the Postcolonial: A Methodological Overview

Postmodern/Postcolonial intersections in Literary Theory and Practice are widely discussed in the contemporary literary and intellectual academia. While the contestation of these terms supplies much energy to contemporary theory, it also figures large in discussions of contemporary literature, whether conducted within the bounds of traditional national literatures or in emerging fields such as World Literature in English. The confluence of the postmodern and postcolonial is important, for instance, in recent discussions of magic realism, which, in its challenge to genre distinctions and the conventions of realism, resists both imperialist culture and the totalizing systems of modern thought. The postcolonial writing has a very long history. But the intensification of theoretical interest in the postcolonial has coincided with the rise of postmodernism, which, it would be true to say that, this has led to both confusion and overlap between the two. The confusion is caused partly because the major project of postmodernism -- the deconstruction of the centre, logocentric master narrative of European culture, is very similar to the postcolonial project of dismantling the center/margin binarism of imperial discourse. Similarly, these two overlap because the rejection of the individuality, the instability of signification, the dynamic operation of power: all these familiar poststructuralist concepts emerge in postcolonial discourse. Eurocentrism is still active and this activity itself becomes a subject for postcolonial reading.

These aesthetic concerns, in turn, are integral to the theoretical work of such notable scholars as Hoffman James, Hellen Tiffen, Homi Bhabha, Simon During, and Linda Hutcheon, who have dedicated essays to reconciling the fields or, more often, to reevaluating one through the lens of the other. If, as Hutcheon suggests, "the

postmodern and the postcolonial share a range of concerns--a debate with the past, a strong concern for marginalization, an emphasis on textual gaps--they also differ in their conception of history, the location of their discourse, and their evaluation of discursive effects on subjectivity" (131). In this connection James Hoffman writes:

> Many Post colonial writer effectively use postmodern strategies as part of there discourse of emancipation. In practice, postmodern and postcolonial phenomena are often intertwined rather than one being subsumed by the other. It would be as mistaken to argue that the postcolonial is always postmodern as it world be to argue that the postcolonial is never postmodern. A post colonial strategy may be to (take) it's identity from a double relation to place (as source of authentic identity) and other place (as source of impose culture), but this is not all postcolonialism is nor do all postcolonialisms pursue this strategy. (163)

The much debated relationship between postmodernism and postcolonialism still requires lengthy and careful delineation. Jane M. Jacobs argues:

> This nexus is of particular relevance to this volume which takes as its empirical focus not the colonial past but on urban present which is so often read as a paradigmatic site of the 'condition of post modernity' their is little doubt that postcolonial theoretical revisions have productively course-fertilized with postmodern theory. (29)

Therefore, the postmodern project of deconstruction master narratives unsetting binaries and admitting marginalized knowledges, follow closely the objectives of the post colonial critical project. Similarly, these various perspectives are conjoined in their attention to the relationship between discourse and power, the social constituted

and fragmented subject and the unruly politics of significant – the working of irony, parody, mimicry.

Likewise, arguing on this connection, Philip Leonard says:

> Poststructuralism and postcolonial theory do not arrive at a cohesive explanatory model that conclusively explains the relationship between cultural power and the nation-state but they do overlap and coverage in ways that provoke a dramatic rethinking of colonialism's legacy, of postcolonial resistance, and of globalization's impact on national identity. (154)

Next critic, Linda Hutcheon also sees the affinity between postmodernity and postcoloniality. She puts:

> Despite this major difference between the postmodern and the post – colonial -- which feminism help to place in the foreground and which must always be kept in mind -there us still considerable overlap in their concerns: formal, thematic, strategic. (131)

But this doesn't mean that two can be conflated unproblematically, as many commentators seem to suggest. Formal issues such as what each is called magic realism, thematic concerns regarding history and marginality, and discursive strategies like irony and allegory are all shared by both the postmodern and the post colonial, even if the final uses to which each is put may differ. It is not a matter of the postcolonial becoming the postmodern, as one critic has suggested but rather that manifestations of their concerns often take similar forms; for example, both often place textual gaps in the foreground but their sites of production differ; there are those produced by the colonial encounter and those produced by the system of writing itself and they should not be confused.

The formal technique of magic realism has been singled out by many critics as one of the points of conjunction of post modernism and postcolonialism. Its challenges to genre distinctions and to the conventions of realism are certainly part of the project of both enterprises. As Stephen Slemon has argued, "until recently it has been used to apply to Third World literatures, specially Latin American and Caribbean, but now is used more broadly in other postcolonial and culturally marginalized context to signal works which encode within themselves some resistance to the massive imperial centre and its totalizing systems" (22). Thus, it becomes part of the dialogue with history that both postmodernism and postcolonialism undertake. After modernism's ahistorical rejection of the burden of the past, postmodern art has sought self-consciously to reconstruct its relationship to what came before: similarly, after that imposition of an imperial culture and that truncated indigenous history which colonialism has meant to many nations, postcolonial literatures are also negotiating the once tyrannical weight of colonial history in conjunction with the revaluated local past.The postmodern and the post colonial also come together, as Frank Davey has explained, because of the predominant non European interpretation of modernism as "an international movement, elitist, imperialist, totalizing, willing to appropriate the local while being condescending towards its practice" (119).

In the thematic and structural level, it is not just the relation to history that brings the two posts together; there is also a strong shared concern which the notion of marginalization, with the state of what we could call ex-centricity. In granting value to the margin or the other, the postmodern challenges any hegemonic force that presumes centrality, even as it acknowledges that it cannot privilege the margin without acknowledging the power of the center. As Rick Salutin writes, "Canadians

are not marginal because of the quirkiness of our ideas or the in adequacy of our ague man, because of the power of those who define the centre" (6). The regionalism of magic realism and the local and particular focus of postmodern art are both ways of contesting not just this centrality, but also claim of universality. Postmodernism has been characterized as that thought which refuse to turn the other in to the same and this is, of course, when its significant for postcolonialism comes in.

A related problem is that postmodern notions of difference and positively valued marginality can themselves be used to repeat colonizing strategies of domination when used by first world critics dealing with the third world: the precise point at which interested and concern become imperializing appropriation is a hotly contested one. In addition, some critics, of course, argue postmodernism as it self the dominant, Eurocentric, neo-universalism imperial discourse. There are no easy solution to any of this issues raised by the perhaps uncomfortable overlap of issues between the postmodern and the postcolonial, but that in it self is no reason not to explorer the that problematic site of interaction.

Beside the formal and thematic areas of mutual concern, that have already mentioned, there is what could be called a strategic or rhetorical one: the use of the trope of irony as doubled or split discourse which has the potential to subvert from within. Some have seen this valorization of irony as a sign of the increasing purchases of poststructural codes of recognition in western society, but poststructuralism can also be seen as a product of the larger cultural enterprise of postmodernism. In either case, thought, as a double-talking, forked-tongued mode of address, irony becomes a popular rhetorical strategy for working with in existing discourse contesting them at the same time. Its inherent semantic and structural doubleness also make it a must convenient trope for the paradoxical dualities of both postmodern complicitous

critique and postcolonial double identity and history. And indeed irony has become a powerful subversive tool in the re-thinking and re - addressing of history by both post-modern and postcolonial artists.

