

**The Idea of Space and Its Relation with Human Beings in**

***The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro: A Study**

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**Abstract:**

The novel *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro gives significant attention to the concept of space (1989). The lives of Stevens, an old butler, serve as the primary focus of the narrative. His meditations about his former master, Lord Darlington, and the decline of British principles after the war drive the plot along. The profound connections that exist between Stevens and Darlington Hall are at the centre of the narrative, to the point that the destiny of one character is inexorably tied to the persona of the other character. It is inevitable that Darlington Hall will become a significant location, not just in world history but also in Stevens' own biography. According to this research, *The Remains of the Day* is a story about Stevens' effort to understand his history and uncover the secrets of his life. This is the central theme of the novel. This paper will argue that setting plays a significant role in determining the identities of characters and the direction that narratives take.

**Keywords:** Kazuo Ishiguro, spatial criticism, identity, power, cognitive mapping, panopticon

**Introduction:**

Kazuo Ishiguro, born in 1954 and currently living in the United Kingdom, is a Japanese-English novelist, short-story writer, and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature. He is known for his lyrical stories of regret that are tinged with a subtle buoyancy. The reader is introduced to Stevens, the butler, in the author's work titled "*The Remains of the Day*," which was published in 1989. The entirety of the novel revolves around Stevens' first-person account of his time spent working as the head butler at Darlington Hall, and the emphasis is placed on both personal growth and the progression of history. The setting of Darlington Hall plays a significant role in Stevens' reflections on his prior existence. It is possible to say that the tale of Stevens' personal life runs concurrently with the history of Darlington Hall. Aside from an attempt at historiographic metafiction that focuses on significant players like Lord Darlington, Ishiguro's plot centres on the butler, who is a supporting role (Ekelund 70-71). When Stevens is trying to make sense of his history, the reader is taken inside his head and transported into that world. It is a journey into the past of a character whose stoicism and dedication to duty, even to the point of giving up the most essential pleasures in life, confound the reader.

Because the story is written in first person, Stevens presents himself to the reader as a mystery. There are no other options for understanding his actions than establishing a technique for reading between the lines. That exposes the space of Darlington Hall's overwhelming impact on Stevens' identity. According to Stevens, the grand manor was an active location where important events in global history occurred. One might argue that Stevens' identity has similarly been built, dismantled, and reconstructed in response to the changes that have taken place in the physical space of Darlington Hall. The setting morphs into a living, breathing area that holds the secret to revealing all that has been hidden around the main character.

In light of this background information, the major emphasis of this investigation is placed on the significance of space in terms of its role as a physical presence that shapes identity. *The Remains of the Day* has been the subject of wide and varied scholarly criticism, which serves as the context for our discussion. A number of different approaches, including an unreliable narrator, socioeconomic class and society, postcolonial critique, Japanese Samurai ideals, and

British principles, have been utilised in order to comprehend the narrative. The amount of scholarly research that has been done on Ishiguro's work has, for the most part, explored its importance as a narrative that attacks British Empire ideology. According to Meera Tamaya,

In his recent and most acclaimed novel, *The Remains of the Day*, it is the dismantling of Britain's colonial empire, mentioned only as the date on which the narrative begins, which provides the determining historical context of the characters' attitudes and aspirations. The date is July 1956, when President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, thus heralding the end of Britain's long reign as the world's foremost colonial power. Not so coincidentally, on that particular day, the narrator/protagonist of the novel, Stevens, the quintessential English butler, sets out on a journey across England and, in the process, recovers the tragic truth of his past, a truth inextricably bound up with the history of his country. (45)

