**School and Schooling, Humanism and Posthumanism in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go***

**Introduction**

Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* is a speculative novel that takes place in England between the nineteen-seventies and nineteen-nineties. It presents an alternative history in which artificial reproduction is viable and the mass production of human clones is practiced. Drawing on the availability of technological capabilities in contemporary reality, the novel imagines a situation in which embryonic stem cells are grown and developed into “live” entities that serve a healing technology. Scientists and lawmakers in the fictional world have a supreme goal: to alleviate human suffering caused by diseases and injuries. Thus, human clones are produced and grown as organ donors whose lives end prematurely—Society creates the clones as a human apparatus designed to exist only until they reach maturity at which time the process of donorship begins. Donorship entails the harvesting of their organs one after the other for the purpose of curing human diseases. The clone’s entire body is used to this end. The clones are perceived artificial human beings, "born and raised to be professional nonhumans" (Kadouki pg. 208), other than human, "as if humans" (Carrol, pg. 63) and therefore, less-than-humans, as put in the novel by the narrator herself: (Ishiguro, pg. 263) CITE. “For a long time you were kept in the shadows, and people did their best not to think of you and if they did, they tried to convince themselves that you weren’t really like us. That you were less than human” (Ishiguro, 2005, 258) Advanced ideas facilitate the legitimacy to distance and isolate the clones and be indifferent to the fact that the clones face death toward the end of their twenties this envisioned future is based on challenges summoned by biotechnological progress, which is nurtured by the capitalist rationale and human beings’ fantasies of transcending the limitations of biology, illness, suffering, and death, combined with the biotechnological vision of an improved and empowered trans-human human being.

The clone does not exist as a subject, neither as a citizen and human being with rights, nor as part of the “state’s population.” As children, they are transferred from one breeding camp to another until they reach maturity. Reaching maturity, however, does not mean that they have become independent adults, but rather that they are mature enough to begin fulfilling their role as a tool.

 Interpretations of the novel have read it allegorically as one that deals with the issue of human rights, and as a narrative that tells a story of exploitation and injustice by giving a voice to different excluded and weakened social groups that struggle in the margins of developed democratic societies. A novel presenting the paradox between human rights and societal exigencies (Levy 2011). As a novel that deals with the reproduction of the logic of heteronormativity. As an allegory of the welfare-state, in which class origin determines and predicts one's future (Robbins, 2007)/ i propose to take the novel at its face value.

Ishiguro’s novel deals with the ethical implications of bio-technology the possible ramifications, ethical and moral, of life-intervening techniques the result of The technological advancement and the prospect of artificial reproduction becoming the origin of life (Lecourt, 2003, pg. ---). Ishiguro does so outside the context of the dystopian, the habitual mode for such themes. Ishiguro’s speculative England is not an apocalyptic world annihilated by catastrophe but rather about our own progressive world.

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One of Ishiguro’s main poetic devices to foreground this, is positing Hailsham school, at the center of the narrative as a chronotope (the term employed by Mikhail Bakhtin), it is the spatio-temporal arena invoked by the narrative, where the two discourses collide. Humanist, and a Posthuman one.

The term posthumanism signifies here -----

Most of the narrative takes place at Hailsham school Not only is it there that the childhood story unfolds, but it is referred to recurrently throughout the novel,. The realistic motivation, referring to the authenticity of the motif, is that An autobiographical narrative, which is the genre of the novel, tells the story of the formative years, the childhood years, and naturally, it is the central arena in which a human being’s individual and social development occur. Moreover, Hailsham is more than a school; the clone does not have a home other than the boarding school in which they were raised. The school is the narrator’s childhood home. It is not a boarding school where students live during the school year and from which they return home for holidays.

As a concept, school is an institution of the humanist tradition par excellence, whose purpose is to develop the individual’s subjectivity to its full capacity. School is an institution borne from the acknowledgment of human beings’ essential values and human rights. It is founded on ideas of justice and equality and on every human being’s right to an education.

Even with the industrialization of education, and its submission to economic-social needs, this humanist core of education prevails.

See here the quintessential concepts of humanist education

Humanist defined as

“a philosophy which views the individual and their potential for development as the essential starting point for theorizing abut, or implementing, systems of teaching and learning. A humanist approach to education focuses on the learner as an individual, taking their interests, enthusiasms, and goals as the basis upon which to organize or facilitate their learning experiences. Learning is not seen as an end in itself, but rather as a means towards enabling the individual to realize their full potential, referred to by some humanist theorists such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers as achieving self-actualization. (pg. 131-132)

Wallace, Susan (ed.) A Dictionary of Education. Oxford University Press, New York 2008.

 Moreover, School is a social instrument in the context of which, by way of socialization, the future, or foundations for the future, are constructed. It correlates with the notion of the child as the future citizen, as one at whom the full array of the state's institutions is directed, the nation is obligated to those citizens in waiting, “state intervention in shaping healthy minds and bodies of future citizens” (King, pg. 394), their protection and their nurturing is an investment in the future strength.

-add that this is a progressive school comparing to others

Let us glimpse Hailsham school, from chapter 7 in the novel, which holds a significant scene. .

