

KAZUO ISHIGURO'S USE OF CLONES AS A METAPHOR TO EXPRESS HUMAN VALUES AND EMOTIONS IN NEVER LET ME GO

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ABSTRACT

Exploring memories, identities, trauma, and nostalgia is a cakewalk for Kazuo Ishiguro, a Japanese-born British novelist. His novels mainly elaborate on children's trauma. *Never Let Me Go*, which is often claimed to be a sci-fi novel for its characterization of cloned humans (who are termed as students throughout the novel), ironically lacks much content about science. It instead deals with human values such as love, friendship, memories, mortality, and moral teachings. Ishiguro specializes in dealing with trauma among children; this novel also does not exhibit his talents in the area. He gives a scathing critique on how children are generally deprived of truths at their young age about life, due to which they do not develop the ability to tackle real-life situations. However, the author stresses that not all children fail or become depressed because of the truths deprived or manipulated or skipped in the teachings from the school. Through the character Kathy, the author tries to portray that a child, brought up away from the real world and manipulated from the truths about the natural world, can build up the courage to survive despite the trauma they had as a child; the former quality portrayed through the characters, Ruth and Tommy. The three characters being a clone, brought up in Hailsham (a Boarding school in England where the clones are brought up in isolation without any contact from the world), are metaphors that express the psychological conditions of human beings. This article intends to emphasize that *Never Let Me Go* metaphorically throws limelight upon the inability of human beings to face death, even though they are aware that they are immortal and their desires about life and love and memories through the clone characters from the novel. It also provides a contrast study about the psyche of humans and clones and the socialization attempts between the two.

Keywords: Clones, human beings, love, friendship, memories, trauma, death, mortality, moral values, manipulation, socialization, and isolation

INTRODUCTION

Sir Kazuo "Ish" Ishiguro is a versatile writer. He is a Japanese-born British novelist, short story writer, lyricist, and screenplay writer. He was born in Nagasaki to the couple Shizuo Ishiguro and Shizuko on 8 November in the year 1954. When he was five years old with his family, he moved to England as his father was required in the National Institute of Oceanography after the disastrous North Sea Flood. His mother and grandmother were obstinate to bring him up with the culture and values of Japan. They did everything they can to keep reminding Ishiguro of the essence of his native culture. However, Ishiguro had only an imaginary idea about Japan as he left the country early. His novels also have a dominantly fictional setting for Japan, which he regards as the result of his imagination about his native country. Ishiguro did not return to Japan for about thirty years (which was also for a program in the Japan Foundation) after he immigrated to England. This made him predominantly create imaginary settings of Japan in most of his novels.

Ishiguro's novels highly deal with memory, nostalgia, and childhood trauma. Most of his works are autobiographical, and so his novels firmly fall into bildungsroman. Ishiguro wanted to become a musician and a songwriter when he was young, but he studied English literature and philosophy, after which he did a master's in creative writing. This was the root of his writing career. However, Ishiguro became a lyricist fulfilling his dreams in the music career. He wrote songs for Stacey Kent's albums titled *Breakfast on the Morning Tram* (2007), *Dreamer in Concert* (2011), *The Changing Lights* (2013), *Brazil* (2013), and *I Know I Dream: The Orchestral Sessions* (2017). As an emigrant of Japan and immigrant of England, Ishiguro has had the essence of Japanese culture in his childhood through his grandmother's artifacts from Japan. This can be an influence for the writings of Ishiguro; that is, his novels explore nostalgia and are often narrated from the memory of the protagonist. It is evident that any immigrant would experience some crisis and trauma until they fit into the cultures of the new land. Ishiguro immigrating at a young age would have or have not faced trauma, but any kid would have issues adapting to a new trend. Therefore, Ishiguro's style of writing is an influence from his childhood. He often portrays characters that are narrating their memories and trauma from their childhood during adulthood. Ishiguro himself has acknowledged that he does not tend to create varieties of novels. His novels deal with the same theme, and to be even more particular, he explores and emphasizes elaborating on the same storyline. In other words, his stories are all the same, which he has addressed in so many interviews.