ElifOztabak-Avci, the author of a recent article on the book, investigates the ways in which the text interacts with the concept of "Englishness," and she makes the observation that "*The Remains of the Day*" "emerges clearly as a text attempting to deconstruct the master narrative of 'Englishness' which resurfaced in England at the time in which it was written" (52). Given the wealth of scholarly work that has already been done on the novel, the relationship of the novel with space will be the primary emphasis of this essay. By putting the emphasis on the less-researched context of space, the purpose of this strategy is to bring attention to the fact that a comprehensive text study is required. The novel *The Remains of the Day* places a strong focus on the significance of physical space within the narrative by tying major settings, such as Darlington Hall, to the character of Stevens, the story's protagonist. An examination of the text that is guided by the concepts of spatial theory indicates that there are significant links between Stevens and Darlington Hall. This connection can't be disregarded since it is at the very centre of the narrative, and the course of events for one is inexorably bound up with the persona of the other.

#### Criticism of Space

It is the goal of spatial criticism to dismantle Enlightenment and Cartesian views about the nature of space, which view space as a meaningless entity that contributes very little to the

narrative of texts. It emphasises Michel Foucault's (1926-84), Henry Lefebvre's (1901-91), and Frederic Jameson's (1934-) theoretical principles to demonstrate that space is an active component in a story. It asserts that place shapes identity and binds it to the human subject. Spatial criticism argues that “space itself is both a product, shaped through a diverse range of social processes and human interventions, and a force that, in turn, influences, directs and delimits possibilities of action and ways of human being in the world” (Wegner 181). Space is not only a location where historical events take place; rather, it is history itself and the basic foundation of human life (185). The work of Foucault, which examines discursive spaces, draws attention to the function that place plays in the formation of identity. As he argues, “Space is the matrix in which knowledge and identities are produced, but also one of the products, and in turn an agent of production” (qtd. in WestPavlov 153). Henry Lefebvre is known for his research on space, which focuses on both the product and the process of social production. According to Lefebvre, the concept of space is loaded with a variety of implications. To begin, location plays a significant role in the regulation of social activity. Second, it is a potent political weapon and an entity that is incorporated into all different kinds of social governance (Butler 42). The research that Lefebvre has done on space hints towards it, “as neither simply a physical container of objects nor an infinite discursive field. It is both socially produced and an essential precondition for the reproduction of social relations” (Butler 42). Reading the significance of space in literary works has garnered a lot of attention ever since the works of Foucault and Lefebvre were published. Answers to the mysteries that have been surrounding the character of Stevens can be found by delving further into "*The Remains of the Day*" and paying close attention to the setting.

#### Darlington Hall and Stevens

The feelings of attachment that Darlington Hall has for Stevens are so strong that they almost verge on obsession. Even though the novella recounts Stevens' brief visit to Miss Kenton, the expansiveness of Darlington Hall acts as a focus point for Stevens for the entirety of the story. Even though Yugin Teo is on a journey away from Darlington Hall, he has looked into its hold on Stevens' life. As Teo points out:

Stevens' need to stop and take stock betrays his deep attachment to Darlington Hall. Many years of service that Stevens has provided to Lord Darlington have

exacted a price, and Stevens' sheltered life in Darlington Hall means that he is cut off from the world around him. (27)

Throughout the course of the narrative, Stevens mulls over the requirements of Darlington Hall and is aggravated by a decline in the level of service provided by the servants. He is concerned about the requirement of having a housemaid such as Miss Kenton in order to return the space to its previous standards, which had represented the pinnacle of British values. His actions appear strange for an elderly bachelor who should be displaying some appearance of desire to gain the last chance to date the lady for whom he had a special place. On the other hand, Stevens seems unable to imagine a life that did not involve Darlington Hall in any way. It is only the possibility of Miss Kenton coming to Darlington Hall that allows him to entertain the thought of getting back together with her again. It's as if Stevens is afraid that if he cuts links with the environment where he has built his identity, he would collapse.

