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Stevens' Catharsis in *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro

Kazuo Ishiguro'nun Günden Kalanlar Romanında Stevens'ın Katarsisi

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ABSTRACT

Considering the relationship between Aristotle's and Sigmund Freud's catharsis theories is significant to revise its efficacy in literature. The view here is that the concept of catharsis in literature represents a process of purification and clearing in which all repressed emotions, desires, and anguish come to the surface and, in this way, they are all eliminated from the psyche. This study establishes a recursive relationship between the catharsis theory and Kazuo Ishiguro's (1954-) novel *The Remains of the Day* (1989). In this novel, Ishiguro presents the story of an aging butler, Stevens, through the character's memories of past events from disjointed periods of time. Being full of regrets, Stevens reveals self-accusations, mental repression, lack of objectivity, and fragmentation in moral, intellectual, and ethical senses. The Aristotelian and Freudian views on catharsis testify that the role of memory in Stevens' case may form a discernible sample for purification. *The Remains of the Day* exemplifies the correlation between "telling" and "release" from a marginalized point of view.

Keywords

Catharsis, Aristotle, Freud, Kazuo Ishiguro, The Remains of the Day

ÖZ

Aristoteles ve Sigmund Freud'un katarsis teorileri arasındaki ilişkinin ele alınması, bu teorinin edebiyattaki etkinliğini gözden geçirmek için önemlidir. Buradaki görüş, edebiyattaki katarsis kavramının, tüm bastırılmış duyguların, arzuların ve ıstırabın yüzeye çıktığı ve bu şekilde hepsinin tinden atıldığı bir arınma ve ruhsal temizlenme sürecini temsil ettiği yönündedir. Bu çalışma, katarsis kuramı ile Kazuo Ishiguro'nun (1954-) *Günden Kalanlar* (1989) adlı romanı arasında yinelemeli bir ilişki kurmaktadır. Bu romanda Ishiguro, yaşlanan bir uşak olan Stevens'ın hikâyesini karakterin farklı zaman dilimlerinde yaşadığı olaylara dair anılar halinde sunmaktadır. Pişmanlıklarla dolu olan Stevens, öz suçlamaları, zihinsel baskıyı, nesnellikten yoksunluğu ve ahlaki, entelektüel ve etik anlamda parçalanmayı açığa vurmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, katarsis üzerine Aristotelesçi ve Freudcu görüşler, Stevens'ın durumunda belleğin rolünün arınma için belirgin bir örnek oluşturabileceğini göstermektedir. *Günden Kalanlar* marjinal bir bakış açısıyla "anlatma" ve "serbest bırakma" arasındaki gerçek ilişkiyi örneklendirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Katarsis, Aristoteles, Freud, Kazuo Ishiguro, Günden Kalanlar

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1. Introduction

Literary critics generally favored the traditional position of catharsis in modern interpretations and perhaps all literary horizons. Leon Golden (1962) contends that "[l]iterature is hardly respectable unless it performs some 'catharsis'" (p. 51). In addition to being among the most enduring elements of narrative, it is recognized as having some healing power. The Greek term *katharsis* is based on *katharos*, which is equated with cleaning and clearing. As Aristotle states in his *Poetics*, the function of catharsis is the "purgation of pity and fear." The mere fact is that the purgation theory of Aristotle is relevant to the narratives of contemporary critics who attempt to find justification for character representations. The narrative configuration of retelling and remembering in the catharsis theory allows readers to release a certain type of relief.

