

## *Life in Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go*

Yu-min Huang, National Changhua University of Education, Taiwan

The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy 2015  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

With the announcement of the sheep clone Dolly as the breakthrough in the biotechnology in news media around the turn of the twenty-first century, the rising issue of human clones in its development and the controversially bioethical issues ensued, Kazuo Ishiguro in *Never Let Me Go* (2005) focuses his attention, in the area of cell therapy, on how human clones, since produced, lead their model lives and face their deaths, in order that his readers may better understand the meanings of life and death, and that they may stay in a far closer relationship with their family and friends than ever. In this essay, I examine, in two worlds, the normals' and the clones', paralleling each other, the true meanings of being human and their lives through the perspective of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction; and I argue that Ishiguro misspeaks to his readers the true meanings of life and death especially through the clones' lens and brings them to his readers' hearts further realistically. In Derrida's nature-culture structurality of the clones, it is Kathy H., who comes as center into which the other clones come as freeplay, in the structurality of the real world, where it is normals who come as center into which clones come as freeplay, under the structurality of power in the institutions where the clones' culture comes as center into which Miss Emily's ruling comes as freeplay, by the structurality of authorship where the author comes as center into which the novel comes as freeplay.

**Keywords:** Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, Jacques Derrida, deconstruction, clone, normal, life, and death

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum

[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

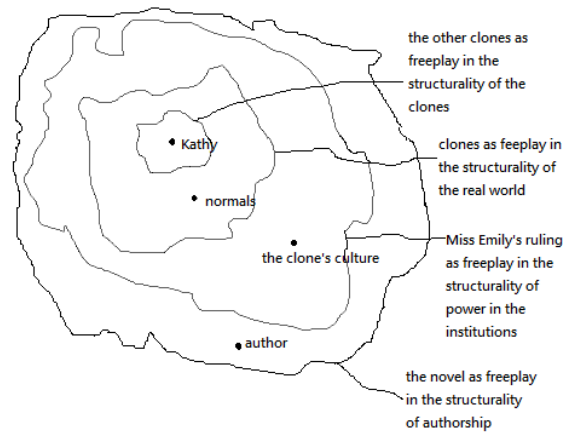
## Introduction

Had you been deprived of the right to live with the very beloved in this life ever as I had, you would understand how difficult I have to recover from the grief over my father's death and for so long years, although in *Hamlet* William Shakespeare writes, "The undiscovered country from whose bourn/ No traveler returns, puzzles the will,/ And makes us rather bear those ills we have/ Than fly to others that we know not of?" (3.1.81-84); and although "your father lost a father;/ That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound/ In filial obligation for some term/ To do obsequious sorrow. .../ For what we know must be, and is as common/ As any the most vulgar thing to sense,/ Why should we in our peevish opposition/ Take it to heart (1.2.89-92, 98-101)?

Should science and medicine have offered me another alternative and another chance to save his life, would you have suggested that I should have given it a try? Then, I find my answer in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. Justine Burley introduces the novel "is set in the [background of] the 1990s, when the birth of Dolly the cloned sheep was announced and the human genome project was well under way" (427) and when "Dolly provoked extensive scientific, political and ethical debate and renewed public unease about the implications of the new genetics and the now foreseeable prospect of human cloning" (Carroll 61) and in the early 2000s, when the debates on cloning and biotechnological development were heated (Griffin 646). The novel functions as "comment[s] critically on the history of the present" (Griffin 653).

James Butcher highlights that there are sixty thousand people on the waiting list for kidney transplantation around 2004 and that there is possibility for xeno-transplantation if with proper pigs' organs or new organs from stem cells growing; however, he refuses the idea that human clones are created for organ farming and harvesting (1299). Titus Levy is a good critic to emphasize the issues of contemporary human rights in the clones' world in the novel and describe the storytelling of the novel, through the voice of Kathy H., "as a constructive response to atrocity and as a potentially dubious method of overcoming traumatic experience" for the normals in the contemporary world, and he praises Kazuo Ishiguro as sensitive to how the general public read aestheticized forms of traumatic experience "with a mixture of empathy, indifference, and perversion," the experience, which is the voice of exploitation and injustice for the human clones, the marginalized social groups in a dystopian society, in their struggle for "the fringes of supposedly democratic societies" (1). I argue that in Jacques Derrida's nature-culture structurality of the clones, it is Kathy H. who comes as center into which the other clones come as freeplay, in the

structurality of the real world, where it is normals who come as center into which clones come as freeplay, under the structurality of power in the institutions where the clones' culture comes as center into which Miss Emily's ruling comes as freeplay, by the structurality of authorship where the author comes as center into which the novel comes as freeplay, as the following illustration shows:



