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Affective Governance and The Management of Human Feelings in The Selected Works of Kazuo Ishiguro

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Abstract

This paper explores the works of affective governance in a small collection of novels by Kazuo Ishiguro, namely, *Never Let Me Go*, *The Remains of the Day*, and *An Artist of the Floating World*. Based on theoretical perspectives of governmentality and affect studies, the paper argues that in the fiction by Ishiguro, institutions influence not only the corporal bodies but also the space of emotional experience. Using narrative methods of memory, restraint, and self-surveillance, characters internalize power structures and, therefore, become complicit in their own governance. In *Never Let Me Go*, biopolitical power is exercised through hope and resignation mechanisms, whereas in *The Remains of the Day*, professional dignity is used to tame personal emotion, and in *An Artist of the Floating World*, collective national memory reconstructs the meaning of shame and pride. In this paper, it is hypothesized that Ishiguro develops a framework of silent authoritarianism where emotional taming is used to curb dissent, hence bringing to light the finesse of political regulation of human emotion in modern times.

Keywords: affective governance, governmentality, biopolitics, emotional regulation, memory politics, quiet authoritarianism, self-surveillance

1. Introduction

Kazuo Ishiguro has been considered as one of the most important modern English novel writers. Ishiguro was born in Nagasaki in 1954, but was raised in Britain, which makes his literary imagination transnationalism, allowing him to investigate memory, identity, and responsibility issues on the background of cultural and historical conditions. In 2017, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in the category of novels, which reveal what was said in the Swedish Academy, the depth that lies behind ordinary life. His fiction is described as having tight-reined prose, unreliable narration, and emotionally restrained narrators re-examining their past in a bid to enforce some sense of rationality to their past that is troubling their morals. It has always been remarked by the critics that Ishiguro's style of narration relies on the element of subtle revelation, in which essential truths come to light slowly through reluctance, omission, and retrospective distance (Shaffer 12). Instead of introducing dramatic political situations to the audience, Ishiguro concentrates on people whose personal emotional space mirrors greater power techniques. In books like *Never Let Me Go*, *The Remains of the Day*, and *An Artist of the Floating World*, he also explores how everyday life can be influenced by institutional norms and historical changes.

A large part of the current literature places Ishiguro in a position of post-modern memory studies, focusing on how remembering is unstable and what the moral implication(s) of false memory looks like. His narrators tend to rewrite the past in a selective manner and hide unpleasant facts, with information about their actions being delivered as reasonable in the context of their era. According to Brian W. Shaffer, Ishiguro fiction shows that story memory is a form of self-defence as well as a deception at the same time (Shaffer 34). On the same note, Cynthia F. Wong observes that his characters find it difficult to balance personal memory and collective history, particularly when it comes to the fall of the empire and post-war guilt (Wong 58). These readings make Ishiguro a novelist with great concern of moral accountability and historical responsibility. Meanwhile, critics have also engaged with the political aspect of his work, especially how ideology influences subjectivity obliquely. But although the issues of memory, trauma, and ethical failure have been explored in detail, not much has been said about how the very structure and regulation of emotions is organized within institutional frameworks. Fiction written by Ishiguro is not just an illustration of impaired memory, but also an illustration of how emotions like dignity, loyalty, hope, and nostalgia may or may not be nurtured, redirected, or held by greater social units.

The idea of affective governance presents an effective structure to comprehend this aspect of the work by Ishiguro. Based on the theory of governmentality by Michel Foucault, it is possible to see governance not as the state over people but as the influence of behaviour by means of norms internalised (Foucault 102). The best form of power is when people govern themselves based on the standards of society. That is the sense in which governance is taken over into emotional life out of physical discipline. The theory of affective economies, suggested by Sara Ahmed, further identifies the way how emotions circulate in social systems and bind people to shared identities (Ahmed 45). Emotions are not entirely individual dispositions; they are conditioned by the narratives of culture and institutional requirements. By internalising these emotional regulations, people are engaged in participating in the same system that puts them into restrictions. Affective governance hence means the control and management of feeling in such a manner that it supports political and social order. The institutions in Ishiguro novels are not based on the explicit use of coercion; rather, they mold the way the emotional setting processes work so that the characters are made to accept their place without open opposition to it.

Although the current literature is abundant, a gap in the scholarship on the analysis of Ishiguro fiction by a single framework of affective governance is still present. *The Remains of the Day* is frequently studied in terms of English identity and professional service moral blindness, whereas the analysis of *Never Let Me Go* is conducted in terms of bioethics and dystopic control. *An Artist of the Floating World* has been extensively construed in the way of Japanese nationalism and post-war reconciliation. However, these solutions seldom relate emotional control to governmental systems. As an example, the concept of dignity attributed to Stevens is often referred to with a sense of personal pride, although it can be interpreted as a form of internalised emotional discipline, which does not allow one to disagree. In the same manner, the hope of the clones in *Never Let Me Go* can be understood as innocent naivety, which also can serve as a system that guarantees obedience. When these emotional patterns are taken to be a practice of government and not necessarily a psychological characteristic, a new critical approach is sought.

