

Memory, Nostalgia, and Emotional Isolation in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*

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ABSTRACT

Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* explores the themes of nostalgia, alienation and emotional loss through the life of Stevens, an English butler who reflects on his past while travelling through the countryside. The novel is narrated through Stevens's memories, which gradually reveal the sacrifices he made in the name of professionalism and loyalty. This paper examines how nostalgia and memory shape Stevens's understanding of his life and highlight his emotional isolation. Stevens constantly recalls

his years of service at Darlington Hall, remembering his dedication to Lord Darlington and his belief in the dignity of being a great butler. Stevens's strict devotion to duty has distanced him from his personal emotions and relationships. His inability to express feelings, especially toward Miss Kenton, leads to a deep sense of regret and grief. The memories that Stevens revisits are not only nostalgic but also painful, as they reveal missed opportunities for love, companionship and self-understanding. The novel also portrays alienation because of social expectations and rigid class structures. Stevens defines his identity entirely through his profession, which prevents him from forming meaningful personal connections. Nostalgia functions as both comfort and confrontation, forcing Stevens to face the reality of his lost possibilities. This paper argues that *The Remains of the Day* presents nostalgia as a complex emotional experience that exposes alienation and hidden grief. Through Stevens's memories and reflections, Ishiguro reveals how individuals may suppress their emotions to maintain social roles and dignity.

Keywords: Nostalgia, Memories, Relationships, Professionalism, Alienation, Love.