The essay consists of six sections: Postmodernism and Humanism; Kathy H. as Center and the Other Clones as Freeplay; Normals as Center and Clones as Freeplay; The Clones' Culture as Center and Miss Emily's Ruling as Freeplay; The Author as Center and the Novel as Freeplay; and Conclusion.

## I. Postmodernism and Humanism

The Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, in the eighteenth century, also called modernity, begins in 1492 and permeates in the twentieth century and further onwards in the twenty-first century, when reason and science are two main guidelines in human life and when many enlightened minds such as Francis Bacon, Sir Isaac Newton and Benjamin Franklin believe that the physical universe, truth and reality can be scientifically investigated and objectively explored. Franklin considers that science replaces religion and even God's existence counts on humanity.

Humanity becomes the sole focus among all, and each individual, the master of his own fate, seeks his salvation in himself (Bressler 96-98). Unlike Franklin and other modern philosophers, who argue that discourse is a representation of reality, Derrida challenges modernity in his declaration that objective reality or truth does not exist but is itself "relative, depending on the nature and variety of cultural and social influences in one's life" of a reader; hence, there are many truths (Bressler 99). Agreeing with Martin Heidegger, Derrida posits the idea of rupture and discusses

about consciousness or existence. He declares that mind encounters “the unfolding of the thing’s Being” and that “truth is the projection of a thing’s Being to an observer’s mind. ...truth is but the mind’s determination about the present state of an outside reality. Truth is [merely] one’s interpretation or consciousness of a thing or reality” (Sagut 1). The representation of discourse for the sole objective reality in modernity’s concept is replaced by a collage with meaning always changing in postmodernist’s view or poststructuralist’s (Bressler 99).

Evidently, Derrida, like Charles E. Bressler, emphasizes the role of readers: Readers juxtapose the images of the collage from the aesthetic texts and interact with texts. Each reader, with his own unique divergent background and in his dominant social and cultural group, has his own subjective and perspectival interpretation of reality, creating many realities and no absolute center, opposed to the basic philosophy in modernity, logocentrism, the undiscoverable—objective truth or ultimate reality like God, reason, science, humanity (Bressler 99-102). Derrida also argues the idea of erasure and supplementation, or to decenter the center and reverse all binary oppositions, respectively; and he considers that each character can be self and other under erasure, the center and the decenter, in their interweavely relations.

For Derrida, there is no ultimate truth or absolute meaning, but the meaning is being deferred on the journey of self-construction in relation to other not in their sameness but in their difference, one temporal meaning after another in the interpretation oscillation, one signifying after another, where *what if* occurs and where the author misspeaks (Bressler 122-28, 132). Briefly, for postmodern thinkers, no one can have complete knowledge; thus, what one embraces is not individualism and conquest but tolerance, understanding, collaboration and holism, and what he emphasizes is not rationality solely but rationality with emotions, feelings and intuition for valid interpretations and guidelines in this pluralistic society (Bressler 100).

Derrida, inspired by Levi-Strauss, suggests that “all interpretation is really a form of play, with each participant handling slippery texts [a kind of center] whose meanings are often illusive” (Bressler 132; Sagut 1). Derrida discusses a centered structure: the structurality of structure as a structure itself has its center, “a point of presence, a fixed origin,” which constructs the structurality of structure and meanwhile “grounds the play of substitutions” (278, 289). The center and the totality seem to be individual objects: the center is located at the center of totality but does not indeed belong to this totality; also, “the totality *has its center elsewhere*” (Derrida 279). It is like that the center escapes from its own structurality of structure and “the concept of a centered

structure is in fact the concept of a play” (Derrida 279). Then the history of the idea of a structure merely becomes “a linked chain of determinations of the center,” a center for another, creating an ongoing quest for a final center or end (Derrida 279). In Derrida’s perspective of observing culture, he discusses the nature-culture opposition in Levi-Strauss’s example of incest prohibition.

