A JOURNEY OF INITIATION INTO THE WONDER OF ENGLAND

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Abstract: Kazuo Ishiguro's The Remains of the Day is widely acknowledged as one of the most renowned and respected literary masterpieces. It presents Stevens as a symbol of national identity, depicting him as a British butler conflicted between stability and change, external and internal reality, and between existence and sacrifice. The article expands upon Stevens' decision to venture beyond his comfort zone, rediscover his own self, and revolutionize both his personal and professional life. While exploring the attractive exteriority of Salisbury and its surroundings, Stevens reawakens the individuality of his senses, and the renewal of his self unfolds due to the visual, auditory, and emotional abundance he meets up with.

Keywords: Stevens, national identity, stability, change, Salisbury

One of the most iconic works of Kazuo Ishiguro, namely *The Remains of the Day*, represents a narrative chest of referentiality. This concept is approached with undeniable prowess because it aims at the harmonious coordination of the narrative textual components (narrator, action, and characters), of the spatial and temporal landmarks, but also of the cultural and multicultural legacy. From its very beginning, the novel is individualised by substance, narrative and emotional profoundness, and *a sui generis* sequence of events. A particular focus on the physical form of the novel has proved imperiously important because the illustrations, quotes, and reviews symbolically placed on the covers of the volume can be regarded as significant sensuous stimuli, the ones that impress the audience at first glance.

The Prologue, 1956, Darlington Hall introductory section, whose profundity derives from a brief etymological analysis of the word *prologue*, justifies the multilinear narrative thread that runs throughout the entire novel. Thus, the importance of the connection between the reader and the narrator, between the real and the fictional worlds, is reiterated via a distinctive macrocosm of temporal incursions, which successfully mediates both distance and proximity and reshapes the individual missions of the characters. The *Prologue* embodies the referentiality of the external world and a short but telling account of the plot, characters, and their personality traits. Besides being closely related to the valuable content of the entire novel, the temporal and spatial landmarks offer a puzzling social and cross-cultural context. Stevens is a one-of-a-kind character. He is a symbol of national identity and an awe-inspiring figure when it comes to personifying the profession of English butlers.

In a rather tempestuous socio-political context, the novel describes the backstage of the English world. English lords, deputies, congressmen, and many other influential figures meet in the privacy and protection of the Darlington Hall mansion to have particularly important conversations about the future. In other words, the introductory part familiarises the reader with the realm of ambitions and traditions, but also of transitions. Due to the substantial changes that occur at the mansion with the conclusion of the "transactions which had taken this house out of the hands of Darlington family after two centuries" (Ishiguro, 2015: 6), the great heritage is considerably diminished, and a large number of sacrifices are required for the smooth running of things despite the fierce crisis of personnel (four staff members instead of fifteen). As expected, Stevens is inconvenienced by the new circumstances, which involve revising one

of his most important duties, namely "the responsibility of every butler to devote his utmost care in the devising of a staff plan" (5).

Stevens' journey has a double meaning. On the one hand, Stevens eventually embraces change, leaves his comfort zone, and does something noteworthy for himself. This is the opportunity to rediscover his authenticity as a human being by doing an intense self-analysis, that will eventually allow him to observe and improve his way of living. With the help of the newly established itinerary, he transcends the mental visualisation that the narrative description gives him and closely explores "The Wonder of England" (Ishiguro, 2015: 11). On the other hand, due to his professional devotion and the numerous changes taking place at Darlington Hall, Stevens is convinced that this trip is a good opportunity for the settlement of the staff shortage: "Miss Kenton with her great affection for this house, with her exemplary professionalism […], was just the factor needed to enable me to complete a fully satisfactory staff plan for Darlington Hall" (10). Although the journey is a materialisation of Mr. Farraday's suggestion (the new master of Darlington Hall), the seriousness and care with which Stevens approaches this issue are to be admired.

