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### Identity Crisis and the Effect of Society in the Works of Kazuo Ishiguro through the Lens of Erik Erikson

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<p><b>Article type:</b> Research Article</p> <p><b>Article history:</b> Received: 11 December 2021 Revised in: 02 October 2022 Accepted: 31 October 2022 Published online: Summer 2024</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Erik Erikson, Identity Crisis, Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>Never Let Me Go</i>, <i>The Remains of the Day</i>.</p>	<p>Eric Erikson, a prominent student of Sigmund Freud, redefined the terms psychosocial development, psychohistory, identity, identity crisis, and ego strength. He built his theoretical framework based on Freud's ideas and expanded it by adding three additional principles of young adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood, and presented his own eight-stage theory of personality. Erikson considers social conditions important in the development of personality and emphasizes that society is not only a source of frustration but can also be a source of hope. What is important in this study is the presence of society as an influential and progressive factor for mental construction or destruction. In other words, society, like a negative personality, brings the space of personalities under its total control. In the present study, Mr. Stevens in Kazuo Ishiguro's <i>The Remains of the Day</i> (1989) and Kathy in his <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (2005) are analyzed in an attempt to determine if these characters are adaptable to Erik Erikson's identity crisis theory. Therefore, this paper attempts to answer the following research questions: What are the functions of society and its manifestations in the main characters, and what role does it play in their regression or progression? And ultimately, why do the main characters in the selected novels experience guilt, and what is the root of this guilt?</p> <p>In the psychological analyses based on Erikson's theory, emphasis has typically been placed on examining the positive aspects of personalities to provide useful strategies for parenting to parents. However, this study delves into the negative behavior of the main characters in two novels by Ishiguro to demonstrate how social systems can lead individuals towards hopelessness and social deviance regardless of their psychological makeup. From this perspective, this paper opens a new chapter in utilizing Erikson's theory and critically assesses the performance of societies in fostering despair among people. A notable point in these two novels is that the two characters are psychologically aligned. In other words, their psychological traits are such that it seems they become closer to their full personality at each stage. Kathy proceeds from childhood to youth, whereas Mr. Stevens progresses from youth to old age. Another significant point in the life cycle of these two characters is the presence of the youth period. Erikson emphasizes that the greatest identity crises of individuals occur during youth: identity confusion, lack of worthiness, self-doubt, and improper connections with others are characteristics of this period, which are fully manifested in the personalities of Kathy and Mr. Stevens, pushing them towards identity crises due to the psychological pressures that arise at this stage. The source of these crises can be found in the social environment. For example, society does not accept Kathy as an independent and social character. This trend is also reflected in Mr. Stevens's personality. The confusion of individuals in the modern world, superficial relationships among people, mutual misunderstanding, the dominance of social environments over individuals, environmental control by politicians, identity crises, isolation, loneliness, the fading of love, and enjoyment are common themes in these novels. In the conducted analyses, the potential force of society is encompassed as a negative character atmosphere in the stories, driving the characters of Mr. Stevens and Kathy towards passivity, isolation, and identity crises.</p>

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