Derrida asserts that the concept of something cooked brings that of something raw into existence despite raw’s precedence over cooked in nature just as how the concept of culture brings that of nature into existence despite nature’s precedence over culture in life. Derrida defines, in Levi-Strauss’s words, nature as something “*universal* and spontaneous” and something independent of any particular culture or norm, but culture as something dependent on a system of norms, varying from one social structure to another (283 emphasis in original). Their relationship is depicted as “a declaration of absolute interdependency” and one as “causative of the other” (Fry). Levi-Strauss’s nature-culture opposition turns into Derrida’s concept of center-play in a centered structure: nature is center into which culture comes as play (278-83); by analogy, the normal is center into which the clones come as play.

In Derrida’s criticism on logocentrism, center does indeed exist inside a structure where center assures this structure of being as presence. In his term *différance* for the divided nature of the sign, he declares that spatially “differ” is a sign spaced out in a system and that temporally “defer” is a signifier postponing presence. Unlike speech with immediate and full presence, writing physically in its system as secondary, leaving a trace, can be repeated and requests (re)interpretation, which arouses philosophers’ fear to ruin the authority of philosophic truth (Selden 164-65).

However, Bacon illustrates Derrida’s violent hierarchy in pairing writing as secondary and speech as full presence, a hierarchy which can be reversed since writing and speech are both signifying processes lacking presence; “speech is a species of writing” (Selden 166). Thus, writing overrides speech and absence overrides presence. By analogy, philosophy under erasure is a form of literature, and literal language under erasure is a form of figurative language because under erasure, words are many signifiers without fixed meanings in them and language has its own freeplay character in the author’s misspeaking (Sagut 2; Bressler 123, 124, 128; Selden 166). For Derrida, the author does not have his authorial intent; however, he misspeaks or slips his language and reveals what he fears to say (Bressler 126, 128, 132).

In his idea of supplementation, meaning addition-substitution, which features in all human activity, writing not only supplements speech but replaces it. In nature-culture,

nature as a full presence precedes culture whereas the violent hierarchy is that nature is never pure but already polluted by culture (Selden 166). For Derrida, supplementation in every binary opposition plays a role as play to the center; e.g. deception plays a supplementary role to truth, or in Bakhtin's dialogism, other does to self (Bressler 124-25). Also, Derrida's concept of *différance* meaning differ and defer, in his illustration of the word in speech and writing, is a tool for readers to ask *What if* question and as in the case of narrative detective stories, for a narrative author to suspend the truth of discourse for the climax (Bressler 125; Culler 89).

Derrida proceeds deconstruction by reader's "locat[ing] the moment when a text *transgresses the laws it appears to set up for itself*" and when a text breaks into pieces (Selden 167 emphasizes in original). Derrida declares some features in writing: "a written sign is a mark" repeated in the absence of the subject in a specific context and that of a specific addressee; it breaks its real context and in different contexts, it is interpreted, despite authorial intent (Selden 167). Derrida argues that "the task of deconstruction" is "to discover...the 'other' of philosophy," and the result of it is questioning and subverting (qtd. in Selden 169). Then, there is again no fixed meaning in words, creating one signifying after another, one freeplay after another, which seeks a final center in vain.

Many theorists debate their ideas over humanism as a human essence either beyond history or in its historical context; actually, they are equally significant and the role of history as a process is hence repositioned in humanism. Michèle Barrett proposes that the term humanism changes its fortunes to derogatory particularly in the field of culture in the last two or three decades (Hawthorn 156). Louis Althusser highlights at the heart of humanism with attainment of human freedom as its goal, lies a human essence beyond history and society, not in social structures nor cultural formations but in an individual human being, which is not realist but idealist, ahistorical, and individualistic, "often involving the projection of the characteristics of one form of society [onto] human beings at large" (Hawthorn 156). Althusser emphasizes that human individual's essential being is "what man makes from his life activity" or from his life as a process; and that human beings as a whole are the existence of a species and "man is a being that treats its species as its own essential being—that treats itself as a species being" (Marx 113 qtd. in Hawthorn 156) and for Pauline Johnson, a human essence "refers specifically to the process of transformation and development which characterizes the history of the species (36 qtd. in Hawthorn 157).

