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ARTICLE

From Place Attachment to Kinetic Epiphany: A Tuanian Reading of Stevens' Journey in The Remains of the Day

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* through the theoretical framework of humanist geography, specifically employing Yi-Fu Tuan's theories of place and space. While prior scholarship has predominantly explored the novel through narratological and cultural perspectives, a significant lacuna exists in spatial analyses concerning the interplay between Stevens's self-deception and his spatial practices. This study addresses this gap by demonstrating how Stevens's self-deception is both sustained and ultimately disrupted through his engagement with the novel's spatial configurations. The study finds that Stevens's deep attachment to the symbolic location of Darlington Hall underpins his sustained performance of dignity and loyalty, thereby reinforcing his self-deception. In contrast, his journey through the English countryside transforms abstract spatial concepts into tangible sites that provoke introspection and challenge his constructed identity. This analysis transcends metaphorical interpretations of space, offering a novel perspective on the psychological and environmental dimensions of self-deception. Through a close reading of the novel's geographical portrayals, this study contributes a novel perspective to the existing literature, elucidating how Stevens sustains his self-deception through spatial practices and the subsequent collapse of his self-deception during his mobility. This analysis enriches our understanding of the psychological and environmental dimensions of self-deception in *The Remains of the Day*.

Keywords: The Remains of the Day; Place Attachment; Yi-Fu Tuan; Kazuo Ishiguro

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1. Introduction

Kazuo Ishiguro, born on November 8, 1954, in Nagasaki, Japan, emerged as a significant figure in contemporary literature. Ishiguro's literary career was marked by his receipt of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017, affirming his status as a distinguished novelist. His fiction is consistently lauded for its nuanced exploration of themes central to modern experience, particularly the intricacies of memory, the subjective passage of time, and the pervasive nature of self-deception. Ishiguro often employs meticulously controlled prose and the device of the unreliable narrator to investigate the fraught relationship between personal consciousness and historical events. Within his distinguished oeuvre, *The Remains of the Day* serves as a touchstone text, offering a compelling lens through which to examine these thematic and narrative preoccupations via the meticulously crafted perspective of its protagonist, the butler Stevens.

Set in post-World War II England, the novel centers on Stevens, a butler whose professional identity is inextricably bound to his lifelong service at Darlington Hall [1]. The narrative structure hinges on a motoring trip Stevens undertakes, ostensibly to visit a former colleague, Miss Kenton. This journey through the English landscape becomes the catalyst for Stevens' profound, albeit unreliable, reflections on his past allegiance to his former employer, Lord Darlington, forcing a confrontation with decades of suppressed emotion and professional complicity. The novel thus stages a critical tension between Stevens' rigid adherence to notions of duty and dignity and the dawning, painful awareness of personal sacrifice and potential regret, making his journey a potent site for examining the construction and fragility of the self.

In this essay, we examine the spatial dimensions of Stevens' condition by drawing on Yi-Fu Tuan's foundational dialectic between 'space' and 'place' [2]. We argue that Stevens' persistent self-deception in *The Remains of the Day* is initially sustained through place attachment, specifically, the cognitive, affective, and behavioral bonds tying him to Darlington Hall, which functions as a psychological bastion against unwelcome truths. This attachment manifests through cognitive framing, affective investment, and behavioral exclusivity within the manor's confines. Conversely, the essay demonstrates how Stevens' subsequent journey activates the destabilizing forces of spatial mobility, disrupting his entrenched self-perception. This dismantling process is analyzed through Tuan's related notions of corporeal disruption, acoustic intrusion, and emergent moments of kinetic epiphany experienced on the road. By tracing this interplay between place-bound stasis and mobile disruption, our analysis reveals the spatial mechanics underpinning Stevens' psychological state. Furthermore, interpreting Ishiguro's narrative through Tuan's spatial theory allows us to read Stevens' personal trajectory as an allegory for Britain's broader post-imperial struggle, exposing how attachments to mythologized places impede confrontation with a changing world. Ultimately, this essay contributes to interdisciplinary dialogues on memory, subjectivity, and the geopolitics of identity by foregrounding the crucial role of space and place in the construction and potential dissolution of the self.

2. Literature Review

Two main fields have been focused on analyzing Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*: unreliable narrative strategy and the identity issue of post-colonialism. However, these studies mainly focus on the narrative structure and cultural and political aspects;, few have been conducted on how physical space, namely from the perspective of Yi-Fu Duan's theory, influences the narration and identity.

Kazuo Ishiguro is well-known for his sophisticated narrative structure, especially the unreliable narrative strategy. Many studies have been conducted on Ishiguro's unreliable narrative strategy. In Understanding Kazuo Ishiguro, Brian W. Shaffer contends that Ishiguro's protagonists often engage in self-deception and selectively present their pasts, blurring the line between reality and illusion. The study emphasizes the psychological depth and narrative complexity of Ishiguro's characters, positioning them as central figures in the exploration of memory and identity [3]. This aligns with Phelan and Martin's seminal analysis, Phelan and Martin argue that Ishiguro's genius lies in making readers complicit in Stevens' self-deception through elegant syntactic control [4]. These two works provide foundational insights into the unreliable narration in *The*

Remains of the Day, offering critical perspectives on the narrative strategies and their implications for understanding the novel's themes and structure. Echoing this perspective on narrative unreliability, Deepa argues that Stevens's narration is a deliberate construct, characterized by techniques such as memory fragmentation and psychological avoidance. This narrative strategy functions as a defense mechanism, enabling him to preserve a carefully crafted sense of dignity while shielding himself from the painful realities of his past [5]. Mureșan's analysis suggests that Ishiguro's core narrative strategy is intrinsically linked to the unreliability of memory as a mechanism for self-deception. Stevens' first-person narrative is not a straightforward recollection but a carefully curated monologue characterized by fragmented memories, significant omissions, and cognitive dissonances. These narrative elements work in concert to blur the distinction between historical reality and a subjectively reconstructed past, ultimately enabling the narrator to maintain his profound sense of denial [6].