Ishiguro has been honored with so many awards, and also, he had been officers of some significant orders. In the Year 2017, he won the "Nobel Prize" in Literature (2017). He also won the American Academy of Achievement's Golden Plate Award in the same year. He has been the Officer of the Order of the British Empire in the year 1995 and Chevalier, which translates to Knight, of the Order of Arts and Letters (France) in the year 1998. He has received the Fellowship of the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal Society of Literature. His other novel, *"The Remains of the Day,"* was awarded the Booker Prize in the year 1989. The select novel, *Never Let Me Go*, was listed as one of the hundred greatest English language novels on the magazine 'Time.' It was also shortlisted for one of the highest literary awards: the Booker Prize and the novel *The Sea* by John Banville in the nominations. The jury found it hard to pick one from both, and however, they decided to give away the award to John Banville.

The select novel is set in a dystopian world where clones are made for organ donation to real humans. The story revolves around three characters who are clones – Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy. They are brought up in an isolated place without revealing the purpose of their creation. Once they are aware of their purpose and the fact that they will die young when their donation is finished, they start to face the realities of the world from which they were isolated. The character trio goes through a series of events in which they exhibit their extreme emotions, such as love, jealousy, hatred, cunningness, etc. The remaining story revolves around if the characters cannot face the fact that they will die at a young age after three donations. However, Ruth is the only exception as her health deteriorates after the first donation, and she dies after the second donation itself. Kathy and Tommy try to get deferred from the last donation on hearing the rumor that the best art selected for display in the gallery is considered the symbol of true love, and the artist would get a deferral. On inquiry, it comes as a shock that the rumor was spread to make humans understand the importance of love and humanity. Kathy, unable to digest the fact that Tommy will die very soon as he will make his third donation, joins as a caretaker. She is assigned as the caretaker for Tommy itself. After Tommy's death, Kathy builds the courage to live her life with the memories she had with Ruth and Tommy. The story is a narrative from the memory of Kathy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Novels of Ishiguro have been subjected to research for a very long time. Research has been conducted on the themes of his novel, his writing style, and the genre of his novel. A researcher named Titus Levy discussed the storytelling and trauma narrative techniques in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (the select novel of this article). He proved that the novel is a type of bildungsroman by stating that "it presents coded models of contemporary human rights issues. It shows how autobiographical storytelling functions within the novel as a form of rights claims that gives voice to the suffering of an oppressed social group." (T Levy)

The select novel has been claimed as science fiction by many researchers, while the others deny it to be science fiction, saying that the novel lacks the detailing as science fiction. Though clones are the novel's main characters, the creation of clones and scientific elements revolving around the clones, such as the laboratory, are missing. In short, the origin of clones is not the main subject of the novel. The novel ironically deals with feelings and emotions which any scientifically created being would lack naturally. The clones travel through a roller coast of emotions in terms of friendship and love. The entire story is a narration from the memory of the protagonist Kathy. She narrates how she loved Tommy, and the couple desired to survive despite knowing their fate in adulthood. Keith McDonald states that "The novel is considered as an example of an ongoing science-fictional model where life-writing acts as a window into a world where the individual's experiences guide the reader through the speculative world." (McDonald, Keith)

Though research has been already conducted upon the select novel, the focus has not been given because Ishiguro uses the clones as a metaphor to human beings to teach human values and emotions. This article intends to emphasize that Ishiguro has used the clones to metaphorically express the feelings, emotions, and helplessness of human beings. At the same time, he steps forward to teach the importance of humanity and love through some instances, which would be discussed in detail in this article.

CLONES AS A METAPHOR TO EXPRESS HUMAN VALUES AND EMOTIONS

The clones are a loud voice of existentialism when analyzed deeply. They do not know the purpose of their creation. Ironically, everyone else other than them knows the purpose of their creation. The clones do not even know that they are the clones of someone already existing. Since the beginning of the novel, they were called the students, and nowhere are they mentioned as clones. They are isolated from human folks. They are brought up in a school named Hailsham, a boarding school, far from the sight of human beings. The teachers of the school are called guardians. The guardians keep a close watch on the students. The novel is filled with so many ironies but with a purpose. The students are prohibited from smoking as the school is concerned about the health and teaches the importance of health. This is ironic as any scientifically or, in other words, artificially created being need not have health concerns. Clones are the nearest creation to the robots, and therefore it does not make much sense when they act out with emotions and have health concerns. Ishiguro creates a dystopian land and adds his imagination to understand the human psyche and emotions better. He clones human emotions, which is loud enough to say that he used clones as a metaphor for human beings. It can be witnessed when Kathy says, "Didn't we all dream from time to time about one guardian or other bending the rules and doing something special for us? A spontaneous hug, a secret letter, a gift?" (NLMG 60)