The comprehension of Stevens' internal reality requires a synergy between several methodological grids. The main character's portrayal derives from the connection between the characters' thoughts, actions, and experiences imprinted in the "stream-of-consciousness" (Bottez, 2007: 118), the dynamic and revolutionary psychological models of Jung, and the temporal aspects related to memory and melancholy, tackled by the "man of interiority" (our translation, Cuțaru, 2010: 73), St. Augustine in *Confessions*. Stevens' foremost personality traits are highlighted via the character's interior monologue, his confessions, and his conversations. Embracing the dual nature of character and narrator, Steven facilitates access to his stream of consciousness via the way he presents the sequence of events, more particularly by using the thought representations called by Monica Bottez "Direct Thought" (DT) and "Free Direct Thought" (FDT) (Bottez, 2007: 114-118). As regards the other characters' journey through life, Stevens capitalises on the categories "Indirect Thought" (ID) and "Free Indirect Thought" (FDI) (114) to highlight his second role, that of narrator.

The symbolism of the entire journey is defined by the narrative fiction reading strategies, whose interpretative grid is enriched by the approach to the scientific literature (geocriticism, psychology, theology, and neuroscience). During the first day of his trip, Stevens becomes fully aware of the human variability that he and the people whom he is surrounded by are invested with as he leaves the confines of Darlington Hall and is subjected to the feeling of personal freedom after so many years of servitude. Stevens embraces "the attitude of investigator and thinker" (Jung, 1975: 17) and changes to a certain extent his habitual behaviour while he rediscovers the vastness of the physical and emotional space. As he transcends the boundaries of space, Stevens engages his psyche as "an object of experience" (Ishiguro, 2015: 18).

The main character's characterization folds properly on Dr. Andrew Huberman's research related to the successful habits of billionaires. The distinguished neuroscientist and tenured professor from Stanford University talks about ways of adopting new habits or giving up on the old ones by designing the proper *a priori* conditions for the execution of the habit by engaging our procedural memory. Interestingly, Stevens sets in motion his "episodic memory" when it comes to interpreting Miss Kenton's letter and making up his mind, and his "procedural memory" in what concerns his journey and every decisional trigger that gleans from it (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzynYwGx-qg). The complexity of the main character can be defined by the synergy between specific and potential energy (Jung, 1975: 25). Stevens pays attention to certain aspects he identifies with. When he avails himself of "specific energy," "the attention and the capacity for work" (25) prevail, while his gut feelings, wishes, and emotions are ignored or deferred. In what concerns potential energy, Stevens aims attention at

"aptitudes and attitudes" and professional "achievements" rather than "possibilities" (25). Hence, what Stevens needs is to escape his "mental habitus" (39) and concentrate on personal needs, with particular emphasis on the emotional ones.

The first noteworthy step he takes is overcoming the mental conflict between the known (Darlington Hall) and the unknown (the West Countryside of England). All seven locations become cognitive and emotional triggers as the new environmental conditions and their interrelation bring about the evolution of the character. Stevens will be able to reconcile with his past and enjoy "the germs of new life and vital possibilities for the future" (42) only after considering the need for self-renewal. He transcends the morning of his life and welcomes the afternoon and evening of it because his cultural background exerts the greatest influence when it comes to the gist of his consciousness.

Salisbury represents the first noteworthy topos in the experiential realm. It is the place where both the character's flow of energy and thoughts undergo rewarding changes. The synchrony between the evening of the day, and subsequently, the evening of life, and Stevens' arrival in Salisbury illustrates a semiotic approach to the sensory, cognitive, and emotional abundance that the character meets up with. The evening can be perceived as a turning point, a transitional stage that monitors the dichotomy consisting of day and night, goodbyes and hellos. It also delineates the onset of darkness, self-introspection, and self-awareness.

On the first day, we are introduced to a Stevens who is engaged in an unfamiliar environment, fully aligned with the character's new concern. Hence, Salisbury registers how the renewal of Stevens' self unfolds. For the first time, Stevens' personality branches into two categories: a professional self that feels and comprehends the law of causality and effect and a personal self that craves an adjustment of self-image. Since the new professional requirements determine new personal standards, the character gets on with redefining the "inner and outer necessities of the life-process" (Jung, 1975: 33).

Salisbury and all the following landscapes function as indicators of the characters' peculiarities (Bottez, 2007: 172). The English countryside can be associated with a binary macrocosm, in which the character's evolution is shaped and curved by the outer adventures, the journey to the West, and self-examination, the journey to the East (Jung, 1975: 43). Since the beginning of day one, Stevens has oscillated between "action execution" and "action suppression" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzynYwGx-qg). Despite capitalising on the procedural memory and the thorough planning of his journey, the character manifests second thoughts towards leaving his alma mater, namely Darlington Hall and the emptiness of the mansion yielded by his departure: "Darlington Hall would stand empty for probably the first time this century- perhaps for the first time since the day it was built" (Ishiguro, 2015: 23). Therefore, the character is not only concerned with anticipating the changes in the environment that await him but also with the atmosphere he leaves behind at the mansion.