The discussion of irony as a discursive strategy of both postmodernism and post postcolonial, not unlike allegory, irony is a trope of doubleness.And doubleness is what characterizes not just the complicitous critique of the postmodern, but, by definition, the twofold vision of the postcolonial -- not just because of the obvious dual history but because a sense of duality was the mark of the colonial as well. Doubleness and difference are established while, at the same time, producing differentiations and discriminations. According to Linda Hutcheon, "it is the doubleness of the colonial culture imposed upon the colonized (134)". But it is also the doubleness of the colonized in relation to the colonizer, either as model or antithesis. As Raymond Williams has argued, "however, all national literatures develop in this sort of way-up to a point: from imitation of a domination pattern to assimilation or internalization of it, but then to a stage, of open revolt where what was initially excluded by the dominant pattern gets revalorized" (121-8).This is why irony the trope that works from within a power field but still contrasts it, is a consistently useful strategy for postcolonial discourse. The postcolonial is therefore as implicated in that which it challenges as is the postmodern. Critique may always be complicitous when irony is its primary vehicle, but the postcolonial has its disposal various ways of subverting from within the dominant culture such as irony, allegory, and self-reflexivity -- that it shares with the complicitous critique of postmodernism, even if its politics differ in important ways.

Simply put, insofar as the fields overlap they create a space for debate. Situated in this space, a paper on the present panel might address questions such as:

Is the "post" in postcolonial the same as the "post" in postmodern? When are the postmodern notions of difference and positively valued marginality used to repeat colonizing strategies of domination? How do the foundational notions of identity offered in postcolonial discourse challenge the anti-foundational thrust of postmodernism? What lasting utility, if any, does postmodern theory have for postcolonial theory and for the postcolonial project, in general? Does one discourse offer a more useful critique of transnational globalization than the other? Does the postmodern threaten or facilitate the possibility of postcolonial aesthetics? What is lost or gained when international figures, such as Salman Rushdie or Gabriel Garcia Marquez, are placed definitively in either category?

First, why would a postcolonial novel reflect the ideas of postmodernism? Perhaps, the two different movements are not so different in their aims. Michael Syrotinski also notices that a relationship exists between the two when he says:

> Postmodernism is simultaneously (or variously) a textual practice (often oppositional, sometimes not), a sub - cultural style or fashion, a definition of western, postindustrial culture and the emergent or always already dominant global culture. At the same time, post-colonialism is simultaneously (or variously) a geographical site, an existential condition, a political reality, a textual practice, and the emergent or dominant global culture (or counter - culture). (74)

Syrotinski mentions that postmodernism and post colonialism converge in some respective purposes. First, both are a "textual practice," Second, the two movements examine an "emergent or dominant global culture (81)". However, they do differ in that postcolonial novels usually have a geographical nature to them, while expressing an existential condition. Also, both explore the idea of authority or as Berger says, a

"dominant global culture," and perhaps this is why there is yet no definite "boundary" drawn between the two movements. However, Philip Leonard does attempt to draw a clearer line between the two with respect to the idea of authority. He says that "postcolonial writers attempt to unmask European authority while postmodernists attempt to unmask authority in general, so it seems that both movements investigate the ideas of control in different settings" (103).

One theory of postmodernism stipulates that language is one vehicle by which authority obtains control. And since postcolonial novels explore the implications of European authority on postcolonial, wasn't it inevitable that postcolonial writers would have been faced with the problem of how language can be manipulated for the purpose of European control. Tiffin Hellen recognizes that colonizers use language to control the colonized. She says that the "dialectic of self and other, indigene and exile, language and place, slave and free, which is the matrix of post-European literature is also an essential part of an inherited understanding of the way in which language and power operate in the world" (71). Perhaps Tiffin's idea that "language and power operate in the world" together also implies that "power" remains in power by its ability to control public and private language" (77). If so, then an attempt for linguistic control might explain why one postcolonial writer, Salman Rushdie, would write to "conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free" (17).

The current poststructuralist/postmodern challenges to the coherent, autonomous subject have to be put on hold in feminism and postcolonial discourses, for both must work first to assert and affirm a denied or alienated subjectivity: those radical post modern challenge are in many ways the luxury of the dominant order which can afford to challenge that which it security possesses.

It is to surprise that postcolonial writers would use language to deconstruct European identity as postmodernists do. This is in fact one method chosen by postcolonial writers to reestablish their own unique identity. Postcolonial writers attempt to deconstruct European identity. The dismantling, demystification and unmasking of European authority that has been an essential political and cultural strategy towards decolonization and the retrieval of creation of an independent identity from the beginning persists as a prime impulse in all postcolonial literatures.

Tiffin argues that one struggle the postcolonial writers face in particular is the struggle over the "word". This not only includes non-fiction, but all written language. Her reason is as follows:

> The history of postcolonial territories, was, until recently, largely a narrative constructed by the colonizers, its functions, and language(s) in which they are written, operate as a means to cultural control. When the two movements accept the idea that a relationship exists between power and language, for the sake of control, a type of symbiotic relationship develops simultaneously between them. However, one wishes to deconstruct the center of authority in general while the other is concerned with the European component. (73)

Even Rushdie admits to the postcolonial writer's desire to reconstruct history through language. He says, "What seems to me to be happening is that those peoples who were once colonized by the language are now rapidly remaking it they are; carving out large territories for themselves within its frontiers" (44). And by remaking the language, the postcolonial writers have associated themselves to one particular theory of postmodernism. That theory, expressed by postmodernism, is the reconstruction of language, and because both non-fiction and fiction are constructed by language, an

attempt to reconstruct all literature is in the making too. Tiffin argues that both postmodernism and postcolonialism share strategies but have different motives:

> A number of strategies, such as the move away from realist representation, the refusal of closure, the exposure of the politics of metaphor, the interrogation of forms, the rehabilitation of allegory and the attach on binary structuration of concept and language, are characteristics of both the generally postcolonial and the European postmodern, but they are energized by different theoretical assumptions and by vastly different political motivations. (72)

Tiffin makes an excellent distinction here again between the theories of postcolonialism and postmodernism when she says, "they are energized by different theoretical assumptions (postmodernism) and by vastly different political (postcolonialism) motivations" (45). A postmodernist focuses on aesthetics, and perhaps authority in general, but a postcolonial writer's explores the implications of European authority. If so, then this might explain why postcolonialism is more of a political movement in contrast to a cultural movement, i.e. postmodernism.

