



Narrative Of Posthuman Identity And Representaion Of Human–Stories Through Clones In Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*

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Narratology is the study of narrative structures. Structuralism is the source of Narratology but later it has established itself as an independent branch from the parent. It has borrowed the terminologies and some of its characters from the linguistic theory though its all about stories. Narrative and art are connected through a single cord in our imagination. The speciality of it is that both artists and non-artists engage in a similar way in a Narrative. Narrative makes its presence known through the activation of it by mind. We can describe films, texts, plays and paintings through its physical form but Narrative is only an out of sight experience. We have still a long way to go or may not even achieve its scientific exactitude. According to Barthes when we look into the narrative genres like epic, short-story or Saga the narrative provides a structure. Even if we focus on any non-narrative genre like a lyric poem we can find a single feeling not only a mere story and this is Narrative (Barthes.“Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives.” in Susan Sontag, pp. 251–2).

Narrative and art are connected through a single cord in our imagination. We think of different genres like novels, folktales, sagas, anecdotes or even storytelling when we speak about narrative. The speciality of narrative is that both artists and narrators engage in a similar way in narratives. Narratives permeates our lives in a way that Nick David describes like “fish trying to discuss the nature of water” (Davis Nick, “Rethinking Narrativity: A Return to Aristotle and Some Consequences”, *Storyworlds* 4, 2012.

We commonly describe complex and longer works like histories, biographies, novels and autobiographies as narratives. These Narratives contain some materials that are non-narrative in nature such as wandering conversation, lengthy descriptions and philosophical thoughts but when there is an invisible spine holding it together we definitely call it a narrative. Sometimes we can't decide if there is an apparent narrative spine as it becomes obscure to find out in the presence of little and also not so little building blocks of main narrative. In the words of Marie Laure Ryan Narrative is a “Fuzzy set defined at the centre by a solid core of properties, but accepting various degrees of membership” (Ryan, “Narrative”, 2005). The difference between Narrative discourse and story lies in different kinds of time and obviously different kinds of order. According to Seymour Chatman this kind of arrangement and order gives rise to the chronologic of narrative. What makes narrative unique among text type is its “chrono-logic”, its doubly temporal logic. Narrative entails movement through time not only “externally” (the duration of the sequence of events that continues the plot). The first operates in that dimension of narrative called discourse...,the second in that called story...Non-narrative text types do not

have an internal time sequence, even though, obviously they take time to read, view or hear. Their underlying structures are static or atemporal. (Chatman Seymor, *Coming to Terms*, P.9).

While reading a non– narrative type of text we can find the time involved in it is the time that we take to read the essay and the structure of the essay is the only order imbedded in it. But when we read a narrative two kinds of time are involved in it. One is the time when we read it and the other is when the stories unfold and the events occur and obviously the order we talk about is the order of events. One beautiful quality of narrative discourse is its malleability. Narrative can expand and contract and leap forward and backward. We can consume information from a narrative and reconstruct it in our mind as an order of events. We can call it a story. Stories can be finished in a minute or it can take a lifetime. Sometimes it is true and sometimes it is false. They can be fictional or historical. But there is a difference in the time and order of events between stories and narratives. These are examples of Narratives in which the time of the narrative discourse walks in the opposite direction to the time of the story so that the beginning starts at the end. In the play 'Betrayal' by Harold Pinter (1978) the incident of a seven successive years of affair staged in a completely reverse order and the ending becomes the beginning. Similarly the Novel *Never Let Me Go* starts from the ending. As it starts with the memories of Kathy "I've been getting this urge to order all these old memories" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, P.37). The story is narrated by Kathy who is a 'carer' and a former student at Hailsham. Here the students are trained for organ donation for non–cloned humans. Kathy, Ruth, Tommy all are clones but their lives are reflection of joys, sorrows, disappointments and hopes defining human experience. Their humanity is expressed through their artworks and moreover Kathy's narrative portrayed through her memory pleads the urge of holding onto the human identity forever. The narrative goes back and forth throughout the novel in time and space and is constructed by one single narrator Kathy. At the beginning of the novel Kathy is thirty one years old and she recalls her past days "My name is Kathy H. I'm 31 years old (P.3). This is narrated from Kathy's point of view and all the characters are perceived as Kathy has described them, "And I realised that for Ruth and the others, whatever the boys chose to do was pretty remote from us..." (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, P.7). So the reader only comes to know about the events if Kathy only remembers them or wishes to portray the events. The readers need to have a perception of their own and ask themselves that if Kathy narrates the events as it or only describes them as she wants them to be. In the beginning of the novel the narrator assumes the reader has a certain kind of prior knowledge about the society in which she lives in but the reader surely does not have any knowledge. So the opening becomes confusing and the issues doesn't resolve until certain things come to light in the progression of the novel. It is really disturbing for the reader to guess why Kathy doesn't disclose her full name or what role she plays as a carer. She says, "I've been a carer now for over eleven year". (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, P.3). It's a kind of suspense she creates by not giving the full details. When she says, "My donors have always tended to do much better than expected" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, P.3). No one can clarify what is the substantiality of being a donor. What kind of society she is talking about where her identity gives her a vital importance among others when she mentions. "And I'm a Hailsham student – which is enough by itself sometimes to get people's back up" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, P.3). This is the way of her narration that makes the reader intrigued as the reader faces a lot of questions but only a few answers. This quality makes the reader determined to find out more and more. Kathy describes the events in a non–linear way as she begins to portray an event while she remembers it but in the next moment she is tempted to recall another event. In the chapter four Kathy first tells about Miss Emily, the head guardian but in a moment's gap she starts to share her recollected memories about Ruth. She interrupts and begins, "but that's not really what I want to talk to you about just now. What I want to do now is get a few things down about Ruth, about how we met and become friends, about one early days together."