In Barrett's exposition, humanism as an ideology has its immensely progressive role either as a secularizing force or as a vital role in contemporary politics; indeed, human

essence is not situated outside its historical context (Hawthorn 157, 158-59).

In the twentieth century, a humanist tradition bases itself on Marx's historicist and non-essentialist emphases and it extends further on. Alan Sinfield supports the same view as Arnold Kettle's that humanity "is not an essential condition towards which [people] may aspire, but what people have as a consequence of being socialized into human communities" (291 qtd. in Hawthorn 158). Kwame Anthony Appiah even exemplifies that contingency and moral worth are not contradictory and that the essence of "humanism can be provisional, historically contingent, anti-essentialist (in other words, postmodern) and still be demanding. [People] can surely maintain a powerful engagement with the concern to avoid cruelty and pain while...[recognizing] the contingency of that concern" (Ashcroft *et al.* 123 qtd. in Hawthorn 158). Over the debates, a main direction for humanism emerges: "if a non-essentialist humanism can be established...the free play of the signifier may be, if not arrested, at least slowed down. Even if the human is not a fixed or a unitary reference point, it may denote certain relatively stable (if contested) reference points, whose history, movements and conflicts can be plotted" (Hawthorn 158).

## **II. Kathy H. as Center and the Other Clones as Freeplay**

I would like to ask the question what if the clones and the clones' world are not created and to reveal that Ishiguro leaves a trace in the name Kathy H. since alphabetically there should be from Kathy A. to Kathy G. and then H. (3), which is unique (Vorhaus 99) and which has no surname in it (Butcher 1299). The meaning of her existence and the novel are being deferred. It is Kathy H. who comes as center into which the other clones come as freeplay in the structurality of the clones; and other clones play a supplementary role to Kathy. There are three life phases in the novel "set in England in the late 1990s" (Butcher 1299):

Hailsham for childhood, Cottage for maturity and recovery center for adulthood. For education in their childhood, the clones live in Hailsham, which provides the human clones with "the opportunity for free and full development of individual personalities, the chance to grow up enjoying the freedoms[,] envisioned by human rights law and literature" the same as normals (Levy 6). Next, they learn to be independent in Cottage. If they cannot endure the boring life in Cottage, they will be active to move onto the next phase, to be a carer in the recovery center.

The same is true when they cannot endure the tiring life as a carer, they will become a donor without a deferral. Kathy as a center plays the role model in these three phases

and does her duty well. She is thoughtful and has a perspective and she feels proud of being a carer and a donor-to-be after realizing the whole cruel donating system (Jones 33); however, her friend calculating Ruth (Deb 55) as freeplay follows the trend and succumbs to the fate, and short-tempered Tommy (Deb 55) as freeplay is indecisive between the fate and his freewill, between Ruth and Kathy.

Surprisingly, not mutual love gains the right of deferral of the organ donation but Kathy's contribution and responsibility do. She is a carer for eleven years (Ishiguro 3) and till the end of the novel since she has not yet gotten tired with her present phase, a carer, and thus never has to move onto the final step, the perverse responsibilities, claimed by a cruel real world (Levy 6). Kathy displays "courageous act of protest" as heroic (Levy 4) and her role as "a cog in the bioconsumerist culture" (McDonald 81) since she offers humanistic expression to the people of her kind, human clones, a marginalized minority in a monolithic majority to seek their right to be included in them (Slaughter 157 qtd. in Levy 4); her voice "stand[s] in for the clone community as a whole" (Levy 3).

### **III. Normals as Center and Clones as Freeplay**

It is normals that come as center into which clones come as freeplay in the structurality of the real world; clones play a supplementary role to normals. Kathy desires to be like normals, and the world of Kathy, Tommy and Ruth, declare I, is no different from that of any normals; and neither are the clones different from any normals (Vorhaus 99), in their personal growth since early childhood to maturity, and to adulthood. As the clones are getting old, they start to donate significant organs until death completes them and parts them from their family and friends, merely like normals in certain diseases and in ill health by losing their sick organs in a surgery room. Then, a real life seems to be a life waiting for death if without love.