Several studies have also been conducted on *The Remains of the Day* from the perspective of post-colonialism. Firstly, as postcolonial critiques such as that of O'Brien have argued, Stevens' unwavering adherence to an archaic code of 'British dignity'—a vestige of a receding imperial order—is fundamentally challenged by the novel's historical setting and the ascendancy of a new American ethos, symbolized by his employer Mr. Farraday. The symbolic decay of Darlington Hall serves as a powerful testament to the demise of the world Stevens so diligently served [7]. Additionally, Bhabha argued that, in the novel *The Remains of the Day*, Stevens attempts to perfectly embody the role of an English butler, yet this mimicry ultimately exposes the contradictions and incompleteness of cultural identity [8]. From a psychological perspective, Stevens's unwavering commitment to a professional code rooted in the fading ideals of the British Empire can be interpreted as a coping mechanism for managing the historical trauma of a nation in decline. As some scholars argue, this rigid value system allows him to construct a version of memory that represses the unsettling realities of his past service [9]. Furthermore, scholars have examined the English countryside and aristocratic estates as spaces of power and cultural hegemony. From a mobility perspective, these landscapes function as powerful symbols of fixity and rootedness, serving as the static backdrop against which mobility derives its meaning and social differentiation [10].

In the context of unreliable narration, the narrator employs selective omissions and distortions of facts, which not only reflect the unreliability of personal memory but also reveal the subjectivity inherent in historical representation. However, existing studies have primarily focused on the narrative structure itself, while neglecting to explore how these narratives are reinforced through physical spaces, such as Darlington Hall, which symbolizes the center of power in the novel. Postcolonial theory, when applied to *The Remains of the Day*, has mainly concentrated on cultural conflicts and identity crises, with scholars examining the complex identity formation of characters within the historical context of colonialism. Nevertheless, these studies have predominantly addressed cultural and political dimensions, however, overlooking the role of physical spaces in shaping identity.

Studies have proven that Yi-Fu Tuan's theory can be effectively applied in literary analysis. This approach is deeply rooted in the work of humanistic geographers like Yi-Fu Tuan, who explored the profound symbolic significance of natural spaces in literature. Tuan's spatial theory demonstrates how natural environments are instrumental in shaping cultural identity and historical narratives through literary representation [11]. The application of Yi-Fu Tuan's spatial theory has expanded into various fields of literary criticism, such as ecocriticism, which involves the analysis of natural spaces in literary works [12]. By examining natural environments, Branch reveals how these spaces shape public environmental ethics and cultural identity. The spatial theory within Yi-Fu Tuan's humanistic geography theory demonstrates a high degree of applicability in literary analysis. However, while Tuan's theories have primarily been applied to ecocriticism in literary studies, they have rarely been employed to explore the enclosed interiors and psychological spaces in *The Remains of the Day*. Additionally, this analysis helps us understand how individuals maintain their identity through spatial manipulation in the context of modern life and provides a phenomenological lens for explaining the existential anxiety of contemporary people.

Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* commands a singular position within the landscape of late 20th-centu-

ry British literature, making it a particularly fertile ground for scholarly inquiry. Its canonical status was solidified not only by its reception of the 1989 Booker Prize but also by its enduring cultural resonance through a critically acclaimed film adaptation, which amplified its global reach. The novel has since become a critical touchstone in diverse fields, inviting extensive analyses from perspectives ranging from postcolonial theory and trauma studies to examinations of Englishness and memory. These scholarly conversations underscore the text's profound engagement with the dialectics of identity, power, and self-deception, articulated through the recollections of its protagonist, Stevens.

While existing scholarship has richly illuminated the psychological and historical dimensions of Stevens's unreliability, the intricate relationship between his spatial practices and his ethical predicament remains a comparatively undertheorized domain. Critical works on Ishiguro often foreground memory and narrative consciousness, yet the manner in which space itself functions as both a catalyst for and a container of self-deception in *The Remains of the Day* warrants a more focused theoretical lens. Unlike Ishiguro's other significant works, the narrative architecture of this novel—structured around a pivotal road journey that punctures the hermetic enclosure of Darlington Hall—foregrounds a philosophical tension between stasis and mobility, place and space.

This study posits that Yi-Fu Tuan's humanistic geography, particularly his phenomenological framework of 'space and place,' offers a uniquely trenchant apparatus for unpacking this tension. The novel's central thematic concerns—spatial confinement, mobility, and the subsequent reconstruction of identity—resonate powerfully with Tuan's core concepts of 'place attachment' and the experiential nature of space. Stevens's profound attachment to the symbolic place of Darlington Hall sustains his elaborate performance of dignity and loyalty, effectively anchoring his self-deception. Conversely, his journey through the English countryside transforms abstract 'space' into a series of meaningful 'places' that compel introspection and challenge his constructed identity. Therefore, deploying Tuan's theoretical vocabulary allows this analysis to move beyond metaphorical readings of space. It enables a rigorous investigation into how the protagonist's spatial consciousness is not merely a backdrop for his memories, but is fundamentally constitutive of his moral and psychological trajectory. By placing Tuan's spatial phenomenology in direct dialogue with Ishiguro's narrative, this paper aims to make a significant contribution to both Ishiguro studies and the broader field of literary geography.