As Monica Bottez claims, there is a strong and cardinal connection between the senses and the perception of spatial coordinates (Bottez, 2007: 186). The sensory perceptions of the character undergo considerable changes because the gaze is confronted with known and unknown surroundings. As he continues his journey, Stevens becomes bewildered and identifies himself as "a being whose innermost is a tension of opposites" (Jung, 1975: 60). Stevens has to transcend the boundaries of his consciousness and deal with the outer world, whose unexplored diversity is upsetting: "the experience of unease mixed with exhilaration […] a slight sense of alarm" (Ishiguro, 2015: 24).

God's majestic creation gradually mesmerises the main character. The individual he meets on his way to Salisbury has multiple meanings. The first one is charged with a narrative significance because the objective perspective exposed by using the 3rd person interrupts the DT or FDT presentation and enhances the sensory perceptions via the accuracy of the visual portrait: "a thin, white-haired man in a cloth cap, smoking his pipe" (25). The second one is

related to experience, or more particularly, to Stevens' "attitude to life and world" (Jung, 1975: 31). The man he meets provides him with a different approach to the next stage of life, in which wisdom prevails over the sensorial assets and recognises the duality of being, the possibility and powerlessness, the qualities and flaws. The persuasion and perseverance of the white-haired man determine Stevens to take action. As a result, Stevens seizes the opportunity and enjoys the resources brought about by the present moment.

For the first time, Stevens gives himself permission to listen to someone other than Lord Darlington. Despite the reluctance he feels at the beginning, he allows his mind a margin and experiences "the direct nourishment of the body" (48). In this context, the main character knows the potential of objects in outer space. The bench, the paths, and the distant tower of the church represent spatial landmarks, which are associated with symbols and can be perceived as "stepping-stones to new activities" (52). Stevens' increasing sense of movement demands a halt. The bench, a recurring symbol in Ishigurian literature and also tackled in *Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall* in the third story, namely *Malvern Hills*, has various connotations. This object can illustrate Stevens' heightened need to take a break from his duties and his professional routine. Besides the astonishing glimpse and the immediate consolidation of the geographical knowledge, the uniqueness of the landscape increases awareness and broadens the overall view of the journey: "Here one was met by a bench – and indeed, by a most marvellous view over the miles of the surrounding countryside" (Ishiguro, 2015: 26). Thus, Stevens uses his "psyche" as an "object of experience" (Jung, 1975: 18), which records the sensorial activity directed from outwards to inwards (the whole body).

Stevens experiences for the first time the states of being, feeling, and believing. He takes hold of his body and mind and reawakens the individuality of his senses. Thus, the sovereignty of the audio-visual synergy emerges from Stevens' environmental experience. The character contemplates his sense of sight, which establishes a meaningful connection between the external matter, namely the brightness of the sun, and the "internal being of the body" (Steiner, 1981: 13), namely the auditory perceptions. He becomes fully involved in the visual and auditory recording of the English wonder: the purity and beauty of nature, carefully caressed by the sun's rays: "It was a fine feeling indeed to be standing up there like that with the sound of summer all around one and a light breeze on one's face" (Ishiguro, 2015: 26). Also, the sense of inner warmth is invigorated by the sun's rays and the intensity of the stimuli that permeate his body.

As a narrator, Stevens operates from "the exogeneous point of view, which dominates the travel narrative" (Westphal, 2011: 129). As a character, he grasps the eloquence of spatial and sensorial landmarks, which is strongly linked to the opportunities yielded by the new context: "I began for the first time to adopt a frame of mind appropriate for the journey before me" (Ishiguro, 2015: 26). The spatial visualisation is followed by the remodelling of Stevens' "subjective value system" (Jung, 1975: 20). While conforming to nature's outstanding beauty, he puts aside his professional pursuits and enjoys a wide range of authentic emotions: excitement, curiosity, and contentment: "I felt the first healthy flush of anticipation for the many interesting experiences I know these days ahead hold in store for me" (Ishiguro, 2015: 26). The fresh air and the time spent in the middle of nature are the ones that calm the mind and nourish the soul and body: "I felt a new resolve not to be daunted in respect to the one professional task I have entrusted myself with on this trip" (26).