As this paper suggests, Ishiguro depicts in his fiction institutions that not only regulate the bodies but also the emotional terrain and create submissive subjects of regulated feeling. In *Never Let Me Go*, the school system in Hailsham promotes invention and love and cautiously restricts the amount of knowledge they have had, ensuring that the clones do not rebel against their destiny. In *The Remains of the Day*, professional service turns dignity into a code of emotions that represses individual desire and moral doubt. In *An Artist of the Floating World*, historical memory and feeling are remade in Japanese society after the war, and shame and pride are rearranged to stabilize the political changeover. In these accounts, power operates silently by working in a refined way as opposed to apparent force. This paper is organized in such a way that it starts with a theoretical discussion of the concepts of governmentality and affect studies and ends with the detailed textual analysis of the three novels and a comparison of the ways of emotional control as a subtle yet effective form of governance. In such a way, Ishiguro appears as a novelist of memory and moral cogitation as well as a deep commentator on how contemporary societies cope with human emotion.

2. Literature Review

Critical commentaries on Kazuo Ishiguro have always focused on the theme of memory, unreliable narration, and moral responsibility. Initial research centered around the narrative strategies according to which the main characters of Ishiguro rebuild their pasts in tentative, disjointed, and sometimes self-delusional methods. Brian W. Shaffer states that both Ishiguro-narrators are trying to make sense out of their lives, though indirectly and evidenced by evading moral responsibility, the unsteadiness of recollection as the source of truth (Shaffer 15). In the same spirit, Cynthia F. Wong points out that Ishiguro fiction predicts selectivity in recollection and narrative gaps and explains that memory is a protective mechanism that helps to avoid feelings of guilt and shame (Wong 42). In books like *The Remains of the Day* and *An Artist of the Floating World*, critics note that the phenomenon of memory is not a neutral process but is colored by the influence of psychology and ideological forces. The manner of narration used by the narrators, the inhibited one and the slow discovery, establishes the so-called controlled distance in emotion that James Wood refers to as such: the reader has to read between the lines that the narrators themselves cannot recognize (Wood 182). To a great extent, therefore, early criticism places Ishiguro in postmodern memory studies, and his novel as a reflection on the ethics of memory and the instability of subjective truth.

These arguments have focused on the issue of unreliable narration. The main characters of Ishiguro seem to be honest but still do not realize that they themselves are blind to morality. *The Remains of the Day* by Stevens, for example, justifies his unwavering affection to Lord Darlington, as historical facts reveal the opposite fascist leanings of the latter. Other critics like Kathleen Wall believe that Ishiguro has made the task of unreliable narration difficult by introducing a group of narrators who are not deliberately self-deceptive but, psychologically, have a personal stake in maintaining their own self-image (Wall 24). This minor plot device compels the reader to face the moral aspects of self-excuse. On the same note, in *An Artist of the Floating World*, Masuji Ono unravels his role in propaganda of the war slowly but presents his activities as noble in its historical context. The conflict between revelation and denial has prompted critics to view Ishiguro fiction as a lifelong investigation of the problem of moral complicity and the boundaries of self-awareness.

In addition to narrative technique, a second line of research looks at the political and historical aspects of the work of Ishiguro. There has been a critical examination of how his novels have led to post-war guilt, national decline, and ideological transition. Researchers usually pay attention to the reconstruction of Japanese identity in the post-World War II in the studies of *An Artist of the Floating World*. Wong is of the idea that the novel embodies an uncomfortable transition between militaristic nationalism and democratic reform, with a focus on how people bargain with shame and responsibility in a new political environment (Wong 65). Equally, the interpretations of *The Remains of the Day* view Stevens as an icon of the fading imperial powers of Britain and the false sense of loyalty. The obedience of the butler to aristocratic order reflects a national nostalgia of the sense of grandeur that has passed, and the way of personal feeling that meets the history of the nation.

This analysis can be broadened to political interpretations of *Never Let Me Go* by looking at it through the prism of biopolitics and bioethics. Using the idea of biopower by Michel Foucault, critics state that the system of cloning in the novel is the best example of the modern type of government, which controls life itself (Foucault 138). Bruce Robbins reads the novel as an attack on liberal humanism, in which empathy goes hand in hand with structural exploitation (Robbins 289). The acceptance of fate of the clones brings out issues of consent, autonomy, and institutional power. Although these works help shed light on the political institutions that form the basis of the dystopian society in which Ishiguro functions, they tend to

focus their attention on issues of bodily regulation and ethical conflicts as opposed to emotion regulation. It focuses more on external regimes of domination as opposed to the covert nurturing of feeling that makes people obey. During the last several years, one can also note an increased focus by scholars on the ethical aspect of Ishiguro fiction. His works are often seen as ethical inquiries of responsibility and accountability. Critics observe that his reserved prose style stimulates the judgmental mind and not the emotional overblown. Nevertheless, even in ethical criticism, people are mainly concerned with actions and decisions, as opposed to focusing on emotional structures that define actions. Although literature recognizes that characters are reinventing guilt or holding onto the concept of dignity, they seldom theorize such feelings as a result of governance. Consequently, the emotional existence of the characters in Ishiguro is perceived on most occasions to be rather psychological than political.