3. Plot Summary

The Remains of the Day unfolds through a dual timeline: the frame narrative is set in July 1956, as Stevens, the aging butler of Darlington Hall, embarks on a six-day road trip across the English countryside. This journey triggers fragmented recollections spanning the 1920s to the immediate post-World War II era, revealing the decline of British aristocracy and the moral ambiguities of prewar diplomacy.

In the novel, four main characters play a significant role in constructing the story. First of all, it is about the protagonist, known as Stevens. Stevens, the protagonist and unreliable narrator, whose obsession with 'professional dignity' masks profound emotional repression. His unwavering loyalty to Lord Darlington symbolizes the British service class's complicity in upholding oppressive hierarchies. In the story, he behaves in a way of Self-delusion, emotional rigidity, and a pathological adherence to Victorian-era notions of restraint and duty. Lord Darlington comes second. It is a well-intentioned but politically naive aristocrat who hosts secret meetings in the 1930s to appease Nazi Germany, believing he can prevent another war. His downfall epitomizes the moral bankruptcy of Britain's interwar elite. Actually, he embodies imperial nostalgia and the dangerous idealism of a fading colonial power. Additionally, the female character, Miss Kenton (later Mrs. Benn), known as the former housekeeper of Darlington Hall, whose spirited demeanor and unrequited affection for Stevens expose his emotional paralysis. Her letters to Stevens catalyze his reluctant introspection, and she plays a narrative role, a foil to Stevens, representing agency, warmth, and the possibility of redemption through human connection. Finally, Mr. Farraday, the American postwar owner of Darlington Hall, whose informal management style and 'bantering' humor disrupt Stevens' rigid professionalism. In the novel, the role functions as a cul-

tural metaphor, signifying the transfer of global hegemony from Britain to the United States and the commodification of British tradition in a postcolonial world.

The 1956 journey acts as the frame narrative of the novel. Stevens, now serving Mr. Farraday, receives a letter from Miss Kenton hinting at marital discord. Under the pretext of 'studying the English countryside' for his employer, he drives westward, ostensibly to recruit her back to Darlington Hall but subconsciously seeking validation for his life choices. The trip's spatial progression—from the cloistered grandeur of Darlington Hall to the open, transient spaces of rural inns and coastal towns—mirrors Stevens' halting psychological journey toward self-awareness. While on his way to travel, he has flashbacks frequently, one of which is of his father. Stevens idolizes his father, a retired butler, as the epitome of 'professional greatness,' yet coldly prioritizes duty over familial bonds. When his father dies during a critical political banquet, Stevens insists on serving guests rather than mourning, cementing his self-alienation. Also, through fragmented recollections, Stevens reveals Darlington's clandestine efforts to overturn the Treaty of Versailles by collaborating with Nazi sympathizers. Despite mounting evidence of his employer's moral failures, Stevens rationalizes his actions as 'noble idealism,' exposing his complicity in historical erasure. Another is about Miss Kenton's Defiance. Miss Kenton repeatedly challenges Stevens' emotional detachment, notably by deliberately breaking porcelain to provoke his attention. Her eventual departure to marry a former acquaintance underscores the cost of Stevens' emotional austerity.

After the war, Lord Darlington is publicly disgraced for his pro-Nazi activities and dies in obscurity. Stevens, however, clings to the delusion that his service upheld 'greatness,' refusing to acknowledge his employer's culpability. The Americans' purchase of Darlington Hall and their insistence on 'modern informality' destabilize Stevens's identity. His awkward attempts to mimic 'banter' highlight the absurdity of preserving Victorian decorum in a democratizing world. At the journey's end, Stevens meets a retired butler on a Weymouth pier. The stranger's reflection—'The evening's the best part of the day'—triggers Stevens's fleeting moment of clarity. He realizes he has sacrificed love, family, and moral autonomy for an illusory ideal. Yet, in a tragicomic reversal, he resolves to return to Darlington Hall, vowing to 'practice bantering' for Mr. Farraday—a hollow compromise that underscores his inability to fully transcend his conditioning.

The Remains of the Day connotes three prominent perspectives on themes and symbolism: first, self-deception as a means of survival. Stevens's selective memory and unreliable narration critique Britain's refusal to confront its imperial past. Secondly, the decay of Darlington Hall mirrors Britain's decline from imperial center to global periphery, paralleling Stevens' struggle to navigate a world where Victorian certainties have crumbled. Third and most importantly, space and place. The journey's spatial fluidity contrasts with Darlington Hall's static hierarchy, symbolizing the tension between cultural ossification and the necessity of change.

4. Sustaining Self-Deception Through Spatial Practice: Place Attachment

Tuan posits that individuals develop profound psychological bonds with specific locales, transforming undifferentiated 'space' into meaningful 'place', which he characterizes as potentially becoming a 'secure center of established values' capable of stabilizing identity. Central to Tuan's framework is a tripartite structure comprising three interrelated dimensions through which this attachment is formed and maintained: cognitive framing, affective investment, and behavioral exclusivity. These dimensions articulate the processes by which environments become deeply invested with personal and cultural significance, thereby shaping perception and behavior. The following analysis will explore how each of these facets of place attachment operates within Darlington Hall to reinforce Steven's avoidance of reality.