The first day of the trip can be likened to an empirical stage, in which Stevens becomes familiar with different spaces and circumstances, people, perceptions, and events. In terms of temporal coordination, the main moments of the day, namely morning, afternoon, and evening, are highlighted and capitalised on. Each of them corresponds to a certain type of event, cause, effect, or goal. In the course of the morning, Stevens acquires abundant knowledge regarding the beauty of the countryside. The meeting with the white-haired man and his bantering tone

(interpreted this time positively) represent the main motivational source to experience the zenith of the natural landscape. For a proper evaluation of the experience, it is imperative to analyse all the events that happened throughout the day. The most appealing contrast is given by the association of the adventurous morning with the pleasant evening. Climbing the hillside can be perceived as a metaphor for personal growth, while staying in the comfortable guest house turns out to be an opportunity to remember the most significant aspects of his profession. Surprisingly, the impact of the latter is significantly diminished by the morning landscape and its beauty.

The afternoon corresponds to the binder between morning and evening, between rural and urban experiences. It is also a time of letting go and embracing diversity. Within the spatial context of Salisbury, big changes come into sight. Throughout his journey, Stevens carries with him the standards of the butler's profession, proper clothing, and the borrowed vehicle. He cannot deny his membership at Darlington Hall, but what is gratifying is that he enjoys the privilege of simplicity and focuses on what is best for him: "a relatively modest establishment, but very clean and perfectly adequate for my needs" (Ishiguro, 2015: 27). He uses his resources correctly; he does not stand on them. The most significant changes occur within the spatial context and the realm of behavioural patterns. As a result, new emotions, new daily routines, and new sensory approaches come into Stevens' life.

The vastness of Darlington Hall is contrasted by the double room, and Stevens' role is reversed. Instead of following orders, he is the one who is served and taken care of. However, his professional background and his vast experience in the field exert a major influence on evaluating the quality of accommodation services. The twin room becomes Stevens's new space of objects, carefully analysed and subjected to his professional experience. He appreciates the cleanliness and tidiness of the room, together with the availability and hospitality of the house owners. Both urban and rural landscapes trigger new emotions and sensory experiences. Although Stevens acknowledges Salisbury as "a city of many charms" (28), abundant in colours, textures, and lights, he is not as fascinated as Mrs Symmons by the famous cathedral or by the "other charming sights of the city" (28). His direct involvement favours the emergence of an individual perception, which illustrates his fondness for the rural landscape and preserving that view as a vivid and everlasting memory: "what really remains with me from the first day […] that marvellous view encountered this morning of the rolling English countryside" (28).

The butler's feelings of admiration towards his experiential environment are divided into several categories, but they all have the same core, namely defining and exemplifying the concept of *greatness* regardless of the field of knowledge. Besides the prodigiousness of Darlington Hall, Stevens highlights the cultural and geographical uniqueness of "the English landscape at its finest" (28). The main character is caught between "progression" and "regression" (Jung, 1975: 47). The renewal of his emotional and intellectual self entails a balance between familiarity and novelty, between inner and outer conditions, which are strongly linked to the concepts of "macro-glance" and "micro-glance" (Popa, 2022: 174). The former comes from the inside and is reflected on the outside, while the latter targets only an introverted ego that is subjected to environmental conditions. The two spaces allow Ishiguro to practise narrative artistry and design a character who is not always aware of the fragmentary and sliding or declining meanings of his personality.

The subjective perspective of the narration highlights the contrast between the present experience and memories. The special interest that the character manifests in his journey is directly proportional to that invested in recalling the most significant events in his life or those of his father and his acquaintances. During his monologues and dialogues, Stevens undergoes two alternative stages since he turns moments into memories and memories into moments. The emotional or vocal mapping of memories results in three levels and gives a reliable account of

the character's stream of consciousness. The entire process aims at reinforcing Stevens' "sense of self" (https://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2012/issue124a/), which transcends the micro-glance of Darlington Hall and decodes the macro-glance of the English West Country.