Another intersection happens between postcolonialism and postmodernism when they both desire to bring the marginalized to the "center." The marginalized are those who have been left out of literature in the past or history in general. In “Post Modern Times,” Syrotinski claims that postmodernists bring the marginal into the center "by rewriting history in favor of those who have been excluded from power -- women, homosexuals, blacks, Native Americans, and other victims of oppression" (57). And Tiffin suggests the same about postcolonial writers. She says, the postcolonial "writer adopts the positions of those already written out of, or marginalized by, the western record of historical materialism oppressed or

annihilated peoples, [and] women" (176). He recognizes this intersection when he says, "Put another way, postcolonialism like postmodernism (and modernism) functions in terms of sexual, racial, class, economic and even stylistic differences, [and are] reducible to the spatial metaphor of a centre-margins opposition" (3). Furthermore, if we examine the stylistic devices Philip Leonard uses to "bring the marginal to the center" (86) the postmodernist ideas discussed above become evident in his novel too. They are there in fact to reinforce his ideas of postcolonialism; one of them is his attempt to deconstruct the European traditional identity.

Similarly, liminal narrative comes in the intersection of postmodernity and postcoloniality. This term liminality derives from the word 'limen', meaning threshold, a word particularly using psychology to indicate the threshold between the sensate and the subliminal -- the limit below which a certain sensation ceases to be perceptible. The sense of the liminal as an interstitial or inbetween space a threshold area , distinguishes the term from the more definite word limit to which it is related. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin remarks:

> The importance for the liminal for postcolonial theory is precisely its usefulness for describing an 'in-between' space in which cultural change may occur: the transcultural space in which strategies for personal or communal self-hood may be elaborated, a region in which there is a continual process of movement and interchange between different states. (130)

In a sense one could say that Postcolonial discourse itself consistently inhabits this liminal space, for the polarities of imperial rhetoric on one hand, and national or racial characterization on the other, are continually questioned and problematized.

Homi Bhabha employs liminality to show that "postmodernity, .postcoloniality, postfeminism are meaningless if the ‘post’ simply means after" (99). Each of these represents a liminal space of contestation and change, at the edges of the presumed monolithic, but never completely beyond. The present can no longer be envisaged as a break or a bonding with the past or future: our presence comes to be revealed in its discontinuities, its inequalities, its minorities.

The recent growth of interests in thresholds and boundaries associated especially with postcolonial theory has brought the world back into common usage in literary--critical and cultural-theoretical circles. Part of the current post colonialism interest stems from the poststructuralist concern to reject binary distinctions and the black/white categories which go along with them, but a more general interest in the marginal has also led to a greater reliance upon the term. Here for example is Dominick LaCpra: "the most engaging, if at times perplexing, dimensions of interpretation exit on the margin, where these two meanings are not simply disjoined from one another, for it is at this liminal point that the dialogue with the past becomes internal to the historian" (78). Some feminists have found the term useful as a way of locating women in no-man’s land’ between nature and culture.

Summing up, the postmodern intersects with the postcolonial in that both these categories of theory subvert the centre from within the dominant culture and privilege a perspective of the margin.

Chapter III

Confluence of Postmodernism and Postcolonialism in *The Remains of the Day*

Postmodern literature has its many spokesmen. Many would agree that Kazuo Ishiguro is not the most typical representative of this somewhat anarchistic literary and social movement, but he is certainly one of its most subtle and valuable artists. He uses the principles of postmodernistic writing in a very meaningful way, and only after a thorough analysis can one fully appreciate all carefully constructed and presented elements through which he successfully delivers his story. *The Remains of the Day*, as a novel, is a unique example of how a story of a personal fate of one man can reflect on such large, historical and social scale. With that political and social scale, Kazuo Isiguro blends postmodernity and postcoloniality by keeping in attention the issue o f liminal narrative by making the narrative structure pass the threshold between them.

Set in 1956, *The Remains of the Day* is the gap-packed tale of an almost retired British butler named Stevens who works for Mr. Farraday, the wealthy American owner of Darlington Hall, a majestic mansion located in the English countryside. Dedicated to his lifetime occupation, working night and day like a galley slave, Stevens is contemplating a breakaway on the advice of his master and finally embarks on a journey in the West Country. This expedition, as he calls it, is an opportunity for him to meet up again with Miss Kenton, a retired housekeeper whom he formerly met under Lord Darlington's initial occupation of the mansion. As Stevens is short of staff, he intends to coax her into taking up a job again at Darlington Hall. By means of his memory and therefore patchy account of his glorious days under the reign of Lord Darlington, Stevens recounts

the early decades of the twentieth century by chronicling his daily chores, the master-servant relationship, the political concerns of the time, the historical impact of unofficial and allegedly important conferences, to name a few.

In *The Remains of Day*, the narrative complex structure draws on postmodern strategies of liminal narrative, unreliable narrative, selfreflexivity, narrative shifts, fragmentation, discontinues timeline, flashback and self-deception come together with the theme of postcoloniality. By and large, Stevens also somewhat embodies the archetypal antihero who, far from being a dull character, stands out as a result of his failures and inaction but is irritating and therefore deserves no mare sympathy than empathy. Similarly, the subtext, in *The Remains of the Day*, is more important than the text itself in the sense that the story serves as a mask to hide the narrator's inner thought and feelings.

Narrative style in *The Remains of the Day* draws on postmodern stand point. Unreliable narrative is one of the most. For the most part of the novel, the style flows from the voice of Stevens, whose memories provides the novel's text. The entire text is his account of the past and present. As Stevens relates events of the past all the while emphasizing the admiration he felt for Lord Darlington, it becomes clear that Stevens is an unreliable narrator. Besides his unwillingness to assess Lord Darlington realistically, there are inconsistencies in his account of the past. At a deeper level, Stevens is unreliable because he has an underdeveloped identity and thus he has come to experience life through the filters of what he believes is expected of him.

To consider this connection, one might observe that unreliable narrators typically articulate values or interpretations jarring to the reader's expectations. That

is, the unreliable narrator is one whose values are visible, for the category functions only if readers can recognize the speaker's perspective as radically different from their own. The unreliable narrator emerges in a contested or troubled identification between narrator and reader. In this sense, unreliable narrators are an effect of cultural and conventional disjunction: we know that the narrator's world is not ours, not because we perceive the content of this difference, but because we perceive the fact of difference at all. This difference is marked: unlike the reliable narrator, the unreliable narrator is perceived as being the story rather than merely having one.

Unreliable narrators regularly project their stories into the lives of the people they describe. Ishiguro's narrators, though they also offer information about themselves that they do not know or do not say they are providing, importantly reverse the usual projective process: rather than claim all stories as their own, they try to propose that their own stories are always someone else. The anxiety and disappointment they detail, they assure us, do not belong to them. For the reader, Ishiguro registers this disavowal through the displacement or abstraction of pronouns.