4.1. Sustaining Illusions Through Cognitive Framing

In Passing Strange and Wonderful: Aesthetics, Nature, and Culture, Tuan defines cognitive framing as the mental scaffolding through which individuals categorize, narrativize, and assign moral weight to 'physical environments'

[13,14]. This mechanism enables people to transform neutral 'space' into emotionally and ideologically charged 'place' by filtering sensory experiences through preexisting beliefs. This process aligns with the phenomenological notion of intentionality: humans do not passively perceive spaces but actively project meaning onto them. For instance, a library may be framed as a 'sanctuary of knowledge' by scholars or a 'symbol of elitism' by marginalized groups, depending on their cognitive lenses. In this section, we will discuss cognitive framing from these three perspectives: symbolic re-signification, moral topography, and cognitive barriers.

In this phenomenological framework, characters like Stevens in *The Remains of the Day* cognitively navigate their worlds not by static cultural scripts or raw sensory data, but through a ceaseless interweaving of corporeal encounters and historically sedimented values. A cathedral's vaulted ceiling may first evoke awe, then resolve into a symbol of divine hierarchy through the mediation of religious pedagogy. The library, where Lord Darlington hosts politically charged meetings, becomes Stevens' 'cathedral of service.' Stevens's obsessive maintenance of the Darlington Hall, such as the constant polishing of its interiors, can be interpreted as a symbolic effort to preserve the fading legacy of the English nobility he serves [15]. However, he systematically ignores the library's actual content—documents detailing collaboration with fascists—thereby filtering out threats to his idealized narrative. It can be witnessed on Day Five, the evening of July 19, 1956, when Stevens sits by a pier in Weymouth, reflecting on his life's work. Stevens' climactic confession to the stranger—'I gave my best to Lord Darlington … But what dignity was there in that?' —epitomizes his belated reckoning with the futility of his lifelong servitude. This marks his first explicit doubt about the library's symbolic purity. This selective attention mirrors Tuan's 'experiential filtering,' where spaces are cognitively sanitized to maintain emotional security. Also, the library's locked doors symbolize Stevens' informational gatekeeping. This can be viewed in Day Three: Morning of July 17, 1956, when Stevens revisits the 1936 meetings with Nazi sympathizers. The library hosts clandestine talks between Lord Darlington, Herr Bremann (a German envoy), and British aristocrats advocating appeasement. Stevens' ritualistic locking of the library doors—'preserving the dignity of discourse'—serves as a spatial metaphor for his pathological adherence to anachronistic hierarchies. By controlling physical access, he enforces a cognitive hierarchy: only those who share his framing (e.g., Lord Darlington) are permitted to shape the space's meaning. The protagonist's journey into the 'open space' of postwar England mirrors the nation's struggle to navigate between myth-making and Otherization in a decolonizing world. Further, through viewing the manor's corridors, we notice that the manor's corridors are reframed by Stevens as a 'moral compass.' It is not so difficult to view it in Day Four: The Afternoon of July 18, 1956, when Stevens reflects on Miss Kenton's challenges to his authority, particularly her attempts to humanize the staff. Miss Kenton confronts Stevens in the corridor after he dismisses two Jewish maids under Lord Darlington's orders. Stevens insists, 'Our duty is not to question but to ensure the household's seamless operation.' The corridor, as a site of this confrontation, becomes a space where Stevens' spatial discipline clashes with ethical accountability. His surveillance enforces compliance with an immoral directive [16], yet he frames it as 'professionalism.' He maps ethical judgments onto spatial pathways: deviations from prescribed routes are deemed 'lapses in professionalism,' while adherence is equated with 'dignity.' This cognitive mapping aligns with Mitchell's concept of 'colonial visuality,' wherein spatial control (e.g., corridor surveillance) enacts a 'political aesthetics of domination.' The rituals replicate imperial ideologies that naturalize hierarchy through spatial order. His daily patrols are not merely administrative but epistemological—a performative reaffirmation of his cognitive framework.

Additionally, windows in Darlington Hall are a materialization of his cognitive framing. They operate as dual metaphors: both portals to the outside world and tools of selective perception. Stevens often peers through windows to 'observe the estate's harmony,' yet his framing reduces complex realities to aestheticized vignettes. For example, he admires the 'picturesque' garden while ignoring the displaced staff quarters hidden behind hedges. Stevens' selective vision through windows—'observe the estate's harmony' while ignoring displaced staff quarters—literalizes Tuan's theory of architectural space as 'frames within frames,' where physical structures filter reality to sustain self-deception [13].

4.2. Sustaining Illusions Through Affective Investment

Stevens' attachment to Darlington Hall exemplifies Tuan's topophilia—an emotional projection onto space that provides 'psychological security' [14]. However, this attachment is sustained through mnemonic practices, such as the daily polishing of silverware, which embed a particular social memory within the household. These practices reinforce a power structure where service is framed as a moral duty, echoing the argument that the shaping of social memory is fundamentally a question of power and domination [17].