The first level of memories expands upon his experience at Darlington Hall. The mansion can be perceived as a flourishing setting, where Stevens was surrounded by "professionals of the highest discernment" and acquired "the fundamental understanding of the profession" and "the fondest memories" (Ishiguro, 2015: 29-30). Sadly, it is also the place where he traded his intuition and his desires for being liked and fitting in. In other words, Stevens' destiny has been shaped within the confines of Darlington Hall, where he identified more with his professional vocation than anything else.

The second level of memories portrays Stevens' father as a role model for both professional standards and personal pursuits. His fondness for his father corresponds to the definition of a great butler, together with the most appropriate attributes for this profession. Besides calling him "the embodiment of dignity," Stevens portrays his father as a preserver of traditions and ethical and moral values. Stevens' Senior stories, his vast experience, and his neutrality are qualities highly admired by the main character. His father is the character whose professional evolution is particularly relevant in arguing "what rather than who is a great butler" (29).

The main character is engulfed in a deep state of awareness, a transitional stage that magnifies the link between facts, words, and sensory experiences and helps him to convey "his natural instincts into work" (Jung, 1975: 48). The narrator illustrates his subjective evaluation by contrasting the greatness of the land with the greatness of the English butlers.

Great butlers are those whose entire lives are committed to professionalism regardless of the troublesome circumstances that appear, be they internal or external: "they will not be shaken out by external events, however surprising, alarming, or vexing. They wear their professionalism as a decent gentleman will wear his suit" (Ishiguro, 2015: 43-44).

It is sensoriality that helps Stevens comply with the new spatial context (Westphal, 2007: 133) and appreciate the greatness of the land. In the first place, Stevens' sensorial quintet is mesmerised by "the calmness of that beauty, its sense of restraint; It is as though the land knows of its own beauty, of its own greatness, and feels no need to shout it" (Ishiguro, 2015: 29). As a narrator, Stevens emphasises the connection between cultural identity and the professional assertiveness of the butlers: "It is sometimes said that butlers only truly exist in England" (44). He also outlines the specificity of the English personality through the contrast between the denial of the essence, represented by the emotional component, and the promotion of appearances, which coincides with socio-political demands: "Continentals are unable to be butlers because they are as a breed incapable of the emotional restraint which only the English race is capable of" (44).

For Stevens, greatness dominates all the aspects of his life, whether we are talking about appreciating human relationships or contemplating the natural landscape: "It is with such men as it is with the English landscape seen at its best as I did this morning: when one encounters them, one simply knows one is in the presence of greatness" (45). Consequently, the landscapes of Salisbury and the rural surroundings reveal two important traits of the main character: "a very fine feeling of quality" (Jung, 1975: 24) and his proliferate thoroughness.

Salisbury is illustrated as the most important destination of the journey as Stevens explores this location over the course of two days. The twofoldness of space encompasses a vivid sunset and a Salisbury caressed by the first rays of the sun in the morning. Thus, this antagonistic background illustrates Stevens' ability to adhere to temporal and spatial heterogeneity. It is imperative to take into account the transitional stage of the night, respectively the early morning, which allows the character to contemplate Miss Kenton's letter and his future arrangements regarding his journey: "it was still so dark […] in these quiet

moments as I wait for the world about to awake, I find myself going over in my mind again passages from Miss Kenton's letter" (Ishiguro, 2015: 49-50). The symbolism of the "evening-morning" dichotomy is decisive for understanding the inner turmoil as well as the evolution of the character. Therefore, the biblical interpretation of the two moments of the day expands the methodological grid of the present research (https://www.thinkersbiblestudies.com/1-2-bible-creation-days-genesis/meaning-evening-and-morning) and properly reflects Stevens' awakening of the self. In the evening, we are presented with a Stevens who is mainly preoccupied with his well-being and his admiration for the greatness of nature and the many charms of Salisbury, signifying new beginnings. In the early morning, Stevens' sagacity is doubled by sensibility. The undesirable and unforeseen endings transcend the confines of Darlington Hall, which has lost its former glory, and can also be seen in Stevens' novel behavioural patterns and Miss Kenton's miserable marriage.

The morning spent in Salisbury is perhaps the most important turning point of his expedition. Stevens, the cultural man, starts to pay attention to the biology of his body. The entanglement of the temporal context and his memories is largely due to the new space of objects. The strange bed and the disturbed sleep bring back to life the less pleasant moments of Stevens' career or those that have required him to the fullest: the arrival of his father at Darlington Hall together with his errors, Miss Kenton's relationship with Stevens' father, Stevens' tense relationship with Miss Kenton, the conference from March 1923, Stevens' senior poor health state, and his death.