According to D' hoker, "the interpretation of unreliability [which] depends to a large extent on the reader's ability to recognise that conflict and gauge the distance so as to arrive at a version of what really happened and at an interpretation of the narrator's frame of mind" (D'hoker , P.150). While Kathy tells her story she is also a part of writing project to preserve the memories of loved ones and the life–stories of dying people. She turns the experiences of her own around the people in distress into her memoir. The symbol of loss has bloomed as an elegy in act of witnessing the testimony. In the words of Judith Butler,

The lost object is ... made cohesive with the ego itself. Indeed, one might conclude that melancholic identification permits the loss of object in the external world precisely because it provides a way to preserve the object as part of the ego and hence to avert the loss as a complete loss...Giving up the object becomes possible only on the condition of a melancholic internalization or what might for our purpose turn out to be more important, a melancholic incorporation. (Butler Judith, P. 243-58).

Ishiguro's Novel *Never Let Me Go* focuses on the narrative of dystopia in the 1990's England where the lives of the common people are pronged through the process of human cloning. The clones are gaining a posthuman identity and at the same time facing the sense of crisis of human identity. The approach of posthumanism lies in an oblique position in comparison to human perspective while we consider it critically. This approach views the crisis of humanism and the posthumanization effect from the extended 'inhuman' point of view. This inhuman according to Neal Curtis "upholds the human in its certainty and rectitude, projecting all animality and barbarity outward" (Curtis, 2006, P.434). In the words of Lyotard,

The human species is not the hero of the fable. It is a complex form of organizing energy. Like the other forms, it is undoubtedly transitory. Other, more complex forms may appear that will win over it. Perhaps one of these forms is preparing itself through techno-scientific development right from the time when the fable was being recounted. (Lyotard, P.17).

Kathy lives in a world where the clones created from human beings are nurtured for organ donation. Kathy would also become a donor but we can find her at the beginning of the novel as a 'carer' who helps the donors throughout the process of organ donation by providing medical facilities and by taking care of the donors after operations. Ishiguro introduces a term called 'completion' in the novel *Never Let Me Go* that refers to the completion of the process of donation and the demise of the clones as well. The process is not a spontaneous one rather it is very forceful. The donors are prepared in a systematic way from childhood for this donation. Though donation is a charitable work and people do it with an inherent happiness but only donors can give this life such a condemned destination by going beyond the space of human experience, thus creating a posthuman condition for them. In the words of Snaza,

their organs from them. Calling such a taking a "donation" is a crucial misnomer, a catharsis in the sense of abuse. Such a reading is bolstered by a consideration of what the final donation—the one in which the "donor" gives all her organs, including the ones she cannot live without—is called: "Completing". (Snaza, P.224).

Kathy understands "that we are different from our guardians and also from the normal people outside. We perhaps even know that a long way down the line there were donations waiting for us" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, P.69). She realizes that she can't align herself with another human being. Her identity is not similar with a person having a human identity. She always has in her mind that who she is like 'Frankenstein' in Mary Shelley's novel. The monster wants to know about his creation and also about the creator to discover his origin and confirm the identity. Even in *Never Let Me Go*, Kathy, Ruth, Tommy and other clones want to know about their creation process and who are actually their "possibles". (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, P.117) or from whom they are made or their possible models. By finding their possibles they will be aware of their roots or achieve a sense of belonging that will provide them the needed identity. Post-human turns their journey of finding the identity into reality though humans believe clones have no souls or identity as well. According to Donna Haraway, a cyborg or posthuman

"is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction." (Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto", P.150).