This literature review has shown that there is a gap. Though memory, nationalism, post-war guilt, and biopolitics have received significant focus, there is no long-term effort to develop these themes on the basis of a consolidated affect-theoretical framework. The new discipline of affect studies, exemplified by Sara Ahmed and Lauren Berlant, focuses on the manner in which emotions circulate in social systems and attach individuals to institutions (Ahmed 8; Berlant 2). The idea of affective economies, as introduced by Ahmed, shows that emotions are not just personal phenomena but organized forces in society that maintain collective identities. The idea of cruel optimism by Berlant also supports the reason why people are still engaged with systems that restrict and hurt them. However, such theoretical insights have not been applied to major novels of Ishiguro in a comparative way. Although some sources mention affect singularly, it is not researched entirely, which discusses how emotional regulation is governed usually as a form of control in his works.

The given work attempts to fulfill this gap, as it attempts to align Ishiguro with the interdisciplinary approach of affect studies and political literary criticism. Instead of considering memory as perilous narration or emphasizing historical guilt, this approach examines how institutions influence emotional reactions so as to create a sense of stability. The paper combines Foucault theory of governmentality with affect theory to contend that, in the works of Ishiguro, a kind of governmentality is imposed through emotional polish instead of coercion. In this way, it carries on the current reading of politics, even though it brings a new perspective. This view does not only add more insight to our discernment about the narrative technique of Ishiguro, but it also serves to enlarge the discussions on how contemporary communities control feeling, attachment, and loyalty. In this context, Ishiguro comes out as an author who reveals how human feeling is manipulated in the background of modern-day power regimes.

3. Theoretical Framework: Affective Governance and Governmentality

The present study is based on the interrelated ideas of governmentality, affect theory, and memory studies to create a framework that can be applied in comprehending affective governance. The term denotes the use of emotion as a form of control and governance in institutional systems where power is not just exercised by law and discipline but rather by the control of desire, loyalty, shame, and attachment. To describe this process, the framework combines an approach of Michel Foucault's theory of governmentality, Sara Ahmed's theory of affective economies, and Lauren Berlant's theory of cruel optimism. These two viewpoints help us to understand how emotional life is turned into a place of political governance and how people become the stakeholders of their governance by means of internal feeling.

This analysis is based on the concept of governmentality presented by Michel Foucault. Foucault suggests in his lectures and essays on power that contemporary forms of government are not confined to sovereign power or legal coercion but are involved in the type of subtle techniques that govern behavior and structure everyday life (Foucault, "Governmentality" 102). Governmentality is the act of acting or the manner in which institutions lead people to control themselves in relation to accepted standards. Foucault follows a historical trend from discipline to biopolitics. Surveillance, examination, and normalization are the mechanisms of power in disciplinary societies, including schools, prisons, and military institutions (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 170). Discipline brings about docile bodies because it trains people into internalizing observation and correction. Nevertheless, in contemporary societies, power extends to biopolitics, where the issue of governing people is about how to manage populations, health, reproduction, and even life itself (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 138). The power of biopolitics does not simply penalize but controls and streamlines life processes.

This disciplinary change to biopolitics ultimately results in self-regulation. People start to watch themselves as per social standards. Power is internalized and not forced. Here, emotional self-surveillance comes into center stage. Individuals train on what emotions they should express and which they have to suppress. They measure their feelings against the cultural norms of dignity, patriotism, or responsibility. Governance, therefore, comes into the sphere of affect. When one is able to control anger, stifle opposition, or reinvent guilt as devotion, he or she is playing on oneself. According to Foucault, contemporary power is effective only due to not looking like power; it becomes part of self and moral decision-making (Governmentality 103). Internalized authority thus is the most subtle governance, where subjects are willing to align their emotional lives to the expectations of institutions.

When Foucault defines the structural processes of governance, the theory of affective economies by Sara Ahmed helps to understand how emotions move inside social structures. According to Ahmed, in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, emotions are not psychological states of individuals but social forces that flow between bodies and accrue value (Ahmed 8). Emotions are attached to objects, institutions, and identities, forming collective attachments. Indicatively, nationalism can be associated with pride in the country and disgrace of opposition. By doing this, emotions are exchanged as economic

commodities, and they form ties and hierarchies. Ahmed stresses that emotions like fear, love, and hatred do not exist in the minds of individuals only; they are created in the course of repetitive stories and interpersonal relations (45). Therefore, political communities exist because of emotional circulation.

Specifically important political tools in affective economies are shame, loyalty, and nostalgia. Shame punishes people, reminding them of their failure to adhere to accepted standards. It is loyalty that subjects people to institutions, despite the fact that such institutions are morally compromised. Nostalgia is a re-formation of the past that happens in emotionally reassuring ways, stabilizing collective identity. These feelings, through repetition, become symbolic and strengthen established authority. The framework offered by Ahmed assists in understanding how emotions get transformed into resources of systems of governance. They cause some sense of attachment and obedience to ensure that institutions are not only sustained by obligation but also by feeling. It is through emotional build-up that value is created for political orders to maintain authority without the appearance of coercion.