All the above-mentioned events had dichotomous connotations, which influenced Stevens' cultural, physiological, and emotional profiles. The synchronization between the arrival of Miss Kenton and William, Stevens's father, at the mansion was initially perceived by Stevens as a relief from the tasks, which afterwards required the design of a new staff plan as well as the acceptance of the professional ambitions of the two characters. Professional pursuits go beyond any kind of emotional involvement. Even when it comes to a blood lineage, the demands at Darlington Hall are the decisive ones: "it seemed a reasonable solution to ask my father to bring his experience and distinction to Darlington Hall" (Ishiguro, 2015: 54).

Stevens' disapproval regarding Miss Kenton's way of addressing his father is aimed not only at an honest assessment of the experience Stevens Senior has but also at a suggestion that not always the title or the social hierarchy correspond to the professional abilities a man holds. Stevens focuses on his father's experience and "dignity of age" (Jung, 1975: 369) rather than his title of under-butler: "you may come to see the inappropriateness of someone such as yourself talking 'down' to one such as my father" (Ishiguro, 2015: 56). Miss Kenton's fierce desire to overcome herself arises from her ambition to improve her skills as a housekeeper and to prove to Stevens that she is a fast learner with a promising career that awaits her: "I was pleased to observe, she went about settling in impressively" […] she was a housekeeper who took her work very seriously and in spite of her youth, she seemed to have no difficulty gaining the respect of her staff" (57).

The argumentative conversations between Stevens and Miss Kenton display a discrepancy between Mr. Stevens Senior of yesteryear and Mr. Stevens Senior of the present moment. This contrast is highly emphasised by what Miss Kenton becomes, namely a very skilled housekeeper who pays attention to the smallest details (the scenes with the dustpan, the Chinaman, and the nose drops). Stevens finds it hard to accept that, with the accumulation of experience and the passage of time, his father's physical body undergoes various transformations and even signals a certain state of degradation. He still considers him "a figure of unusual distinction" (Ishiguro, 2015: 56), a prominent role model when it comes to butlers and their quintessential traits.

As a narrator, Stevens expresses his admiration for the beliefs and evolution of each character. In due course, all his actions aim at his professional evolution and his meeting of

Lord Darlington's requirements, together with those that the geographical, cultural, social, and political context entails. According to Stevens, Lord Darlington distinguishes himself via discretion, consideration, respect, and diplomacy. All in all, his lordship, as Stevens calls him, is a man who gives him the chance to practise and improve his native skills and build a career centred on full commitment and emotional restraint: "I can declare that he was a truly good man at heart, a gentleman through and through, and one I am today proud to have given my best years of service to" (64).

Stevens' relationship with his father is characterised by objectivity, coldness, and minimal distraction from professional duties. The rare occasions on which they talk show how much the two are alike in terms of conciseness, value systems, and professional preoccupations. Although their conversations are mostly aimed at negotiating professional duties, admiration reinforces Stevens' sanctuary of the senses. Moreover, Stevens uses his thoroughness to contemplate his father's imposing appearance. He pays great attention to "the edges" of his "father's craggy, lined, still awesome features" (67) as well as to "the sheer impact of his physical presence" (69).

The book provides us with a psychological point of view, while the movie enhances it and promotes a sensorial approach to the outer stimuli that enlivens the gaze and embodies the intensity of self-discipline and the singularity of the characters' physical portraits. "Interiority, memory and melancholy" (our translation, Cuțaru, 2010: 13) are the main issues tackled by Stevens during his stay in Salisbury. Stevens and his father share similar backgrounds, namely small and dreary rooms, which are meant to preserve solitude and a lack of emotional involvement.

In other words, Stevens is living the season of his life. It's the first time Stevens' professional experience and the memories related to it have become a distraction for him: "I see I am becoming preoccupied with these memories and this is perhaps a little foolish" (Ishiguro, 2015: 70). He senses the environment and reacts to it. Mesmerised by the "aroma of meadows" (70), the dulcet tones of the stream, and the immensity of the valley, Stevens acknowledges the uniqueness and relevance of his journey: "This present trip represents, after all, a rare opportunity for me to savour to the full the many splendours of the English countryside, and I know I shall greatly regret it later if I allow myself to become unduly diverted" (70).