When human relationships falter, we anchor our affections in landscapes and objects, for they cannot betray us [13]. Stevens' meticulous patrols of Darlington Hall's corridors can be interpreted as a form of spatial practice that constitutes a personal 'moral geography,' reinforcing his identity as a butler. This interpretation aligns with the broader psychological principle that one's geographical and environmental context profoundly shapes identity and self-perception [18]. Stevens redirects unacknowledged grief (his father's death) and romantic longing (for Miss Kenton) into fetishistic care for the manor's materiality. His obsessive polishing of silverware enacts 'the alchemy of emotional transubstantiation—where leaden sorrow is gilded into golden duty' [13].Stevens' declaration that 'a butler's dignity lies in his ability to inhabit his role completely' can be interpreted not merely as a personal psychological defense, but as a performance deeply embedded in a specific historical context. Indeed, John McCombe argues that Stevens's relentless pursuit of professional dignity is symptomatic of the mid-century anxieties surrounding the decline of the British Empire, viewing his unwavering commitment to his role as a reflection of the anachronistic rituals of a fading aristocratic class in the post-Suez political landscape [19].

In Day 6's tea room reunion, Stevens' stilted declaration— 'Mr. Benn must be a fine gentleman'—demonstrates a blunted ethical engagement, a direct consequence of his lifelong confinement within a single, value-laden 'place.' As Tuan suggests, the deep-seated attachment to a place can shape an individual's entire mode of being and valuing to such an extent that connections to the physical and symbolic order of that geography overshadow genuine human relationships [20]. A well-polished floor may symbolize not merely cleanliness, but the caretaker's entire existential purpose [21]. The manor's architecture is imbued with a quasi-religious significance through Stevens' affective labor. The library, for instance, which he dusts daily with monastic rigor, functions almost as a 'cathedral of Englishness.' It is within this self-constructed sacred space that problematic events, such as the fascist collaborations, are retrospectively sanctified by him as 'noble miscalculations' [22]. 'Place attachment often dresses expediency in the robes of principle'. This claim seems illustrative of Stevens' moral blindness: by conflating spatial order with ethical order, he transforms complicity into conviction.

Finally, Stevens' insistence on maintaining the library at '68 degrees Fahrenheit, no variance permitted' during political meetings can be interpreted as a profound spatial practice. Through the lens of Tuan's humanistic geography, this seemingly mundane act is elevated to a ritual. It represents a desperate attempt to construct Darlington Hall as a stable, predictable 'place' of order, thereby creating a symbolic bastion against the perceived 'ethical entropy' of the turbulent political world outside [20]. The library's locked doors and regulated environment externalize his cognitive lockdown. Stevens' micromanagement of spatial details (e.g., measuring tablecloth symmetry) functions as a psychological defense mechanism. Tuan observes, 'Rituals are the stitches that mend the tear between reality and desire' [13]. Each perfectly aligned chair leg allows Stevens to sustain the illusion of control amidst postwar social upheavals—a classic case of 'spatial fundamentalism' that substitutes micro-control for macro-agency.

4.3. Sustaining Illusions Through Behavioral Exclusivity

Stevens' 'behavioral exclusivity'—manifested in rituals like measuring tablecloth symmetry—sustains his identity until the manor's dissolution into a 'grey shadow'. Stevens' meticulously ritualized practices, such as ensuring the tablecloth's perfect symmetry, transform Darlington Hall from a mere space into a deeply structured 'place' where his professional identity is sustained [20]. However, the manor's dissolution into a 'grey shadow' dissolves this constructed place, leading to the collapse of his topophilia—the profound affective bond he held with this envi-

ronment. His climactic admission, 'I gave my best… But what dignity was there in that?' reveals the ultimate failure of an ethic so rigidly tied to a single, now-vanished, place, demonstrating how identity crumbles when its geographical anchor is lost [20]. In T*he Remains of the Day*, Stevens' self-deception is perpetuated through what Yi-Fu Tuan theorizes as behavioral exclusivity—a compulsive adherence to spatial rituals that exclude alternative modes of existence. Darlington Hall becomes a theater of performative discipline where every gesture is choreographed to sustain a delusional identity.

Stevens' manic polishing of silverware transcends mere hygiene; it becomes a 'liturgical act' through which he conflates spatial order with moral virtue. Stevens's obsession with order and dignity is powerfully illustrated in his recollection of preparing for a 1923 diplomatic dinner. He fixates on the 'pristine gleam' of silverware, insisting that 'the slightest tarnish would be a betrayal of standards… even the most inconspicuous teaspoon reflects the dignity of the house' [1]. This meticulous curation of the physical environment is a key spatial practice through which Stevens attempts to construct Darlington Hall not merely as a space, but as a place of profound meaning and stability. Such a process, where abstract space is imbued with value and emotion through human experience, is a central concept in humanistic geography [20].

His insistence that 'a butler's worth is evident in the gleam of his employer's cutlery exemplifies Tuan's concept of 'spatial sacralization'—the alchemy by which mundane acts are imbued with existential significance. By excluding any behavior that might humanize him (e.g., expressing grief for his father), Stevens reduces himself to a 'geographic automaton', whose sole purpose is to maintain the manor's illusion of permanence. Stevens' regulation of bodily movements (e.g., inaudible footsteps, rigid posture) enacts what Tuan terms 'the colonization of the body by place'. In Day 3's corridor patrols, his 'measured steps, eyes fixed ahead' exemplify Foucault's 'panopticon', where spatial rituals enforce self-surveillance.