This is further elaborated by the idea of cruel optimism by Lauren Berlant, which dwells on the issue of attachment. In *Cruel Optimism*, Berlant refers to cruel optimism as a state whereby people are still bound to objects or institutions that do not promote their flourishing (Berlant 1). These attachments are not always droppable because they provide stability, recognition, or meaning even where they result in harm. Desire is made a process of ruling since it makes subjects be bound to systems that restrict them. People are willing to put their hearts into things like professional dignity, romantic fulfillment, or national pride, despite the ideals hiding structural injustice. Cruel optimism describes the reason why subjects fail to object to oppressive systems; the bonds themselves are a regulation.

According to the theory of governance developed by Berlant, fear or discipline is not the only way to maintain governance but also through desire. Humans desire to be members, to be known, to be worthy. These desires are molded by institutions, which provide emotional goods in exchange. Resistance can be neutralized by the promise of dignity, hope, or reconciliation. In this respect, affective governance is achieved by way of attachment. People voluntarily identify themselves with systems of power since their emotional investments are tied to the systems. Desire is, therefore, a force stabilizing political systems.

The role of memory in linking these theoretical strands is very important. It is possible to think of memory as an emotional library where emotional stories are stored, which constitute identity and legitimize action. Narrative reconstruction enables one to redefine past happenings in a manner that resonates with current demands. According to scholars involved in memory studies, memory is selective and usually influenced by modern values (Assmann 37). Memory is not, then, an impartial account but an active process of making meaning. People are in control of their emotional reactions to guilt, blame, or remorse when they are recreating the past.

Memory acts as emotional regulation as it structures feeling into coherent tales. People maintain a consistent sense of self by selective recollection of events and downplaying others. This biased recall may also be ideologically oriented. National historians have a tendency to emphasize heroic instances and to downplay occurrences of violence. By so doing, memory is a governance instrument, molding mass feeling. It is through ideological filtering that it is identified which feelings can be aired publicly and which ones should be suppressed. Therefore, memory is a process by which affective government is able to sustain itself over time.

A combination of these theories can be described as affective governance, whereby discipline is transformed into self-regulation, in which feelings are transferred as political resources, one binds oneself to restrictive structures through attachments, and stabilizes attachments to these structures by selective narration. Governmentality gives the structural rationality of self-policing; affective economies, the processes of distributing and storing emotion; cruel optimism, the reasons why something harmful is perpetuated; memory, the archive by which such processes are justified and normalized. It is a complete system of analysis of the way modern institutions cope with not only behavior but also feeling. It modulates the emphasis on open coercion to the subtle manipulation of emotions, the process of governance being an extremely interior one.

Using this theoretical model in literary texts can allow one to interpret characters not so much as psychological individuals but as individuals under the influence of emotional regimes. Their restraint, loyalty, hope, or nostalgia can be used as consequences of organized state, not as individual characteristics. It is, however, this framework which gives the conceptual basis for studying how emotional life is a core location of political power.

4. Core Textual Analysis

4.1 Never Let Me Go: Biopolitics and Emotional Conditioning

Kazuo Ishiguro in *Never Let Me Go* offers a dystopian society where cloned children are born and brought up to donate organs, but the machine that regulates them is not based on open bloodshed. Rather, it functions based on what Michel Foucault refers to as biopolitics, which is the control of life on the population level (*History of Sexuality* 138). The Hailsham clones are biopolitical subjects since their bodies are made and controlled in the interest of society. They are all instrumental in their existence and are brought up in an apparently humanized setting. This blend of love and exploitation is a holdover to the present-day system of governance, where life is maximised and ruled instead of being outright ruined. The students are raised as knowing that they will be donors, but this fact is brought out progressively, normalized using more commonly

used language, and presented as the only possible course of life (Ishiguro 81). They do not realize themselves as prisoners since the establishment influences their emotional reactions from childhood.

The educational process in Hailsham is a mixture of emotional nurturing and deprivation of epistemics. Students are motivated to make friends, draw pictures, and experience romanticism. Meanwhile, important details regarding their origin and use are not disclosed. As Miss Lucy tries to be more open with them on their future, she is ousted as her intervention is seen to mess with the well-established balance (81–82). This is a strategy through which emotional maturity is attained without awareness of politics. Knowledge restriction aids the institution in avoiding critical thinking and developing sensitivity and attachment. The idea of governmentality by Foucault describes the way in which norms are internalized by the subjects, and they are self-regulated without being forced to do so (Foucault, *Governmentality* 102). The clones do not require 24/7 monitoring; they have been molded to submit to their fate.

Hailsham governance is based on regulated production of art, limited knowledge, and petite pedagogical affection. The school philosophy focuses on art. Madame gathers the paintings and poems of students in the Madame Gallery, allegedly to show that the clones have souls. Nevertheless, art is a technology of control too. Passion is promoted but tamed within reasonable boundaries. According to Sara Ahmed, emotions flow and cling to things, adding social value (Ahmed 45). The Gallery converts the creativity of the clones to provide evidence of a moral legitimacy of the system. Limited knowledge also makes rebellion impossible through timing and framing information. Lastly, the parenting of the guardians is affectionate, which leads to trust and dependency. There is a benevolent look of the system, and it makes it less suspicious. Power, therefore, functions in a soft manner, which matches emotional life with institutional objectives.

