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Clones, Consciousness And The Ethics Of Being: Exploring Posthuman Themes In *Never Let Me Go*

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This paper examines the posthuman themes in *Never Let Me Go* (2005) by Kazuo Ishiguro by scrutinizing the novel's critique of the limitations and moral dilemmas inherent in a posthuman society. It aims to investigate the tension between the characters' acceptance of their predestined fate and their quest for meaning in a world that regards them as mere instruments for survival. The paper contextualizes *Never Let Me Go* within the broader framework of posthumanist thought and delves into the ways in which clones created for organ donation redefine love, identity, and selfhood, thereby highlighting the ethical implications of cloning. The paper focuses on how the clones' relationships and emotions are shaped by their biological purpose and reveals a nuanced portrayal of posthumanism where humanity is explored through the lens of the non-human. These insights emphasize the novel's critical engagement with ethical dilemmas in a world that is increasingly defined by biotechnology and the reimagining of what it means to be human. Ultimately, the paper concludes that Ishiguro's novel urges readers to reconsider the ethics of bioengineering and the future of human life in an increasingly technologized world and offers a nuanced reflection on the intersection of humanity and posthumanity.

Key words: Posthuman, identity, ethics, personhood, anthropocentrism, memory

Technological advancements have altered the trajectory of the whole world. As time passes, the reliance of humans on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other tools have expanded significantly. The relationship that man shares with cyborgs has risen to great heights and led to the formation of an interconnected world- one where the bridge between the two has become obscure. The 21st century thus witnesses an amalgamation of the human and the non-human as their identities almost merge into one, transcending all differences.

Posthumanism as a philosophical and critical framework challenges traditional humanist ideas about the nature of humanity by questioning human exceptionalism- the belief that humans are the most important entities in the universe. "Of all things the measure is man: of those that are, that they are; and of those that are not, that they are not" (Protagoras). Traditional humanism propounded by Renaissance thinkers such as Petrarch, Erasmus, Sir Thomas More etc. posits humans as unique and superior in the natural world owing to human faculties of consciousness, thought, reason and morality.

Posthumanism critiques this anthropocentric worldview which places human beings at the top of a hierarchy above all other forms of life and non-human entities. Ihab Hassan, an American cultural, postmodern theorist, introduced the term "posthuman" in his 1977 article "Prometheus as Performer: Towards a Posthumanist Culture?". The term "posthuman" literally translates to 'beyond human' or 'after human'. It discredits the concept of human exceptionalism by contending that humanity is not fundamentally separate from other forms of life or technology. It also explores the implications of technologies, biotechnology, artificial intelligence and other developments that pose as a challenge to the boundaries between the human and the non-human.

Never Let Me Go (2005) by Kazuo Ishiguro is a dystopian science fiction novel which is set in another version of 20th-century England. Clones are created for the purpose of donating their organs and raised in isolation from the outside world during the post-war era. The novel follows the lives of Kathy H., Tommy and Ruth, who are students at a boarding school, Hailsham. As they grow older, they realise the unsettling truth about their existence that they are being reared for organ donation, which ultimately shapes their identities and sense of purpose.

The question of what it means to be human forms the apex of the novel. The clones are genetically identical to humans however they are not treated as fully human by society. The characters struggle with the questions of identity which oscillate between their biological function and social demands. This idea mirrors larger questions about the value of human life and agency.

Posthumanism questions whether the human capacity for reason and self-awareness make humans fundamentally distinct or superior to other beings. Instead, it recognizes the interconnectedness between humans and their environment. A central theme of posthumanism is thus to breakdown the distinctions between human beings and non-human entities thereby preventing the 'othering' of these beings. This is achieved through fusing humans with technology (cyborgs), creating artificial intelligence and bringing the ethical considerations around biotechnology, cloning and genetic modification into the forefront. "In the posthuman, there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals." (Hayles 3). The posthuman thus reconceptualizes reality as an evolutionary and transformative process. Identity and consciousness are not found in a single, independent person, but rather emerge from these connections. In an era of pervasive technology and interaction, this idea of the self as both manufactured and flexible offers up fresh perspectives on what it is to be human.