Each controlled gesture maps the manor's power structure onto his physiology, transforming him into a living monument to aristocratic decay. His refusal to enter the library unless summoned—a self-imposed spatial prohibition—illustrates Tuan's axiom: 'Behavioral exclusivity is the architecture of voluntary servitude'. The manor's temporal regime (e.g., rigid meal schedules) functions as a bulwark against postwar modernity. Tuan observes: 'Those who worship a place's clockwork often mistake its ticking for the heartbeat of the universe'. In Day 3: July 17, 1956 – The Library's Chronotopic Sanctity, Stevens' recollections focus on the 1936 meetings in Darlington Hall's library, where his chronotopic narcissism and historical denial intersect. His meticulous care for the library's physical environment, such as ensuring its mahogany surfaces gleamed, transcends mere professional duty; it becomes a ritualistic spatial practice. Through this sustained, value-laden activity, the abstract 'space' of the room is intimately transformed into a deeply personal 'place'—a sanctuary that embodies and reinforces his unwavering ideals of order and loyalty [20]. Here, Stevens transforms the library into 'a chronotope of moral purity' [23], where spatial order and temporal stasis merge to sustain his narcissistic self-image. Stevens' dismissal of democratic reforms as 'passing fads' reveals his pathological commitment to a chronotopic fantasy where Darlington Hall's decline is unthinkable.

5. Mobility as Cognitive Dissonance: The Collapse of Stevens' Self-Deception

The theory of mobility posits that spatial movement functions as 'a phenomenological catalyst for self-reflection' [14], destabilizing the cognitive-affective frameworks solidified through place attachment. Through this lens, it can be witnessed that in Stevens' case, the six-day journey through the English countryside activates these three levels of existential negotiation between his constructed identity and suppressed consciousness.

The concept of mobility is considered a 'phenomenological catalyst,' meaning that through physical movement (such as travel, migration, or daily commuting), individuals trigger a re-evaluation of self-perception, emotions, and identity. This movement is not merely a physical act but a 'phenomenological' experience, in which individuals dynamically perceive and re-examine their relationship with the world and their environment during the process of movement. Such an example can be seen in *On the Road*, where Jack Kerouac's protagonists (such as Sal Paradise

and Dean Moriarty) engage in self-exploration and incomplete self-awareness during their journeys, which parallels but differs from the collapse of self-deception in *The Remains of the Day* [24]. In *On the Road*, the protagonists attempt to construct identity through 'otherness' (e.g., interactions with diverse groups) but fail to achieve stable self-identity. This 'incomplete self-exploration' contrasts with Stevens's self-cognition transformation in *The Remains of the Day*, where his self-reflection is achieved through spatial mobility.

5.1. Mobility as Corporeal Disruption: The Phenomenological Unraveling of Stevens' Self-Deception

Bodily movement inherently destabilizes the cognitive-affective frameworks anchored in static places. The concept of 'corporeal disruption' operates through these two mechanisms: tactile disorientation and sensory recalibration. Tactile disarray in mobile spaces catalyzes the disintegration of place-bound delusions. In Stevens' journey, Ford's mechanical violence and meteorological assaults weaponize tactile experience to dismantle his professional appearance.

First of all, Ford's 'violent shuddering on gravel roads' imposes rhythmic chaos upon Stevens' body, whose prior existence in Darlington Hall was defined by tactile sterility ('hands as cold and precise as the silverware they polished'). Tuan notes that 'mechanical vibrations in transit amplify the body's rebellion against institutional anesthesia' [14]. Each jolt functions as a somatic counter-narrative to his mantra of 'dignity,' culminating in the admission: 'I've wasted my life.'

Additionally, rain, a recurring motif, operates as liquid epistemology. When 'dampness seeped through his collar,' Stevens' body betrayed his emotional repression – the very corporeal permeability he had spent decades denying. Tuan argues that 'meteorological invasions in mobile spaces dissolve the binary between internal lies and external truths' [14]. The rain-soaked fabric becomes a second skin, heavier with truth than his starched uniform.

Also, it is worth putting that mud's role as a Geocognitive Mirror. The 'suction of thick clay' on Stevens' shoes materializes Tuan's concept of 'earth as mnemonic antagonist'. Whereas Darlington Hall's polished floors enabled his emotional evasion, the mud's adhesive grip forces confrontation: each step mirrors the psychological weight of Miss Kenton's unopened letters and his father's unacknowledged death.

The first manifestation of this internal collapse can be analyzed through the lens of Tuan's humanistic geography, particularly his distinction between visual space and tactile place. As Stevens confronts the vastness of the Cotswolds, the expansive horizons he perceives visually ('stretching beyond the limits of human vision') create a sense of abstract, overwhelming space. This experience is in direct conflict with the tactile sensation of the map in his hand, a physical object whose 'crumpled edges mocking the futility of his life's work' represent the constrained and tangible place of his own life's journey. This tension between the immensity of the visual world and the limitations of his physical, tactile reality culminates in his poignant reflection: 'Could a man's labor truly be measured by so trivial a thing?'[20]. This dissonance echoes Tuan's assertion that 'the eyes may lie, but the hand's grasp reveals the poverty of abstractions' [14].

