

## A Study of Postcolonial Narrative in *The Remains of the Day*

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Received 12 August 2019; accepted 2 November 2019  
Published online 26 December 2019

### Abstract

The winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 2017, Kazuo Ishiguro, is a famous contemporary Japanese-British novelist who, together with Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul, is known as the “Three Giants of Immigrants” in British literature. His novel, *The Remains of the Day*, was published in 1988 and won Booker Prize in 1989. *The Remains of the Day* takes two World War and typical British manor as the background and uses the first person retrospective narration form to describe the postwar British butler Stevens in the face of the historical change, the master replacement and some other series of events. The protagonist Stevens has gone through a process of identity change in different background, which is also the process of re-building identity through various events. As one of Kazuo Ishiguro’s representative works, *The Remains of the Day* is successful in its unique narrative strategy. Based on narratology theory and Said’s post-colonial identity theory, this paper attempts to explore the subject of the protagonist’s identity behind the text by virtue of Stevens’ unreliable narration, so as to show the process of his subjectivity, identity loss and identity reconstruction.

**Key words:** *The Remains of the Day*; Unreliable narration; Post-colonialism; Identity

Wang, A. Q., & Zeng, Y. B. (2019). A Study of Postcolonial Narrative in *The Remains of the Day*. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 19(3), 85-91. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/11388>  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/11388>

### INTRODUCTION

A well-known Writer of Japanese-British Origin, Kazuo Ishiguro was born in Nagasaki, Japan, in 1954. Later he went to England with his father and lived in London. He acquired British citizenship in 1982. In terms of his main works, there are *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *Artist of the Floating World* (1986), *The Remains of the Day* (1988), *The Unconsoled* (1995), *When We Were Orphans* (2000) and *Never Let Me Go* (2005). Ishiguro Kazuo has won the Booker Prize and the Winifred Holt Award. Many works have been nominated for the Booker Prize many times. His latest novel *Never Let Me Go* was also shortlisted for Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2005, and the novel has been translated into more than a dozen languages and has been adapted. They have been awarded the Order of the British Empire and the Order of the Knights of French Arts and Literature. They are regarded as the most popular and one of the respected writers in England. In addition, Kazuo Ishiguro and V. S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie are also known as “Three Giants of Immigrants” in the British literary world. Ishiguro Kazuo successfully won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017.

*The Remains of the Day* was published in 1988 and subsequently won the Booker Prize in 1989. The American Publishers Weekly and other several magazines have praised the well-deserved Booker Prize-winning novel *The Remains of the Day* as “an elaborate masterpiece, which not only makes a convincing analysis and deep study of personal psychology, but also meticulously depicts the fallen social order”. The scholars at home and abroad are keen to study Ishiguro’s work from the perspectives of postcolonialism, psychoanalysis, narrative techniques, theme analysis and the comparison among several works. It is undoubted that this novel has many research values.

Ishiguro’s novel *The Remains of the Day* was published in 1988 and won the Booker Prize in 1989, which is the most prestigious book in English literature. Since the publication and award of *The Remains of the*

*Day*, enormous numbers of scholars have shown great interest in the novel. Early research on this novel is mainly about studying Ishiguro's own immigrant background, the British culture and Japanese culture besides in his works. And then more and more scholars began to use the theory of narratology to analyze this novel. In addition, some aspects such as post-colonialism, trauma description and theme analysis also attracted more and more scholars to study. The main outputs of the research on Ishiguro by foreign scholars are monographs, essay collections and periodicals. Abroad studies focus on analyzing from almost three aspects: narrative strategy, thematic analysis and comparison of the novel with Ishiguro's other novels.

