

DAYDREAMING IN THE FUNCTION OF SELF-DECEPTION IN ISHIGURO'S NOVEL *THE REMAINS OF THE DAY*

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ABSTRACT

We live in a world of great expectations and therefore, it is inevitable that the modern man is faced with problems such as fear of change, re-examination and finding excuses. On the other hand, the best way to escape from the reality is to let oneself indulge in another dimension in which everything can be corrected and beautified, and that dimension is daydreaming. All of these are some of the motifs we find in Kazuo Ishiguro's third novel, *The Remains of the Day*, but there is one leitmotif that pervades and unifies all the other motifs, and that is self-deception. Stevens, as the main character of the novel and the first-person narrator, has his goal, and that is to justify his actions to both the narratees and himself, and the goal of this paper is to establish the extent to which he succeeded in doing so. We will perform the analysis from the narratological aspect, within which we will refer to Genette's narrative theory. In addition, we will refer to Barthes's notion of a *narrative contract* that will shed light on the position of the narratee in the *Remains of the Day*.

Keywords: Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*, narratology, self-deception, daydreaming, justification, unreliable narrator.

METHODOLOGY

When Genette's narrative theory is concerned, we will perform the analysis referring to his category of *voice* which deals with the narrator as the one who tells the story, and within his category of *mood*, we will analyse the perspective or *focalization*, which refers to the point of view. On the other hand, we will refer to Barthes's notion of a *narrative contract* defined as a peculiar contract between the narrator and the narratee, defined as someone to whom a story is narrated, which implies some exchange.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Within Genette's narrative theory it is very important to see the difference between *Who narrates?* and *Who sees?*. In *the Remains of the Day* the both roles belong to the same character, butler Stevens. In other words, according to Genette's category of voice, Stevens is a homodiegetic narrator which means that he is present in the world which he narrates. On the other hand, when the focalization is concerned, we have an internal fixed focalization as the point of view is bound to the main character who is at the same time the narrator, and that is Stevens. This form of narration inevitably results in daydreaming, self-deception and unreliable narration.

The narration in *the Remains of the Day* is the result of the main character's recollections which inevitably has an impact on his unreliable narration. Nevertheless, butler Stevens mentions only those fragments of recollections which he finds appropriate and relevant and therefore, he is inclined to be subjective and guided by some sudden associations. Sometimes he even acknowledges that it was a long time ago and therefore, that his memory could be unreliable. He lives in a double world. In his world of daydreaming everything makes sense, including his important position of the butler at Darlington Hall and the relationship with Miss Kenton, the former head housekeeper. However, in the real world we find out that Miss Kenton is actually Mrs Ben and that she used to try to be Steven's voice of reason, but that eventually, she gave up. His act of mentioning her as Miss Kenton only represents one instance of self-deception.

Although Stevens is the first-person narrator, his point of view is mostly restricted by the perspective of his guests and his father who also dedicated his life to service. In fact, Stevens struggles with the fear of change and therefore, he prefers to live in the world which other people create for him and to let himself indulge in daydreaming as the dimension in which everything can be corrected and beautified. He is guided by the fear of change even when his new employer encourages him to take a well-earned vacation and he constantly feels anxious during his six-day journey.

In his opinion, being in the limelight inevitably evokes sudden collapse and that is the reason why he even tends to speak euphemistically and tries to acquire the skill of bantering in order to preserve his dignity and please his employer.

To sum up, all his actions and stories are pervaded by his attempt to justify his actions to both the narratees and himself.

If we pay attention to the fragments when Stevens directly addresses his narratees using his formal and euphemistic language, we can conclude that he even suggests what they should feel and think about his concerns and doubts. Referring to Barthes's notion of a *narrative contract*, Stevens tells his story in detail and in return he expects the narratees to justify and support his actions. However, although it seems that on a few occasions the narratees become his supporters, at the end we realise that there is no justification in this case, but only the feeling of intense sympathy for the man who sacrificed his love and youth for the sake of wrong ideals.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to answer the question whether and to what extent Stevens justified his actions to both narratees and himself, and now we can conclude that this was just a failed attempt to do so. Moreover, he only succeeded in evoking their intense sympathy. Within the narratological analysis, we showed how much the form in which we have a homodiegetic narrator and a fixed internal focalization is convenient for daydreaming and self-deception.