Reading this last scene, it is important to see the "I" that "one" at once effaces and putatively includes. A narrator is unreliable if he or she blithely conflates a unique and subjective experience with a generic and objective fact: Stevens allows "ones" disapproval to compensate for his silence. The reader's assumption that a statement has a universal application rather than an individual specificity is an everyday force of habit, certainly a valid expectation for readers trained, as we are, in the traditional model of sympathetic reading. However, an unreliable narrator, for whom our expectations fail to function, makes this habit visible. For Ishiguro, the realization that a speaker has fused a story about him or herself with a story about someone else revises the status of linear past and discernable narrator, as well as the

status of blame, guilt, and loyalty. Readers are no longer confident of knowing a fact or a character when they see one.

The unreliability of Stevens's narration becomes particularly visible in the case of Miss Kenton's oft-quoted letter. While one does not doubt the existence of the letter, it is the tenor of it one has to question: as the reader, one is never presented with an actual version of it. Stevens lets out information about its contents only when opportune, for example to defend his planned meeting with Miss Kenton -- the main reason behind his trip to convince himself of the genuineness of her wish to return to Darlington Hall: "I have, I should make clear, reread Miss Kenton's recent letter several times, and there is no possibility I am merely imagining the presence of these hints on her part" (10). But as his journey progresses, Stevens himself begins to voice doubts about his interpretation of Miss Kenton's words. Eventually, Stevens has to admit that he misread the letter altogether. It is up to the reader to piece together what little information he reveals and to be wary of his seemingly assured narrative. It also has to be recognized that Stevens's highly unreliable narration lends some irony to its contents. In the case of Miss Kenton's misinterpreted letter, for example, Stevens's pompous style ridicules the over-importance he places both on his own position and the house he serves in. David Lodge says that "Stevens's 'life has been based on the suppression and evasion of the truth, about himself and about others. His narrative is a kind of confession, but it is riddled with devious self-justification and special pleading […]" (155). This consistent evasion of the truth has marred Stevens's life and led him to worship the wrong deity.

In *Remains of the Day*, Stevens translates personal choices into universal rhetoric by addressing his own morality as a matter of English "dignity." When the housekeeper Miss Kenton accuses him of complacency towards the Jewish maids who

were fired, Stevens denies indifference, replying: "Naturally, one disapproved of the dismissals, one would have thought that quite self-evident" (154). Ishiguro has the wit to notice that the choice of "one" over "I" unites an "impersonal" grammar with the rhetoric of English impersonality. Steven's language seems at once natural -- what a butler sounds like -- and yet tactical. "One" negates the claim to personal feeling Stevens's statement would otherwise offer, and it is stilted, an attempt to sound likes the gentleman that Stevens, in his indifference and in his status as a butler, fails to be. "One" cannot be said to replace "I" exactly, since "one" leaves open the possibility that "I" is implied; moreover, we might notice that "I" is everywhere dependent on Stevens's fantasy about what "one" would do.

Stevens's professional part, which requires him to be omnipresent and to show some virtually round-the-clock availability, makes him an acute and privileged discreet observer of life at Darlington Hall. To be sure, his stance as a homodiegetic narrator gives him storytelling credence thanks to his ability to record facts from an insider's perspective, but by relying too heavily on the memory of an aging focalizer like Stevens, this stimulating account automatically addresses the issue of unreliability with its thematic nexus of privacy, mendacity, mystery, secrecy, dissimulation, transformation, transposition, deception, and omission. For Lodge, "unreliable narrators are invariably homodiegetic" (142). Commenting on *The Remains of the Day*, he further asserts that "The point of using an unreliable narrator is indeed to reveal in an interesting way the gap between appearance and reality, and to show how human beings distort or conceal the latter" (155). Contributing to that effect is the novel's self-conscious narrator whose occasional comments within the

text alluding to the storytelling process: "But I am digressing," emphasize the gap between fiction and reality (53).

To some extent, the novel also draws our attention to role-playing, mimicry and self-deception. In this melodrama of sorts, Stevens cuts a pathetic theatrical figure, using words as a mask and memories as props to remain at all times in the limelight. His job is even challenged by Mrs. Wakefield as being part of a charade, as reports his American master, Mr. Farraday: "She even thought you were 'mock', Stevens"(130), Stevens is therefore not acting as a butler, but rather like a butler. This lack of authenticity certainly throws charges of fakery. Adding to the theatrical dimension, is that most of the action takes place indoors with actors making their entrances and exits, not to mention the personal reflections in the guise of asides.

Stevens's narrative style makes it hard for the reader to relate to him. Stevens's stiff and restricted verbal style, like his person, reflects his emotional repression. After all, 'one' does not want to bare 'one's' soul to the readers. Stevens does not express what he really wants to say. This can be recognized in his general tendency not to call a spade a spade: he often avoids people's names, and, in particular, reverts to the impersonal 'one' rather than use the appropriate personal pronoun. Things are not actually said, but only implied. With this narrative technique, Ishiguro cunningly leaves open the possibility of diverse and individual interpretations.

Ishiguro's novel, *The Remains of the Day* seeks to interrogate the apparently fixed opposition between the structural rigidity of Stevens's position at Darlington Hall and the liminal anti-structure of Stevens's journey. And thematic preoccupations found in the novel are underscored by liminal narrative techniques.

The technique of liminal narrative intersects postmodernity and postcoloniality in Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day.*

The consequence attached to Stevens's role as butler to Lord Darlington is a subject that preoccupies the narrator for a large part of *The Remains of the Day,* especially as regards the proper "dignity in keeping with his position" (42). And as if to underscore this preoccupation, Stevens's physical position itself at Darlington is foregrounded, almost to the point of excess. Ishiguro goes to considerable lengths to place his butler on thresholds, beneath arches and, even more notably along the passage of the back corridor that forms the service spine of Darlington Hall. Significantly, the trip that Stevens takes to visit Miss Kenton in the west of England is also a form of "passage"-- it is a pilgrimage; a rite of passage. The country lanes that Stevens travels along are described as tunnels and conduits that vividly recall the corridors of Darlington; more specifically, they become the physical structures down which Stevens must pass as he moves toward self-knowledge, however qualified. Speaking both literally and figuratively, *The Remains of the Day* is a novel set in passage.

Darlington Hall places Stevens at the liminal passage. Stevens's duties at Darlington Hall require of him a fine sense of balance between stasis and movement, "that balance between attentiveness and the illusion of absence that is essential to good waiting" (72). On the one hand, when in attendance to Lord Darlington or Mr. Farraday, he must be present but unobtrusive, as a consequence he customarily positions himself "in the shadows" (73) "near the entrance arch" (217); even when tasked with a duty outdoors, he considers the value of "concealing [his] […] person behind the large rhododendron bush beside the path" (89). This "tunnel", and Stevens's occupation of it, has an undeniable metaphoric purchase as a reflection of Stevens's existence at Darlington Hall.