**We will see the filmic version taken from director Mark Romanek’s 2005 adaptation of the novel. Write on slide**

**Miss Lucy decides to discard the mask of falsification nse and tell the children the truth about their future after she witnesses the event in which (in the film) the children avoid retrieving a ball that had fallen outside the school fence. In Hailsham,** Instead of revealing to the clones their intended upbringing and the interdiction to leave school grounds, for fear of hybridization and also to prevent them from escaping, the school spreads harrowing stories that circulate among the children. I would now like to elaborate and elucidate to two points here. The first point,

Hailsham’s strategy of schooling is covert and obscure. Its modus operandi is tell-and not-tell. It keeps the children in a state of constant awareness of being told and not told, As a result of their obscured consciousness, formed through their education, the clones can no longer fully comprehend what they are told. This obfuscation is underscored in particular by way of wordplay in the semantic context of light and darkness and the intermittent flicker of awareness. In this chapter QUOTE, the selection of words clearly constructs interchanges and binaries of covert and overt: light and darkness, clear and blurry, and in metaphorical terms, sunshine and rain. The language in this chapter is laden with literal and metaphorical linguistic signs derived from an identical semantic field. Paradoxically, the more it is brighter, clearer, and more lucid, so too is it more somber. And vice-versa—the more obscure it is, so too is it sunnier and brighter.

Either way, due to the education of told and not told, the Kathy of now is captive, almost up to the last moment, in false anticipation for the future. And to that matter, Miss Lucy was unable to

Undo the school’s doing, that is engraining in the children their position as less than human.

Halisham is in fact a preparatory school to the subsequent "organ-donation gulag" (Robbins, 2007: 292) and is designed to segregate the clones during childhood.

The second point, Miss Lucy explains she tells the truth so that they could live decent lives. What does “decent lives” mean?

Decent denotes satisfactory, respectable, good, proper. Although not a legal term, “decent” pertains to the quality of life of all human beings and is derived from their natural prerogative. Having a decent life is perhaps the ultimate objective of education. Ideas of individuality, freedom, progress, rights (Mahon, pg. 3) , justice, a passage upward and social mobility are to be channeled by schooling, as the formation and nurture of human agency are required for leading a decent life.

The way in which the children were schooled at Hailsham school destroyed their agency and prevented them from leading decent lives. . Even before hand, their genetic programing obliterated their rights as humans. Because the clones cannot have children, they have been denied the right to parenthood, and their civil status has denied them their right to life—in concrete terms, they lack a future. RF The purpose of the school, therefore, is to guarantee the internalization of a life without rights and civil status. In fact, It is an "imitative schooling by which the clones are taught to pass as 'normals'". The school is similar to Umberto Eco’s “city of robots”—a simulacrum of a school.

~~Surely, they cannot rely on enlisting public support because in the heteronormative regime, in which a human being’s obligation is toward his parents and offspring, there is no one to care for them. There is no one the clone can rely on, someone who will never leave them—the security and comfort in the sentence “never let me go” is not part of the clones’ birthright and never will be. On the contrary, human beings are more than willing to let them go. They will always let them go. No one out there to tell them they will never let go of them. This is referring back to the novel’s title~~

Hence, as chronotope, Hailsham serves a compositional motivation as well, referring to the usefulness of the motif. .----

~~The school gives a spatial perspective, a site in which two streams that run contrary to each other collide, making the posthumanist discourse open for deliberation and debate. The posthumanist discourse is one of progress, of relieving humanity from misery, technology provides the means. And here is the perfect tool for that, state of the art technology, clones programmed to serve mankind.. but the only difference between clones and humans is their origin – either natural reproduction or unnatural reproduction, and unnatural reproduction is a technology already available today – so it’s just a small step from what we have available today but the ethical implications are never considered, due to the discourse of ph/~~

~~On the other hand, humanist discourse, where every individual has a right to a decent life,~~

--here more on the advanced society that is moving backwards in terms of humanism --- The posthumanist discourse claims to free mankind of misery, stemming from illness and death. But the new forms of the human ---

 There is an ironic gap between the purpose and role of the school and its function in the novel –.

On the contrary, it represents the new discursive order of posthumanism, that revers technology but Never considering the full extent of the ethical issues that rise with the new technique. The most advanced humanist discourse of human rights is metamorphosed, inadvertently, into a reactionary discourse of exploitation and exclusion.

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Advanced technology at the expense of withdrawing from humanist discourse.

and the neglect of its humanist role, emphasizes that the clones were denied the ability, competences, and skills to care for themselves. Further on in the narrative, The mature clones arrive at the home of Miss Emily, the former principle of Hailsham and she admits: ... “quote from novel” (p.258).

that human beings will refuse to revert back to the “days of darkness” of different types of terminal diseases, regardless of the reasons. Therefore, the existence of a soul within the clones remains a question that is not asked. The ability to prolong life, to avoid aging, terminal diseases, and deformations.

 As Miss Emily states CITE

To conclude,

 In his book Critical Children, Richard Locke (2011)---- proposes that novels for adults that focus of children and adolescents use their function as critics of their worlds, as “vehicles of moral and cultural interrogation” (pg. 4). as novels for adults often employ children to effectively foreground ideas ---exmp --

children caught in atrocious situations are especially able to exert powerful ethical injunctions on the readers: “they invite us to follow the story of a child’s imperiled growth and development and thereby to participate in a process of discovery […] an attempt at liberation or the restoration of a just order” (pg. 5). In line with novels such as Oliver Twist, The Catcher in the Rye, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Portnoy’s Complaint, and addressing contemporary dilemas,

Ishiguro encourages us to think about more appropriate and accurate conceptual tools for the analysis and evaluation of current radical changes and the alterations that will occur in human life as a result of immense technological advancement. Ishiguro’s novel participates in a discussion that stems from the fact that new technological possibilities , the new post-humanist forms, the new relationships between man and, biology, and technology, calls for the redistribution of terms of difference and identity.

MORE--Two significations of Posthumanism clash. The first is posthumanism as transactions between humans an non-humans as enhancing human agency, through technology our body regains its aura, we can become more than huam, n the sense attributed to Sherryl Vint, as engaging the unjust distribution of the legitimacy of the human,