Having time as an ally, the main character retrieves the joy of living after many years spent in the service of others: "For the first time in many a year, I'm able to take my time and I must say, it's a rather enjoyable experience" (Ishiguro, 2015: 71-72). Moreover, Stevens returns to the "natural happenings" (Jung, 1975: 358) of life, giving free rein to himself and appreciating simplicity, to reinforce the playful spirit and confidence in nature. On his way to Salisbury, Stevens' way of thinking, feeling, and acting is rewarded. Stevens, the man, remembers that the simple ways are those that make life better. Due to the action of protecting the hen, the character receives genuine appreciation and unexpected recognition of his main moral values, respect, responsibility, and care: "the simple kindness I had been thanked for, and the simple kindness I had been offered in return, caused me somehow to feel exceedingly uplifted about the whole enterprise facing me over these coming days" (Ishiguro, 2015: 72-73).

Without a doubt, the spatial and temporal coordinates have a significant impact on the development of the characters (Stevens, Miss Kenton, Lord Darlington, and Stevens Senior), completely reshaping their thoughts, actions, and emotions. The symbolism of the Darlington Hall mansion is divided into two main categories: the political and the initiatory, namely the professional climax of the butler and the housekeeper. In addition to hosting several high-calibre events, Darlington Hall is a space of ambition where the protagonists evolve at too high a price, namely emotional suppression.

The Conference of March 1923 changes the perceptual power of the collective consciousness, but especially of the individual consciousness of the protagonists. Darlington Hall, the pearl of the English landscape and principled landmark, is the setting where nations and important people join their forces and destinies are fulfilled: "Darlington Hall was filled with people of all nationalities, talking in rooms, or else standing around, apparently aimlessly, in the hall, in corridors, and on landings, examining pictures or objects" (92). The beginning of spring is associated with novel professional and intellectual demands: "It was one of those events which at a crucial stage in one's development arrive to challenge and stretch one to the limit of one's ability and beyond" (73). "That memorable March of 1923" (80) depicted the memorable behavioural patterns of Lord Darlington, his friend Sir David Cardinal, Stevens, Miss Kenton, and the members of the staff. Driven by a similar goal, acquiring or preserving the quality of dignity, their actions and demeanours are designated to strengthen the image of English cultural identity: "That is the welcome we will show these foreign visitors to let them know they are in England, where order and tradition still prevail" (*The Remains of the Day*. Movie, 1993).

Stevens, the narrator, becomes both an intimate observer and a motivational leader. Through the exhaustive use of his procedural memory, Stevens the butler succeeds in devising a proper staff plan, assigning tasks, foreseeing unpredictable scenarios, and motivating the staff members: "I thus set about preparing for the days ahead as, I imagine, a general might prepare for a battle" (Ishiguro, 2015: 81). Besides being a character, Stevens can be regarded as the creator of a climate dominated by ambition, perseverance, and high professional standards. Moreover, Stevens witnesses the culmination of his relationship with his father and Miss Kenton. Not only the staff members are motivated and inspirited by the conference, but Stevens' father is too: "It was almost as though some supernatural force possessed him, causing him to shed twenty years" (81), providing him with a younger look and "youthful vigour" (81). He strives to demonstrate his exceptional standards as a butler for the last time. As for Miss Kenton, Stevens characterises her as deeply influenced by "the mounting tension of those days" (Ishiguro, 2015: 82), showing irritability and bad-tempered behaviour. Stevens' recurring observations make Miss Kenton ask for a different kind of collaboration, more distant, through messengers or tickets, to avoid discordant situations like those that have already happened and simplify their way of communicating.

"The attractive exteriority" (our translation, Cuțaru, 2010: 82) of Salisbury represents the triggering factor in refreshing both beautiful and painful memories. Stevens engages himself in an all-encompassing form of confession, in which he visualises once again the "unforgettable occurrences that were to take place during that remarkable week" (Ishiguro, 2015: 84). In other words, Stevens has an inner dialogue with the self, which, in addition to listing experiential diversity, expands upon the sensory richness that has contributed to the imprinting of memories into the character's consciousness.