Truthfully, there is an absence that if normals need a human organ, they pay the fee, sign the contract with Miss Emily and then serve as role models for manufacturing the clones in trading human organs. Therefore, normals and clones are connected to each other. Just when a normal gets ill and needs an organ, a clone donates one and gets ill, since all lost things return in Norfolk, the lost corner of England, implying Hailsham, all for normals' benefits (McDonald 81, Ishiguro 169).

Kathy and Tommy's belief in the theory of love and deferral signifies hope in both worlds. Although there is true love involved between lovers, neither the clones nor the



normals can change their life course to death; namely, they cannot delay donating organs nor getting diseases. However, if with true love, either of them can experience his life with support and company until death separates them from their beloved, which is the spirit of life, despite pain or agony. If with belief in God and metaphysical pattern and leaning, and love, one leads a meaningful life in the kingdom that God numbers and finishes; again, life is meaningful not in the length but in the depth (Wood 39).

#### **IV. The Clones' Culture as Center and Miss Emily's Ruling as Freeplay**

It is the clones' culture that comes as center into which Miss Emily's ruling comes as freeplay under the structurality of power in the institutions; Miss Emily's ruling plays a supplementary role to the clones' culture; and the center is there and not there: "[t]he rebellious free-spirited individual is at once a produce of the freedoms offered by society, and a threat to the order and stability of that community" (Levy 4). The three main characters, Kathy, Tommy and Ruth, seek their human essence and struggle for humanism in the world of human clones with Kathy as the main voice, created by Miss Emily as the medium in the real world of the normals.

Miss Emily implants the ideology of the twisted social responsibilities into the clones; she educates them in her ruling practices such as Exchanges, Sales or Madame's gallery, where the clones construct their identities (Carroll 62, 66). Although later on Kathy becomes a universal individual in her struggle for a place in the hierarchical society and her voice represents the clone community (Levy 3), the clones form their culture and practices in Miss Emily's ruling and they react to it differently.

Kathy recognizes Miss Emily's conspiracy about ideology imposition, an idea offered by Tommy that the clones in Hailsham are taught with information always an early step beyond their age and they seem to accept the information that they do not really comprehend. Kathy and the other students are forbidden from comprehending the truth, evident in Miss Lucy's exploding the donating system and the deceit of life in Hailsham (Marks 350; Levy 10-11, 5): "you've been told and not told. You've been told, but none of you really understand ... You'll become adults ... you'll start to donate your vital organs ... You were brought into this world for a purpose, and your futures, all of them, have been decided" (Ishiguro 81) and in Tommy's discovery to Kathy, "the guardians had, throughout all our years at Hailsham, timed very carefully and deliberately everything they told us, so that we were always just too young to understand properly the latest piece of information. But of course we'd take it in at

some level, so that before long all this stuff was there in our heads without us ever having examined it properly” (Ishiguro 82). Most of the clones remain passive and accept their fate as their responsibility to the real-world society in their doomed position and do not revolt against it (Marks 348; Butcher 1299) because their logic to this responsibility is twisted (Levy 3) and they are “creatures of habit” (Wood 37). For example, after Ruth does a job as a carer for five years, she expresses her willingness to donate organs: “I was pretty much ready when I became a donor. It felt right. After all, it’s what we’re *supposed* to be doing, isn’t it” (Ishiguro 227 emphasis in original; Levy 3)? Kathy and Tommy intend to save their lives by their mutual love but in vain. Facing the monolithic social forces, it is possible that eventually Kathy will abandon her personal freedom and donate organs simply like Tommy and Ruth, which is indeed “an unjust capitulation to the demands of an oppressive social order” in a realistic version of the Bildungsroman (Levy 4); or, Kathy will age and fade like normals.

In her manipulation, Miss Emily intends to keep the theory of love and deferral as the human clones’ hope of delaying their organ donation and thus keeps those clones living the same regular life as normals (Ishiguro 261), implying whether life is meaningful counts on whether it is in a meaningful process. Although the clones are predestined to donate their organs and complete one day in the recovery center, Miss Emily creates a perfect environment and the best interests for the clones to live their life (Wood 38), creating the theme of a life with predestination or freewill. In the case of the clones’ infertility, it seems related to a test of their freewill.