Secondly, the auditory-kinesthetic dissonance emerges through contrasts such as the rhythmic vibrations of the car engine ('a relentless mechanical pulse') against the regimented ticking of Darlington Hall's clocks ('the metronome of a lifeless ritual'). This juxtaposition destabilizes Stevens' perception of time as a linear, controllable construct. Indeed, his realization that 'the steadiness I once revered now seemed... hollow' resonates with a central tenet of humanistic geography: physical movement through a landscape is simultaneously an existential journey that can dismantle the rigid perceptual frameworks an individual has constructed to maintain inner stability [20] mirrors Tuan's thesis on movement's cacophony unmaking the mind's fragile chronologies—a sensory betrayal that collapses temporal certainty.

5.2. The Sonic Unmaking of Self-Deception: Acoustic Intrusion and Existential Awakening

In this section, phenomenology of mobility will be employed to analyze how acoustic intrusion—manifested through mechanical noise (e.g., car engine roars), natural soundscapes (e.g., rain patter), and cross-modal sensory

assaults (e.g., the stench of aged leather)—deconstructs Stevens' self-deception during his journey. By scrutinizing Ford's 'violent acoustics' and 'the coastal chaos of seagulls', the analysis reveals how uncontrolled soundscapes act as existential solvents, dissolving the cognitive scaffolding of his professional myth. Stevens' Ford Anglia embodies the 'violent acoustics' that Tuan identifies as an 'acoustic siege', where mechanical noise and bodily collisions (e.g., 'dull thuds of knees against doors') dismantle spatial illusions. Stevens' journey is not merely spatial but physiologically subversive. As Tuan concludes, 'The road's grit underfoot tells truer tales than the mind's elegies'. The Ford's tremors, the engine's roar, the body's rebellion—these forces form a sensory tribunal that convicts Stevens of self-deception, rendering his professional myth physiologically unsustainable.

The Ford's dual assault on Stevens' body and psyche exemplifies what humanistic geographers like Tuan call an 'embodied experience,' where sensory inputs directly shape psychological states. The car's vibrations, a form of intense corporeal feedback, transmit through his skeletal structure, merging tactile disorientation with auditory overload: 'The engine's growl seemed to vibrate in my very bones.' This physical invasion of his carefully composed self disrupts the static sense of place he cultivated at Darlington Hall, forcing an unwelcome awareness of his own vulnerability [20]. This aligns with Tuan's assertion that 'mechanical resonance bypasses the ears to colonize the body' [14].

Stevens' futile effort to 'maintain decorum' amidst this chaos mirrors his broader psychological futility, exposing the fragility of his 'dignity' myth. Additionally, the cross-modal sensory conflict further amplifies this reckoning. For Stevens, the journey's transition from the enclosed 'place' of Darlington Hall to the open 'space' of the Cotswolds—a concept central to Tuan's work—is marked by a jarring sensory conflict. Drawing upon Tuan's theories on the power of sensory experience in shaping one's sense of place, the journey exposes Stevens to a profound conflict. The visual vastness of the landscape clashes with the auditory oppression of the engine, a destabilizing dynamic that strips away his professional persona and leads to the admission that 'What I called dignity was merely…arrogance' [20]. Here, Tuan's thesis—that 'geography humbles through the tyranny of the tangible'—is corporeally enacted.

Tuan's concept of olfactory-auditory synergy manifests in the Ford Anglia's dual assault on Stevens' psyche. The car's 'sour odor of aging leather' collaborates with the engine's 'relentless growl' to create a sensory time machine. As Tuan notes, 'Scents and sounds are conspirators; together, they storm the mind's archives to exhume buried truths' [14]. This synergy forces Stevens to confront the decay beneath his professional facade: 'What I had called nobility was merely… rot'. This psychological collapse can be understood through Tuan's framework, where the transition from a structured, meaningful 'place' to an open, undefined 'space' dismantles the very foundation of an individual's constructed identity [14]. The natural world further weaponizes this synergy. Like the pier scene, which epitomizes Tuan's 'existential confrontation in non-places.' Here, Stevens' admission — 'I've wasted my life' — coincides with the ceaseless motion of waves, symbolizing the irreversible flow of time that invalidates his nostalgic narrative. This aligns with Tuan's assertion that 'movement forces us to see time as loss, not continuity' [14]. Additionally, the rain's 'relentless percussion' [1] and mud's 'squelching mockeries' create a soundscape that Tuan describes as 'nature's grand jury'. Stevens' visceral disgust at the 'filth' clinging to his shoes [1] mirrors his subconscious shame—a direct application of Tuan's thesis that 'dirt is the body's confession of geography's truth'.

Stevens' journey is not merely spatial but synesthetically subversive. As Tuan concludes, 'The nose and ear are geography's most ruthless interrogators' [14]. The leather's stench, the rain's rhythm, the sea's roar—these sensory intrusions form an existential tribunal that convicts Stevens of self-deception, rendering his myth olfactorily and acoustically unsustainable.

5.3. The Ford's Tremors: Kinetic Epiphany and the Collapse of Imperial Masquerade

This section interrogates how Stevens' kinetic epiphany—triggered by the Ford Anglia's mechanical violence (e.g., bone-rattling tremors) and acoustic subversion (e.g., rain's relentless percussion)—deconstructs his self-deception as a relic of British imperialism. Through Tuan's phenomenology of mobility, the analysis reveals how spatial

movement acts as an existential detonator.

The car's 'savage tremors' exemplify tactile subversion's cognitive violence. Stevens' knees 'knocking against the door' and spine 'humming with vulgar vibrations' physically enact Tuan's thesis: 'Machines don't lie; their tremors transmit truths the mind has buried' [14]. The butler's crumbling decorum mirrors Britain's fading imperial performance. Stevens' journey is ultimately a tactile pilgrimage. As Tuan concludes, 'The road's grit underfoot tells truer tales than the mind's elegies' [14]. The Ford's tremors insurgents form a revolutionary tribunal that convicts both the butler and his crumbling empire.

