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Research Article

Kazuo Ishiguro's Remains of The Day: The Novel and the Movie

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ABSTRACT

Remains of the day (1989) is a work of fiction by Nobel laureate Kazuo Ishiguro. It was made into a movie four years after its publication i.e., in the year 1993. It's the tale of 1920s, which revolves round the life of James Stevens (Anthony Hopkins) who serves as a butler to doltish Lord Darlington (James Fox) . As a dedicated butler he forsakes his other personal interests and obligations just to attend to his master. Only to realize at the sunset of his life that he has terribly missed on life and living and what remains of the day is the regret of an unfulfilled life. His disillusionment with his master, Darlington is complete when he comes to know about latter's empathy with the Nazi and anti Semitism. Darlington had lavishly thrown parties to Germans and was unworthy of all the undivided focus of Stevens. He decides to bring his old connection with Miss Kenton alive after twenty long years but has nothing left apart from the reminiscences of the past. He looks at the remains of the day which suggests the evening of his life to live according to what he wills.

"I have a good view from here of the sun setting over the sea, and though there is plenty of daylight left-it has been a splendid day..."(RD243)

Remains of the day (1989) is a work of fiction by Nobel laureate Kazuo Ishiguro. Sir Kazuo Ishiguro is a Japanese British novelist, screen writer and musician who is known and admired across the world as a writer of "great emotional force and has uncovered the abyss beneath our sense of connection with the world". It was made into a movie four years after its publication i.e., in the year 1993. The movie *The Remains of the Day* was released in the year 1993 and was adapted from the same name by Kazuo Ishiguro. The movie was an Ismail Merchant production and adapted by Ruth Pravar Jhabwala. Ismail Merchant has adapted fiction into movies. In *Custody*, the *City of your Final destination* are a few to name. Ruth Pravar Jhabwala is also known for her works like *Howards End* and *A Room with a View*. Anthony Hopkins plays James Stevens and Emma Thompson was seen as Miss Kenton. Others who played subordinate roles were Hugh Grant, Ben Chaplin, James Fox, Christopher Reeve among others. The movie acclaimed critical and box office success at once. The movie won several accolades at the Academy awards - Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Picture, Best Adapted Screen play et al. the movie ranks among one of the top hundred best movies of Britain.

It's the tale of 1920s, which revolves round the life of James Stevens (Anthony Hopkins) who serves as a butler to doltish Lord Darlington (James Fox) . As a dedicated butler he forsakes his other personal interests and obligations just to attend to his master. Only to realize at the sunset of his life that he has terribly missed on life and living and what remains of the day is the regret of an unfulfilled life. His disillusionment with his master, Darlington is complete when he comes to know about latter's empathy with the Nazi and anti Semitism. Darlington had lavishly thrown parties to Germans and was unworthy of all the undivided focus of Stevens. He decides to bring his old connection with Miss Kenton alive after twenty long years but has nothing left apart from the reminiscences of the past. He looks at the remains of the day which suggests the evening of his life to live according to what he wills. Farraday, his new employer, he feels was much considerate and kind than his earlier employer, Darlington. He decides to stay with his and take his life as it unfolds to him. "But I see I am becoming unduly introspective, and in a rather morose sort of way at that. No doubt, this has to do with the late hour, and the trying nature of the events I had to endure this evening."(RD189) A book when adapted into a movie becomes a different experience after its reincarnation as a movie. A huge point of difference in the movie adaptation is the amount of time that goes into making it. a book can be read at leisure at any given point of time at

disposal. A movie, however, has to be conjured up within a specified time period. It doesn't have the luxury of eternal exposure and understanding. They also form an alliance between them. Books need the oxygen and the movies provide it. Books are a platform where movies are born and bred. So they foster a unique alliance. *Remains of the Day* is a tree of life where Ishiguro captures life and its journey as seen through the protagonist's lens and it is based on texture of memory. This movie adaptation takes its source from Booker prize winning novel of Ishiguro moving around the life of a repressed and domestic but very graceful butler who takes his life as a long book of service dedicated to his master. The trio- Jhabvala, Hopkins and Merchant Ivory have done an exhilarating job to extract the psychological and political world of the novel. The movie realizes the themes of the novel like never before. The enchantment of the leading duo Mr Hopkins and Emma Watson is depicted exactly in the same manner as in the novel, silent and unexpressed. "if that is how you feel about it , Miss Kenton, there is no need at all for us to continue with these evening meetings."(RD)The head butler secretly in love with the stewardess is no major theme. After all who is bothered about the life a side character or a man on the margin. However, the novel as well as the movie finds this theme of unrequited love with utmost delicacy and intent. The fragility and vulnerability of the butler's love makes it so ardent a case for plea for the reader/ audience to not empathize for it. A man who loses on the calling of his heart's desire becomes the victim of his own sense of regret. "Naturally, when one looks back to such instances today, they may indeed take the appearance of being crucial, precious moments in one's life;but of course, at the time, this was not the impression one had. Rather , it was as though one had available a never-ending number of days, months years in which to sort out the vagaries of one's relationship with Miss Kenton.(RD188)

The novel walks on the slow pace taking into account one gesture, one emotion, one gasp at a time. The movie does the same. It tries to capture the nuances of the pen of its author and the author is a maestro in leaving no delicate details behind while penning a character or an argument. The movie resonates with the climate of the novel. A pocket of critics might argue that the movie is a bit tardy, harsh on the keen audience. However, there are others who praise it for its superior acting prowess and meticulous execution of the whole plan. To add to the reader's dismay there are flashbacks strewn everywhere from the view point of the repressed butler. The novel narrates Steven's road trip through the English country side to visit his colleague from work and also his love interest. It is ironical that Stevens towards the remains of his day gives up concentrating solely on his master and his butler existence. He knows it was too late to address his personal guilt and grudges. At hindsight he leaves the confines of Darlington hall , only partially working there for sustenance. He reflects, "throughout the years I served him, it was he and he alone who weighed up evidence and judged it best to proceed in the way he did, while I simply confined myself, quite properly, to affairs within my own professional realm." *Remains of his last days* should not have the guilt and regret of the past. The evening of his life should be spent meticulously without the shadow of the past.

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