Kearney (2007) suggests that "the recounting of experience through the formal medium of plot, fiction, or spectacle permits us to repeat the past forward so to speak" (p.51). He rationalizes pity and fear in Aristotle's theory, which are emotions experienced by the reader or the audience as a healing brew. Thereupon, this theory sets out "a) beyond a pathology of pity to compassion and b) beyond a pathology of fear to serenity" (Kearney, 2007, p. 52). This "cathartic release" through narration and the reordering of the experience, as the essence of inner conflicts, offers a deep empathy and compassion to see the real reason behind traumas. If this criticism is upheld as primary, then it is possible to state that "Freud's theory of equilibrium of competing tensions through literature is very much like Aristotle's catharsis" (Donnelly, 1953, p. 156). Literature, as a product of the mind, has insights into the unconscious, as Freud used the unconscious for the murky accumulation of traumas in the psyche. According to him, all repressed emotions, vulgarities, desires, and childhood traumas are suppressed into the unconscious, which might be regarded as the main reason for all conflicts and sicknesses. Tuairisc (2003) claims that "Freud created the methods of psychoanalysis to awaken that Catharsis, or cleaning, in the sick person" (p. 179). The Aristotelian view holds that the hysteria in one's soul can be healed through purification. This purification, as Tuairisc states, can be perceived through psychoanalysis. In essence, this study attempts to explore the function of catharsis in Kazuo Ishiguro's (1954-) well-known novel *The Remains of the Day*. The cathartic narration of Stevens, the protagonist, sheds light on the cause and context of his suffering towards the end of the work. In the original immediacy of suffering, Stevens seems to have no power to declare or at least recognize his grief, which creates a discrepancy between his past and the time of his narrative. The term catharsis, introduced by Freud and Aristotle, requires an elaborate interpretation and discussion to comprehend Stevens' case. In his highly recommended article, Golden (1973) points to the role of art in real life as follows:

> The essential pleasure of art is an intellectual one derived from learning about human existence through the medium of art, it follows that all artistic endeavors which achieve the illumination of human experience will be pleasant whether their objects are, in reality, pleasant or painful. (p. 476)

This interpretation, which specifies the essential nature of art, adds further weight to clarify the significance of catharsis in artistic representations since they have the same features as in reality. The relevance of fictional action and the unconscious psyche in the intellectual sense dominates the argument presented in this paper. In order to present this connection between art and repressed emotions, Golden claims: "When we look at the whole realm of art, we see that the emotions engendered by the work of art" (1962, p.59). With this expression the critic means that literary figures are reflections of human beings, and this interpretation provides a clear direction

for understanding corresponding events in real life. Moreover, the Western literary reception began with Aristotle. Gardner (1985) defines Aristotle's literary efficacy with the following words:

> Aristotle's overall theory of literature was both mimetic and formalist. He saw all literature, all art, as imitating or representing reality, as giving some valid vision of reality, it was this link between literature and our immediate world which constituted its seriousness. (p. 30)

As Gardner clarifies, this mimetic aspect of literature is not merely a sort of aesthetic ordering of incidents, but it should also imitate pathetic and terrible occurrences. As in Keesey's (1978) view, "[t]hrough artistic representation, our emotions are 'intellectualized' and mastered" (p.203). Overall, the universal condition of existence and universal phenomena are represented and appreciated by human beings as they relate real occurrences to artistic performances. It is apparent, then, that catharsis in Aristotle and Freud, by its very nature, functions to recognize and understand the painful process of a literary work. As Keesey (1978) specifies, "catharsis is a process connected with mimesis and that it is a process operating within the work" (p.204). This crucial assertion accentuates that catharsis in literary works is related to what appears to be perceived in real life.

As the main point of this argument, catharsis seems to be an ideal point of departure, or benchmark, to concentrate on Stevens' repressed emotions through purification. The indeterminate overlapping of these emotions and regrets involves a sacrificial aspect, which indicates implicit self-accusations. Burke (1959) explains this process: "We are combining contradictory impulses. And we are healed by being enabled to put opposites together in a way that transcends their opposition" (p. 341). Therefore, to be cured, as Aristotle and Freud called it, it seems reasonable that one needs to admit and accept all happiness and sorrows, since they may be convulsive in their physicality. After narrowing down the concept of catharsis in Aristotelian and Freudian theories, in line with the purposes of this study, it will be necessary to give some information about Kazuo Ishiguro and his novel *The Remains of the Day* to evaluate the cathartic case of Stevens.