Human clones are not created by a natural or biological process rather they are created by a hybrid technology from only one single person. There is Posthuman era "you become adults, then before you're old, before you're even middle-aged, you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you was created to do" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, P. 68).

The existence of clones is also a big challenge. The clone children receives good education. Miss Lucy teaches them, "you're special. So keeping yourselves well, keeping yourselves very healthy inside...that's much more important for each of you than it is for me" (Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, P.57). The clones do not escape the process of donation but they accept their destiny without any complain. They feel proud whenever they become successful in their journey up to the fourth donation and at the same time they feel guilty if they fail in the process and become ashamed if their life and after at first or second donation.

Kathy's awareness begins when she understands Hailsham students are of a different kind from the "normal people outside" (Ishiguro, P.63). When Miss Lucy, one of their guardians exposes the purpose of bringing them to Hailsham she says,

you've been told, but none of you really understand, and I dare say, some people are quite happy to leave in that way. [...] None of you will go to America, none of you will be film stars. And none of you will be working in supermarkets as I heard some of you planning the other day. Your lives are set out for you. [...] You'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you was created to do. [...] you were brought into this world for a purpose, and your futures, all of them, have been decided (Ishiguro, P.73).

After leaving Hailsham Kathy comes to the cottage, a deserted place. Kathy and the path of her friends Ruth and Tommy gets separated here. She applies for working as a carer to overcome her feelings for Tommy. The travels from place to place to take care of the donors. In Hailsham or in the cottage Kathy realizes clones do not have contact with the real people. They live in a parallel world. Their behaviour is modelled on the things they adopt from TV series, or street poster or paper ads. Their identity is made on the reflection of the artificial image of the society. Kathy expresses her condition by saying,

Because It does not really matter how well your guardians try to prepare you: All the talks, videos, discussions, warnings, none of that can really bring it home. [...] All the same. Some of it must go in somewhere [...]. Maybe from as early as when you're five or six [...] you're waiting, [...], waiting for the moment when you realise that you are really different to them; that there are people out there [...] who don't hate you or wish you any harm, but who nevertheless shudder at the very thought of you— of how you were brought into this world and why—and who dared the idea of your hand brushing against theirs. The first time you glimpse yourself through the eyes of a person like that, it's a cold moment. It's like walking past a mirror you're walked past every day of your life and suddenly it shows you something else something troubling and strange (Ishiguro, P.33).

In the novel *Never Let Me Go* the reader identifies Kathy on the other side of mirror and finds her in a devastated condition. The idea of real is converted to a mere image where the clones live on a world of parallel reality. The novel acts as a threshold between the reality and the simulacrum of reality and the reader is trapped in the narrative of the novel. Thus novel indicated towards the fabulized future of the country.

It seems that today this inhumanity of the system has thoroughly embraced the 'absence of an essence' and the endless plasticity of the human with its secret human core. Lyotard does not refer to 'plasticity' which has become a fashionable word especially for cognitive science in recent times (Malabou 2008), but simply to 'development'. The meaning, however is quite clear : at stake is the accelerated liberalization, flexibilization, virtualization etc. of modernity whose internal dynamics and metaphysics corresponds precisely to the 'ideology of development' (Herbrechter, *Posthumanism, A Critical Analysis*, P.8).

The novel indicated towards a denouncing society where we perceive the world though a simulacrum of reality. The society of Hailsham is made of some internal rules. Tokens are used as currency there and human body is introduced to a free market economy.

This 'ideology of development' and (self) transformation has become automated and no longer needs any grand narratives which used to promise humanity's emancipation. Instead it is now threatening to become the embodiment of the inhuman or even the

posthuman, because for the complex system humans are merely a means to an end (Herbrechter, P. 8-9).

According to Lyotard,

And what else is left to resist with but the debt which each soul has contracted with the miserable and admirable indeterminacy from which it was born and does not cease to be born? Which is to say, with the other inhuman (Lyotard, *A Postmodern Fable*, P.7) ?

Similarly at the end of the novel *Clones* come to know,

And for a long time, people preferred to believe these organs appeared from nowhere or at most that they grew in a kind of vacuum [...] By the time people [...] come to consider just how you were reared, whether you should have been brought into existence at all, well by then it was too late. There was no way to reverse the process. [...] 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 (Ishiguro, P.240).