*The Remains of the Day* wonderfully depicts the notion of space as a fluid object that is affected and, in turn, transforms the lives of its protagonists. Darlington Hall, a historic manor home, used to be a place where English ideals and practises were preserved. According to Adam Parkes, "Darlington Hall... is a miniature version of England itself, and the hierarchical arrangement of social relations inside its walls reflects the state of English society at large" (55). During the prewar and postwar years, Darlington Hall was visited by leaders from all over the world. The manor home is transformed into a setting where certain English traditions must be followed under Lord Darlington's system. During this time, Stevens' life as the head butler at Darlington Hall had an effect on his thoughts and feelings about himself. Both Darlington Hall and Stevens are infected with the meticulousness, mechanical precision, fine language, a feeling of responsibility, and other traits that are typically associated with the British nobility. Throughout the course of the narrative, Lord Darlington is shown as a meek and submissive superior who rarely demonstrates overt power over Stevens. When they are face to face, he never criticises or assaults Stevens. Lord Darlington's reputation as a wonderful employer is never harmed, with the exception of Stevens's public shaming at Mr. Spencer's hands in front of Lord Darlington (Ishiguro 205-

206). This raises the question of why Stevens painstakingly reconstructs himself to fit his function as top butler, even to the extent of neglecting his own feelings in the process.

#### Darlington Hall Representing Greatness and Dignity

Working as a butler brings with it a certain degree of respect and splendour that calls attention to the significance of sustaining British standards. His sense of dignity was formed by debates with the other butlers that took place in the servants' hall of Darlington Hall. According to Stevens, "We English have an important advantage over foreigners in this respect and it is for this reason that when you think of a great butler, he is bound, almost by definition, to be an Englishman" (Ishiguro 44). This approach sheds light not just on the British way of life, but also on the extent to which Stevens would argue that locations related with British ideas should be seen as wonderful or ideal. [Case in point:] The tone of Stevens' story changes to one of astonishment whenever he talks of the virtues and decencies of the British. Even when Stevens is attempting to arrive at an objective definition of decency or grandeur, the existence of Darlington Hall still has an effect on the judgments that he makes. Stevens makes a strong effort to uphold the proper etiquette appropriate for a setting such as Darlington Hall. Due to the fact that he gives such timid performances, it is impossible for him to ever portray the role of a son or a lover (Trimm 146).

According to Stevens, the most distinguished mansions are those that are in the epicentre of political and historical events on a global scale. Employed in such estates, butlers are well versed in aristocratic mores and, as a result, rise in prominence along with the growing renown of the family. Stevens says that "debates are conducted, and crucial decisions arrived at, in the privacy and calm of the great houses of this country" (Ishiguro 121). According to Stevens, Darlington Hall is a hub of political activity that is frequented by prominent individuals who hold influential positions. Stevens, by virtue of his service to Lord Darlington, gives himself reason to believe that he is contributing to the grandeur of Britain. By controlling the location - Darlington Hall - where greatness is being generated, he pretends to make a contribution to those in power (Tamaya 50). Throughout the story, his reverence for Darlington Hall as a place of authority requiring severe subservience influences his behaviour and personal decisions. A devoted adherent of the ancient British ideas and a willing servant like Stevens may get their careers off the ground with the assistance of

Darlington Hall. It transforms into an environment characterised by close observation and restriction, leaving little opportunity for Stevens to express his individuality or have a private life.

#### Darlington Hall and the Modern Penitentiary

Darlington Hall is comparable to a modern prison in terms of harsh conditioning. Michel Foucault developed four criteria that describe the spatial confinement of inmates inside a jail in his research of modern prisons. The first premise is the establishment of 'boundaries' or 'enclosures' within the organisation. These divisions are used to instil disciplinary monotony. The second premise is 'partitioning,' which specifies how convicts should be placed inside the confines of the facility. The third premise is that of 'functional sites,' which sustain routine activities such as work, exercise, and sleep that are required for the space to function properly. It should be noted that the operational locations have a rather sparse appearance. The fourth and final principle is 'rank,' which serves to maintain the space's hierarchical structure and instils discipline and subservience among the prisoners (Brown 23). Inmates would have neither their freedom nor their privacy if any of these suggestions were implemented. Captives can be trained to behave properly by consistent monitoring. The activities of Stevens are a hidden allusion to the hidden state of living under surveillance in a site such as Darlington Hall, which operates in a manner that is comparable to that of a jail.