2. Kazuo Ishiguro and *The Remains of the Day*

Kazuo Ishiguro is a Japanese-born contemporary British writer. He was born in Nagasaki but raised and educated in England. As one of the well-known postcolonial writers, Ishiguro has endeavored to write specifically on historical subjects and to touch upon the effects of imperialism on ordinary people. In Tamaya's (1992) words, "Ishiguro uses that consummately economical and British literary form – the novel of manners – to deconstruct British society and its imperial history" (p.45). As in Tamaya's definition, Ishiguro benefits from historical incidents that require a degree of critical re-consideration underlying his narrative and his characters. Emara (2015), on the other hand, expresses Ishiguro's connection to history and its influence on his literary personality: "Engagement with the question of history is Ishiguro's major preoccupation" (p.9). This preoccupation, as Emara states, has a marginalized point of view that moves away from the conventional and traditional models of historical narratives. Ishiguro is concerned with the consciousness and unconsciousness of individuals, with the aim of reworking the past from a different perspective. Khalaf (2017) interprets this aim: "He [Ishiguro] sees that memories can play an instrumental role in adapting to the present with its circumstances and needs and that separating history from the present can result in crises mainly with identity and existence" (p. 174). As Khalaf points out, Ishiguro's narratives are riddled with the ruptures of history, which create a state of uncertainty and awkward insistence that may be the result of the struggle between their past and present affiliations. Elliptically alluded to, the historical context of all his

narratives is inextricably linked to the attitudes and aspirations of his characters. In fact, Ishiguro's narratives formulate a dialogue between fictional narrative and postmodern historiographic narrative. With this dialogue, he depicts a specific territory in which order and disorder coexist, like a jumbled line of thought. No matter how ordinary, mundane, and unimportant the micro-narratives of his characters may sound, Ishiguro allows them to be heard. As Emara (2015) remarks, "Ishiguro opens up history to people who have been left out from the official records" (p. 10). Because official records are for great men and their great deeds, the writer rejects the traditions of earlier historiographic narratives that focus on masters and their lives. The private and public records of history operate throughout his fiction, acknowledging the possibility of fallaciousness.

This study attempts to trace the effects of catharsis focusing on the butler Stevens whose painful emotional life rationalizes that the private recollections are consistent with the soul and mood of the century. Written in 1989, *The Remains of the Day* deals with the aging butler Stevens and his emotional relationship with his former colleague Miss Kenton. The action is set in Oxfordshire, England, in 1956, as a depiction of postwar society and drastic changes in British imperialism. Additionally, the novel portrays Stevens' profession in Darlington Abbey, where uncertainty and fragmentation appear as the main crises of postwar people in a new globalized world. All the characters in the narrative experience a conflict between their past actions and their present situation. To quote Khalaf (2017), "[s]uch characters have made choices in the past and have to face their consequences in the present" (p.174). In this context, "Stevens as an historically constituted entity" (Westerman, 2004, p.157), internalizes a deep divide, which is apparent in the novel in the form of repetitions, ambiguities, and gaps.

To reveal the place and function of Stevens in the postwar community, Ishiguro explores determinant attributes as proof of the character's actual condition in Darlington Hall and in the British Empire in general. The use of first-person narration in the novel may be evaluated as the writer's way of identifying the gaps between real historical records and personal accounts of the postwar period. Stevens' ever-conflicted position, pointing to an unreliable narrator, makes it clear that there was a big gap between formal historical records and personal stories in that period. It is not wrong to claim that Stevens' accounts work as an internal dialogue; inconsistencies, temporal structures, uncertainties, and gaps figure prominently throughout the text. As an "ideal servant" who always obeys the rules and never questions the orders of his employer, the character attempts to maintain the service system or the class system. Put differently, he enacts the absolute hierarchy of the English service system throughout the novel. He associates Englishness with butlering and dignity with obedience. This blindness, a strenuous repetition of his structured duties, causes him to deny his emotional side. While the beginning part of the novel formulates his structured personal utterances about Lord Darlington, the former employer, concealing contradictions and ambiguities become apparent in the following sections of the narrative. Westerman (2004) argues this change as follows:

> As the world around him changes (over time and, as he travels, spatially), he begins to suspect the internal tensions and contradictions of his subjecthood. Stevens does think: he thinks every word of the text, and these tensions are the content of this novel. (p. 160)

These contradictions and tensions, as Westerman remarks, may also be credited to the content of his catharsis. His weak responses to the strictly structured English class system may be regarded as regrets and life-long sorrows. In the following section, his confessions will be evaluated in terms of Freud's and Aristotle's catharsis theories. The narrative, as Stevens' internal

dialogue, is worth analyzing to indicate how expressing regrets and repressed emotions may result in catharsis and a sigh of relief.

