

e-ISSN 3060-5059

DOI: 10.67227



IJTIMOIIY-GUMANITAR SOHADA ILMIY-INNOVATSION TADQIQOTLAR

ILMIY METODIK JURNAL

Scientific and Innovative Research in
Social and Humanitarian Studies

Vol. 3 • Issue 10

2026



Founded in 2024



publishscience.uz



publish_science_journal@mail.ru



PEER REVIEWED • OPEN ACCESS

KAZUO ISHIGURONING “KUNNING QOLDIQLARI” ROMANIDA KASBIY O‘ZLIK VA AYOLNING MUSTAQIL HARAKAT QILISH IMKONIYATI

Irsaliyeva Madinaxon Anvarbek qizi

Mirzo Ulug‘bek nomidagi O‘zbekiston Milliy universiteti, katta o‘qituvchi (PhD).

e-mail: irsaliyevamadina92@gmail.com ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-3574-8823>

Annotatsiya.

Ushbu maqolada Kazuo Ishiguroning “Kunning qoldiqlari” (1989) romanidagi Miss Kentonning kasbiy identifikatsiyasi va ayol mustaqilligi masalalari tahlil qilinadi. Matn va obrazlar tahlili orqali uning kasbiy mahorati, axloqiy mustaqilligi hamda ijtimoiy tabaqalanish va gender cheklovlari sharoitidagi shaxsiy tanlovlari o‘rganiladi. Tadqiqotda kasbiy mas’uliyat va shaxsiy avtonomiya o‘rtasidagi ziddiyat yoritiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Kazuo Ishiguro, Miss Kenton, ayol mustaqilligi, kasbiy identifikatsiya, gender, ijtimoiy tabaqa, uy xizmatkorligi.

ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНАЯ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ И ЖЕНСКАЯ СУБЪЕКТНОСТЬ В РОМАНЕ КАДЗУО ИСИГУРО «ОСТАТОК ДНЯ»

Ирсалиева Мадинахон Анварбек кизи

Национальный университет Узбекистана имени Мирзо Улугбека, старший преподаватель (PhD).

Аннотация.

В данной статье анализируются профессиональная идентичность и женская независимость мисс Кентон в романе Кадзуо Исигуро «Остаток дня» (1989). Посредством анализа текста и художественных образов исследуются её профессиональное мастерство, нравственная независимость и личный выбор в условиях социальной стратификации и гендерных ограничений. В исследовании раскрывается противоречие между профессиональной ответственностью и личной автономией.

Ключевые слова: Кадзуо Исигуро, мисс Кентон, женская независимость, профессиональная идентичность, гендер, социальный класс, домашняя прислуга.

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND FEMALE AGENCY IN KAZUO ISHIGURO’S “THE REMAINS OF THE DAY”

Irsaliyeva Madinaxon Anvarbek qizi

National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek, Senior Lecturer (PhD).

Abstract.

This article examines Miss Kenton’s professional identity and female independence in Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel *The Remains of the Day* (1989). Through textual and character analysis, the study explores her professional competence, moral independence, and personal choices within the constraints of social stratification and gender expectations. The research highlights the tension between professional responsibility and personal autonomy.

Keywords: Kazuo Ishiguro, Miss Kenton, female independence, professional identity, gender, social class, domestic service.

Introduction. Kazuo Ishiguro’s fiction frequently explores identity, memory, social expectations, and the consequences of personal choices. His characters often attempt to maintain a coherent understanding of themselves while living within social structures that restrict their freedom. In *The Remains of the Day* (1989), these questions are explored through Stevens, an English butler who has devoted much of his life to service at Darlington Hall. Although the novel is narrated primarily through Stevens’s memories, Miss Kenton, the former housekeeper, provides an important alternative perspective on work, responsibility, and individual choice.

Miss Kenton is not merely a supporting figure in Stevens’s story. Her professional competence, confidence, and willingness to question decisions distinguish her from the conventional image of a submissive female servant. While she works within a strict hierarchy, she develops authority through her knowledge and performance. Her character consequently offers a useful perspective on the relationship between gender, class, work, and autonomy.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY. This article investigates how Ishiguro constructs Miss Kenton as a professional woman whose independent judgement survives within a restrictive social environment. It focuses on her workplace authority, her ethical response to Lord Darlington’s decisions, and her choice to leave Darlington Hall. The central argument is that her agency is neither unlimited nor revolutionary; rather, it emerges through everyday professional actions and decisions about the direction of her life.