The students are also taught the importance of art and are rewarded with their art getting placed at a gallery chosen by the highest maiden the students know who is called Madame if it is the best work of art. The creation and admiring of any art require feelings and emotions, which is the essential quality of human beings. Human beings are special and are the only beings on earth to have six senses. The sixth sense is what makes them think and react. Anything they feel or reason with the help of their mind is because of the sixth sense.

To create art, one needs elevated thinking and/or imagination skills and judging and admiring the artifacts they need to possess the same. The students are taught the importance of art and are also made to draw and paint and get rewarded, which is similar to that of any human artist's awards. They are taught that recognition is the greatest reward for their work. They are also taught about hard work by the general rule that every student must mandatorily work in the vegetable garden.

The students are clones created for the sole purpose of organ donations for human beings suffering from organ damage. Pathetically, the life of the students will end after a particular number of donations. The students are not revealed about the purpose of their creation in the school. This symbolizes existentialism. They do not know the purpose of their life until a point in Time. But when they come to see the purpose of their creation and know-how, their life will end, the factors such as friendship and love urge them to survive and live life to the fullest. This is highlighted from the lives of Kathy and Tommy, who love each other. There was a theory (term used in place of rumor in the novel).

The students heard and believed that the guardians conducted the exhibition of arts and selected the best skill to be displayed in the gallery by Madame was an initiation to express the students' love. The creator of the best art chosen was believed to be genuinely in love. If the student's art is displayed in the gallery, the couple would be considered for having extra Time to live before their completion. After moving into the real world from the school, the couples, Kathy and Tommy, remembered this theory genuinely that they will students are after a particular number of donations. They decide to approach the guardians and Madame to ask for the extra Time they deserve as his art is displayed in the gallery. This metaphorically exhibits the pathetic condition of human beings and the theory of existentialism. They wander their entire life searching for their life. When they get to the point of life's purpose and know how to live, their death bed keeps waiting around the corner.

However, when Kathy and Tommy approach Madame and the guardians asking for extra Time before their completion based on the theory, they are devastated to know that it was not valid. They say that the theory was spread to emphasize the importance of humanity and love to human beings. This statement is compelling and attacks the values of human beings directly. The author beautifully addresses the depletion of humanity and kindness and the need to revoke them in the contemporary world. The author uses the clones as a metaphor to exhibit the psyche of human beings and address the qualities they lack amidst the growth of science and technology. Selfless love is rarely seen in the contemporary world. Materialistic desires invade the minds of people, and selfless love is seen once in a blue moon. The clones exhibit the fact that one has to make hay while the sun shines; that is, love has to be felt and enjoyed when there is Time, and there is no use in realizing and seeking opportunities to live with your love when the end is near. People in the modern world do not value the love they receive when they are surrounded by it. They instead search for it when they lose it or about to lose it. The author explicitly describes this through the love of the clones Kathy and Tommy. As mentioned earlier, the theory that was spread as a rumor to teach human beings the need to love and be kind highlights that human beings are losing their essential human qualities in a mechanical world.

Ishiguro not only explores and metaphorically expresses the positive feelings of humanity through clones in the select novel. He also describes the negative emotions such as selfishness, cunningness, envy, and much more than humans possess. Ruth, who is friends with Kathy and Tommy, is the character Ishiguro uses to exhibit such negative qualities. He stresses that he, who is filled with jealousy and cunningness, will have a bitter end. Kathy and Tommy like each other initially, but Ruth and Tommy got into a relationship. Ruth tries to keep Kathy and Tommy apart from each other, knowing that they both have genuine feelings of love for each other. One day, Kathy and Tommy searched for the music tape that Kathy