3. Catharsis in *The Remains of the Day*

The concept of catharsis has become commonplace in literary criticism to make retrieval possible and to interpret the results of this process in terms of the character's relief. It is no coincidence that in *The Remains of the Day*, unease, as the ultimate impact of the narrative, turns into confessions and changing ideas after recounting and telling them aloud. Recalling bygone incidents shows the narrator's effort to meld two separate conditions of the psyche in order to have a sense of peace. Catharsis, still resistant to comprehend exactly, underscores the relevance of memory and time, which entail blocking, persistence, and dubiousness. Furst (2007) remarks on the work of memory: "The assimilation of the concept of 'repression' testifies to the widespread acceptance of the role of the unconscious in our everyday experience of remembering and forgetting; selectivity, far from being random, may form a discernible pattern" (p. 530). Furst argues that the function of unconsciousness in an individual's life, as in Stevens' case, is significant and leads to a close connection between recalling and repression. Westerman (2004) states that "[t]he novel, in contrast, allows Stevens to narrate himself, a complex voice in a particular situation" (p. 160). Narrating himself forms a salient link between the expression of his life and the structured conditions of society. Although set in 1956, the action in the novel goes back to 1922, signifying the course of his service to the aristocratic Darlington Hall. While telling the story of his trip from Darlington Hall to the western part of the country, Stevens touches on his previous experiences as a great butler in a distinguished hall. As Stevens moves toward his meeting with his former colleague, Miss Kenton, now Mrs. Benn, he realizes how his ideals have collapsed and how they have made him emotionally ruined. Until that trip, he assumes that "[l]oyal service to a distinguished household means striving to be part of the great affairs of the world through service to one's distinguished employer" (Phelan & Martin, 1999, p. 90). This supposition guided his mannerism during his long years of service. The required qualifications of a butler are signified in the narrative repeatedly, and among these qualifications, dignity, according to Stevens, is the most outstanding one. Ishiguro (1989) reflects his ideas about dignity: "Acting with dignity means always remaining in control of a situation and one's emotions, never giving way to sorrow, love, sympathy, never literally or metaphorically 'removing one's clothing in public'" (p. 210).[b] This "remaining in control" motto of Stevens rules all his life and guides his emotional side, which then hosts various psychological complexities and distractions. To put the point another way, his lifelong ideals in terms of being an ideal and dignified butler begin to change as he is on the way towards Miss Kenton who may be deemed the main regret of his whole life. During the trip, Ishiguro provides, both literally and emotionally, different scenes from different periods in Stevens' life to the reader. Each one of them includes its own signs of regret since they are the honest reports of Stevens who admits how he sacrificed himself for those mistaken ideals and how he denied his emotional existence, which prevented him from feeling like an ordinary man in that world. It is possible to say that Stevens questions his life together with the memories that come to his mind along the way. Nevertheless, he experiences his real enlightenment when he meets Miss Kenton and hears her words:

> But that doesn't mean to say, of course, there aren't occasions now and then— extremely desolate occasions— when you think to yourself: 'What a terrible mistake I've made with my life. And you get to thinking about a different life, a better life you might have had. For instance,

[b] From now on, only page numbers will be given for the citations from *The Remains of the Day* (1989).

> I get to thinking about a life I may have had with you, Mr. Stevens. And I suppose that's when I get angry over some trivial little thing and leave. But each time I do so, I realize before long—my rightful place is with my husband. After all, there's no turning back the clock now. One can't be forever dwelling on what have may been. One should realize one has as good as most, perhaps better, and be grateful. (p. 239)