Whether Stevens is waiting or busying himself behind the scenes, a common feature to his situation is that he is often to be found somewhere in between the two activities, appropriately enough at doorways. When he hears that his father has been taken ill, he is to be found "hesitating in the doorway" (93); he pauses "for a second to listen at the door" to a furtive conversation between M. Dupont and Mr Lewis (94); and has a persistent "recollection of standing alone in the back corridor before the closed door of Miss Kenton's parlor; not actually facing the door, but standing with [his] person half turned towards it […]" (212). Along with Ishiguro's finely-tuned depiction of the uneasy balance between Stevens's sometimes accomplished, sometimes anxious alternation between movement and stasis, accounts of the butler's hesitation at doorways are presented with such regularity that they acquire a figurative resonance. The doorways at Darlington Hall come to signify thresholds, or portals, over and through which Stevens is reluctant to pass because, more specifically, they represent both the threat and promise of change to Stevens's emotional rigidity and vaunted professionalism.

The placement of Stevens in the passage of Darlington Hall also serves as a commentary on the position of the butler, generically speaking, as a figure of some hierarchical uncertainty. As the commonplace term a gentleman's gentleman suggests, the butler is neither simply a servant, nor full-fledged member of the family he serves. To be a butler is to be in a condition of simulacrum: he is a gentleman, but only in as much as he is defined in relation to a gentleman of property and social standing; that is, he is employed to be a gentleman -- something of a contradiction in terms. All of these ambivalent positional dynamics are played out in *The Remains of the Day*, where Stevens's intermittent occupation of both hall and passage, the centre

and the margin, is reflected by his wavering at the thresholds that mark the entrances of existential territories of the self, class and society.

If the various doorways of Darlington Hall bestow a physical site for Stevens's ambiguous social position, they also serve with similar equivocation as indexes of both restraint and liberation. They undeniably work as barriers between the different worlds Stevens uneasily and ambiguously inhabits, but the nervousness he displays at crossing over their portals suggests that the thresholds of Darlington Hall also give access to a world that lies beyond their literal and figurative confines. They represent the possibility of egress because they can open and permit escape. In spite of his entrenched domestic position and view of life he nevertheless seems, at the same time, poised on the brink of flight. It is the opportunity of escape, of course, that Stevens will take when he sets off on his voyage into the West.

Miss Kenton also puts Stevens into liminal passage. It is worth noting that it is pursuit of Miss Kenton that finally spurs him on: her letter that "set[s] off a certain chain of ideas" (5) and inspires him to approach her concerning the possibility of her returning to work. Her role as a catalyst for Stevens's journey is firmly established before the present-time passages of the novel. In the sections of the text that are set in Darlington Hall, she is shown to beckon him towards thresholds, and towards the light, on almost every occasion in which she is mentioned. Early in the novel, Stevens describes what is to become an important and often recollected scene. She seems forever "just outside the door" (103) where he catches "sight of Miss Kenton through the open doorway, signaling to (him)" (106). On one occasion where Stevens senior has placed a statue of a Chinaman in the wrong position she repeatedly urges Stevens to "step out here and observe for himself" (57) -- to which Stevens's rather comical response is contemplation of the decidedly undignified

option of "departure via the French windows" before finally succeeding in "propelling [him]self through the doorway and several paces down the corridor before a somewhat astonished Miss Kenton could recover her wits" (58). This action, unsurprisingly, startles not only Miss Kenton but Stevens himself, forcing him to round on his companion in defense and express his surprise that she has "nothing better to do than stand in corridors all day" (58); it also anticipates both his departure from Darlington Hall and Miss Kenton's role in inspiring it. In her role as catalyst, Miss Kenton is both menacing: "glaring up at [him] from the foot of the stairs" (215) -- and inviting, as "the light shin[es] from her parlor like a beacon into the dimness of the corridor" (226), or both, when "a bar of light [falls] across her face and [he can] see the angry expression on it" (78-79). Just as the doorways of the Hall signify both imprisonment and freedom, so Miss Kenton is represented as an agent of both Stephens's doom and his salvation appropriately enough, given the fact that Stevens's journey will place him and his firmly-held beliefs in crisis at the same time as grant him new and unexpected pleasures.

In the sections of narrative set at Darlington Hall, then, Ishiguro presents Stevens as a figure caught between two worlds, challenged by the threat of a new and unsettling experience, placed along corridors, in the passage, teetering on thresholds, beckoned forward by an enlightened companion. These sections are important because they simultaneously anticipate and are recalled during the events that take place in the present time of the novel.

Talking about liminality in Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day,* Victor Turner explains Stevens as pilgrims. He puts: "pilgrims undergo a separation from a relatively fixed state of life and social status, and pass […] into a liminal or threshold phase and condition for which none of the rules and few of the experiences of their previous

existence have prepared them" (29). "The limen of pilgrimage is ... motion", writes Turner (38), along "a threshold" which can be "a very long threshold, a corridor almost (50). Perhaps less obvious correspondence between *The Remains of the Day* and Turner's definition of pilgrimage, are the repeated descriptions of Stevens entering into, quite literally, the passages, corridors and tunnels of the English countryside which become his "pilgrim's road" (50). As he leaves Darlington Hall he recognizes that he has

> […] gone beyond all previous boundaries […] [with the sense] of unease mixed with exhilaration […] I took a turning and found myself on *a* road curving around the edge of a hill, I could sense the steep drop to my left, though I could not see it due to the trees and thick foliage that lined the roadside. The feeling swept over me that I had truly left Darlington Hall behind, and I must confess I did feel a slight sense of alarm - a sense aggravated by the feeling that I was perhaps not on the correct road at all, but speeding off in totally the wrong direction into a wilderness […] (24)

Going beyond all boundaries, Stevens enters the threshold of the liminal, both literally and figuratively. The literal part of the process is made evident by the tunnel-like passage of the "trees and thick foliage" that characterize the roads he travels.

Turner notes that symbols and metaphors of death and rebirth are typically part of pilgrimage. These are important tropes because they represent the "pains of dissolution" (30), the withdrawal from a previous life and the possibility of rebirth into a new one: "The move into liminality is […] a death - birth or a birth-death" (32). It is tempting, given Turner's description of death and gestation symbolism in pilgrimage, to compare Stevens's leafy road passages to the birth canal: but this might

be rather too blunt a formulation for a novel in which awakening and rebirth are only obliquely hinted at. Nevertheless in leaving becomes "'dead' to quotidian existence" (29) and given the opportunity to "regain" a lost "innocence" (32).