## 1. RELATED STUDIES AT HOME AND ABROAD

The domestic attention to Ishiguro and his works is posterior to abroad and started in Taiwan for the first time. Domestic research on Ishiguro started later than abroad, and the study of Ishiguro is mainly reflected in the study of his Booker Prize-winning novel *The Remains of the Day*. In 1994, Ishiguro's first novel *A Pale View of Hills* was published by Taiwan Literature Publishing House. After that, Ishiguro's other works have been translated and introduced to China successively. His works are not introduced into mainland China until 2002, when *When We Were Orphans* was published by Yilin Press. *The Remains of the Day* was not published until 2008. In *The Remains of the Day* was first translated into Chinese by Mao Guoan in 2008 (nine years after the novel won the prize). Since then, more and more scholars in China began to pay attention to the novel. The first research on Ishiguro appeared in 1994, Zhong Ziqing in his article firstly talked about the life and works of Ishiguro. The author searched the China Knowledge Network and found that before 2005 the number of research on Ishiguro and *The Remains of the Day* was very limited, and from 2005 to 2019, there have been 100 papers on the study of *The Remains of the Day*. It can also be seen that the scholars have shown diverse interest in this research.

Compared with the studies abroad, the studies at home are still in the process of making progress. Most of the research achievements are theses and dissertations. They mainly explore themes, narrative strategies and features of post colonialism of *The Remains of the Day*. These studies provide insights and provoke further thoughts for researchers interested in the book.

To sum up, the current research on *The Remains of the Day* in the academic circles at home and abroad is mainly interpreted from the following aspects, which includes narrative strategy, new historicism, postcolonialism, cultural identity research, the theme of the novel from the aspects of identity loss, nostalgia, existentialism and so on.

## 2. A STUDY OF POSTCOLONIAL NARRATIVE IN *THE REMAINS OF THE DAY*

### 2.1 The Composite Narrative Method

The point of view is the perspective of the novel's observation and narrative, "in the novel's skill, the whole complicated method problem, I think, must be subject to the problem of the point of view, that is, the relationship between the narrator's relative story position". The traditional term point of view, or focalization, usually has two interpretations. The first being structural, that is, the perspective used by the narrator, which directly acts on the events being narrated. The second is stylistic, that is, the narrator's position, opinion, tone and tone expressed through the text in the narrative, and it indirectly acts on the event. Structural perspective is an important means of regulating narrative information and distance, so narrators are very interested in this field and pay great attention to the classification of different types of perspectives. Friedman proposed eight types of perspectives, and Gennett divided the narrative perspectives into "zero focalization", "internal focalization" and "external focalization". Professor Shen Dan then put forward four different types of perspectives or focalization, namely zero perspective, internal view, first-person external perspective and third-person external perspective. Shen Dan's division is characterized by distinguishing the first-person external perspective from the third-person external perspective. On the one hand, this division avoids Friedman's error, but also to make up for the leakage of Gennett, which to a large extent avoids the Western narrative circle for the first-person narrative perspective of the classification of the existence of one-sided.

In the narrative perspective, *The Remains of the Day* mainly uses the first-person internal perspective and the first-person external perspective of the dual composite narrative focus. Both the first-person narrator's narrative "I" is experiencing the vision of events, but also the first-person narrator "I" recall the past vision. The narrator butler Stevens is in the center of focus, It's all about what he sees, hears, experiences, and remembers. For example, at the beginning of a novel:

"It seems increasingly likely that I really will undertake the expedition that has been preoccupying my imagination now for some days. An expedition, I should say, which I will undertake alone, in the comfort of Mr Farraday's Ford; an expedition which, as I foresee it, will take me through much of the finest countryside of England to the West Country, and may keep me away from Darlington Hall for as much as five or six days. The idea of such a journey came about, I should point out, from a most kind suggestion put to me by Mr Farraday himself one afternoon almost a fortnight ago, when I had been dusting the portraits in the library."

