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**Editors-in-Chief**

**Dr. C. BIBIN SAM  
Dr. G. DANISH S. GEORSHIA**

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# Proceedings of Forty First Multidisciplinary Conference Jointly Organised by JETIR and Ramachandra College

(A UGC Listed Peer Reviewed Research Papers of National Conference)

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Ground-Breaking Skill by Kazuo Ishiguro in *Never Let Me Go*

D. Vismison  
II M.A English  
St. John's College of Arts and Science  
Ammandivilai  
Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu, India.

&

M. Maria Helen Janoba  
Assistant Professor,  
St. John's College of Arts and Science  
Ammandivilai  
Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu, India.  
jano.helen@gmail.com

**Abstract**

This paper presents the innovative techniques used by Ishiguro in *Never Let Me Go*. Ishiguro's novels are preoccupied by memories, their potential to digress and distort, to forget and to silence, and, above all, to haunt. When he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2017, the Swedish Academy praised Ishiguro's work for unearthing 'the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world.' If Ishiguro's novels tend to defy genre expectations, with each new work veering from the conventions of the last, what haunts all of them is the abyss of memory and its potential to shape and distort, to forget and to silence. His protagonists seek to overcome the chasms and absences left by loved ones and lost family members by making sense of the past through acts of remembrance. Ishiguro's characters are pathologically unreliable. They tend to deceive, rather than reveal themselves, through storytelling. His novels are not attempts to render the past convincingly, but rather to pursue how individuals interpret and (re)construct their lives through history.

Kazuo Ishiguro is a Japanese-born British novelist, screenwriter and short-story writer, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2017. He has been nominated for the Booker Prize multiple times, winning it for *The Remains of the Day* in 1989. In his previous novels, he has explored this inner world and its manifestations in the lives of his characters with rare inventiveness and subtlety, shrewd humour and insight.

*Never Let Me Go* takes place in a dystopian version of late 1990s England, where the lives of ordinary citizens are prolonged through a state sanctioned program of human cloning. The clones, referred to as students, grow up in special institutions away from the outside world. As young adults, they begin to donate their vital organs. All donors receive care from designated carers, clones who have not yet begun the donation process. The clones continue to donate organs until they complete, which is a euphemism for death after the donation of three or four organs. *Time Magazine* named it the best novel of 2005 and included the novel in its TIME 100 Best English language Novels from 1923 to 2005. It also received an ALA Alex Award in 2006. A film adaptation directed by Mark Romanek was released in 2010. Japanese television drama aired in 2016.

"Narration is writing that tells a story. It has a sequence of events, the plot. Narratives also have characters and a setting, as well as a narrator or person from whose point of view the story is told" (Soft schools 2005).

*Never Let Me Go* is written in the first person narration. Kathy speaks in the present tense but when she is sharing memories of the past she uses past tense. Kathy is the protagonist and the narrator of the novel. Ishiguro begins the novel with the character of Kathy,

My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years. The sounds long enough, I know, but actually they want me to go on for another eight months, until the end of this year. That'll make it almost exactly twelve years. Now I know my being a carer so long isn't necessarily because they think I'm fantastic at what I do. (NLMG 3)

Kathy presents the action and the characters of the novel. The readers can identify the novel from Kathy's point of view. Through her narration the readers trust Kathy as a narrator. The novel portrays the past memories of Kathy and her two friends, their guardians. After the beginning of Tommy and Ruth's donation process, Kathy returns back to her lives. First she becomes the carer of Ruth and then Tommy.

The novel divided into three parts. Part one covers chapter one to nine. Part two covers chapters ten to seventeen. Part three covers chapters eighteen to twenty three. Each section presents different stages in Kathy's story. The first part

of the novel clearly portrays Kathy's memories of her school Hailsham. "And I'm a Hailsham student – which is enough by itself sometimes to get people's back up" (NLMG 3).

When the novel begins Kathy tells us that she is thirty one years old but most of her narration tells about her past memories, when she was a student in Hailsham School and when she was living in the cottages. So through her narration the readers know that her narration is not straightforward because she wants to jump from recalling one incident to another. Kathy mentions her role as a carer, "My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years. That sounds long enough, I know, but actually they want me to go on for another eight months, until the end of this year" (NLMG 3).