According to researcher Isabel Blumenroth, Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel *The Remains of the Day* focuses on the life of

its central character, a butler named Stevens. While travelling in his employer's Ford automobile, Stevens recalls the past decades he spent as the head butler at Darlington Hall. Due to the narrative perspective and Stevens's limited personal relationships, there are few supporting characters who can serve as additional sources for understanding his personality. Nevertheless, the novel features one character who provides insight into Stevens's past and the development of his character. This is Miss Kenton, who worked as the housekeeper at Darlington Hall for many years and developed a relationship with Stevens that he considered one of the most emotionally significant in his life. Miss Kenton is a key character whose role is to explore the various aspects of Stevens's personality and contribute to our understanding of how his character develops and changes throughout the novel [7, p. 2].

The article uses qualitative textual analysis and characterological analysis of *The Remains of the Day*. Particular attention is paid to Miss Kenton's dialogue, conduct, professional responsibilities, and interactions with Stevens. A socio-psychological perspective is used to connect her personal choices with the class hierarchy and gender expectations of the novel's setting. Gender analysis helps identify the ways in which she negotiates the expectations attached to women's work and domestic roles. The interpretation is based on the novel and the secondary reference materials listed at the end of the article. The aim is to analyse the evidence available in the text rather than to treat Miss Kenton as a completely independent figure outside her historical and social circumstances.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. Miss Kenton is introduced as an efficient and serious member of the Darlington Hall staff. Stevens acknowledges her professional manner, efficiency, and dedication, noting that she appears capable of advancing to the position of housekeeper. He also recognizes that, despite her youth, she gains the respect of the staff. These observations matter because Stevens himself places great value on professional standards. His recognition of Miss Kenton's abilities establishes her as a credible professional counterpart rather than a subordinate whose only function is to obey. She does not automatically accept Stevens's view simply because he holds a senior position.

Miss Kenton is introduced as an efficient and serious member of the Darlington Hall staff. Stevens acknowledges her professional dedication and ability to manage her responsibilities, observing:

"It was clear, furthermore, she was a housekeeper who took her work very seriously, and in spite of her youth she seemed to have no difficulty gaining the respect of her staff" [1, p. 57].

This observation highlights her professional competence and ability to establish authority through practical skills and responsible conduct. Despite her relatively young age and subordinate social position within the household, Miss Kenton earns the respect of her colleagues. Her professional identity is therefore constructed through competence, commitment, and interpersonal authority rather than social status alone.

Moral Judgement and Resistance to Hierarchy.

Miss Kenton's independence becomes especially visible in her response to Lord Darlington's decision to dismiss the Jewish maids. She objects to the decision, showing that her sense of right and wrong does not simply follow the wishes of her employer. Her reaction differs from Stevens's approach to service. Stevens tends to place loyalty to his employer and the performance of his duties above personal judgement. Miss Kenton, by contrast, recognizes that professional service does not require the abandonment of moral responsibility. This disagreement reveals an important dimension of her agency.

Miss Kenton's professional identity is further developed through her interactions with Stevens, which reveal both her confidence and the tensions surrounding her position within the household:

"I am most indebted to you for your advice, Mr Stevens. So do please tell me, just what marvellous things might I learn from observing your father?"

"I would have thought it obvious to anyone with eyes, Miss Kenton."

"But we have already established, have we not, that I am particularly deficient in that respect."

"Miss Kenton, if you are under the impression you have already at your age perfected yourself, you will never rise to the heights you are no doubt capable of. I might point out, for instance, you are still often unsure of what goes where and which item is which."

This seemed to take the wind out of Miss Kenton's sails somewhat [1, p. 143].

Leaving Darlington Hall: Choice and Constraint.

Miss Kenton's eventual departure from Darlington Hall is a significant act of self-definition. It marks a decision to build a future beyond the professional environment that has shaped much of her life. Leaving is not simply a change of employment; it also means stepping away from a household in which her work and personal feelings have become closely connected.

Her decision illustrates the possibilities and limits of female agency in the novel. She is able to choose a different path, but that choice is made within the social expectations of her period, including expectations surrounding marriage and family life. Ishiguro does not portray her as entirely free from convention. Instead, her independence develops through choices that are possible within, and constrained by, the circumstances available to her. The later regret she expresses about the life she might have shared with Stevens complicates the meaning of her departure. Her decision does not guarantee complete happiness, and the life she chooses cannot erase every unrealized possibility. This complexity prevents her from becoming a simple symbol of liberation. She is a person who exercises agency while living with the consequences and uncertainties that accompany choice.