Darlington Hall's spaciousness has had such an impact on Stevens' mentality that it leaves little room for private emotions or sensations. The conditioned and docile Stevens is required to do mechanical duties for the space, and he reacts to the needs of the space. Stevens recalls the Lord Darlington's 1923 conference at Darlington Hall as a period when he could show signs of being a "great" butler. This meeting took place at Darlington Hall (Marcus 139). In spite of this, it was also a moment of profound personal grief for Stevens, as his father passed away while he was out running errands in his capacity as head butler. There is no indication that Stevens has informed his master about the impending passing of his father. The notion of the gorgeous butler as the focal point of the most important activities taking place in a rich household is extremely important to Stevens.

While Miss Kenton and Mrs. Mortimer grieve his father's death, Stevens serves to the visitors of the 1923 conference, answering their questions and wishes. It may be claimed that Stevens

is powerless to some extent and must complete the responsibilities assigned to him without objection. All authoritarian places with conditioned and submissive people have this quality. But it's his perspective on the whole incident that makes his narration so revolting:

Even so, if you consider the pressures contingent on me that night, you may not think I delude myself unduly if I go so far to suggest that I did perhaps display, in the face of everything, at least in some modest degree a ‘dignity.’  
(Ishiguro 115)

The highly mechanised and authority-focused setting of Darlington Hall has had a profound effect on Stevens' personality, which was formerly that of an emotive creature. He shows a robot in the area of Darlington Hall that is programmed to serve without respect for those in positions of power. It is therefore possible to draw parallels between Stevens' existence inside the repressive environment of Darlington Hall and the sedentary lives of convicts who have been conditioned to have a warped perception of both fear and freedom. It turns out that Stevens' existence is conditioned and altered at Darlington Hall, to the point that it impedes his growth as an emotionally self-aware and independent person. Stevens' development is repressed as a result.

#### The Panopticon and Repressive Surveillance in Darlington Hall

Michel Foucault's investigation of places imposes an authoritative gaze on the subjects, which may be examined further in regard to Darlington Hall. Such settings, according to Foucault, work well by conditioning people to monitoring concepts. Without the presence of an authoritative gaze, submissive people self-police. Through his notion of the panopticon, Foucault investigates the power that the modern jail wields over its inmates (Barry 43). He borrows the panopticon's concepts — a high watchtower in the heart of a contemporary jail — from Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). All of the jail cells are visible from this vantage point, and prisoners are constantly monitored. Even when there is no guard in the watchtower, the panopticon causes an instinctive reflex of self-policing. For Foucault, the panopticon is “a model for modern societal organization of bodies and spaces” (Tally Jr. 158).

Prioritization of duties is a requirement for operation in any and all contemporary correctional facilities “the spatial demands of facilitating the inspection principle” (Hirst 172). According to Hirst, the contemporary institution employs a technique to manage

inmates' everyday life by regulating their behaviour through inspection and continual observation (172). Within the confines of Darlington Hall, Stevens is behaving in a manner that is reminiscent of a prisoner who is engaging in the activity of self-policing. The fact that he did not feel any emotions when in the private areas of Darlington Hall or while beyond the physical presence of the observer in command, Lord Darlington, is undeniable evidence of the oppressive character of the area.