Darlington Hall represents the spatial context of the experience, while Salisbury represents a topos of awareness, where emotional restraint comes to an end. All the feelings and emotions that were once denied are finally recognised, understood, and outsourced via Stevens' confession. For the first time, the main protagonist pays attention to the "feelings of his soul" (our translation, Cuțaru, 2010: 99). Consequently, the sensorial assets the character was invested with are those that enhance the significance of his memories. The evolution of not only the character but also the narrator, Stevens is illustrated by his ability to look beyond his professional experience and handle the emotions and consequences that emerged from that indelible March of 1923.

While staying in Salisbury, Stevens capitalises on his consciousness as "a power of the soul" (99). As mentioned before, duty and work prevail over family bonds or any other type of emotional involvement, an aspect that was proven during the Conference of March 1923. As a

butler, Stevens mirrors his father's professional qualities and strives to acquire the quality of dignity and to please his father. Their last conversation is revelatory because Stevens gets the appreciation he has always been waiting for. Surprisingly, his efforts as a professional but also as a son are recognised and praised by the person identified by Stevens as a great butler before considering him a parent: "I'm proud of you. A good son" (Ishiguro, 2015: 101). The character becomes aware that his life has come to an end, which allows him to give up the emotional constraint under which he guided and lived his entire existence. Stevens Senior's latest lines are part of his last confession as they mirror his feelings of regret and emphasise that he also strived to do his best as a father; likewise, Stevens did his best to make him proud: "I hope I've been a good father to you. I suppose I haven't" (101).

The fact that Stevens continues his job even when his father feels ill and even after he dies shows his commitment to his profession and the highest degree of emotional restraint he experiences: **"Miss Kenton, please don't think me unduly improper in not ascending to see my father in his deceased condition just at this moment […] I know my father would have wished me to carry on just now. […] To do otherwise, I feel, would be to let him down" (111).**

Stevens also practises his role as a storyteller by capitalising on spaces in terms of breadth, intimacy, atmosphere, and content (objects). The classification of spaces is defined by antagonistic associations: vastness and smallness, feminine and masculine energy, and brightness and darkness. How he narrates and enumerates the descriptions of the rooms illustrates the emotions produced by those spaces in the character's consciousness. He portrays the drawing room as a delicate space, which is contrasted with "so many stern, dark-jacketed gentlemen, sometimes sitting three or four abreast upon a sofa" (Ishiguro, 2015: 95). In addition, Stevens is enraptured by another room, which, besides offering a delightful view, helps him fulfil his professional duties and offers guests an abundant, pleasant, and unforgettable experience: "It was always something of a memorable sight to see that magnificent banqueting hall employed to its full capacity" (102). Stevens acquires the status of an omniscient and omnipresent narrator, which strengthens the intensity of the sensitive experience and confirms the sensory perceptions underlying his memories. Thoroughness is a radiant quality of the character, which is also turned into a good account in the narrative and descriptive sequences that Stevens, the narrator, gives prominence to.

The contrast between strength and tenderness and subsequently between darkness and brightness, forges an atmosphere in which the male force is tempered by the soothing light: "the effect produced by unbroken lines of gentlemen in evening suits […] was a rather severe one; […] in those days, the two large chandeliers that hang over the table […] resulting in a subtle, quite soft light pervading the room" (102) The textures, the colours, the objects, as well as the attendance, enliven even the smaller spaces up to their utmost: the smallness of "the smoking room" is depicted as "a forest full of black dinner jackets, grey hair and cigar smoke" (111).

In conclusion, Stevens' confession carries out the feelings of contentedness and evolution: "the conference of 1923, and that night in particular, constituted a turning point in my professional development, I am speaking very much in terms of my own more humble standards" (114). Unlike the new memories created on the first day of the stay in Salisbury, day two illustrates the entanglement of past experiences with current emotional and sensory perceptions that emerge from the reinforcement of memories: "Indeed, why should I deny it? For all its sad associations, whenever I recall that evening today, I find I do so with a large sense of triumph" (115). One could easily affirm that these two days can be called "The Remains of Salisbury" for the reason that they enrich Stevens' cultural and geographical knowledge and lead the way to novel ways of perceiving the story of his life. The transition space, Salisbury, involves a detailed process of introspection that aims to provide an all-

encompassing perspective regarding the professional and personal choices made by Stevens and the other characters.

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