The first-person narrator is experiencing an eye-opening interaction between the vision of the events and the recollection of the past in the retrospective narrative. First focusing on Stevens' three decades of service at Darlington Hall, where he was given the behavior of his employer, Mr. Faraday, and drove around the west of England. It goes on to recall the thoughts of the past, which tells the story of every aspect of Stevens' thirty-year career in service to Darlington Hall, trying to comfort himself by serving man and world peace by serving a great gentleman, yet lurking in the memory of the "outstanding" nature of Lord Darlington. Through his work and life memories, he constantly convinced himself that he was an impeccable and truly respected butler, but in real life, his ideological realm is so narrow and stubborn. His inner world is extremely complex, what he sees and hears along the way makes him deeply aware that although he is a butler, he may never really choose his own path in life, but let others control and misunderstand.

In the course of the narrative, the first-person narrator's thoughts shuttle through a network of sudden influxes of past, free associations and inner monologues. For instance, the first-person narrator's vision of what is going on as Lord Faraday, who persuaded him to leave Darlington Hall and travel around England. In a very delicate way, the difference between the American master and the British butler is vividly reflected in the cultural concept, but also we can spy on the first-person narrator Stevens' inner helplessness and entanglement. This proves that Stevens is still embarrassed or ashamed of some of the things of the past, and this embarrassment reveals another side of Stevens' characteristic. That is, he is not just a cold, restrained, unkind mechanized butler, but also has its sensitive, soft, kind side. For example, every time he recalls the past with Lord Darlington, the experience itself repeats that he is an "outstanding gentleman".

The first-person narrative perspective increases the narrative's personal experience and helps to introduce the reader directly into the narrator's inner world. It has the characteristics of direct vividness, subjective one-sidedness, easier to stimulate compassion and create suspense. So that the reader directly and intuitively feel the narrator "I" in the face of change of times, different countries, different thinking of the United States when the united owner of the feelings of helplessness and uneasiness, but also from its memory of past events reflected "I" on historical events and other feelings.

## 2.2 Narrative Path--Memory and Reality Interweaving

In *The Remains of the Day*, the author has two timelines to unfold the plot and the two are interwoven as well as parallel. One of the timelines was Stevens' six-day trip, which moved forward at a constant speed. And the other was Stevens' memories of passing on the trip, which looked like a jump and a messy one.

Although the main plot of the story is a visit to Stevens, the author does not focus on the timeline of travel, but rather on the content of his memories. It is important to note that the essence of recall is based on the re-engineering of the past in the present, which examines and preserves memorable, identity-building, and future-oriented things. Thus, when the author switches to the selective, obscured narrative of recall, Stevens' narrative is full of uncertain, even contradictory words. The double narrative path of the work highlights the unreliability of the recollection narrative. On the one hand, there is a difference between Stevens' narrative and reality, which makes the plot show a dynamic change in the interweaving of truth and falsehood.

In Stevens' account, this unreliability is concentrated in Stevens' assessment of the anti-Semitic tendencies of his former employer Lord Darlington. After World War II, there were accusations of Lord Darlington's anti-Semitic tendencies. At first, Stevens tried to justify this in a way that was not true: "In all my years of work for the Lord, there were many Jews in my staff, and I would go further to make it clear that they were never treated differently because of their race". Yet in trying to find out the source of these "unjustified accusations," Stevens' recollections reveal several of Lord Darlington's anti-Semitic behavior. For example, "I remember him telling me that I stopped donating to a local charity that came to the house regularly because the agency's management committee was more or less Jewish". And Lord Darlington ordered Stevens to fire two unfaulty maids, citing "no Jews among our Darlington staff."

Stevens went to great lengths to defend Lord Darlington because he believed that "an outstanding butler could only be such a person: he could proudly state his years of service and claim that he had shown his talent son and served a great gentleman through the latter. He also served all mankind." Stevens' contradictory narratives highlight his inner vanity and self-deception. He was reluctant to acknowledge Lord Darlington's anti-Semitic tendencies because, if they did, it meant that Lord Darlington was no longer a "great gentleman" and no longer an "outstanding housekeeper" who served a "great gentleman".