made and lost in, unfortunately. Tommy realizes how deep his feelings were for Kathy and pondered how he got into a relationship with Ruth. They find the tape and decide not to tell Ruth about it. Eventually, Ruth finds out about the tape and develops a fear of losing Tommy. She tells Kathy in the absence of Tommy that even if Ruth dies or gets separated from Tommy, he would not get into a relationship with Kathy as she has histories of sexual relationship with several men. Ruth is the metaphor for the insecurities, possessiveness, jealousy, and envy a human has when in love. The first organ donation of Ruth goes terrible as a result of which her health gets worse. She comes to know that her next donation will end her life. At her death bed, she regrets keeping Kathy and Tommy apart even after learning they were fond of each other. She talks to Kathy and Tommy and tells them to get the deferral (extra Time before donation) to live together. Ishiguro emphasizes that it is unavoidable for anyone to have insecurities and do actions that would harm others. Still, one can always correct the negative impacts caused by his actions in the lives of others.

"It should have been you two. I'm no pretending I didn't always see that. Of course, I did, as far back as I can remember. But I kept you apart. I'm not asking you to forgive me for that. That's not what I'm after just now. What I want is for you to put it right. Put right what I messed up for you." (Ruth)

At Hailsham, students are always skipped from intimate topics such as reproduction. They are told that they do not require to learn such subject matters as they have no regard or concern in their life. However, the students develop a curiosity to know what it is. This is a metaphor for how children at a young age are manipulated from the truths by the adults. This manipulation makes it difficult for them to understand and adapt to things when they happen in real life. People are hesitant to teach about the changes a human body undergoes at puberty, and lack of such knowledge affects the psyche of the transformed child. It takes a high time for the person to accept the changes he undergoes, and he, in turn, does not dare to talk to anyone about the problems he faces as they are tabooed in our society. Even in the contemporary world, transgender people are subjected to marginalization. They are always ignored and degraded.

Such things can be eradicated from the society of people are taught what they have to be at the young age itself. If they have to be kept ignorant of such subjects, the syllabus should not cover them in the first place. Anything one tries to manipulate are skip is the first thing the person would dig deep upon. Ishiguro addresses this in the novel with such instances. Miss Lucy is dismissed from the school when she reveals that the students are the clones created for the sole purpose of organ donation. They will have to die young to make a human being survive. This metaphorically exhibits that any genuine human would be regarded unfit to work for the organization. Many companies in the contemporary world do not seek genuine employees. They are rather fond of flatterers. One or the other is deceived at the back in an organization, and honest people are never given a chance. It takes cunningness to survive in the contemporary world, and so any person who is kind and honest is seen as a rare species that is unfit to survive.

FINDINGS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

The findings from the novel according to this article, is that Ishiguro addresses the dying of humanity. He highlights how science and technology have reduced the social communication of man, making them inhumane. Though the novel is set in a dystopian world, it ironically preaches humanity. Further studies can be conducted on the irony and how the novel fails as a sci-fi novel as much information about the process of cloning is not provided in the novel. Studies also can be conducted upon victimization of one to save another like that of the clones are the victims to save the lives of humans in the novel.

CONCLUSION

Ishiguro is a master in narrating stories from memories and expressing traumas. It has been subject to research by many for ages. What has not been focused on is the use of clones as a metaphor to emphasize the psyche and feelings of human beings. This article is evident that Ishiguro is an expert in using metaphors with a blend of imagination. He addresses serious issues such as depleting human qualities like humanity, love, kindness, etc., in a fictional manner. He has also explored the theory of existentialism in this novel, as discussed briefly earlier in the article. Glimpses of existentialism can be traced when Ruth cries that they are made from human trash and does not know what qualities the person they are made from possessing. Kathy is the epitome of existentialism; she keeps questioning her origin/creation if that is what her end was – "Why did we do all of that work in the first place? Why train us, encourage us, make us produce all of that? If we're just going to give donations anyway, then die, why all those lessons? Why all those books and discussions?" Ishiguro critically put forth the thoughts of every human through these lines, that is, is it worth going through everything to die at the end. Thus, Kazuo Ishiguro uses clones and some of the human characters such as the guardians and Madame as a metaphor to express human values and emotions. He critically attacks how humans are turning inhumane with the growth of science and technology.

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