Furthermore, posthumanism investigates how technological developments could alter the constraints of the human body and mind. The clones in the novel are made explicitly to donate their organs. They are physically and genetically identical to humans, yet they are not recognized as fully human by society. These students were 'reared' to supply medical science. As war casualties and life-threatening diseases including epidemics increased, there emerged a need for a supply of organs to sustain human life.

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 258)

Posthumanism critiques the definition of what it means to be human and considers whether biological factors like genetics or societal recognition are truly the determinants of humanity. The lack of agency exhibited by the clones and their status as objects of exploitation raise ethical questions about the value of life and the essence of what it means to be "human." Posthumanism views identity as hybrid and mutable, rather than fixed or inherent. The distinctions between humans, animals and machines have become more blurred as a result of the development of complex and fluid beings created using technology. "A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction." (Haraway 7). This process of hybridization proposes a future where humans increasingly interact and integrate with technology, thereby redefining humanity itself. "Thus we come full circle here: the clones

are created from humans, they are brought up and treated as the "Other" but their organs are harvested and assimilated into humans so that eventually the clone body and the human body become one." (Nayar 12)

Kathy, Tommy and Ruth are thrust into a conundrum wherein they constantly grapple with their biological identity as human beings and their social identity as people whose lives are defined by their role as organ donors. Their attempts to assert their individuality beyond their biological identity which is fixed and unchangeable, prove to be constrained by the societal structures that categorize them as less than human. However, the novel reveals several ways in which the clones try to carve out a sense of identity beyond their biological purpose. These efforts become crucial testaments to understand the human desire for self-expression. The clones engage in artistic expression and form complex emotional bonds, both of which challenge the idea that humanity is solely defined by biology or utility. The friendships and romantic entanglements that develop between Kathy, Tommy and Ruth are, in their eyes, important aspects of their identity. These relationships give them a sense of individuality and belonging which help them transcend the reductive, utilitarian view of their existence. From the posthumanist perspective, this can be seen as a plea to extend the defining factors of "humanity" to beings who transcend traditional biological limits, whether through cloning or other forms of augmentation.

In *Never Let Me Go*, the status of the clones force readers to reconsider the concept of personhood, individuality and moral responsibility. It speaks about the failure of dominant social and political systems to recognize the intrinsic worth of those who are viewed as 'Other' and therefore marginalized. Ishiguro thus critiques the ethical failures of humanism and posthumanism by representing a society that perpetuates inequality and systemic exploitation.

The tragic fate met by the clones is a manifestation of the consequences of failing to recognize the full complexity of their identity and agency. The clones are subjected to existential predicaments including isolation and predestined death. The philosophical underpinnings of posthumanism allow us to reflect on the ways in which sometimes humanity itself gets constructed through the processes of such exclusion and reduction. The novel critiques the utilitarian view of humanity which sees human lives as commodities, and invites a more inclusive and compassionate understanding of personhood. The life of the characters, despite being shaped by biology and genetics, still retain elements of personhood. Kathy's memories, Tommy's art and Ruth's desires thus come off as a challenge to the idea that life has meaning only insofar as it serves others.

As the narrator, Kathy's reflection on her relationships with Tommy and Ruth is crucial to establish her identity. Her memories reveal her desire to hold onto her unique experiences and emotions which refute the attempt of the society to define her. She seeks to understand her past and create meaning from it despite being informed of her inevitable fate as a donor. Kathy's role as the narrator is a way for her to assert her individuality and to claim ownership of her story, despite it being shaped by forces beyond her control.

The emphasis on art and creativity is a subtle, yet poignant attempt by the institution to help the clones express themselves beyond their biological role. The teachers at Hailsham suggest that the art the clones produce prove that they have souls. "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." (Ishiguro 255). The elegant Madame, whose real name is Marie-Claude, is said to gather the finest artwork from the Hailsham students and display it in her gallery. She attempts to convince others that the pupils ought to be treated equally by using their artistic creations as evidence. Miss Emily treats the kids like human beings rather than as artificial beings and makes every attempt to make their lives worthy of consideration. In addition to Madame, she works behind the scenes to promote her convictions and seeks to persuade those outside of Hailsham that the children are sentient human beings. "Most importantly, 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." (Ishiguro 256). However, she is dismissive of their plight claiming that this is how things go in a world where people's feelings and opinions went every other way each day. She goes on to claim that the students of Hailsham were "lucky pawns" even if they had to grow up "at a certain point in this process." (Ishiguro 261)