Similarly, anti-structural error also serves as a form of play in *The Remains of the Day*. Stevens's life at Darlington Hall and his journey experiences are remarkably likely to go wrong. He is plagued by what he persists in calling "unfortunate misunderstandings" (193), misinterpretation (he misreads the spirit and letter of Miss Kenton's communication as well as her reasons for her pained behaviour while working with him at Darlington Hall); miscommunication (his efforts at bantering are met with straight-faced bewilderment); mistaken identity (the Taylors think he is a gentleman), and misapplication of his duty (he notes that "[m)ore and more errors are appearing in [his] work" (243); and he participates blindly in the anti-semitic employment practices of his employer (145-151)). By the end of the novel, these series of errors that undercut his rigid devotion to duty leave him with the dispiriting sense of futility when he remarks, "I can't even say I made my own mistakes. Really - one has to ask oneself - what dignity is there in that?" (243) in which error is compounded by lack of agency. However, perhaps this last comment also reflects a new awareness, born, ironically, of the playful quotient of anti-structural error that shows up the existential perils of a duty-bound existence that does not permit variance.

Stevens's journey certainly would seem to be a pilgrimage characterized by figurative tropes, liminal positioning, masked figures and anti-structurality. But the significance of this definition of his journey goes further than simply providing us with a way of appreciating what Stevens undertakes. Indeed, the narrative itself is made up of anti-structural devices that mirror its content; that is, that *The Remains of*

the Day is not only a novel about a pilgrimage, but a novel that has as its driving force a liminal narrative. Consider, for example, the status of play in the novel, for Stevens, involves a learning of variability. Ishiguro supports this sense by showing how Stevens's language itself undergoes a teasing out of semantic play as an indicator of anti-structural, transgressive systems that slip away from the structural regularity of Stevens's existence at Darlington Hall. As Stevens's deliberation over the significance of terms such as "dignity", "professionalism", "greatness" and so on progresses, we note that these terms themselves are persistently presented within inverted commas -- so repeatedly in fact, that this technique has the effect of setting these words apart, making them curious objects in their own right and, even more curiously, distancing their meaning from themselves. Turner makes, this point when he notes that play in liminality "involves metacommunication and metalanguages" (151), and that in the liminoid state, "mundane axioms become problematic" (58), Bracketed thus, a word like "dignity" becomes interesting as a signifier that is likely to go astray, which is polysemic and quite possibly works against superficial assumptions of what it means. Supported by the evidence of the indignities that Stevens must endure, by the unprofessional behaviors of professionals, and the ungentlemanly acts of gentlemen, the situating of these terms within inverted commas is a playful act that simultaneously places them under erasure.

Further, the character of Stevens is presented as a figure of approximation, in spite of all his determination to be the perfect butter, to "inhabit [his] professional role and inhabit it to the utmost" (43). It is one of the most redolent ironies of the novel that in spite of Stevens's disdain for those for whom "being a butler is like playing some pantomime role a small push, a slight stumble, and the facade will drop off to reveal the actor underneath" (42), the butler's position is predicated upon the

imitation and enactment of the gentleman, thereby foregrounding his distance from complete possession of his existence as either gentleman, or "gentleman's gentleman", this term itself especially suggestive of infinite deferral.

As if to underscore this sense of Stevens's fragmented and plural identity Darlington remarks, "At one point during dinner, Stevens, I would have sworn you were at least three people" (107), a suggestive hint at multiplicity that is taken up again by Mr Farraday's concern at the suggestion that his employee might be a "mock" butler (124).

If the liminal is characterized by the anti-structural, then it is fitting that *The Remains of the Day* is shaped according to a structure that is only apparently linear. Stevens's westward journey from Darlington Hall to Weymouth forms the backbone of the novel, bestowing a seductively coherent quest-like structure to the text. But the play of memory, in the form of Stevens's recollections of his past, his father, and recent cataclysmic events in history, shimmer through this quest, causing the narrative to double back upon itself and detour in a manner that significantly resists any confining sense of structure. James M. Lang puts:

> […] multiple discrete moments in his story could be construed as the turning point of his narrative, and he finds himself uneasy at this lack of certainty. He struggles to make sense of the courses of action both he and Darlington undertook in these events, but the slippery task of constructing causality frustrates that sense-making urge. (144)

Indeed, the liminal state is one in which the anxious hankering after causality is suspended; fittingly, then, this concern in the novel goes to the level of deep anti-structure where the liminal narrative itself thwarts, almost metafictionally, an

unproblematic causal sequencing of events. Arguing on this issue, Karen Scherzinger says:

> The palimpsestic effects of memory and the aporetic purchase of the two narratives in the structure of the novel also serve to qualify any simple understanding of pilgrimage as a teleological activity. This complex fission of structure and anti-structure, identity and performance, unequivocality and ambiguity, blindness and insight, reaches its zenith at the end of the novel, an ending anticipated throughout by its title, which offers perhaps the most significant lucid performance of meaning in the novel. (18)

And herein lies the tantalizing ambiguity of the end of the novel. While the model of Turner's pilgrimage might lead us to expect the end of the novel to be one of tidy resolution, the novel resists this simple prediction and a trace of the liminal persists -- *remains* -- to subvert any such unequivocal resolution. When he admits "-- why should I not admit it? -- at that moment, my heart was breaking" (239) we are presented with an acceptance of pain markedly different from the stubborn denial of pain at his father's death, a flash of self-recognition and emotional honesty wrought from his experiences during his pilgrimage. On the other hand, while Stevens's resolve to return to Darlington Hall with a fresh attempt at bantering seems to signify resilient optimism, it is also redolent with overwhelming futility -- especially if one agrees with the logic that "the bantering at Darlington Hall is underwritten by conceal[ed] ... relations of power and has the sinister effect of embarrassing Stevens, thereby keeping him in his place" (793). But these ambiguities notwithstanding, what abides is the refrain "the evening's the best part of the day" that -- Stevens seeks to embrace and which, by association, defines him as a survivor, a remainder. His supplementary

puts the lie to the complacencies of Darlington Hall and its occupants past and present. The liminal state has a residue that persists rather like the haunting light on the skyline once the sun has set: there is ambivalence, a betwixt and betweenness of the narrative itself that remains after the journey is over.

Likewise, the novel possesses an undeniable postcolonial dimension which challenges the Eurocentric perspective on power relationships. Kazuo Ishiguro is a novelist standing at the crossroads of two imperialistic cultures, experiencing the in-betweenness felt by most postcolonial writers. As both an outsider and insider, Kazuo Ishiguro has no vantage point to speak properly on behalf of either British or Japanese people. Born in Japan, he has chosen to live in England with his wife and daughter and although he seems to be concerned with Japanese identity and culture, he can hardly express himself in his native tongue. This did not deter some critics from pointing out that *The Remains of the Day* reads like a Japanese novel, the Englishness of the novel being somewhat like a coating covering a Japanese cake. In other words, they argued that Kazuo Ishiguro transposed the plight of the Japanese people on the British by pitting stringency against democratic freedom. But readers unaware of Japanese culture would rather believe that Kazuo Ishiguro has carried things to extremes by writing a novel which reads more English than even the British could write, a successful impersonation he achieves with his highly polished style and turgid speech.