Through the unreliable narrative of the recollection, he reconstructs the event. He firmly asserted that Lord Darlington had never had an anti-Semitic bent in order to erect Lord Darlington as a "great gentleman" and as an "outstanding housekeeper". Wayne Booth once suggested in the novel rhetoric that "unreliable narrative" refers to: "If the narrator's narrative is consistent with the norms of the implied author, then his narrative is reliable, if inconsistent, it is unreliable". In *The Remains of the Day*, when the protagonist Stevens begins the narrative with recollections, he "sweeps through the memory, examines from time to time, sometimes avoids, and the two alternate." This act of presenting memory fragments of



choice creates a double deviation from historical facts and the standards of the work itself. This not only makes the plot in the real and false transformation more confusing, but also makes the hero split into two contradictory self. On the one hand, Stevens is aware of the existence of real events; on the other hand, he shows his strong pursuit and maintenance of the butler and gentleman status. The unreliability of the character's narrative is reflected in the hero's desire for personal identity and national identity.

### 2.3 Unreliable Narrative in *The Remains of the Day*

The American literary critic Wayne Booth's book *The Rhetoric of Fiction* first came up with the concept of "unreliable narrative". In this work, Booth discusses implied author and reader, unreliable narrator as well. These concepts help to reveal the subtext beneath the surface of the monologues that make up a large part of the narrative of *The Remains of the Day*.

In his book, Booth points out that there is a common norm of behavior promoted by a second author, known as the "implied author" in literature. If the narrator in the novel is consistent with the "norm" proposed by the implied author, it is called reliable. Shen Dan pointed that "The reader needs to 'double decode' when reading: one is to interpret the narrator's words, and the other is to disassociate or transcend the narrator's words to infer the true nature of the matter, or to infer what constitutes a correct judgment." It must be noted that when it comes to the former aspect, there is a close relationship between stylistics and narration.

First-person narrators are inherently limited, which is close to the limited perspective of the third person. First-person narrators are not aware of other people's ideas when it comes to narrative, and can provide only a description of other people's language and behavior. Therefore, it is necessary to put forward the concept of "implied author". In the 1950s, the new criticism theory prevailed in the United States to exclude all elements except works, including authors. Booth, the founder of the concept of "implied author", argued that "implied authors are different from real authors, so that they can avoid criticizing authors because of the narrator's perspective". The implied author is omnipotent, he is the real designer of the work, and he belongs to the real world and is separate from the narrator. So it is the implicit author who gives some perspectives to the narrator in the virtual world, and the real subject in the narrative is the implied author.

Booth also proposes the concept of "unreliable narrative" and distinguishes between two types of unreliable narratives: one is the unreliable narrative on the axis of "fact-events", i.e. the narrator misreported the facts, and the other is the unreliable narrative. Another one is on the axis of "value-judgment", in which the narrator may be biased in his or her value judgment

and thus its narrative is unreliable. In narrative works, there are many reasons for unreliable narrative, not only with the narrator's gender, psychological characteristics and age, but also with the narrator's narrative intention, values, intelligence or knowledge level. It also can be the fact that the narrator's knowledge level or misperception of a particular thing lead to unreliable narrative, just as Stevens' narrative in *The Remains of the Day*. James Phelan, a fellow American narrator of Booth's student and friend, developed and perfected Booth's unreliable narrative theory. He added unreliable narratives on the axis of "knowledge- perception" on the basis of Booth's two axes, and distinguished between six subtypes of unreliable narratives.

Stevens, as a first-person narrator, is an "unreliable narrator". And his westward trip is far from simple, with a metaphorical meaning at the level of narrative discourse. The novel is a metaphor for Stevens's journey to rediscover his identity by reviewing his life journey, and it is also "an attempt to escape the shackles from Darlington House and from himself". But there is no doubt that this was a failed attempt, and Stevens was mired in personal misalignment throughout, first and foremost in his choice of travel clothes and his role as a "gentleman". The clothes Mr Stevens carried during his trip included Lord Darlington's "kind gifts after passing through" and gifts from dignitaries such as Sir Edward Blair. Stevens' travel dress is at odds with his social status, and the choice of clothing may seem ordinary, but it hides deep meaning. To some extent, the individual's choice of clothing is the individual's representation of self-identity. But the novel's protagonist's self-identity narrative is full of contradictions. It is clear that his choice of clothing from the noble celebrities he serves gifts. As a symbol of the status of the upper-class society, these gorgeous costumes are at odds with the social status of the butler Stevens. Thus, Stevens twice left the local villagers with the impression of being a "gentleman", or a "great man" who had been involved in the formulation of the country's foreign policy, and in fact expressed a status that was contrary to reality in class and was a lost, misplaced self-identity.