Miss Lucy is overcome by her feelings and tells Tommy that he doesn't need to be artistic. She believes that the students need to know the whole truth of how they were created or 'reared' to donate their organs till they "complete" i.e. pass away providing them. She addresses them likewise:

Your lives are set out for you. You'll become adults, then before you're old, before you're even middle-aged, you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's each of you was created to do. You're not like the actors you watch on your videos; you're not even like me. You were brought into this world for a purpose, and your futures, all of them have been decided... So, you're not to talk that way anymore. You'll be leaving Hailsham before long, and it's not so far off, the day you'll be preparing for your first donations. You need to remember that. If you're to have decent lives, you have to know who you are and what lies ahead of you, every one of you. (Ishiguro 80)

The clones themselves find personal significance in creating art. They hope that on some level, their art can assert their existence as more than just their biological purpose. The clones believe that their art has value and invest emotionally in it, considering their art as an expression of their inner selves.

Tommy struggles with creating art which reflect his difficulties in asserting an identity outside of his predetermined biological function. His eventual frustration with his lack of creativity stems from his desire to express something meaningful about himself. However, even as he tries to create art, he is discouraged by the recognition that these efforts won't change the trajectory of his life. His identity is always tethered to his future as a donor. His search for a more authentic form of self-expression through his relationships and the act of creating animal figures later on, become futile yet deeply human attempts to resist the reduction of his existence to his fate as a donor. Tommy's theory that their art was taken away to the gallery for the purpose of scrutiny when a couple came to ask for "deferring"- a concept that two people in love could hold off donations for 2-3 years, a privilege applicable to students at Hailsham, reflects his belief in art as a medium of expression and to some degree a yearning for normalcy and escape.

The concept of deferral is almost a plunge in the dark, a mythic belief in the possibility of altering their destiny or asserting some form of control over the gruesome fate they are to meet. It becomes a way for the clones to assert that their lives have intrinsic value beyond their function as organ donors. They hold on to the hope that their love and emotional experiences will validate their existence, even if they ultimately cannot escape the life set out for them. This desire to "defer" their fate can be seen as a struggle to claim a form of agency for themselves. Similarly, the belief of the students' that Norfolk would be a place where all lost things end up mirrors their hope and yearning to regain their lost self. "We still had that last bit of comfort, thinking one day, when we were grown up, and we were free to travel around the country, we could always go and find it again in Norfolk." (Ishiguro 66)

The purpose of organ donation remains central to the lives of the clones but is rarely discussed in clear terms until the realization comes too late. The clones are led to believe they are special, yet their lives are limited by their role as donors, thereby rendering their "specialness" hollow. Madame, who is supposed to be sheltering them from the harsh realities of their existence, comes off as a hypocrite who considers them as less than human. As the students walk past her, she stiffens up and shudders which makes them realise that she was afraid of them, similar to someone's fear of spiders. This incident forms the first instance wherein the students felt themselves to be "spiders", which normal people were frightened of.

So you're waiting, even if you don't quite know it, waiting for the moment when you realise that you really are different to them; that there are people out there, like Madame, 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 dread the idea of your hand brushing against theirs. (Ishiguro 36)

These children were thus viewed with fear and disregard and often objectified as mere vessels for organ harvesting. The position of clones in society thus lies in the midst of civilised humanity and barbarism. Posthumanist theory emphasizes how this reflects broader concerns about the commodification of life and the treatment of non-human beings or human-like entities as tools for other purposes.

Posthumanism frequently explores the ethical and moral implications of genetic manipulation and biotechnology. In *Never Let Me Go*, the act of cloning and using clones for organ harvesting serve as a direct commentary on how biotechnological advancements can be misused to dehumanize and exploit. The dystopian society in Ishiguro's novel treats the clones in a way that echoes contemporary concerns about exploitation. "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" (Ishiguro 257). While they were physically human, they were regarded as disposable with their value being measured by their ability to contribute to the survival of others, rather than their own worth.