Readers are only given a glimpse of Stevens's personal life at Darlington Hall on a few instances here and there throughout his musings. Stevens shows hesitation bordering on discomfort as Miss Kenton seeks to refurbish his private parlour in an event told shortly after Miss Kenton's appointment. Stevens thinks Darlington Hall to be a hallowed site, and the attempt to light it up brings sacrilege closer to him (Guth 135). Miss Kenton's behaviour calls into doubt his status as a stoic, respectable servant working inside Darlington Hall. Stevens has no zone of independence in a secluded room that receives little scrutiny from the master. Miss Kenton is chastised by Stevens for intruding into a location that he claims is not intended for enjoyment or relaxation (Ishiguro 55). He quietly questions Miss Kenton's behaviour, which he fears will distract him from his butler duties. He shifts the conversation to formal topics. As a kind of retaliation for her violation of the space, he points out deficiencies in her abilities that she will need to address shortly in order to feel at ease in Darlington Hall. His motivational speech is similar to that delivered to incoming convicts at a prison by veterans. According to Stevens:

Miss Kenton, if you are under the impression you have already at your age perfected yourself, you will never rise to heights you are no doubt capable of. I might point out, for instance, you are still often unsure of what goes where and which item is which. (Ishiguro 57)

The professional slight should be interpreted as a warning from Stevens, who has been conditioned to avoid changing anything, even the recreational setting. Stevens' statement at the end of the episode confirms this hypothesis: "After this encounter, Miss Kenton did not attempt to introduce further flowers into my pantry, and in general, I was pleased to observe, she went about settling in impressively" (57).

### Space Defining norms and the Identity of Stevens

The idea of space plays a significant role in this episode, which depicts a metaphorical conflict between one character who is encased within the space and another character who is attempting to alter it. Phillip E. Wegner conducts research into the role that space plays in the development of personal conflict. According to him, space “is conceived not only as the site of politics, conflict and struggle, but also the very thing being fought over” (185). This episode focuses on the coercive impact that Darlington Hall has over its inmates and illustrates the extent of that power. It highlights how the place teaches its prisoners to be consistent with its ideals to the point where they are utilised as cohabiters who struggle to maintain the structure intact. This is done in order to make the convicts more useful to the place. Stevens' identity is unknowingly defined by the space. Arguments that Stevens is a workaholic, stoic, or Spartan may be refuted by pointing to the key aspect that has formed his life.

A number of "norms" of human behaviour have been described by Paul Rabinow. These "norms" are impacted by the situations in which they take place (10-11). It's possible that the spatial component of an architectural or geographical structure will influence behaviour patterns (Wegner 185). Subjects who can be easily conditioned to places give off the impression of being well adjusted, whereas unsuitable subjects are either expelled from the area or sent to a location outside of it. This action of leaving a space involves an attitude of defiance and non-compliance with the space's "norms," which is required in order to leave the space. Miss Kenton is absorbed into Darlington Hall, where the master of the house, Lord Darlington, exhibits pro-Nazi sympathies by instructing Stevens to remove two Jewish members of the staff. Stevens is responsible for removing the Jewish staff members (Robbins 233).

The event might be interpreted as a test of one's ability to comply to the norms of the space, which are governed by forces that have their own objectives. Stevens, who has a healthy perspective on life, is aware that there must be rigid respect to the space's regulations. A trace of defiance is displayed by Miss Kenton against the unfair requirement that the environment be preserved in accordance with the desires of those in authority. She and Stevens argue over whether or not it is fair and how far prejudice may go when it comes to rejecting honest

coworkers because of their colour. Convicts who dispute the existing quo, which may be altered according to the whims of those in authority, are not permitted to be housed at Darlington Hall since there is no place for them there. Miss Kenton's act of rebellion is short-lived since she ultimately decides to keep her submission rather than remove herself from the surroundings in which she is comfortable. When Stevens asks Miss Kenton why she did not follow through on her intention to leave Darlington Hall, she gives Stevens the reason that the institution provides her with a sense of comfort, despite the fact that this sense of security comes at the expense of her individuality. The unease that Miss Kenton feels when she is away from Darlington Hall is mirrored in her assessment of her level of cowardice.