Stevens' behavior is similar to the Mimicry proposed by Homi K. bhabha. Homi bhabha pointed out that in order to consolidate colonial authority, the colonists forced the colonists to imitate their own language, culture, customs, habits and other aspects, thereby creating a "almost identical but not identical" to their own. Not only did Stevens look like a gentleman in his appearance and manners, but he also used a language that was "simulated" against upper-class English: almost identical but not identical. Stevens' personal misalignment is also reflected in his unconscious role in playing and imitating other people's identities. On the third day of the trip, Stevens came to a village called Moscombe. The villager was misled by his dress and thought he was a gentleman.

Stevens' equivocal ness in the conversation reinforces the villagers' misunderstanding of their identity. When the villager asked him if he was the man who had spoken on the radio a few years, Mr Stevens replied, "No, I'm not... In fact, my main concern is international rather than domestic. In other words, foreign policy". Even Stevens himself was "surprised" by his answer, adding immediately, "I've never served. Any influence I exert is unofficial". It is clear that Stevens, though not deliberately pretending to be a gentleman, deliberately hides his true identity. At the moment, Stevens seems to be "playing" a gentleman, a character that is different from his identity.

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said uses the term Orientalism to refer to the dominant and discourse oppression of the weak East by the powerful West. Scholars engaged in post-colonial studies borrowed the concept of Orientalism and extended its connotation, using it to refer to the colonists' ideology towards the colonists. Said then developed the theory of Orientalism, pointing out the colonial way of thinking in *The Culture and Imperialism*: in the view of the white colonists, all people other than whites belonged to inferior races or inferior human beings; The other, who drew a line against the colonial "other", saw that the colonists were foolish and backward, that they knew only barbarism and violence, and that they were not like "Self" and should therefore be ruled.

As the British butler, Stevens also went through the process of national identity. Marked by the Suez Canal incident of 1956 (a month after Stevens' trip to the west), Britain's national power rapidly declined, America rose strongly, and the era of British empire was over. The ensuing upheaval in British society led to the paradox of the above elements used by Stevens to define The national identity of the United Kingdom, and the boundary between the distinction between "British/Non-British" gradually dyed out, and its national identity suffered an unprecedented crisis. The country mansion where the gentleman once lived was also purchased by multinational capital from the United States. Even ordinary British people admit that only Americans can afford country mansions. The great butler also became a cultural commodity, consumed by foreign capital, along with the gentleman's country houses. After Lord Darlington's death, the mansion was bought by Faraday, a wealthy American businessman. Stevens's self-identity was completely materialized, and the national identity represented by the butler was deconstructed.

Apparently in *The Remains of the Day*, Stevens' social status changes from subjectivity to the other. The change also leads to his self-identity collapse. In the old days, Stevens devoted himself to his butler career so as to fulfill his value as a qualified butler. After the fall of Darlington Hall, he began to work for a new employer who is an American with totally different life style. Thus the new life style challenged his traditional values. At the meantime the change in life and new master's values

mingled and resulted in his identity loss. Suggested by his new master, he started a journey to visit his old colleague. This journey to some extent can be seen as a self-identity reconstruction of Stevens. Through this journey, Stevens reviewed his old days and adjusted his new identity as the other. He began to realize the fact that England has lost its greatness and new era came. In the end, Stevens changed his attitude and started to focus on the remains of his life and inner feelings. At the end of the novel, Stevens started to reconstruct his lost identity and receive a new status in society.