If *The Remains of the Day* has been dubbed postimperial by George Landow, it is chiefly because it was composed from a once-colonizing standpoint. This fragmented narrative pays a tribute to early twentieth century

aristocratic England while being a remembrance of things past. Although the story takes place in 1956, most of its flashbacks refer to the interwar years. Among the events which purport to belong to History are: the 1923 Conference for peace talks, historical figures such as Lord Halifax, Sir Oswald Mosley, and Herr Ribbentrop, along with less explicit references which need to be inferred from the context such as Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. In such a post World-War I context, references to the Jews inevitably crop up with the effect of creating a feeling of general discomfort as the reader realizes Lord Darlington's overt anti-Semitism.

Additionally, the novel alludes to the decline of the British Empire following the decolonizing process which has set in motion in the post-World War II era. Great Britain was losing its status of powerful master as her servants gradually walked out from her house. The Americans have taken over the power to rule, like the symbolic replacement of Lord Darlington epitomizing the very influential British aristocracy and grandeur by the crushing might of Mr. Farraday personifying the superpower. Putting The Remains of the Day as postcolonial novel, Jean-Francois says:

> British imperialism, together with the master-servant relationship which he fully explores in the novel, are at the core of the postcolonial dialectics between the colonizers and the colonized, between the imperial centre and its peripheral countries. Yet,

> Ishiguro's status as a postcolonial writer needs to be qualified as he does not originate from a former British dominion. (3)

In *The Remains of the Day*, the narrators look back from the middle of the twentieth century on events that took place in the years before the Second World War. While the novels never mention their own time period, the 1980s, their sly humour and dramatic irony depend on the reader's sense of distance both from the interwar confidence of the early 1930s and from the Cold War hypocrisy of the 1950s. In these works, interwar confidence comes in the form of English racism, German militarism, and Japanese expansionism, while Cold War hypocrisy is represented, often more subtly, by Englishmen who praise democracy but oppose the decolonization of all kinds of little countries that once belonged to Britain. Comparing the fascisms of the 1930s, the imperialisms of the 1950s, and the nativisms of the 1980s, Ishiguro develops a critical cosmopolitanism that allows us to see how the aspects of fascism and triumphalism function not only in Japan and Germany but also in the United States and England, and not only in the 1930s and 1950s but also in the 1980s; in Ishiguro's narratives, no country looks like a perpetrator or a victim only, or like a major power or a minor supplicant all of the time. As Rebecca L Walkowitz says:

> Ishiguro generates comparisons not to create equivalences but to notice continuities and merging among different political circumstances and among various, conflicting allegiances. Ishiguro's novels are treasonous because they suggest that steadfast and unconflicted allegiances are neither possible nor desirable, because they propose that critical artworks will need to project a limited or only partial

> faithfulness, and because they use unreliable narratives to generate in their readers self-reflective and contingent kinds of loyalty. (110)

The personal concerns of Stevens, the narrator and protagonist of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, are inextricably bound to the political and social climate that surrounds him. The personal values to which Stevens subscribes the benevolent paternalism of his employer Lord Darlington and the rigid hierarchies that structure their relationship are values shared by a colonialist ideology. The narrative techniques of Remains, including its famously unreliable narrator, also invite a postcolonial reading. As James Lang observes, Ishiguro foregrounds an interest in "the ordinary, private, and marginal lives and moments which fill the long spaces between the historic battles, the treaties, the summits, and the incidents of public record" (151). Stevens's narrative connects the personal to the political in just this way, offering an alternative to a public historical record that too often elides the voices of those subordinated by colonialism, by gender, or, in Stevens's case, by an unyielding class system.

In *Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro provides a clear indication of the political muddle that marked Britain in late 1956 through the character Harry Smith. John P McCombe observes, "Ostensibly the voice of the Labor Party, Smith addresses the importance of an active engagement in the democratic process, particularly through his participation in local government" (77). And yet, as Stevens prepares to retire for the evening in Tavistock, Smith also reveals his more conservative streak on the subject of empire to Dr. Carlisle; "I was hoping [Stevens] would have a few words to say about your ideas on the Empire. Doctor [...] Our Doctors here's for all kinds of little countries going independent. I don't have the learning to prove him wrong, though I know he is […]" (192). Although he offers no assent, Stevens would surely

agree with Smith that the doctor's liberalism is misguided, since the colonial system in which Smith believes is understood by Stevens's own values.

The first example of Stevens's colonialist ideology is his belief in the benevolence of the father figure. Despite evidence that his employer is the single biggest pawn of the Nazis in England, Stevens faithfully reiterates his childlike trust in Darlington:

> The fact is, such great affairs will always be beyond the understanding of those such as you and I, and those of us who wish to make our mark must realize that we best do so by concentrating on what is within our realm: that is to say, by devoting our attention to providing the best service to those great gentlemen in whose hands the destiny of civilization truly lies. (199)

Such a belief resembles one of the pillars of colonialist ideology, which claims that, as Edward Said puts it, the colonized are "a subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves" (35). A second principle that links Stevens to colonialist apologist relates to the first: he subscribes to the doctrine that "they cannot represent themselves; they must be represented" (36). Stevens makes this very point in his reflections on the futility of Harry Smith's activism:

> But life is what it is, how ordinary people can truly be expected to have "strong opinions" on all manner of things -- as Mr. Harry Smith rather fancifully claims that the villagers here do. And not only are these expectations unrealistic. I rather doubt it they are even desirable. There is after all, a real limit to how much ordinary people can learn and know, and to demand that each and every one of them contribute

> "strong opinions" to the great debates of the nation cannot, surely, be wise. (194)

Stevens's words ultimately reveal a curious contradiction: although Stevens and Smith view the maintenance of empire as central to the nation's identity. Stevens is at least consistent in his belief that both colonized peoples and the ordinary people of Britain must entrust their welfare into the hands of the great gentlemen whom Stevens has served. In contrast, Smith fails to reconcile the inherent hypocrisy. The democratic ideals that Smith has worked so diligently to uphold "Dignity's something every man and woman in this country can strive for" (186) appear to extend only to the borders of the British Isles, a belief that Ishiguro uses to illuminate the dominant ideology of the historical moment of this novel's frame. Popular support for the occupation of Suez was inconsistent with the desire for liberation that underpumed the tight against fascism only a decade earlier. And Ishiguro's Dr. Carlisle is the only character who seems aware of the contradiction. When Carlisle later dismisses Smith's politics in his conversation with Stevens, Smith becomes the personification of the inconsistency of the Labor Party position.