The novel also raises profound questions about the ethics of cloning and organ donation. The treatment of clones as expendable beings that exist solely to serve the needs of "real" humans, serves as a critique of the ways in which society can dehumanize those perceived as "other." "A post-human ethics, therefore, encourages us to think outside of the interests of our own species, be less narcissistic in our conception of the world, and to take the interests and rights of things that are different to us seriously." (Centre)

When the clones question their former guardians about the possibility of postponing their organ donations, the guardians openly discuss the learning at Hailsham as an 'experiment', thereby making it apparent that they dehumanised the clones. Miss Emily tells that "We're all afraid of you. I myself had to fight back my dread of you all almost every day I was at Hailsham. There were times I'd look down at you all from my study window and I'd feel such revulsion..." (Ishiguro 264). Madame says "Poor creatures. What did we do to you? With all our schemes and plans?" (Ishiguro 249) The reiteration of this and her animosity towards them reflect the animalization faced by the students.

Hailsham itself functioned as a mechanism of control wherein the students are constantly subjected to surveillance and subtly nudged into compliance with the roles that they are expected to play in society. The pervasive surveillance system along with the controlled educational environment, mirrors posthumanist concerns about the way technology can be used to limit freedom and autonomy. This leads to the creation of a world in which the destinies of the clones are predetermined. However, this system is disguised by the teachers as a means to 'shelter' the students. Early in the novel, this pervasive control in place at Hailsham is revealed:

The pond lay to the south of the house [...] if there were no guardians around, you could take a short cut through the rhubarb patch. Anyway, once you came out to the pond, you'd find a tranquil atmosphere [...] It wasn't, though, a good place for a discrete conversation – not nearly as good as the lunch queue. For a start you could be clearly seen from the house. And the way the sound travelled across the water was hard to predict; if people wanted to eavesdrop, it was the easiest thing to walk down the outer path and crouch in the bushes on the other side of the pond. (Ishiguro 25)

The students were thus always under observation and were virtually maintained. Hailsham was also situated in such a way that allowed the institution to not fall subject to constant supervision thereby shielding the students from the rest of the world. Kathy reflects:

Hailsham stood in a smooth hollow with fields rising on all sides. That meant that from almost any of the classroom windows in the main house [...] you had a good view of the long narrow road that comedown across the fields and arrived at the main gate. [...] A car was a rarity, and the sight of one in the distance was sometimes enough to cause bedlam during class (Ishiguro 34).

Posthumanism examines how technological and societal structures influence or hinder human agency. It argues that human behaviour and identity are influenced by various external factors such as cultural norms, technological advancements and environmental conditions. Braidotti asserts that posthuman ethics call for an understanding of the self as more than an autonomous individual but rather as beings that are deeply interwoven with other beings and forces. She writes:

In my view, posthuman ethics urges us to endure the principle of not-One at the in-depth structures of our subjectivity by acknowledging the ties that bind us to the multiple 'others' in a vital web of complex interrelations. This ethical principle breaks up the fantasy of unity, totality and one-ness, but

also the master narratives of primordial loss, incommensurable lack and irreparable separation. What I want to emphasize instead, in a more affirmative vein, is the priority of the relation and the awareness that one is the effect of irrepressible flows of encounters, interactions, affectivity and desire, which one is not in charge of. (Braidotti 100)

The final speech delivered by Miss Emily in the novel reveals the systematic exploitation of clones as part of the larger societal structure. She critiques the hypocrisy of the society which turns a blind eye to the lives of clones created for organ donation whilst being dependent on them for sustenance. This reflection challenges the ethical implications of posthuman developments which suggest that certain lives could be seen as expendable in the future.

The characters in *Never Let Me Go* live with the illusion of choice, but their ultimate fate is inevitable. This mirrors posthumanist themes of technological determinism wherein human beings may no longer be in control of their own future because of external technological or biological forces. In the early stages of the novel, the students at Hailsham are aware that their lives will involve something related to "donating," but they are not fully told the truth about what this entails. The lives of the clones are controlled by the structures they live within and the novel critiques this humanist idea of self-determination by showing how the clones' sense of agency is ultimately an illusion. Kathy weighs in on the reality of their situation as donors and contemplates the sense of inevitability that permeate the lives of clones, echoing posthumanist themes of destiny controlled by external technological systems.