It is probably not true that the clones are incapable of carrying babies and giving them birth but that they do not believe in their fertility, dare not break the guardian’s rules and do nothing to solve problems. This is indeed what culture as an expression of the clones comes as center into which what culture imposes on them comes as freeplay. Then, three phases for the world of the human clones, Hailsham, Cottages, and caring centers (Wood 36) are in Miss Emily’s arrangement of imposed ideology, the clones’ responsibility for the society; i.e. predestination for organ donation. The organ harvesting is even “internally normalized by the donors themselves” (McDonald 78). Hailsham, for example, educates students in the world of clones as well as those in the world of normals and it also “constricts individual autonomy, stunting rebellious impulses by strategically acclimating students to their predetermined role in society” (Levy 5). Hailsham as “the educational [humane] environment provides protagonists with a microcosm of the wider world they are later to experience” (McDonald 76-77; Marks 348) since childhood is “a social construction which is both culturally and

historically determined” (Scratton 2 qtd. in McDonald 77) “in a nexus of [given] ideological forces” (McDonald 77). Confessing to Kathy and Tommy, Miss Emily stands for the real world of normals and their desire and demand for healthy organs and for clones as means (Marks 350) of therapeutic ends (Carroll 61) and as the exploited (Levy 8):

There was no going back. However uncomfortable people were about your existence, their overwhelming concern was that their own children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, did not die from cancer, motor neurone disease, heart disease. So for a long time you were kept in the shadows, and people did their best not to think about you. And if they did, they tried to convince themselves you weren’t really like us. That you were less than human, so it didn’t matter (Ishiguro 263).

She feels proud in her deceit that she offers clones an excellent and supportive life in Hailsham, a good shelter, better than any other institutes and that she protects them from sad predestination, the regular procedures for organ donation (Ishiguro 268; Levy 6). Though from the clones’ perspective, if they prove their souls in their creative artistic works to the world, they can defer or stop organ donation (Marks 349); unfortunately, in Emily’s eyes, for Shameem Black, those creative artistic works prove that clones are good products for a wrong purpose (Levy 11-12):

we demonstrated to the world that if students were reared in humane, cultivated environments, it was possible for them to grow to be as sensitive and intelligent as any ordinary human being. Before that, all clones...existed only to supply medical science. (Ishiguro 261)

Under Emily’s careful manipulation, the clones gradually step onto their predestination.

The definition of human beings appears a question: like Butcher, who questions what makes people human (1300) and like Ishiguro, who questions what a soul is (qtd. in Griffin 658), I wonder whether clones are true human beings, have human characters and deserve the same human rights. A human being can be viewed as a human being if he can present his humanity or human essence by creating things and socializing in his human community or historical context, by which it means that he can present his soul and character; so does a human clone. Thus, human clones are not merely commodities but human beings simply if they are creative enough to create artistic

works for Madame's gallery even from the guardians' perspective (Griffin 655; Carroll 68), whose importance is emphasized (Jones 32) pitifully for product promotion (Jones 32); if clones' bodies are "more than the sums of their parts" (Griffin 655); and if they are the oppressed intelligible (Butler qtd. in Carroll 63), which thus proves that they have the same souls in them as normals, since from the medical perspective, an embryo with conception already is counted as human (Marks 340): "She told Roy that things like pictures, poetry, all that kind of stuff, she said they *revealed what you were like inside*. She said *they revealed your soul*" (Ishiguro 175 emphasis in original).

Indeed, the clones are more human than the normals in the novel since they shows more bonds, intimacy and commitment in the case of the existence of Hailsham and since the system of the successive organ donations is an act of inhuman (Griffin 655-56). Hailsham is meaningful for Kathy not because it is Edenic paradise, an environment for good health care and education but because it is a place that helps the human clones bind one another over space and time (Levy 5); namely, in Kathy's eyes, without Hailsham, the clones may lose chance to stay linked with one another and lose their sense of belongingness and root.

## V. The Author as Center and the Novel as Freeplay

It is the author who comes as center into which the novel comes as freeplay in the structurality of authorship; and the novel plays a supplementary role to the author. The novel uses the technique of postmodern narrative and meta-referencing and "distance[s] Ishiguro from the writing process" (McDonald 79) in Kathy's address:

I don't know how it was where you were, but at Hailsham we had to have some form of medical almost every week—usually up in Room 18 at the very to top of the house—with stern Nurse Trisha, or Crow Face, as we called her. (Ishiguro 13)

The reader senses the reader-writer exchange and Kathy functions as the voice of "an autobiographical account of events" and she "stamp[s] her authentic authorial voice upon the work" (McDonald 79) to an imagined reader as a peer by using the second-person address (Levy 9; Carroll 68). The reader and the narrator both look for traces of lives lost in the novel (McDonald 82).