This confession by Miss Kenton causes Stevens to realize how much is going on beneath the surface and how he ignored his real self to provide good service. The subtext that operates here may be the thinnest layer of something deeper. Stevens' shift from "remaining in control" to "removing one's clothing in public" takes place when he fully acknowledges that he has loved Miss Kenton during all these years. Simultaneously, he realizes that he has lost his last chance to live a happy life with intrinsic satisfaction. In what follows, catharsis as a purgation of psychic pathologies has an implicit place in this confession and realization, which are aligned with Aristotle's and Freud's conceptions. This purgation offers an account of sacrificed desires and cathartic functions, which lead Stevens to reiterate his mistakes. Be that as it may, towards the end of the narrative, Stevens lives his own catharsis or purification, which may be regarded as therapeutic mediation. His personal accounts of memories, which are signs of his unconscious, entail strictly structured rituals, repressed desires, false beliefs, excessive control, and a mechanic life that cast light on the current situation, namely the pathology, of Stevens, who deftly maintains the qualifications of a butler throughout his adulthood. In another sense, however, it is not wrong to claim that he maintains all his desires, even in an implicit way. Lawtoo (2018) identifies the connection between unconscious and mimetic representation as: "What applies to mimetic desire equally applies to the unconscious that triggers desires and rivalries in the first place, a 'true unconscious' based on a less visible, more ancient, yet, as we shall see, still modern theoretical assumption" (p. 164). As the critic puts it, a true unconscious involves ancient desires, disappointments, and a certain degree of imitation, imitation of regrets, as in Stevens' case, at the end of the narrative to emphasize its cathartic social function. This is the cathartic method of Ishiguro whose main concern is to unveil the appropriate nature of Stevens' unconscious through Freud's meditation method. It seems necessary to make Stevens express his own regrets and wishes to persuade the reader about his sacrifices with an innate sense of purification.

Indeed, in ancient times, various layers of meditation were proposed by different disciplines, such as psychoanalysis, philosophy, and mimetic theory. Countering previous reports on catharsis in different disciplines explains how literature and catharsis are inextricably intertwined. Ishiguro traces this link in his narrative by forcing Stevens to make his unconscious mind explicit, to some extent, towards the end of the story, which may be qualified as an attempt for diagnostic purposes and thereby have relief. It should be noted that Ishiguro attempts to cleanse Stevens' mental pathology in this narrative via a celebrated method called "the talking cure." In other words, Stevens feels the violence of many past traumas, which prevents him from acting at the right times, due to blockage, and induces him to have a complex, seduced but dynamic account of memory. Surrounding an unyielding class system of British Imperialism, Stevens reflects the changing social and political climate of his country, which is analogous to his own shifting perception of the world. The Suez Crisis of 1956 and some other significant events that took place at that time correspond directly to Stevens' own tensions which he hides for the sake of "dignity" or to become "dignified." While secret meetings regarding important events of that period are held in Downton, Stevens regards it as an honor to provide the best service to the visitors as a head butler and declares the servants' duties as follows:

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

This belief, supposed to belong to colonialist apologists, proves Stevens' sacrifice with the aim of contributing to the maintenance of the empire. As an individual being, he seems to have no interest or personal ideas apart from his professional deeds, which mean everything to him. However, he has a social and individual existence that reveals his authentic being and personal wishes that are hidden to protect professionalism. As McCombe (2002) puts it, he feels compelled to justify his leisure activities by enhancing his professional skills (p. 93). Stevens reads a love story because, he says, it provides an "efficient way to maintain and develop one's command of the English language" (p. 167) – a pretext that reveals "his reluctance to drop his professional facade and confront his emotions" (McCombe, 2002, p. 93). While reading the sentimental love story, Miss Kenton comes into his room, and Stevens immediately attempts to hide the book in his hand, which may be interpreted as a defensive attitude to conceal his emotions. Throughout the narrative, he uses words like "dignity," "professionalism," "empire," and "best service" nearly all of which are related to his occupation, not his personality. Hence, the above excerpt from the narrative supports the idea that he desperately wishes to mask his emotions and desires to maintain his being a professional butler. Yet, as stated before, his memory has a dynamic structure that forces him to reveal his true feelings in the end. While grounding incidents in the prose style of historical realism, Ishiguro seeks to present a simulacrum of real events that makes his fiction a matter of speculation. However, his attitude is rooted in the intellectual climate of the twentieth century, in which expressionism and surrealism characterized works of art and literature. In that period, unalloyed realism was disfavored by writers because historical facts were unable to reflect individual traumas of the Second World War and the effects of the Suez Crisis. As a result, Ishiguro benefits from different artistic methods and themes to create his narrative, which initially seems to be realistically anchored. Yet the expressionistic memories of the butler Stevens, who selects and distorts reality, make the narrative psychologically grounded. To signify this psychological aspect, Holmes (2005) writes: "The very tight stylistic and emotional control that all three narrators [Etsuko, Masiju Ono, and Stevens] exhibit conveys the paradoxical message that potentially uncontrollable, dangerous feelings always have to be kept at bay" (p.12). As Holmes states for the three different novels, *A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), *The Remains of the Day* (1989), by Ishiguro, rather than mere facts of history, the chaotic psychology of characters is involved in pointing out how the characters of the narrative are haunted by a sense of guilt, regret, and sorrow. To convey these hidden feelings explicitly, Ishiguro employs elasticity in terms of time and space. On the road to the western part of the country, Stevens considers and interprets his past actions in a self-approved manner. In these parts of the narrative, the reader meets a highly subjective and unreliable narrator who conveys incidents and interactions based on his memory. This reconstruction of the past suggests that "private memory can help us recapture moments and experiences which public history may elide or suppress" (Lang, 2000, p. 1). Stevens' private memory, shifting from self-approval to anger, reflects his personal and usually unsuccessful struggles, which emerge from the contrasting values of Stevens and his own community. Throughout the narrative, the character tries to reconcile his personal reminiscences of Mr. Darlington with the public vilification of his employer in the postwar period. Lang (2000) explains this struggle:

> Ishiguro's narrators acted according to the ideals of the social climate in which they lived, but when that climate shifted, they suddenly find that their actions have been reevaluated in light of a new set of ideals and public sentiment. (p. 2)

Stevens' rendering of past incidents from a subjective point of view features, in a weak sense, different perceptions of ordinary men and gentlemen in this social climate. Once proud of being a dignified butler for Mr. Darlington, Stevens, by the close of the novel, accepts that he has done wrong and is ashamed of working for a morally repugnant employer who compromises with the Nazi dignitaries. Without question, Stevens is portrayed as an ordinary and mundane man who has no clear idea about world politics and who just parrots his employer's diplomatic tendencies. However, Stevens' inadequacy in interpreting criticism of democracy does not mean that he is unaware of his own emotions. On the contrary, he supposes that he and the other workers of Darlington Hall play a crucial role since if they succeed to please the important diplomats who visit Darlington Hall, it will impress them and cause a successful negotiation. In this unidentified negotiation, his role seems unimportant, as Lang (2000) states: "He works behind the scenes, sacrificing his own interests and desires for those of the important individuals he serves" (p.4). Put most succinctly by Lang, his idealism for the sake of dignity forces him to behave like a machine. A good example of this is his father's death. During an unofficial international meeting in Darlington Hall, Stevens' father is terminally ill, and Miss Kenton calls for a doctor. Instead of waiting by his father's side, Stevens goes about his duties, and, on the same night, his father dies. The other servants inform him about his death; Stevens goes up the stairs, enters the room, looks at his father and goes down again to continue his service. From his perspective, his ability to stay calm and continue living in his household contributes to his professional development. Rather than his father's death, he focuses on the international meeting, which turns out to be an illegal one towards the end of the novel. In order to indicate Stevens' catharsis for this turning point in his life, Ishiguro makes him remember and tell all the details about that day to point out that it is a turning point for him to learn how to conceal his real feelings and emotions in the name of professional development. Reminding Stevens of this moment, Ishiguro brings him face-to-face with his anguish and how he suppresses it into the unconscious. Another significant point that turns into a cathartic revelation is related to his evening meetings with Miss Kenton. At first sight, these meetings can be evaluated as a personal relationship between them, but they actually meet to discuss all matters related to the household and the duties of other servants. After a few evening meetings, Stevens notices that these may damage their professional relationship by turning into a love affair; therefore, he cancels the meetings abruptly, irreparably damaging their fledgling relations. He explains this decision: "It might even be said that this small decision of mine constituted something of a key turning point; that that decision set things on an inevitable course towards what eventually happened" (p. 175). This second turning point, as this excerpt indicates, refers to a coherent line of development in terms of Stevens' insights. Hence, the sequence of incidents highlights his ability to live like a commodity, without any feeling, through discrete moments grounded as turning points in his life. The detailed constructed causality of these turning points is narrated by Stevens as catharsis towards the end. The denial of his own emotional needs becomes apparent in the form of re-evaluations and the continuous flow of thoughts. Having a traumatized existence in the narrative, Stevens never chooses his own way in life; on the contrary, with a slavish sense of duty, he loses his humanity through self-denial, which he discovers afterwards. The narrative technique that Ishiguro judiciously deploys in the novel focuses on Stevens' memory, which allows him to reveal his flaws and disappointments implicitly. Patrick and Adetuyi (2019) explain this function of memory as below:

> All of the memories are triggered by certain scenes, which then again trigger other memories so that the structure is very convoluted and complex even though it is not always too hard to find your bearings in the story. The memory structure of narrative technique shows a high focalization on inner thoughts and perceptions. (p. 62)

This focalization, mostly in the form of fluctuations and fragmentation, indicates the existence of a stream-of-consciousness technique. With this technique, inner feelings, time-line leaps, and non-linear flow of narration serve to reveal the character's uncertainties and repression that can be clearly understood from his unreliable expressions like "As I recall," "I cannot recall precisely," "It is hard for me now to recall." The frequent use of such expressions hints that Stevens is unsure about the accuracy of his memory, and he begins to lose time during the cathartic release of telling all his repressed thoughts. He reflects his conflict with these words: "But I see I have become somewhat lost in these old memories. This had never been my intention…" (p. 167). As the story unfolds, the memories Stevens confronts can be regarded as confessions that create a sense of pathos between the lines. Through this literary excursion between memory and history, Stevens' self-abnegation, due to cultural, social, and ideological codes, is formed in the margin of class hierarchies. On one occasion, he remarks:

> After all, what can we ever gain in forever looking backward blaming ourselves of our lives have not turned out quite as we might have wished? The hard reality is, surely, that for the likes of you and me, there is little choice other than to leave our fate, ultimately in the hands of those great gentlemen at the hub of this world who employ ourselves. (p. 161)

In other words, his blind dedication to his profession manifests itself in the last part of the narrative and oscillates between realization and regret. After working in Darlington Hall for nearly all his life, Stevens forgets the idea of human warmth or human relations in real life. On his trip to the western part of the country, he wishes to visit Miss Kenton and convince her to work in Darlington Hall again for the new American employer. In his fantasy, Stevens imagines that Miss Kenton's marriage ends and she is devastated by the sense of waste. This expectation which Stevens ponders does not come true since Miss Kenton rejects returning with him after explaining that she is able to handle the situation related to her marriage. Yet, at the same time, she justifies her anguish and earlier romantic feelings towards him, which he has never appreciated. In this last but most cathartic moment, Stevens' self-realization, operating as an intermediary between revelation and concealment, emerges as purification. In this regard, his journey to the West has the metaphorical aspect of his mind trip to the past and his soul. Unexpectedly, he becomes aware of his misconducted life in Darlington Hall and confesses:

> I trusted in his lordship's wisdom. All those years I served him, I trusted I was doing something worthwhile. I can't even say I made my own mistakes. Really —one has to ask oneself— what dignity is there in that? (p. 256)

As he rationalizes, busily engaged in the representation of a perfect servant, Stevens "eliminates all traces of his own personality as well as all individual dreams in the service of his master" (Emara, 2015, p.17). This confession, which comes in the end, addresses Ishiguro's narrative strategy, which corresponds to Freud and Aristotle's catharsis theories. By most accounts, the narrative bounds from one period to another and serves Stevens' cathartic moment in which he eventually admits and shows how he blocks his emotional existence throughout his life. In one scene, Miss Kenton exclaims: "Why, Mr. Stevens, why, why, why do you always have to pretend?" (p. 154). As she rebels, Stevens "always has to pretend because he is fulfilling a role implemented in him by suggestion" (Furst, 2007, p.541). This painful clarity captures him when he faces his

earlier excuses about his emotions, which he pretends to not have. Although he has deep feelings toward Miss Kenton and envisages her attitude towards him, the persona he has adopted as a professional butler hinders him from acting on his humanity. This lack of human warmth, which is explicit in his reaction to his father's death and his professional connection with Miss Kenton, is marked by his own words:

> It is now some twenty minutes since the man left, but I have remained here, on this bench to await the event that has just taken place— namely, the switching on of the pier lights. […] A few minutes ago, incidentally, shortly after the lights came on, I did turn on my bench a moment to study more closely these throngs of people laughing and chatting behind me. […] But as I listened to their exchanges, it became apparent they were strangers who had just happened upon one another here on this spot behind me. Evidently, they all paused a moment for the lights coming on, and then proceeded to fall into conversation with one another. As I watch them now, they are laughing merrily. It is curious how people can build such warmth among themselves so swiftly. (pp. 256-257)