Kathy gives the clear information about her school Hailsham to the reader. She also tells about her friends, other students, the guardians and the buildings of the school,

In particular, there are those pavilions. I spot them all over the country, standing on the far side of playing fields, little white prefab buildings with a row of windows unnaturally high up, tucked almost under the eaves. I think they built a whole lot like that in the fifties and sixties, which is probably when ours was put up.... We loved our sports pavilion, may be because it reminded us of those sweet little cottages people always had in picture books when we are young.... Then by the time we were in Senior 2 – when we were twelve, going on thirteen - the pavilion had become the place to hide out with your best friends when you wanted to get away from the rest of Hailsham. (NLMG 6)

The second part of the novel Kathy tells about her time at the cottages. She introduces other characters such as Veterans, Chrissie and Rodney.

We arrived at the Cottages expecting a version of Hailsham for older students, and I suppose that was the way we continued to see them for some time.... The Cottages were the remains of a farm that had gone out of business years before.... He'd shown us a list of chores when we'd first arrived, and the students who were already there – 'the veterans', as Hannah called them .... (NLMG 114)

The third part of the novel tells about that Kathy has left from the Cottages in order to become a carer. She meets many donors and still she never forgets Hailsham and her friends from the school. Kathy becomes Ruth's carer and beginning the relationship with Tommy. At the end of the novel, Kathy is alone so the ending of the novel is rather like the beginning. She thinks her future as a donor.

The novel's structure is very important because it allows the reader to see that Kathy never moves on from her time at the school of Hailsham. Kathy emotionally tied with Hailsham. Kathy's entire narrative and her memories of her school impact on her present life so she does not able to live the life.

Kazuo Ishiguro uses realistic language. Kathy is naughty and open narrator and her attractive style makes easy to understand the novel. She uses the language of acceptance. The title *Never Let Me Go* comes from Kathy's favourite Judy Bridgewater's song,

But the reason the tape meant so much to me had nothing to do with the cigarette, or even with the way Judy Bridgewater sang – she's one of those singers from her time, cocktail-bar stuff, not the sort of thing any of us at Hailsham liked. What made the tape so special for me was this one particular song: track number three, 'Never Let Me Go'. It's show and late night and American, and there's a bit that keeps coming round when Judy sings: 'Never let me go... Oh baby, baby... Never let me go...' I was eleven then, and hadn't listened to much music, but this one song, it really got to me (NLMG 69).

Author has used many themes in the novel to attract and connect the readers in to the novel. "Theme is defined as a main idea or an underlying meaning of a literary work, which may be stated directly or indirectly" (Literary Devices, 2019). A story may have many themes. Author may express a theme through the feelings of his main character about the subject he has chosen to write about.

Ishiguro uses many themes in the novel such as unavoidable of loss, the power of memory, love, friendship, cloning. Ishiguro describes unavoidable of loss through the characters Ruth and Tommy. Through this can easily know about the value of time and life. At the end of the novel Kathy loses her friends Ruth and Tommy because of the organ donation. Their death is inevitable because of their physical condition. She has lost almost everyone.

The power of memory is the major theme of the novel because the whole story tells about Kathy's school memories in Hailsham. She preserves the memory of Hailsham long after it is closed. She remembers her friend's Ruth, Tommy and the Guardian's. She recollects the incidence which happens in the school, cottages and the donation process. So this power of memory makes the reader to understand the incidences which are happened in her life. She preserves all the minute things in her past,

That morning Ruth had got a chair behind a desk, and I was sitting up on its lid, with two or three others of our group perched or leaning in nearby. In fact, I think it was when I was squeezing up to let someone else in beside me that I first noticed the pencil case. I can see the thing now like it's here in front of me. It was shiny, like a polished shoe; a deep tan colour with circled red dots drifting all over it. The zip across the top edge had a furry pom-pom to pull it. (NLMG 56)

Friendship is complicated but they are very realistic. The novel portrays reality, friend's fight, and misunderstandings and supports one another. Her flashbacks about Ruth and Tommy show the ups and downs of friendship. Towards the end of the novel after the three friends are gone their own ways.