The affective mechanisms in this structure are hope, romantic attachment, and resignation. The gossip about the deferrals enables Kathy and Tommy to hope that love would postpone the donation. The concept of cruel optimism by Lauren Berlant explains how this hope continues to hold onto damaging systems (Berlant 1). The clones pour in their emotions in a fantasy that turns out to be a lie, but this hope does not allow collective opposition. The emotionality of romantic relationships is turned outwards into intimate matters instead of political consciousness. The characters are not questioning the organization of exploitation, but their own misunderstanding and desires. With time, resignation is normalized. Kathy is serenely expecting herself to be brought into completion, which is the outcome of affective conditioning (Ishiguro 288). The act of life and death control is thus also in association with the compliance of affection. The empathy among readers is also demonstrated by the fact that they can sympathise with the story despite the lack of rebellion in the work in progress, a phenomenon that Bruce Robbins calls moral discomfort but lacks structural change (Robbins 299). The novel finally shows how emotional polish will help to thwart rebellion. The system makes the subjects obey without coercion by influencing their emotions.

4.2 The Remains of the Day: Emotional Suppression and Professional Loyalty

In *The Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro alternates dystopian biopolitics with the English aristocratic world, but the logic of affective government is in focus. The butler of Darlington Hall, Stevens, depicts affective self-governance. His autobiography is told in the words of dignity and professional pride, and this is the reason why he absolutely defends his unswerving adherence to Lord Darlington; however, the latter makes political errors. As scholars observe, Stevens is a perfect example of unreliable narration, which is based on self-preservation memory (Wall 24). Nevertheless, in addition to narrative unreliability, Stevens shows how governmentality creates self-policing individuals. He does not need outside correction, since he has assimilated the code of service. His personality relies on emotional control.

Dignity serves as a kind of emotional disciplining. According to Stevens, greatness in butlering is that one is able to stay level-headed despite all the situations and overcome any feeling inside oneself to act in the bakery of duty (Ishiguro, *Remains* 43). This ideal works emotional repression into moral virtue. Still, Stevens serves guests even after his father dies because it is his duty to get his way. Excellence is manifested through emotional suppression. The internalized authority theory put forward by Foucault describes the way in which people internalize norms under which they judge their actions without being directly controlled (*Discipline and Punish* 170). Stevens regulates himself, making sure that passion, suspicion, or repentance do not get in the way of service.

Governance in this novel exists in terms of emotional repression as morality, as internalized national loyalty, and as strategic silence. Stevens views an oath of allegiance to Lord Darlington as an oath of allegiance to England. His loyalty is a nostalgic conformity with the social order, which is hierarchical. According to Ahmed, the theory of affective economies goes on to say that feelings of pride and loyalty make people attached to national identity (Ahmed 8). This attachment is shown by the fact that Stevens does not comment on the political mistakes made by Darlington. He does not want to confront and redefine, maintaining an image of moral uprightness. The fact that he did not recognize the emotional importance of Miss Kenton is yet another indication that professional morals are more important than feeling. Even silence turns into a form of government, restricting feelings and critical thinking.

The theoretical connection between the concept of governmentality and cruel optimism explains the condition of Stevens. He is attached to an aristocratic ideology that has lost its glory, as he thinks that his sacrifices were not in vain. Cruel optimism is the idea of attachments that cripple flourishing and whose promise of stability is apparent (Berlant 1). The devotion of Stevens to dignity brings identity and loss of emotions and regrets. He is both subject and agent of emotional regulation: subject since he incorporates institutional norms, and agent since he actively imposes the rules on himself. The

novel, therefore, shows that emotional repression can support the longevity of political institutions despite them losing their legitimacy.

4.3 An Artist of the Floating World: National Memory and Emotional Reconstruction

In the book *An Artist of the Floating World*, Ishiguro explores the theme of affective governance as was seen in post-war Japan. Masuji Ono, the main character, is a painter who assisted in nationalist propaganda in the war. Japanese society is politically and culturally changed in the context of defeat. Ono recounts his history reluctantly, and bit by bit, he opens up to the world about his role in the ideology of the empire. According to scholars, the novel reflects the contradiction between memory and upholding responsibility in the reconstruction of the post-war world (Wong 65). However, even more than personal responsibility, the text shows how group emotion is restructured in political transition.

Ono alters his emotional past in order to retain dignity. He switches between pride in his influence and the recognition of regrets. This alternation is a selective recall in accordance with the current situation. Memory is transformed into an affective archive, which filters shame and recreates pride. According to Aleida Assmann, cultural memory is constantly being reconstructed in such a manner that it becomes aligned with the values of today (Assmann 37). Artistic propaganda had honor when wartime nationalism was used in the case of Ono. The activities of the same people cause embarrassment after the war. Emotional sense changes depending on politics.

Governance works through wartime nationalist feeling, the reconfiguration of guilt in the post-war period, and changes in generational affections. Imperial ideology was supported by pride and loyalty during the war. When people lose, a humble attitude and change are promoted by discourse. Younger generations dissociate themselves from nationalistic feeling, leading to tensions in families. The theory of Ahmed gives an explanation of the circulation of emotions and reconnection to new political narratives (Ahmed 45). Shame is transformed into a punitive system, and people are fitted to conform to democracy. The efforts of Ono to rewrite his past can be used to show how it is possible to edit memory to maintain self-respect and adjust to new demands.