Andy Clark puts forth the idea that human minds and identities are continuously open to deep transformation by cultural and technological means. The mind and self are not bound to the biological human, but are open to radical expansion by merging with external devices and tools, thus forming a hybrid identity that moves beyond traditional notions of the human. "human thought and reason is born out of looping interactions between material brains, material bodies, and complex cultural and technological environments." (Clark 11).

One of the most poignant moments reflecting the posthumanist theme of the lack of autonomy experienced by the clones comes when Kathy reflects on her early understanding of her purpose. "We certainly knew—though not in any deep sense—that we were different from our guardians, and also from the normal people outside; we perhaps even knew that a long way down the line there were donations waiting for us. But we didn't really know what that meant." (Ishiguro 69). This quote illustrates how the clones were forced to accept their fate without objection, highlighting their lack of autonomy. The ingrained sense of inferiority felt by the clones is a result of the society which has shaped their understanding of themselves as "less than human."

Tommy explains a dream wherein two people drowning in a river with a high current, try to hold onto each other but fail as the currents end up being too strong. This reflects the situation of the clones as it is. Although being portrayed as human beings having emotions and dreams, they are irresistible to non-humanized fate. "I have to admit I'll welcome the chance to rest—to stop and think and remember." (Ishiguro 37), this musing of Kathy reflects how the clones were overworked and treated similar to machinery.

The novel also places a strong emphasis on memory and personal identity through the perspective of Kathy as the narrator. Her memories of Hailsham, of her relationships with Tommy and Ruth and of their shared experiences are factors which shape her identity. However, these memories also highlight the limitations of the clones' understanding of their purpose and the societal structures around them. "Memories, even your most precious ones, fade surprisingly quickly. But I don't go along with that. The memories I value most, I don't ever see them fading." (Ishiguro 280). The posthumanist perspective here suggests that memory itself is part of the construction of identity, but it is also shaped by the power structures and systems of control that define what is possible for the individual to experience and remember. Kathy's reflection on her past is poignant because it reveals how the clones were socialized to accept their fate without questioning it which led to an internalization of the system that limits their agency and autonomy.

Kathy expresses her loneliness during her special duty: “Then there’s the solitude. You grow up surrounded by crowds of people, that’s all you’ve ever known, and suddenly you’re a carer. You spend hour after hour, on your own, driving across the country, centre to centre, hospital to hospital, sleeping in overnights, no one to talk to about your worries, no one to have a laugh with.” (Ishiguro 203) The way Kathy reflects on her memories, particularly her emotional and intimate connections with Tommy and Ruth, allows for a posthumanist reading of memory and subjectivity. These memories challenge the notion of what it means to be human when applied to clones who were considered as beings whose lives are treated as disposable.

Kathy’s retrospective manner of storytelling suggests that the act of defining oneself through personal history is one way to establish individuality. Kathy attempts to carve out a space for herself within the constraints of a life that offers her no true autonomy by remembering the moments of love, conflicts and personal triumphs, such as when she feels close to Tommy or when she defies Ruth’s manipulations. Kathy’s emotional response to memories challenges the boundaries between the human and posthuman.

The posthuman interest in the phenomenon of the influence of technology (including memory technology) in altering identity is thus a key aspect. In *Never Let Me Go*, the memories of the characters create a complex web of human subjectivity. This interplay of technology and memory asks whether these clones can be considered “real” humans. Cary Wolfe elucidates how posthumanism shifts the emphasis from human consciousness as a unique and self-contained experience to one that is inherently relational and co-dependent on both organic and inorganic networks. “...it names the embodiment and embeddedness of the human being in not just its biological but also its technological world, the prosthetic coevolution of the human animal with the technicity of tools and external archival mechanisms” (Wolfe xv). This discipline thus stresses for a holistic understanding of existence.