Cloning is another theme in this novel. Ishiguro portrays human clone through the characters. The narrator Kathy is also a donor. Clones are in the boarding school of Hailsham. So that they are grow up and become organ donors. They donate their vital organs and finally they lose their lives. They are not treated as human beings. Through the school, they are trying to prove that clones are human. They want to change the fact that they have to die for others life.

Kathy, Ruth, Tommy are the three kids, they have no different from regular teenagers. They have emotions, feelings. They donate their organs and save people. At the end of the novel Miss. Emily reveals the secret of the art gallery,

Let's answer the simplest one, and perhaps it will answer all the rest. Why did we take your artwork? Why did we do that? You said an interesting thing earlier, Tommy. When you were discussing this with Marie-Claude. You said it was because your art would reveal what you were like. What you were like inside. That's what you said, wasn't it? Well, you weren't far wrong about that. We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your souls. Or to put it more finely, we did it to prove you had souls at all' (NLMG 255).

Through this Ishiguro proves that clones had souls and they are also a human being.

Love is prevalent in the world, like the same here too Ishiguro gives love as a theme. In the beginning of the novel Kathy has some concern about Tommy. She has some feelings towards him but she does not show it to him because already Tommy has a relationship with Ruth. Meanwhile Ruth breaks the relationship with him. After the death of Ruth, Tommy has a relationship with Kathy.

Ishiguro uses many symbols in the novel. "Symbols are objects that stand for more than just itself. They can even represent feelings or thoughts. Authors like to use symbols instead of telling you directly everything you need to know. When you figure out hidden information, it makes you a better reader" (Study, 2003). Symbols can hold unexpected meaning. Author uses the symbols such as the Judy Bridgewater tape, the song 'Never Let Me Go', animal imagery and open-plan office. The first symbol is the Judy Bridgewater tape. Kathy loses the tape. It is gifted by Tommy. She often plays the song 'Never Let Me Go'.

I still have a copy of that tape and until recently I'd listen to it occasionally driving out in the open country on a drizzly day. But now the tape machine in my car's.... Even so, it's one of my most precious possessions... The album's called *Songs After Dark* and it's by Judy Bridgewater. What have I got today isn't the actual cassette, the one I had back then at Hailsham, the one I lost.... What I want to talk about is the first tape, the one that disappeared. (NLMG 64)

The next symbol is the song 'Never Let Me Go'. Tommy gifted a cassette tape to Kathy. It has the song 'Never Let Me Go'. Whenever she hears the song, she always thinks about Tommy. The song becomes a symbol of their love. Next symbol is animal imagery. Once Tommy draws an elephant image for the gallery but his junior students laugh because the picture is very childish,

My guess is that from some time before he did that elephant, Tommy had had the feeling he wasn't keeping up that his painting in particular was like that of students much younger than him – and he'd been covering up the best he could by doing deliberately childish pictures. But after the elephant painting, the whole thing had been brought into the open, and now everyone was watching to see what he did next (NLMG 20).

The next symbol is open-plan office. One day Ruth and Kathy see a magazine on the ground. In the magazine she see an advertisement about open-plan office. A few days later Ruth talks about her future dream working in an open-plan office,

I thought maybe it was some poor creature dead in the frost, but when I came up, I saw it was a colour magazine – not one of 'Steve's magazine', but one of those bright cheerful things that come free with newspapers. It had fallen open at this glossy double page advert, and though the paper had gone soggy and there was mud at one corner, you could see it well enough. It showed this beautifully modern open-plan office with three or four people who worked in it having some kind of joke with each other. Ruth was staring at this picture and, when she noticed me beside her, said: 'Now that would be a proper place to work' (NLMG 142).

Punctuation marks are very important in the texts. It helps the reader to get meaningful reading. The deliberate investment of this technique in the text creates the background for specific and general meanings. The stylistic technique of quoting conversation is also stylistically foregrounded in the text. Ishiguro makes his characters to express critical opinions that are critical and strategic to the readers understanding and interpretation.



Kazuo Ishiguro not only uses a common, plain narrative voice to describe simple things, but to describe an emotional sequence, he uses figurative language. The language is quiet easy to understand. Ishiguro's style and technique distinguishes him from the other writers. He is a talented writer who has the courage to go on his own way in his writing.

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