The novel shows that emotional revision makes political transition stable. Society deals with guilt by doing gradual reinterpretation rather than by means of violent reckoning. The continuity and change, which are evident in Ono's narrative, reveal how emotional internalization promotes larger transformation. In this use, memory is ideological editing. The reorganization of shame, guilt, and pride makes sure that there is social stability. Ishiguro unveils that government goes so far as emotional re-creation of the past, not just the way history is recalled but the way it is experienced.

5. Comparative Framework

5.1 Comparative Thematic Table

Theme	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>	<i>The Remains of the Day</i>	<i>An Artist of the Floating World</i>
Governance Type	Biopolitical	Professional-feudal	Nationalist
Emotional Tool	Hope	Dignity	Nostalgia / Shame
Resistance	Minimal	Internalized	Rewritten memory
Outcome	Acceptance of death	Emotional regret	Ambiguous reconciliation

The comparative analysis of *Never Let Me Go*, *The Remains of the Day*, and *An Artist of the Floating World* shows that, despite the fact that all these novels are built in the context of different historical and cultural backgrounds, they are united by a common logic of affective government. There is a difference in the type of government: in the dystopian world of clones, it is biopolitical in nature; in interwar England, it is professional-feudal; and nationalist in post-war Japan. But each of the three texts shows how emotional life is governed through the use of institutions to achieve stability.

In *Never Let Me Go*, governance is biopolitical since it controls life and death directly. It is the bodies of the clones that are produced and sacrificed to the wellbeing of others as a form of modern biopower that creates life and lets die (History of Sexuality 138). Nevertheless, this rule is not based on violence, but it is maintained by hope and emotional conditioning. The threat of deferrals and the opinion that love could change fate are uses of emotions that hold rebellion at bay. The amount of resistance is low since hope is a way of transferring unhappiness into individual desire. The resultant effect is the acceptance of death, not by violence but by developed resignation (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* 288).

In *The Remains of the Day*, power is professional-feudal, based on hierarchy, service, and aristocratic control. The ethic of dignity that Stevens embraces shapes his emotional life and identifies restraint as an equivalent of moral greatness (Ishiguro, *Remains* 43). Dignity is the leading emotional resource, which controls expressiveness and represses doubt. Discipline is internalized in Stevens as opposed to being forced through outside pressure. Kathleen Wall notes that his narration shows how self-defense is a disguise of underlying moral conflict (Wall 24). Opposition is internalized; Stevens does not openly criticize the political decisions of Lord Darlington, not even when they turn out to be ethically doubtful. The result is emotional regret, which is manifested when he realizes too late that his obedience had cost him personal happiness.

In *An Artist of the Floating World*, the government is of a nationalist character. The recollections of Masuji Ono of propaganda during the war and of adjusting to post-war life depict how group identity reinvigorates feeling. The ideology of nationalism is perpetuated by pride and loyalty during the war and afterwards turned into shame and moderation (Wong 65). Nostalgia and shame are devices of coping with historical transition. Opposition is manifested in the remaking of memory

instead of open opposition. Ono is slowly amending his history, neither making full confession nor denying responsibility. The result is a compromised reconciliation, in which social change becomes stabilized and not drastically broken by emotional adaptation.

5.2 Synthesis

In all these novels, Ishiguro subjects us to soft rule instead of blatant oppression. Power is never based on visible violence as the main factor in any of the three texts. Physical control is secondary to emotional control even in the dystopian environment of *Never Let Me Go*. This is in line with Foucault's theory of governmentality, where power is effective because it is normalized subtly as opposed to spectacle ("Governmentality" 102). Institutions sound kind, decent, or traditionally warranted. Hailsham calls itself progressive education, Darlington Hall honorable service, and post-war Japan moral renewal. Lack of obvious brutality decreases the possibility of resistance because the subjects will not feel like they are oppressed.

Emotional regulation acts as political control in all three stories. The idea of affective economies introduced by Sara Ahmed describes the circulation of emotions inside institutions and connects people to collective systems (Ahmed 8). In *Never Let Me Go*, hope binds the clones to the hope of romantic fulfilment and does not allow any political awareness. In *The Remains of the Day*, dignity binds Stevens to the hierarchy of his profession, the personal identity with loyalty to the institution. Nostalgia and shame are disseminated through national discourse in the book *An Artist of the Floating World* as they refract the ways in which the past is experienced and recalled. Emotions are not instantaneous responses but rather organised responses that are promoted by social accounts.

All three novels put the protagonists in a state of complicit action in self-regulation. They internalize norms and put them on themselves. Kathy does not reject donation because it is the natural course of things; Stevens keeps his emotions in order by acting in accordance with dignity; Ono removes the parts of his memories that will lead to a lack of respectability. This is an indication of the fact that Foucault saw the subject of today ruling themselves by internalizing power (*Discipline and Punish* 170). The concept of cruel optimism by Lauren Berlant also explains why this kind of complicity is perpetuated. Both heroes cling to principles that restrain them, including hope of being put off, dignity of service, and pride of nationalist contribution (Berlant 1). These attachments give meaning despite them hiding structural injustice.