#### Stevens Altering the Space of Darlington Hall

The firing of the Jewish housemaids brings to light another aspect of the idea of space, which is that it includes a lack of consistency. According to Henry Lefebvre, space is historically important while yet being in a state of flux:

One of the greatest temptations produced by the enlightenment conceptualization of space as a static construct is that we think of it as a refined thing rather than an open-ended, conflicted and contradictory process, a process in which we as agents continuously intervene. (Wegner 182)

Furthermore, the fluid character of space modifies the individual activities of its residents on a regular basis. This shift might be the outcome of historical events that have altered the space's standards. Lord Darlington's anti-Semitism is dramatically reversed in the event surrounding the firing of the Jewish servants. The master renews the rules and assigns the obedient Stevens prisoner the task of locating the fired maids, if feasible (Ishiguro 159). Stevens informs Miss Kenton about the shift in social conventions. Stevens' sudden change in response to the Darlington hall space's changing standards perplexes her. She says, "As I recall, you thought it was only right and proper that Ruth and Sarah be sent packing. You were positively cheerful about it" (Ishiguro 162). This calls into question Stevens' theory regarding Darlington Hall's subservience. He attempts to deflect the criticism by claiming, "The whole matter caused me great concern, great concern indeed. It is hardly the sort of thing I like to see happen in this house" (Ishiguro 162).

It is possible to interpret Stevens' reaction as the expression of a prisoner who has successfully adapted to a place and who is able to quickly shift his preferences in response to changes in the space that is involved. Stevens is acting in a manner that is consistent with that of a submissive, conditioned person who has surrendered his individuality to the caprices of an oppressive environment. This chapter is extremely important to the overall storyline. Following the altercation with Miss Kenton, Stevens' previous identity as a compliant subject begins to shift.

In the second section of *The Remains of the Day*, Stevens contemplates the ways in which he works to bring about positive change in the environment that has caused him to repress his feelings and emotions. This alteration in his worldview is something that Stevens himself contemplates. As he says, "But as to what really caused such changes, just what particular chain of events was really responsible, I have never quite been able to decide" (Ishiguro 173). Miss Kenton bursts into his parlour and finds him reading a romance novel, according to Stevens, as the pivotal turning point in this transition (Ishiguro 173). As the following excerpt illustrates, Stevens, in his ruminations, pulls out the conventions that are connected with a butler's parlour in the manner of a passive subject who has been conditioned to the place of Darlington Hall:

The butler's pantry, as far as I am concerned, is a crucial office, the heart of the house's operations, not unlike a general's headquarters during a battle, and it is imperative that all things in it are ordered – and left ordered – in precisely the way I wish them to be. (Ishiguro 173-74)

The analogy that Miss Kenton makes between Stevens' purportedly private accommodations and a prison cell is spot on. She says, "Really, Mr Stevens, this room resembles a prison cell. All one needs is a small bed in the corner and one could well imagine condemned men spending their last hours here" (174). This comment expresses how much Stevens has been influenced by Darlington Hall's space.

Stevens' submission to the space displays a purposeful attempt at resistance for the first time in the story. He's brought something as insignificant as a romance novel into a location dedicated to precise effort to serve those in power and delight the gaze. Stevens' need to reinvent his identity and, at the same time, the space of Darlington Hall is reflected in his

refusal to hide the book from Miss Kenton. It is possible to view it as Stevens's conscious effort to reclaim his lost emotional identity and free himself from the confining environment that he has been a part of for such a long time and with such unwavering commitment. Responses to this attitude of actively defying the idea of a permanent location may be found in the works of Michel Foucault and Paul Rabinow. According to what they say, "if social and cultural spaces, including the body, are indeed the product of human actions, then there is the possibility of our reconstructing human spaces, and hence human being-in-the world as well" (Wegner 185). Even if it came a bit late, the crime that Stevens did may be the result of a realisation that mankind has the potential to transform spaces and redefine their very existence. Before the start of the episode, Stevens had some thoughts regarding another convict named Miss Kenton. In the past, he had considered that she was a good fit for the atmosphere of Darlington Hall. He says, "I know for a fact she tried to introduce flowers to my pantry on at least three occasions over the years" (Ishiguro 173). It is possible that this episode, in conjunction with the one in which Miss Kenton reprimands Stevens for his "pretending," constitutes Stevens' act of non-conformity. They operate as prompts for Stevens to make an effort to alter the environment that has pushed him to keep his sentiments hidden, which eventually enables him to reclaim both his identity and his sense of self. After acting in a subservient manner for such a significant amount of time, this may be regarded as an attempt to reconcile one's life with their own reality.