The posthuman body is often envisioned as something beyond traditional human biology. While the clones in the novel aren’t strictly cyborgs, their creation and use for organ harvesting can be seen as an early form of post humanity: their bodies being bioengineered for specific, utilitarian purposes. The students are shown to discuss how they could unzip parts of their body thereby mitigating the concern of donation. Similarly, they are often given long lectures on the adverse effects of smoking or unsafe sex (even though they cannot have babies) so as to maintain their health “from the inside”. They were also subjected to medical examinations at least once a week. Ruth’s words showcase the inferiority felt by the clones to human beings, thus drawing a sharp line between human beings and human clones. “We’re modelled from trash. Junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps. Convicts, maybe, just so long as they aren’t psychos. That’s what we come from.” (Ishiguro 164).

The human body, as represented by the clones in *Never Let Me Go*, is reduced to a biological tool or commodity. This aligns with posthumanist critiques of the human body as something that can be manipulated or commodified. The clones’ bodies are seen only for their utilitarian value which is to harvest organs to sustain lives of humans. A significant event is when Kathy listens to Track 3 of Judy Bridgewater’s song ‘never let me go’ and sways about as if carrying a child in her arms and nursing it. Ruth and Kathy’s search for their “possible”- the human from which they were created, show a desire for knowing the self and perhaps for motherhood.

The idea of autonomy, or the lack thereof also forms a poignant part of the narrative. The clones are aware of their fate but are not given the chance to escape it or change their destiny. They live under the illusion that they choose their relationships and interactions but in reality, all of these choices are ultimately meaningless in the larger scheme of things. Their lack of agency parallels the ways in which non-human animals, AI and other entities may be controlled and manipulated by human systems. Posthumanism, in this case, critiques the extent to which freedom is a myth for those deemed less than human or subjugated to systems of power.

How maybe, after the fourth donation, even if you’ve technically completed, you’re still conscious in some sort of way; how then you find there are more donations, plenty of them, on the other side of that line; how there are no more recovery centres, no carers, no friends; how there’s nothing to do except watch your remaining donations until they switch you off. It’s horror movie stuff, and most of the time people don’t want to think about it. (Ishiguro 274)

Kathy's sentimental words voice her helplessness and that of her fellow clones. Throughout the novel, the clones are conditioned to accept their fate without question. The characters seem resigned to their roles in life, even though they have memories, desires and relationships. This lack of autonomy is a significant concern: the individual's capacity for self-determination is compromised by societal structures which in this case is the medical industry that utilizes cloning for organ harvesting.

In considering *Never Let Me Go* through a posthumanist framework, the novel invites reflection on the ethics of technological advancements and the exploitation of beings that may not be considered "fully human." The systematic devaluation of the clones in the novel echoes contemporary concerns about how technology and power structures can diminish the agency and dignity of marginalized groups. The act of living in a society that defines worth based on biological functions rather than intrinsic value is central to the posthumanist critique in the novel. Ultimately, *Never Let Me Go* serves as a cautionary tale which prompts critical reflections on the consequences of reducing life forms-whether human or posthuman to mere commodities and urging a rethinking of the ethical boundaries surrounding personhood, identity and autonomy in a rapidly evolving world.

In conclusion, the Posthumanist analysis of *Never Let Me Go* enriches our understanding of Ishiguro's work by drawing attention to the complex dynamics between the biological and the existential. The search for meaning and identity by the clones amidst systematic dehumanization forces readers to confront the uncomfortable truths regarding the limits of humanism and the ethical responsibilities we bear toward those whose identities and lives are shaped by forces beyond their control. The poignant depiction of these themes in *Never Let Me Go* remains a relevant and compelling critique of the ways in which society defines and values life. The novel thus questions the boundaries of humanity and examines the profound consequences of reducing individuals to mere commodities through its portrayal of clones who possess the full emotional and cognitive capacities of human beings but are systematically denied their autonomy. By engaging with posthumanism, the moral implications of cloning and bioethics and the broader implications for how we define and value life itself is subjected to reflection.

Ultimately, Ishiguro challenges us to reconsider the very foundations of what it means to be human in a world where the line between the human and the nonhuman is increasingly blurred. In doing so, *Never Let Me Go* serves as a meditation on the fragility of life, the nature of personhood and the inescapable forces of social and ethical oppression that bind us and shape the contours of existence.

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