Lastly, the normalization of institutional power is silent throughout all three texts. Power is hardly dramatized as tyranny. Rather, it seems internalized into the daily existence of the person or in their work or even cultural recollection. Revolutions are not portrayed in the stories; they are adapting. Rebellion is substituted with emotional refinement. Readers observe characters who have a sense of loss or regret but never arguably oppose the systems in which they were formed. This silent normalization implies that rule is best performed when it becomes no different than commonplace sentiment.

Collectively, these novels prove that Ishiguro is not worried about remembering or being guilty but about emotional life management in institutions, which is delicate. In either a dystopian biomedical state, a decadent aristocratic family, or a nationalist society in the wake of war, the functioning of the state is based on the cultivation of certain emotions: hope, dignity, nostalgia, and shame, which are perpetuating. This comparative framework thus substantiates the fact that affective governance is the logic behind the integration of these different stories. Emotional control turns into the most important technology of control, and the lack of open revolt supports the effectiveness of this approach. The fiction eventually shows that contemporary power is elusive, internalized, and highly emotional, as Ishiguro discovers.

6. Affective Governance Beyond the Core Trilogy

Though this paper centers on *Never Let Me Go*, *The Remains of the Day*, and *An Artist of the Floating World*, two subsequent novels, *Klara and the Sun* and *The Buried Giant*, bring Ishiguro into new areas of narration as he examines the power of affective governance. These pieces of work support the main argument, which is that emotional life is organized, governed, and politically important.

In *Klara and the Sun*, Ishiguro focuses on artificial intelligence and programmed empathy. Klara, an Artificial Friend, which is created to give children emotional support, represents the institutional regulation of affect in a technologically advanced society. Klara is not biologically but emotionally engineered, unlike the clones of *Never Let Me Go*. She is made to take in loneliness, provide comfort, and bring about a normalization of family relationships. Even empathy can be programmed. According to the novel, emotional labor may be delegated to machines, which is why authenticity and commodification are brought up. Klara is unwaveringly devoted and optimistic, which is similar to the attachments that Lauren Berlant defines as supporting unequal structures at the expense of the individual (Berlant 1). Human characters also control their emotions as per the social demands of academic improvement and technology. Affective governance, therefore, functions on the basis of normalized artificial care and silent acceptance of competitive social inequalities.

In *The Buried Giant*, Ishiguro switches to a mythical post-Arthurian setting where collective amnesia does not allow violence between Britons and the Saxons. Forgetting is massively brought about by a magical fog, which erases the memory of atrocities of the past. In this case, governance is based on imposed forgetting as opposed to emotional development. The novel fictionalizes what Michel Foucault describes as the governance of people using subtle methods that influence the behavioral pattern of the masses (*Governmentality* 102). Through forgetting, society stabilizes unstable peace. But it is the

revival of memory that poses a threat of renewed violence. Emotional reconciliation is reliant on regulated ignorance. The theory of cultural memory developed by Aleida Assmann can be used to explain the way in which selective memory perpetuates political order (Assmann 37). To forget becomes a mode of governance and controls grief, resentment, and revenge.

These later novels, when considered together with the core trilogy, strengthen the trend of soft governance. In *Never Let Me Go*, hope is a deterrent to revolt; in *The Remains of the Day*, it is dignity that triggers emotion; in *An Artist of the Floating World*, it is nostalgia that creates a new national identity. Equally, empathy in *Klara and the Sun* is fabricated to balance inequality, and in *The Buried Giant*, it is forgetting that governs group aggression. Throughout the genres Ishiguro writes about, namely, realist, dystopian, historical, and allegorical, power has always been shown to act via emotional sensitization instead of direct force.

These supplementary readings, therefore, extend the reach of affective governance without pushing the main subject of the paper to the periphery. They attest that Ishiguro has long been preoccupied with the political management of feeling in his literary work. His fiction, be it biopolitical sacrifice, professional loyalty, nationalist memory, artificial empathy, or collective amnesia, all demonstrate that modern governance does not succeed through the repression of emotion but through its organization.

7. Original Contribution: Affective Governance and Quiet Authoritarianism

This paper hypothesizes that the chosen novels by Kazuo Ishiguro all express a political paradigm, which can be termed silent authoritarianism. As opposed to classical authoritarian structures characterized by censorship, acts of violence, and outright repression, quiet authoritarianism operates through emotional polishing and internalized control. Things do not seem to arise as tyrannical in institutions; on the contrary, they are shown to be humane, dignified, or necessitated in history. However, behind this veneer, there is an organized control of feeling that brings about obedient subjects. *Never Let Me Go* does not make its cloning system based on brutality but on cautiously nurtured hope and slow revelation. In *The Remains of the Day*, the aristocratic order is not maintained through force but through professional pride and control of emotions. In *An Artist of the Floating World*, there is no obvious coercion to restructure memory and emotion by nationalist ideology. Throughout these works, there is success in governance since governance becomes a part and parcel of personal virtue, loyalty, or reconciliation. Quiet authoritarianism, therefore, refers to a system where power works in a subtle but efficient manner in terms of affecting power through control.