In the novel, this journey reflects a self-identity reconstruction of most British people. The struggle which Stevens went through is also a mirror of the current frustration among British society under the background. The global power status in the hand of the United Kingdom declined. International culture mingled in the country and refreshed people's mind. Their identity changes from subjectivity to the others. Self-identity reconstruction seems to be the most significant problem for British people. It is also an attempt to explore in individual psychological dilemma in the postmodern world.

Stevens began to occupy himself on the trip and sort his disturbed mental state. Travel can be metaphorical as self-identity reconstruction in literature. Travelers inevitably encounter heterogeneous cultures during travel and experience all kinds of different things. Stevens record his journey as an individual's special experience. And that is how travel literature came out.

However, the traveler's documentary writing is from his own cultural background and knowledge. The people and objects of a tourist destination are usually incorporated into his system of knowledge. So it is inevitable that it will be affected by his own emotions. The study of travel literature reveals the power discourse system behind the creation of travel literature. What is the most important is that how cultural memory forms and how to deal with the relationship between self and newly coming tradition.

In *The Remains of the Day*, Stevens' trip is not the classic exotic style of early travel literature. But Stevens, who grew up in Darlington, saw his house as the center of the world and never got a change to see the outdoor world, is unfamiliar with the outdoor world. For Stevens, this was his first step to keep in touch with the rest of the world. Before he started his journey to outside house, he brought him with the most popular British travel handbook—*The Miracle of England*. He drove out of Darlington Hall by his new employer's Ford car. At first, he did feel any agitation. But he later realized: "I knew I had driven away from the familiar place. I have learned about a description of the last sight of land in sailing. At that moment, people feel uneasy and excited. Now, I am driving a Ford, and my surroundings become unfamiliar, and I feel the same way in my heart." When he went to the corner again, he

found himself on the edge of a mountain in which the left side is a cliff. "I feel that when I left Darlington Hall I feel nervous. I have to admit that I was alarmed by the fact that I am going outside the mansion." Like every foreign tourist, when the trip was officially started, Stevens felt uneasy and difficult, but there was also a sense of excitement from the bottom of his heart. During his trip, Stevens' changes are shown in the following aspects: Initially, Stevens' attitude towards his former master Lord Darlington changed who used to be his model. In the past, Stevens had noticed that the danger of every all Lord Darlington's behavior, but he decided to execute all the tasks as ordered. But when he finally reviewed his life, he confessed that Lord Darlington's treatment to Jewish is not appropriate. He made comments:

"Lord Darlington wasn't a bad man at all. And at least he had the privilege of being able to say at the end of his life he made his own mistakes. His lordship was a courageous man. He chose a certain path in life, it proved to be a misguided one, but there, he chose it, he can say that...All those years I served him, I trust I was doing something worthwhile. I can't even say I made my own mistakes." Stevens confessed the wrong choice that Lord Darlington made even though he still defended his employer. In order to beautify himself, Stevens praised Lord Darlington even if he denied his service for Lord Darlington before. Therefore, he began to rethink Lord Darlington if he has the true wisdom he destroys his good reputation and label himself as the assistant of the Nazis criminals.

In the second place, Stevens' attitude toward strangers changes from rejection to total acceptance during his journey. At the beginning of the trip, Stevens was alert to the people he met and consciously rejected it without thinking too much. For instance, when he rested on the roadside a local old man suggested He enjoy the view on the mountain. Stevens thought the old man was a tramp and did not trust him and was not willing to accept his advice. He replied the man with: "If the scenery on the hill is the best scenery just as you said, then I'd rather stay here. I do not want to see the best scenery when I just start my journey." Even though he finally went up the hills and viewed the beautiful scenery, Stevens still felt that the old man had offended himself. There is a sentence goes like this: "I'm up just to prove it was foolish of him to say so." However, when he admitted that the scenery he saw in the day was absolutely splendid and far more unforgettable than the cathedrals shown in the guidebook. It also prompted him to finish his first day of travel. For the first time, he began to treat the trip with the right attitude and also decided himself to the trip. On the next day's trip, his attitude towards others was obvious. When a housekeeper of a local manor helped Stevens inspect his car, he thought the stranger was kind and helpful to others. After the car problem was dealt with, Stevens was very grateful and accepted the initiation to the downstairs,

joined others' conversations and inserted a word that he thought very witty.