Miss Kenton's characterization challenges a narrow division between powerful employers and passive servants. Within Darlington Hall, social rank limits her position, but her professional knowledge and ethical judgement give her a distinct form of authority. She is neither wholly powerless nor entirely independent. Her identity develops at the

intersection of class, gender, work, and personal values. Her contrast with Stevens is central to this interpretation. Both characters take their duties seriously, but they understand service differently. Stevens tends to treat loyalty as a defining principle that can override personal judgement. Miss Kenton is more willing to question whether an employer's decisions are morally acceptable. Their disagreement demonstrates that professionalism can be understood either as strict obedience or as responsible work informed by independent judgement.

Miss Kenton fell silent again for a moment. Then she went on: "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, 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 might have been. One should realize one has as good as most, perhaps better, and be grateful" [1, p. 185].

Her admission that she sometimes imagines "a life I may have had with you, Mr Stevens" suggests that her professional relationship with Stevens was accompanied by unfulfilled emotional desires. However, her decision to remain with her husband reflects her recognition of the consequences of her earlier choices and the social expectations surrounding marriage. The statement "One can't be forever dwelling on what might have been" emphasizes her attempt to reconcile personal regret with acceptance of her present circumstances. Nevertheless, her reflections indicate that acceptance does not necessarily eliminate emotional dissatisfaction. Through Miss Kenton, Ishiguro portrays female agency as complex and historically constrained; although she makes decisions about her own life, she must also confront the emotional consequences of unrealized possibilities.

Key Dimensions of Miss Kenton's Professional Identity and Female Agency

No.	Analytical dimension	Key characteristics	Significance
1	<i>Professional competence</i>	Efficiency, responsibility, and practical knowledge	Establishes professional authority and self-respect
2	<i>Workplace autonomy</i>	Confidence in expressing opinions and defending professional judgement	Challenges hierarchical authority
3	<i>Moral independence</i>	Opposition to the dismissal of the Jewish maids	Demonstrates ethical responsibility and resistance to injustice
4	<i>Gender and social class</i>	Exercises authority within a male-dominated, hierarchical household	Reveals the limitations imposed by gender and class
5	<i>Personal autonomy</i>	Leaves Darlington Hall to pursue a different life	Represents individual choice within social constraints
6	<i>Emotional complexity</i>	Experiences uncertainty, regret, and unrealized possibilities	Presents female agency as complex rather than absolute
7	<i>Contrast with Stevens</i>	Prioritizes independent moral judgement over unquestioning obedience	Highlights different understandings of professional service

Compiled by the author based on Kazuo Ishiguro's The Remains of the Day (1989).

Miss Kenton in *The Remains of the Day* is represented as a professionally competent and morally independent woman working within a restrictive social hierarchy. Her authority is established through efficiency, knowledge, and the respect she earns from other staff members. Her opposition to the dismissal of the Jewish maids demonstrates that she maintains a personal ethical standard rather than accepting every decision made by her employer. Her departure from Darlington Hall further expresses her desire to define her life beyond her role as housekeeper. At the same time, Ishiguro avoids presenting independence as a simple solution. Miss Kenton's choices remain shaped by social expectations, and her later reflections reveal the emotional costs of paths not taken. Her significance lies in this combination of agency and limitation. Through her, the novel suggests that social position does not determine a person's moral or professional worth and that responsible service need not require the surrender of individual judgement.

REFERENCES

1. Ishiguro K. *The Remains of the Day*. – London: Faber and Faber, 1989. – 245 p. – ISBN: 978-0-571-15310-7. – URL: <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/books/the-remains-of-the-day>.
2. Blumenroth I. The Role of Miss Kenton in the Characterisation of Stevens (in Kazuo Ishiguro's Novel *The Remains of the Day*). – GRIN Verlag, 2002. – 19 p. – URL: <https://www.grin.com/document/60193>.
3. SparkNotes. *The Remains of the Day: Miss Kenton Character Analysis* [Elektron resurs]. – URL: <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/remains/character/miss-kenton/>.
4. Toprak Sakız E. Implications of Narrative Unreliability in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* // *Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*. – 2019. – Vol. 18, № 3. – P. 1050–1057. – DOI: 10.21547/jss.494857. – URL: <https://doi.org/10.21547/jss.494857>.
5. Rizq R. What the Butler Never Said: Psychoanalysis and Knowledge in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* // *British Journal of Psychotherapy*. – 2023. – Vol. 39, № 4. – P. 751–764. – DOI: 10.1111/bjp.12863. – URL: <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjp.12863>.

-
6. Sun H. A Study of Unreliable Narration in The Remains of the Day // Academic Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences.
– 2023. – Vol. 6, № 13. – P. 1–6. – DOI: 10.25236/AJHSS.2023.061301. – URL:
<https://doi.org/10.25236/AJHSS.2023.061301>