Stevens' curiosity is heightened by his despair and re-evaluations of his past actions to correlate his tragic existence, lack of human warmth, and what remains. Before this last scene, in his meeting with Miss Kenton, Stevens reveals regret about what it would be if he did not conceal his feelings from her and adds: "Indeed - why should I not admit it? – at that moment, my heart was breaking" (p. 239). In light of his blocking of emotion, which causes disintegration, disillusionment, and alienation, Stevens seems to express the emotional qualities that he has never declared. However, as a last comment, he tells Miss Kenton that "It is too late to turn back the clock" (p. 239). This last remark of Stevens gives the impression that he actually accepts his all wrong beliefs and deeds during his lifetime; however, he does not have the ability or the courage to change anything from this point on. Due to his exaggerated adherence to the idea of professionalism, his memory, directed at forgetting, forces him to conceal and deny his emotional personality. The fundamental oversight is that Stevens' narration rests on his fragile memory, despite some of its blocking and backshadowing potential. In compensation, however, for the first time, he narrates his true feelings and emotions as a catharsis of his repressed life.

4. Conclusion

The popularity of catharsis in modern literature has been technically accepted and appreciated by literary critics and narratologists. The function of this technique, as in psychology, provides the writer with an endeavor for the hidden aspects of stories, and it gives the protagonist who suppresses something a sense of relief. Both Aristotle and Freud affirm the functionality of catharsis since it signifies an organic unity, a new implication for the reader. However, the core notion of catharsis lies behind the idea of envisaging the possible reasons for discontinuity, silences, and gaps in narratives, which cause readers or critics to ponder on it via this technique. The proper recognition of cathartic function in literature promotes emotional, moral, intellectual, and psychological resolution. The characters' mental struggles, mostly reinforced by their memories, are clarified in the process of purification, in both logical and psychological terms.

As a good example of postmodern historiography, *The Remains of the Day* analyzes major historical events, such as the postwar period and the Suez Crisis, from a marginalized point of view. Ishiguro's frame narrative acknowledges engagement with public history and private memory through an unreliable narrator, Stevens. As a "dignified" butler in Darlington Hall, Stevens is severely restricted in social norms dominating the time in which he lives. Rather than official historical records, Ishiguro reveals the negotiations between public accounts and Stevens'

subjective memory to illustrate how these two accounts can differ even if they are not pronounced aloud. By most accounts, this dilemma, between public and private memory, has an effect on Stevens' personality and manners, as has been illustrated. In this narrative, Stevens submits to a common tradition and social order, which reflects and supports a blind devotion to masters. The sense of Stevens-as-commodified has been justified through his continual work in Darlington Hall. More significantly, during this hard and stereotypical work, Stevens discerns and conceals his emotions and feelings.

The notion of catharsis lies at the base of Stevens' hidden emotions, which are implied between the lines. These implied interpretations of Ishiguro about Stevens' conflict are turned into his confessions at the end of the narrative. This cathartic moment, which includes Stevens' remorse, anguish, and sorrow, creates a sense of relief for both Stevens and readers. Being aware of all the mistaken beliefs and attitudes of this unreliable narrator, the reader needs to hear an explicit acceptance of his wrong manner towards himself. As Ishiguro states in the narrative, the spheres of the past and the present are interlinked, which confuses Stevens about his wrong deeds. His sense of alienation, which is the result of his devotion to professionalism, becomes apparent when he meets his old colleague, Miss Kenton. As the peak point of the narrative, this meeting clarifies Stevens' mental picture as a dignified but repressed butler.

To sum up, Kazuo Ishiguro, in *The Remains of the Day,* exemplifies a genuine, old-fashioned English butler who strives to promote the very order which constrains and abolishes his true identity. Being in-between dilemmas throughout his life, Stevens has the catharsis at the very end of the narrative. By confessing all his repressed emotions, he confirms Freud's and Aristotle's theories of catharsis, which signify purification and relief. After the last scene of the narrative, it has been concluded that resolution, as the catharsis of the novel, brings an emotional, moral, and intellectual release for both Stevens and the reader.

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