Kazuo Ishiguro's 1989 work of fiction summons an older literacy resonance of servants, one where they signify a declining world of aristocratic privilege characterized by luxuries such as ironed newspapers. At the same time, service in the novel points toward a contemporary world of consuming professionalization, a world in which subjectivity seems to stem from occupation, a career providing not only manner and method but also social station. In addition to this temporal tension, the novel's depiction of service has a spatial divide as well. Stevens's career has greatly restricted his field of vision: his position having tied him to Lord Darlington and Darlington Hall. This insularity of Stevens's service is pitted against the way such

serving positions him within a broader network: Darlington Hall and its servants can only be fully understood against a colonial or globalize context, one that provides hidden supports and a rebranded identity.

Above all other motifs, the one of history, especially personal, individual history is the idea that dominates all novels Ishiguro wrote, *The Remains of the Day* in particular. In Linda Hutcheon's words "the departure, rather than reworking of mimetic novelist tradition is a definition that helps understanding the mechanism, the strategy Ishiguro uses to communicate this story to the reader" (134). Focus on biography, personal history represents a break with the traditional approach to history and historicity. Dealing with past and confronting it, is an important subject that reoccurs within the discourse of British postmodern prose. Concerning Ishiguro's work itself and *The Remains of the Day* as an example of his manner of narrating, this subject of history is precisely the thing that dominates the discourse and captures reader's attention. Stevens, alike all of Ishiguro's narrators, is not at all objective and trustworthy. His memory plays tricks on him. His language distorts to reveal the actual truth that is buried under layers of self-deception. The language is seen as an important weapon, and as much as it is used by Ishiguro's narrators, as the means of suppression of the actual state of affairs.

Ishiguro depicts postcolonial qualities in *The Remains of the Day* by also expressing a Buddhist criticism of Confucian ethic. Zen Buddhism hopes to liberate a person from all social situations, which are inherently worrisome. For most of *The Remains of the Day,* Stevens feels that his tragic and wasted life resulted from mistaken loyalty, so that if he had backed a different horse or had played different cards, he would have been a winner instead of a loser. Stevens ponders this, "Naturally, when one looks back to such instances today, they may indeed take the

appearance of being crucial, precious moments in one's life; but of course, at the time, this was not the impression one had." Indeed, the very problem is that "There was surely nothing to indicate at the time that such evidently small incidents would render whole dreams forever irredeemable" (179). As Rothfork explains, "Zen Buddhism criticizes our ordinary, unenlightened existence by refusing to accept a retrospective reconstruction of reality" as uniquely or even especially true or definitive" (60). Any expectation of discovering the "truth" or developing a transcendent identity in such terms is futile. People like Stevens, who cannot escape the deconstruction of beliefs they relied on to make sense of their experience -- a world view they thought was objective and universal -- have an opportunity for liberation, for not recommitting themselves to an alternative interpretation. In fact the Zen monastic experience is designed to force monks to just such a crisis.

Stevens is proud to be near the hub of the wheel of empire, where "debates are conducted, and crucial decisions arrived at, in the privacy and calm of the great houses of this country" (115). Initially Stevens is exclusively concerned with samurai values. Someone else chooses the game; the butler is content to be a skilled player: "my vocation will not be fulfilled until I have done all I can to see his lordship through the great tasks he has set himself" (173). In 1923 Stevens witnesses a confrontation between his employer and with an American Senator, Mr. Lewis, who calls Lord Darlington a fool: "He [Darlington] is an amateur and international affairs today are no longer for gentlemen amateurs. The sooner you here in Europe realize that the better" (102). When Darlington rises with icy civility to correct Lewis -- "What you describe as amateurism, sir, is what I think most of us here still prefer to call honor" (945) -- Stevens heartily approves. In touch with modern

politics, he is less crass than the American senator and might be characterized as a young John Majors. His observation on Darlington is discomfiting:

> Over the last few years, his lordship has probably been the single most useful pawn Herr Hitler has had in this country for his propaganda tricks. All the better because he's sincere and honorable and doesn't recognize the true nature of what he's doing. (224)

Stevens has himself, if only silently, objected to Darlington's sycophant behavior towards Hitler's foreign minister, Ribbentrop.

Likewise, language and objectification in *The Remains of the Day* makes the novel postmodern and the postcolonial at the same time. Discourse and language contribute significantly to Stevens' self-subjugation in *The Remains of the Day*. Stevens in many ways appears a representation of the colonial or postcolonial subject. His utilization of upper-class English, for example, exemplifies one form of assimilation and acculturation, since in order to perform his job, he must acquire the language of those he serves. In addition, by obscuring class markers of language, the butler's required use of upper-class English heightens the transparency of service; that is, by using diction, pronunciation, and speech rhythms similar to that of his upper-class employers he creates an illusory appearance of likeness with them, and this illusory appearance prevents his employers from having to confront potentially troubling difference.

Language is an empty tool for people's ideas, as Stevens has become a tool in the service of other people's agendas. The superficiality and performativity that is inherent in language is epitomized in elements such as accent, which ought to be a tool to convey ideas. But in his case, that performativity is the end, not only the means, since in his position; he is a vessel for other people's ideas." Bantering", as

Stevens calls it, is mode of language. Of discourse, it is a manner of exchange that he is not familiar with and that puts him ill at ease. In submitting himself to another mode of discourse, he is again bending his language for another person's ends.

Conclusion

The novel *The Remains of the Day* dramatizes the confluence between the threshold of postcolonialism and postmodernism. The complex narrative structure of liminal narrative, unreliable narratives, self-reflexivity, narrative shifts, fragmentation, discontinuous timeline, flashback and self-deception make this novel a postmodernist text. Similarly, the Eurocentric perspective on power relationship having no vantage point of the author to speak properly on behalf of the British people makes it belong to the realm of the postcolonial.

With the unreliable narrator Stevens, a butler, the novel begins, where the common techniques of postmodernity and postcoloniality such as magical realism, irony, paradox, and allegory are used. The issue of history and marginality in the novel are the fertile grounds for the intersection between the postcoloniality and postmodernity

In the four chapters of the present research work, each and every chapter revolves round the topic of how the nexus between the postcoloniality and postmodernity is presented. The first chapter presents the outlines and the general mirror of the research. The chapter of theoretical modality exemplifies in the subtle way how in the time of the postmodernism and postcolonialism, sharable norms in terms of the technique and the themes link each other. The newness and findings of this research lies in the fact how in the age of postmodernism, the novelist, Kazuo Ishiguro, through the novel *The Remains of the Day*, dramatizes the confluence between the postmodernity and postcoloniality.

Steven's narrative connects the personal to the political in just this way, offering an alternative to a public historical record. Set in 1956, this tale of an almost retired British Butler named Stevens, Darlington Hall places Stevens at the liminal

passage. Miss Kenton also puts Stevens into liminal passage and at the same time the Darlington Hall bestows a physical site of Steven's ambiguous social position. This liminality of the social position of postcoloniality is manifested in the postmodern strategies of the unreliability, selfreflexivity, narrative shifts, fragmentation, flashback and self-deception.

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