The novel also "provides us with a window into a culture of genetic engineering and cloning technology in which people are exploited and killed by a state[,] seeking the

wider benefits of organ farming, a window that nevertheless reflects in part the decisions facing contemporary culture” (McDonald 76). Furthermore, the novel is “the dissensual Bildungsroman, a genre that promotes the benefits of free and full personality development[,] while calling attention to the oppressive structural institutions that constrain individual autonomy” (Levy 5); and it “suggests ways in which ethics might be reconfigured and expanded for a posthumanist age” (Marks 351). The clones’ world is “another reality, an imagined past that could represent a real future” (McDonald 82).

## **VI. Conclusion**

It is a world and non-world, where clones lead their lives and non-lives as human and non-human. Ishiguro presents the clones’ world or the three institutes, presented to the reader, with Kathy as the main voice in parallel with the real world, hidden from the reader, with Miss Emily as the medium. When facing the death of family and friends, the normals in the real world have two choices: one choice is to let go of their beloved and the other is never to let go. It is this choice of never letting go of normals’ beloved that makes Miss Emily create the world of the human clones.

It is absence over presence that the title “Never Let Me Go” actually embeds in the novel its opposite meaning “just let go” (Deb 55), which echo in Linda Pastan’s poem *Go Gentle*, where the speaker requires his ill father in great pain, to let go of life for death to hold up; conversely, for love, the speaker also has to try best, let go of his father and accept the loss of him. Namely, if we never let go, we will never let go of clone farming and harvesting, an aporia, referring to an “unpassable path” (Norris 49), and a pass against God’s will.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank her beloved family, particularly Chiu-er Lin and Yu-chien Huang; and her teacher Dr. Petros Dovolis in Department of English, National Changhua University of Education (NCUE), Changhua, Taiwan

## Works Cited

Bressler, Charles E.. *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. 4<sup>th</sup>ed. New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2007. Print.

Burley, Justine. "A Braver, Newer World." *Nature* 435.7041 (2005): 427.

Butcher, James. "A Wonderful Donation." *Lancet* 365.9467 (2005): 1299-1300.

Carroll, Rachel. "Imitations of Life: Cloning, Heterosexuality and the Human in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Journal of Gender Studies* 19.1 (2010): 59-71.

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: U of Oxford P, 1997. Print.

Deb, Siddhartha. "Lost Corner." *New Statesman* 134.4730 (2005): 55.

Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978. Print.

Fry, Paul H.. *Introduction to Theory of Literature*. 2009. TS. Yale University, Yale.

Griffin, Gabriele. "Science and the Cultural Imaginary: the Case of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Textual Practice* 23.4 (2009): 645-663.

Hawthorn, Jeremy. *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. London: Arnold, 2000. Print.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. New York: Vintage, 2005. Print.

Jones, Kristin M. "Childhood's End." *Film Comment* 46.5 (2010): 32-33.

Levy, Titus. "Human Rights Storytelling and Trauma Narrative in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Journal of Human Rights* 10 (2011): 1-16.

McDonald, Keith. "Days of Past Futures: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* as 'Speculative Memoir'." *Biography* 30.1 (2007): 74-83.

Marks, John. "Clone Stories: 'Shallow are the Souls that have Forgotten how to Shudder'." *Paragraph* 33.3 (2010): 331-53.

Norris, Christopher. *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*. London: Methuen, 1982. Print.

Pastan, Linda. "Go Gentle." *Just a Dream Tripod*. N.p. N.d. Web. 2 February 2015.

Sagut, Joel. "Derrida's Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences." *Scribd*. 2009. PDF file.

Selden, Raman, et al. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. London: Pearson, 2005. Print.

Shakespeare, William. "Hamlet." *The Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997. Print.

Vorhaus, Daniel. Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *American Journal of Bioethics* 7.2 (2007): 99-100.

Wood, James. "The Human Difference." *New Republic*. 232.18 (2005): 36-39.

Contact email: [huangelisha@gmail.com](mailto:huangelisha@gmail.com)