When we move through the edges of a narrative we find that the narrative string is embedded in another narrative. The main string is called a framing narrative. In the construction of a narrative there are some primary directions,

narrative is the representation of events, consisting of story and narrative discourse, story is an event or sequence of events (the action); and narrative discourse is those events as represented. [...] There have been efforts to subdivide narrative discourse into : the order in which events are recounted (plot or *sjuzhet*) and 'style' or 'discourse' (Abbott, P.18).

The difference between story and narrative discourse is that we can't see the story without the help of narrative discourse. A story is presented or mediated through a writing style, a voice, actor's interpretation or camera angles. So the story is collaborated between the reader and author in the process of construction.

In the novel *Never Let Me Go* the clones represent the stories of humanity in the posthuman society. The stories prove that the clones have soul and they also have dream of having a normal life like humans by loving each other, being creative and reproducing their own kids. We can see in Hailsham students are identified with their creativity and artwork. Kathy says,

Exchanges we had at Hailsham four times a year spring, summer, autumn, winter we had a kind of big exhibition cum sale of the all things we'd been creating in three months since the last exchanges (Ishiguro, P.15).

It is believed or the characters in the novel *Never Let Me Go* have a clinginess to the idea that clones have souls and they are human. The souls and they are human. These souls can be identified through their artwork and are evident in their caring nature and ability to love. When Kathy and Tommy meet Miss Emily and Madame she asks why the guardians of Hailsham would ever try to establish the idea of clones having souls or why anyone from the outside would want to prove that the students don't have souls (Ishiguro, P. 260). The best artworks created by students of Hailsham are presented to Madame for the selection process in the Billiard room. Though there is a mysterious issue as the students think that their artworks are given to the gallery which is directed under the supervision of Madame. They assume that the artworks would help them achieving 'deferral' before they reach to the end of donation process. But at the end they come to know that there exists no such process called deferral and Miss Emily reveals,

We took away your art work because we thought it would reveal your souls. Or to put it more finely, we did it to prove you had souls at all. [...] we challenged the entire way the donation programme was being run. Most importantly we demonstrate 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— or students as we preferred to call you— existed only to supply medical science [...] that's largely all you were to most people. Shadowy objects in test tubes (Ishiguro, P. 255–56).

We can get most examples of human stories when we look into the relationship between Kathy and Tommy. While living in Hailsham Tommy gifts a tape to Kathy and the 11 year old child Kathy danced to the song of the tape named “Never Let Me Go” with her pillow attached to her breast. She had tears in her eyes and while Kathy explains it to Madame she says,

I imagined it was about this woman who’d been told she couldn’t have babies. But then she’d had one, and she was so pleased and she was holding it ever so tightly to her breast, really afraid something might separate them, and she’s saying baby, baby, never let me go (Ishiguro, P.266).

But Madame examined it from a different point of view she says,

I saw a new world coming rapidly, more scientific, efficient, yes. More cures for the old sickness. Very good. But a harsh , cruel world. And I saw a little girl, her eyes tightly closed, holding to her breast the old kind world, one that she knew in her heart could not remain and she was holding it and pleading ,never to let her go” (Ishiguro, P.267).

After the days in Hailsham Kathy, Tommy and Ruth again meet when Kathy, the carer took Tommy and Ruth, the donor in the beach to look for a ship that was standard on a seashore. Ruth apologizes for the sake of their friendship to Kathy and gives them the note of Miss Emily encouraging for deferral. Kathy and Tommy’s love can only give proof of their humaneness but it can’t make them enter to the real human world. This symbol is represented through the ship at a distance, they can only watch it but can’t reach to the point. While Tommy grew up playing football and splashing the water through the shot he always thought of an image that the river was always in a hurry that

these two people in the water, trying to hold onto each other... the current’s too strong. They’ve got to let go, drift apart (Ishiguro, P. 245).

Another instance of human story is captured through the memory of Kathy when towards the end of the novel Kathy talks about how a donor has complained about “about how memories , even your most precious one, fade surprisingly quickly” (Ishiguro, P.280). But Kathy disagrees and says “But I don’t go along with that. The memories I value most , I don’t see them ever fading– I lost Ruth, then I lost Tommy, but I won’t lose my memories of them” (Ishiguro, P. 280).

Throughout the novel the memories of Hailsham comes to her knowledge or unknowingly towards the end of the novels she says “ I don’t go searching for it” (Ishiguro, P. 281) and she decides to place Hailsham in her head while she’ll have a quieter life. Though after the completion of Tommy, Kathy drives to Norfolk, the place where she has lost everything from her childhood. She says, “though the tears rolled down my face, I wasn’t sobbing out of control, I just waited a bit (Ishiguro, P. 282). Thus through the tears of human emotions the stories of clones are imprinted in the narrative of posthuman world, a world of Kathy’s unfulfilled dreams.

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