

"remains of the day"
and "a room with a
view" essay



**ASSIGN
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The first major difference you notice when examining the structure of the two novels is the way they are set out and built upon.

Remains of the day is a travel diary, it is an account of a wasted life and a story about missed chances. It is centred around a motoring trip that the butler of Darlington Hall, Stevens takes. This is both a metaphorical and literal journey for Stevens, the further away he gets from Darlington Hall the more he realises about himself and Lord Darlington. The novel is divided into 8 sections each covering the different stages of the journey through which we discover the truth about Stevens' previous employer and we unfold a 'new' Mr Stevens.

The sole narrative voice in Remains of the day is that of the butler, Stevens, he talks about himself and his life with the reader. As he is the narrator we have no reason to doubt his word either about Miss Kempton or Lord Darlington. However, the further we get into the novel Stevens proves to be an unreliable source as he is dependent on his memory, a memory that conveniently forgets things.

"... An embarrassing situation, one which Lord Darlington would never have placed an employee"

Mr Farraday is joking about Stevens' intentions towards Miss Kempton as being anything other than professional. When Stevens tells us that Lord Darlington would never have placed him in embarrassing situations he is forgetting or perhaps simply not admitting to us and himself that he was in fact placed in far more embarrassing situations by Lord Darlington. The majority of this novel is told through Stevens' flashbacks to how life used to

be and a lot of the story is told in the past tense. It is rare that we hear the voice of Ishiguro although he has crafted Steven's narrative, he is generally unobtrusive in the narration except maybe in moments of humour, like Stevens' attempt to explain the facts of life to Reginald Cardinal

" All living things will be relevant to our forthcoming discussion sir"

Stevens was trying to explain the birds and the bees to a man soon to be married. He takes it all very serious and has no sense of humour; he sees nothing funny in moments like these, which may reveal Ishiguro poking fun at his creation.

A room with a view is a true love story, whilst also tackling issues of class, wealth, travel, and social acceptance. The novel is split into two halves. The first is set in Italy where Miss Bartlett and Lucy are on holidays, although Lucy is still surrounded by English authority she has a certain amount of freedom, this is when Lucy and George first meet and where they share their first kiss. The second section is set back in England, Lucy once again is surrounded by the stiff upper lip society and restricted by English standards. However, this is eventually where George and Lucy's love flourishes. There is no central source of narration, rather the story is developed through the characters. Forster's views are present a lot more in this novel than Ishiguro's are in Remains of the day. He subtly includes his own views:

" Passion should believe itself irresistible. It should forget civility and consideration and all other curses of refined nature"

He is saying that passion should railroad over social convention – This is exactly how George sees the world and life, he believes you have to live for the moment. Another example of Forsters views is when he includes the sentence:

“ . . . Like most young people, he was naturally attracted by the idea of equality”

He sees everyone as they are and not for their class or social status, he shares his feelings with Lucy.

The way in which authors introduce and invent characters for their novels is an individual talent. In Remains of the day Ishiguro presents us with Mr Stevens, he is the voice of Darlington Hall and all it stands for; he takes his identity and personality from his status as a good butler not as a good person. He has dedicated his entire life to serving an unworthy “ gentleman”. He is introduced to us firstly by his reflection in how his journey began, he tells the reader:

“ It seems increasingly likely that I really will undertake the expedition that has been preoccupying my imagination now for some days”

Ishiguro is introducing Stevens as the sole narrator. From his first speech we can pick up on his formal language and his strong connection with the past, he is shown to be careful and precise in his choice of words, this may make him come across as pompous. We are introduced to each character through Stevens’ memories. We learn of Miss Kemptons strong will and determination through Stevens’ reflection on her. He receives a letter from

Miss Kempton telling him about her life, and typical of Stevens, he reads more into it than was actually meant. He interprets the letter, as her wanting to return to Darlington Hall, but later finds out this wasn't the case at all. On one occasion Stevens remembers her reaction when he told her that under Lord Darlington's orders two maids were to be dismissed because they were Jewish, Miss Kempton says:

" I am warning you Mr Stevens I will not continue to work in such a house . . . if my girls are dismissed I will leave also"

She is emotional without being excessively sentimental. She shows her feelings on the matter and so has an identity and purpose other than work. There are indications right through the book that she has feelings for Mr Stevens, she is blind to the fact that Stevens is driven by the desire to be a perfect butler. Miss Kempton also has a immature almost childish side to her personality, like when she is courting Mr Benn with the hope to make Stevens jealous. When he sees it as a professional loss she allows her sorrow and fury to get the better of her and leaves Darlington Hall to get married to Mr Benn. Even at the end of the novel she still has feelings for Stevens

" I get thinking about a life I might have had with you Mr Stevens"

It shows the depth of her love and her sorrow for what has been lost. Miss Kempton is a key figure for what she reveals about Stevens and in her own right.