At the last night of his trip, Ishiguro sets the scenery of a small town by the sea. According to literature critic, the seaside is usually considered as a liminal space. The town was fulfilled by travelers from all over the world. The identity of the individual was put aside and the boundary between people became fuzzy.

This is the time Stevens began to change his attitude as well as his behavior. He did not walk alone on deck. "There was an endless stream of footsteps on the deck." In a conversation with an old man, Stevens eventually got rid of the way he used to think, forgetting the social class and nationality. He began to open his heart, his conversation was no more reservation.

If Stevens was an imperial upper-class butler before he came out of Darlington Hall, his views on many things remained in the ideology of the empire century. His value of life is also based on the one-sided work ethic, ordinary people's life and thoughts. Stevens finally realizes his way of thinking was sort of not perfect and decided to go out of the shadow of the past and rebuilt his life. For Stevens, the change in identity is a big challenge for him and his employer and this process is sure to be painful, but he must adjust himself to the new era as soon as possible. Only in this way can people farewell to the past and embrace a better life.

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## CONCLUSION

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The plot of *The Remains of the Day* is simple, but the words revealed between the culture and history, identity and emotion. This novel is undoubtedly a good work for academic research, which still has great research value. Among the immigrant writers living in the UK, Ishiguro is a special character. He was influenced by both English and Japanese cultures, but he had a sense of alienation to both. Perhaps it is this "alienation" that makes Ishiguro's novels so deep. Ishiguro himself thinks that the novel describes only a personal tragedy. But though reading the text, the author thinks that this novel is not just a personal tragedy, but rather has a more far-reaching thinking on the post-colonial context of cultural collision, identity and other issues.

Stevens can be called one of the very successful characters in Ishiguro's works. As the practitioner of traditional British culture and the representative of the modern human self-lost, Stevens not only embodied the British nation's unique self-confidence, pride and moral, sense of responsibility, but also exposed its national tradition, conservative, narrow and self-deception side. Ishiguro uses his favorite narrative method-recall, describes the consistent pursuit of dignity and status so that Stevens lost himself, as if materialization today, human beings indulged in material enjoyment and thus lost human subjectivity. They become slaves to material,

trapped in the anxiety of survival of the status. Through Stevens' recollections, the significance of human existence is recalled in Stevens' intermittent memories and the identity of the English nation is fully demonstrated. In addition, Stevens' self-exonerating unreliable narrative provides the reader with a fair evaluation of history. But in the journey, with the appearance of different characters, the protagonist's narrative gradually revealed truth, and then euphemistically criticized the characteristics of the traditional English nation. Ishiguro arranged a trip for Stevens, giving him the first chance in more than 30 years to leave Darlington Hall, where he had been imprisoned for half his life and to be completely liberated physically and mentally. He can accept new ideas and values, and to show the way to survival and development for Britain, which accepted the norms of traditional English cultural values and adhered to the English national identity. It provides a model for the self-salvation of modern human beings. The process of this narrative is closely related to the hero's narrative motive, so that the readers are likely to understand the real hero.

Under the influence of his father, who was also a butler, Stevens pursued the dignity of being an outstanding butler all his life, and sacrificed the best of

humanity, love and his youth. But after the war all the facts proved that his goal was only an illusion, and that all the people he had dedicated were only the German Nazi alliance. Stevens reflects deeply on his past, waking up in the contrast between reality and the past, and bravely emerging from the misalignment, striving for true identity in the double journey of body and spirit. The six-day trip is undoubtedly Stevens' journey to reflect on his life and rebuild his identity.

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