#### Stevens' Journey and Cognitive Mapping

*The Remains of the Day* is an interesting novel built on travel that goes beyond personal life history classification. The narrative's discourse space can be classified as Stevens' voyage to meet Miss Kenton after twenty years. Stevens describes the region explored in great detail in discourse space. This differs from the tale space. The story area is "the immediate spatial environment containing an action episode more globally, also the range or amplitude of environments across all episodes" (552). Due to the constraints imposed by the available plot space, Darlington Hall takes up the most of the action in "*The Remains of the Day*." It's possible that the efforts that Stevens is making to reshape the environment while also working on redefining who he is may be perceived as a struggle between places. Frederic Jameson is quoted as saying that, cognitive mapping is "a pedagogical political culture which

seeks to endow the individual subject with some heightened sense of its place in the global system” (Wegner 188). Stevens can partially meet the primary criteria for cognitive mapping by travelling away from Darlington Hall and its spatial realm. This condition being “cognitive mapping... comes to require the coordination of existential data (the empirical position of the subject) with unlived, abstract conceptions of the geographic totality” (Jameson 52). The person is able to restructure his or her experience of space as a result of this. It “would allow the individual subject to locate itself and to represent a seemingly unrepresentable social totality in the postmodern world system” (Tally Jr. 155). It turns into a journey both away from and toward his true self, which he had repressed for a considerable amount of time; it is an act of self-expansion that frees itself from its confines (Wong 57).

Following a significant change inside the confined environment of Darlington Hall, Stevens made the commitment to go on an adventure. The historic British ideas of dignity, greatness, and a sense of being under the scrutiny of authority have been destroyed as a result of the sale of the property from Lord Darlington to Mr. Farraday, an American. Mr Farraday's entrance at Darlington Hall caused significant modifications in the space, according to Stevens. The majority of the place that shaped Stevens' mentality is still hidden and unused. The dining hall that formerly hosted powerful visitors has been repurposed. Stevens would go on to say, with a touch of melancholy nostalgia:

Today, the old banqueting hall no longer contains a table and that spacious room, with its high and magnificent ceiling, serves Mr Farraday well as a sort of gallery. But in his lordship's day, the room was regularly required. (Ishiguro 75)

The grandeur of the room, which in the past required Stevens to adhere to particular guidelines, has been diminished and is no longer the same. This might also be seen as an acknowledgment of grief over the British Empire's gradual decline and dissolution, as well as the values and physical locations it represented. According to Yugin Teo:

The act of collective mourning in Britain of its colonial history carries with it a link to the mourning of the fall of the aristocracy by those who were of the landed gentry for several generations.... The country house and stately home

is not only a symbol of the wealth and power of the Empire, but is also a symbol of order and protection within its walls. (58)

Teo further states that “Stevens has lived all his life within such walls, and the decline of the status of the country house signifies the inevitable decline of Stevens’s occupation” (58). As a result, a shift in space modifies Stevens' attitude about his existence, forcing him to reconsider his identity.

In this literary fiction, the breakdown of British principles and their replacement with American standards is particularly clear. This is especially clear in Stevens' determination to perfect the skill of bantering for the advantage of his new employer, something that would have been unimaginable under Lord Darlington's reign. However, Stevens' goal in this scenario is to make significant changes to his identity, which had been developed in tandem with the setting of Darlington Hall over the course of a considerable amount of time spent in subservient labour. David James analyses the difficulties Stevens had in adjusting to his new environment in the novel *The Remains of the Day*. He is of the opinion that

These conflicts and instabilities also reveal Stevens’ underlying vulnerability. His reluctance to abandon discursive properties, even deliberately in the case of convivial banter, is altogether ingrained integrally part of his physiological make-up. (James 64)

However, Stevens' wonder at a change in space as a result of a change in culture plays a significant role in his coming to the realisation that he has the ability to modify a space that he had previously believed to be fixed.