Lord Darlington who is the former owner of Darlington Hall is deceased before Stevens writes his narrative, he is only revealed through Stevens'

flashbacks. Our first vision of Lord Darlington is when Stevens tells us how Lord Darlington gave him a number of suits.

“ I am in the possession of a number of splendid suits, kindly passed to me over the years by Lord Darlington himself”

This gives a good impression of Lord Darlington, however this impression quickly deteriorates as Stevens moves further and further away from Darlington Hall. We learn of his connections with the Nazis, Lord Darlington was dealing with political matters beyond his limits, he was being used a pawn and a stepping stone for the Nazis. Although his intentions were good he should not be dabbling in things that he does not understand, he is oblivious to reality.. We are made aware of his ill treatment of the Jewish maids and of Stevens. Lord Darlington represents English morality their standards and represents the “ established” or “ great” people.

The way in which E. M Forster chooses to introduce Lucy in A room with a view is quite original, the novel starts in the middle of a conversation between her and Miss Bartlett – They are both expressing their disgust at their holiday residence. Lucy says

“ And a Cockney, besides. . . it might be London”

Here they are in the magnificent Florence and all Lucy is worried about is the ladies accent, this could be interpreted as snobbery and prejudice on her behalf. However we soon learn that Lucy is just a young girl who is easily influenced by her elders views. The real Lucy is revealed a few pages on when she meets the Emersons, she feels for them unlike Miss Barlett who is

quick to disregard them because of their clothes. Lucy is optimistic and has a warm personality and this what first attracts George to her. Lucy's social restraints on how to behave are loosened in Italy by George, we start to see her finding out about life first hand, and forming her own opinions on how things should be, she sets her own moral standards. When she has to return to England she is met by all there restrictions and limitations that she had lost in Italy, she tries to forget about George and Italy and tries to become what everyone else wants her to become. Her mother notices it

" You were devoted to her as a young girl. . ."

She is making her feel guilty for changing, Cecil's making her go against things she's always loved and respected. She is unhappy with Cecil whom she is due to marry and she is worried about what kind of life he offers, she dreams of George and the romantic kiss they shared on the mountains of Florence.

George represents freedom and excitement, he has his own views on the world and has no restrictions, limitations or boundaries on how to behave. When George meets Lucy he shows her how life should be, he helps her to have fun and discover he own personality. George's personality is reflected in their kiss, he acted on impulse it was full of passion and meaning just like when him and his father are offering the ladies their room - The Emmersons are passionate about what they believe is right.

E. M Forster introduces Cecil as a typical Englishman. He carries all the social restraints and is unable to act on the moment, he represents all that Lucy is trying to avoid, and he has no sense of judgement, adventure or Humour. He

enjoys showing people up and people less fortunate than him are usually the target of his “ jokes” he is an unpleasant man

“ My Vyse was a tease . . . he took malicious pleasure in thwarting people”

Cecil took pleasure in seeing people upset, him and Lucy have completely different angles on life. Cecil’s rigidity is shown in his kiss, he sees it as more of a formality, it is clumsy and unpleasant.

To conclude Remains of the day and A room with a view both tackle the same issues such as class, status and travel. However the way in which the author deals with them and structures the novel around them is individual. There are many characters in both novels that represent the same personalities: George and Mr Farraday represent all that is different, they offer the reader of the modern day something that they can relate to, that life wasn’t all about the stiff upper lip, people can make their own decisions.

Cecil and Lord Darlington represent the English standards, they live their lives in accordance with the “ proper” moral ways, and never experience or make their own mind on about life. To a certain extent this is where Stevens and Lucy would have fitted in – Stevens lived his life with accordance to how Lord Darlington would have liked, it isn’t until the end of the novel that he decides he wants to live a little. Lucy likewise was following the path that her mother, cousins and Miss Bartlett would have wanted. She isn’t showing her true feelings about life or George because she was afraid of being different, however she escapes the life that was set out for her and becomes truly happy.