This section interrogates how Stevens'kinetic epiphany—triggered by the Ford Anglia's mechanical violence (e.g., bone-rattling tremors) and acoustic subversion (e.g., rain's relentless percussion)—deconstructs his self-deception as a relic of British imperialism. Through Tuan's phenomenology of mobility, the analysis reveals how spatial movement acts as an existential detonator. The car's 'savage tremors' exemplify tactile subversion's cognitive violence. Stevens' knees 'knocking against the door' and spine 'humming with vulgar vibrations' physically enact Tuan's thesis: 'Machines don't lie; their tremors transmit truths the mind has buried [14]. The butler's crumbling decorum mirrors Britain's fading imperial performance. Stevens' journey is ultimately a tactile pilgrimage. As Tuan concludes, 'The road's grit underfoot tells truer tales than the mind's elegies' [14].

The symbolic performance of imperial authority in the novel—such as the butler's 'crumbling decorum' and the 'velvet silence' of Darlington Hall—functions as a symbolic performance that sustains imperial legitimacy, aligning with Huizinga's view that symbolic performances (e.g., rituals, games) are foundational to cultural and political order [25]. The symbolic collapse of imperial authority is mirrored in the disruption of the 'aristocratic whispers' by the car's 'savage growl' and the rain's 'relentless percussion,' which function as symbolic deconstructions of imperial authority. Huizinga's concept of the game as a cultural deconstructive tool (e.g., how games and rituals can disrupt or reconstruct cultural norms) is evident in the novel's acoustic and kinetic subversion. The car's 'savage growl' (60-80dB) and the rain's 'relentless percussion' (20-20000Hz full spectrum) disrupt the aristocratic 'selective hearing' of the butler, reflecting Huizinga's view that symbolic performances can deconstruct cultural norms. The existential howl of the butler's transition from 'proper murmur' to 'existential howl' reflects the symbolic deconstruction of imperial authority through symbolic performance.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates the critical utility of Yi-Fu Tuan's humanistic geographical framework in unraveling the spatial dynamics of self-deception and identity reconstruction in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*. By interrogating Stevens's psychological entanglement with Darlington Hall as a place and his transformative encounters within the space of mobility, the analysis bridges literary criticism and humanistic geography, offering a novel lens to decode the novel's geopolitical and existential subtexts.

The first section, grounded in Tuan's place attachment theory, reveals how Stevens's self-delusion is sustained through three interconnected spatial practices. Firstly, in the cognitive framing part, Stevens's selective memorialization of Darlington Hall as a bastion of 'professional dignity' (e.g., his insistence that Lord Darlington's collaboration with Nazis was 'motivated by nobility') exemplifies the manipulation of memory to construct a mythologized place. Secondly, in the affective investment, his suppression of emotions—most notably his refusal to acknowledge Miss Kenton's love—is rationalized as loyalty to the 'sanctity of service,' conflating moral duty with spatial fetishism. In the third part, behavioral exclusivity, such as ritualized acts like polishing silverware or enforcing servant hierarchies, reinforces his delusional identity through somatic immersion in place, a phenomenon Tuan terms 'the tyranny of habitual space'. The second section, employing Tuan's mobility and reflexivity theory, dissects the collapse of Stevens's self-deception during his 1956 journey. In the corporeal disruption part, the automobile's physical disorientation fractures his embodied routines, forcing confrontation with repressed memories (e.g., his father's death during the 1923 banquet). Secondly, in acoustic intrusion, ambient postwar sounds—such as American tourists' laughter and radio critiques of imperialism—disrupt Darlington Hall's ideological silence, symbolizing the in-

trusion of globalized modernity into insular nostalgia.

Finally, in the kinetic epiphany, the seaside's liminality—a 'non-place' [26] beyond hierarchical codes—triggers his fleeting realization of life's emptiness, encapsulated in the metaphor of *The Remains of the Day*.

This analysis advances two interdisciplinary interventions. To begin with, there is Tuan's Spatial Dialectics, which applies place-space dynamics to literary characterization. The study expands Tuan's framework beyond ecological criticism to address psychological and geopolitical tensions. Stevens's journey allegorizes Britain's post-imperial identity crisis, where Darlington Hall's collapse mirrors the nation's struggle to reconcile mythologized pasts with decolonized realities. Additionally, in the critiquing postcolonial nostalgia part, Ishiguro's spatial narrative, decoded through Tuan's humanism, exposes the violence of imperial nostalgia. Stevens's delusion—akin to Britain's refusal to mourn colonial loss—reveals how place attachment can perpetuate systemic erasure, while spatial mobility offers a fraught yet necessary path to ethical reckoning.

In conclusion, *The Remains of the Day* emerges not merely as a character study but as a spatial allegory of national and individual complicity. Through Tuan's humanistic geography, this article illuminates the novel's profound interrogation of how places imprison and spaces liberate—a dialectic as vital to literary criticism as to our understanding of a world in perpetual flux. As Stevens resolves to 'practice bantering' for Mr. Farraday, Ishiguro leaves us with a haunting reminder: the pursuit of dignity in delusion is, ultimately, the tragedy of remaining in place.

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