Stevens' trip is solely for the aim of meeting Miss Kenton and maybe inviting her back inside Darlington Hall's newly renovated premises. His endeavour is an act of reorganising one's existence that had been subjugated to passive subservience to a location and its dominating stare, and it emphasises his will to restore his emotional life. He had been subjected to submissive subservience to a place and its overpowering look. Beyond the confines of Darlington Hall, Stevens starts to piece together his past in order to better understand himself. He starts to understand the significance of his self-imposed restrictions and the role that the looming presence of Darlington Hall has had as the principal contributor to the formation of his identity. The voyage that Stevens took is the climax for Wojciech Drag after a protracted

period of melancholy and introspective contemplation that was centred on his previous life.

As Drag puts it,

The decision to leave the walls of Darlington Hall for the first time in many years can be interpreted as a displaced expression of Stevens' frustration with his inner conflicts. (53)

As he moves away from a life of servile dedication to the grounds of Darlington Hall, he makes an effort to reorganise his life and find new meaning in it. When Stevens meets with Miss Kenton, now Mrs. Benn, this exercise of cognitive mapping comes to a head. Stevens' notion that Miss Kenton is on the verge of divorcing her husband is incorrect, and he wants her back. Miss Kenton muses on these things as she travels back to her house. She says "a different life, a better life you might have had. For instance, I get to think about a life I might have had with you, Mr Stevens" (Ishiguro 251). The following is an excerpt from Stevens' answer, which is an interior monologue, to Miss Kenton's words: "[T]heir implications were such as to provoke a certain degree of sorrow within me. Indeed – why should I not admit it? – at that moment, my heart was breaking" (251-252). His unfortunate situation is the outcome of a passive subject who prioritised space conventions over his own personal needs.

#### Conclusion

This article seeks to sketch the space of Darlington Hall and concludes that Stevens' journey becomes a conscious effort to examine the damaging consequences of docility on his identity. Stevens is attempting to break free from both physical and psychological confines. It is a final, desperate attempt to know and remake himself and his environment; an act of rebellion against a life of slavery and routine (Shaffer 82-83). Stevens is able to look back on the judgments he took to defend Lord Darlington's whims and British principles. He expresses himself in a way that counteracts his prior reluctance. The thoroughly shattered Stevens realises the meaninglessness of his former existence in a melancholy moment near the end of the story. The protestations of Stevens are not merely addressed against Lord Darlington; rather, they are directed against the space that forced him to comply without questioning it. It becomes very clear over the course of *The Remains of the Day* that Lord Darlington has very little influence, if any at all, on Stevens' private choices. Stevens' personal life is influenced in

some way by Darlington Hall, a manor estate steeped in its own unique set of British traditions pertaining to dignity and greatness.

Stevens portrays himself in the book as a subject who has been entirely demolished as a result of conforming to the standards of an oppressive environment. However, the mere act of publicly confessing his crime outside of the confines of Darlington Hall might be interpreted as an effort on his part to eventually restore his identity. The process of cognitive mapping that Stevens does via his journey and introspection away from the confines of Darlington Hall enables him to prioritise what he had ignored in his life, which are the sentiments and emotions of human beings. Stevens, who has recognised via his work at cognitive mapping that places, even ones infused by British values like Darlington hall, are fluid, might view this as a realignment of norms. This can be interpreted as meaning that spaces can change through time. Stevens is aware of the fact that different environments have the potential to shape a person's identity; nevertheless, the most important aspect is that people have the ability to simultaneously transform their environments and reclaim them to better serve their purposes.

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