The study presents three conceptual tools to explain this intervention: Affective Docility, Narrative Self-Policing, and Ethical Melancholia. Affective Docility describes the situation whereby subjects govern themselves and their feelings according to the expectations of the institution. Using the concept of docile bodies as introduced by Michel Foucault (*Discipline and Punish* 170), the concept presumes the extension of discipline to the emotional sphere. The easy acceptance that Kathy demonstrates towards donation, Stevens showing grief in a suppressed way, and Ono displaying regret moderately depict how people get to know how to feel the way they should in well-organized systems. They feel in line with institutional logic, which makes them follow orders without coercion.

Narrative Self-Policing explains how Ishiguro's narrators are policing their own stories. They choose what to remember, are hesitant, and justify thoroughly what they do by selective memory. This is in line with Foucault's theory of governmentality, that power acts through self-surveillance ("Governmentality" 102). Stevens repackages loyalty as greatness; Ono dilutes his moral wartime excitement; Kathy cools her own destiny. Their histories show that they have an internal censor that maintains coherence and dignity. Narration turns into a governance practice, which constructs individual identity and generates overall meaning.

Ethical Melancholia reflects the affective residue that is left behind in situations whereby the characters are aware of loss and fail to directly challenge structural injustice. Melancholia maintains the appeal to false ideals, unlike active guilt, which requires reparation. The idea of cruel optimism, as formulated by Lauren Berlant, helps understand such attachments as the ones that continue to exist despite the damage (Berlant 1). The silent regret of Stevens, the nostalgic contemplation of Kathy, and the ambivalent reconciliation of Ono is an example of muted grief that does not shake but balances the status quo. Ethical Melancholia is thus the name given to the emotional mood according to which silent authoritarianism persists.

The introduction of these ideas places the study in the context of affect theory and political literary critique. It develops the fact that there is circulation of emotions within social structures and maintains collective attachments, as developed by Sara Ahmed (Ahmed 8), and expands this theory to literary analysis of narrative structure and character psychology. Instead of reading Ishiguro as a novelist of memory or trauma, the analysis transforms his fiction into a prolonged reflection upon the way in which contemporary governance deals with the issue of feeling. This method is the combination of biopolitics, nationalism, and professional hierarchy through a shared theoretical prism of affective regulation.

The greater significance of this intervention is that it is applicable to current studies of governance. With the advent of the neoliberal self-management era, soft power, and emotional branding in contemporary societies, the exercise of authority takes a more affective and less coercive approach. This situation is predicted in the novels by Ishiguro, in which characters voluntarily conform their emotional lives to the standards of institutions. Silent authoritarianism is thereby a literary paradigm for comprehending modern types of power, where obedience is obtained by use of attachment, dignity, hope, and nostalgia. This study introduces a novel vocabulary to the study of how affective docility, narrative self-policing, and ethical melancholy are managed in politics and literature by creating a new conceptualization of these ideas.

8. Conclusion

This paper has stated that the chosen novels of Kazuo Ishiguro show a recognizable tendency of affective government, where institutions control emotional existence as opposed to traditional repression. The paper has shown through the critical examination of *Never Let Me Go*, *The Remains of the Day*, and *An Artist of the Floating World* that governance in the fiction of Ishiguro works by creating hope, dignity, nostalgia, shame, and resignation. His characters are not governed mainly by violence or surveillance, but they adopt emotional norms that set their personal identities in accordance with institutional demands. Emotional refinement is the key tool that is used to obtain compliance. The argument that Ishiguro represents institutions that control emotional geographies and not just bodies is therefore maintained in a variety of historical and cultural contexts.

There is an emotional control aspect to Ishiguro that comes out as a result of this reading that makes him a political novelist. His writing is controlled and his stories personal, but the meaning is deeply political. Through developed hope and normalization in *Never Let Me Go*, biopolitical control is successful since the clones embrace their destiny. In *The Remains of the Day*, professional hierarchy is still present since dignity controls inner emotion and does not allow dissent. The Japanese national transformation in the novel *An Artist of the Floating World* is stabilized as a result of the emotional restructuring of memory. In these writings, governance has been seen as an internal process. To preserve social order, characters police themselves, redefine their own past, and change their emotional reactions. Power is silent, intangible, and fully ingrained in daily emotion.

Such a framework is also familiar to modern international politics. The use of soft power is becoming more popular in modern states, which shape the opinion of the population using the effects of culture instead of direct force. Emotional nationalism uses pride, fear, and nostalgia to consolidate identity and avoid criticism. Instead of emotional discipline being the responsibility of the government, neoliberal self-management persuades people to manage their productivity, resilience, and optimism on their own. These developments are predicted by Ishiguro in his fiction, where his subjects voluntarily conform their emotional existence to dominant structures. In his writings, it is implied that the reality of government in the twenty-first century is less apparent repression and more of an affective congruency.

The framework can be expanded to include future research into the emerging field of AI governance, where programmed empathy and algorithmic influence become a part of emotional experience. The emergence of emotional capitalism, where emotions are sold and marketing of feelings spreads in digital space, speaks to the political importance of affect once again. Also, the environmental crisis causes a sense of collective grief, which poses a question of how such emotions are regulated on the global level. Ishiguro's work offers a literary predicate to explore these developments, and it is evident in the book that the control of emotion is still a key point in the functioning of contemporary power.

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