



Beni Asla Bırakma: İnsani Şefkatin Bellekle Harmanlandığı Bir Özlem Hikâyesi*

Never Let Me Go: A Story of Longing for Humane Affection Tinged with Memory

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ÖZ

Beni Asla Bırakma, Kazuo Ishiguro'nun 2005'te yayımlanan altıncı romanıdır. Eserde anlatılan olayların geçtiği yer İngiltere'dir. 1970'lerin başından 1990'ların ikinci yarısına kadarki yirmi yılı aşkın bir süreyi kapsayan bu varsayımsal distopik roman, insanın daha sağlıklı ve daha uzun yaşayabilmesi amacıyla zorunlu organ bağışından dolayı yaşam süreleri önceden belirlenmiş, kısaltılmış ve mahkûm olarak yaşayan klonların deneyimlerini anlatmaktadır. Ishiguro'nun anlatısı, hepsinin geniş kapsamlı etkilerinin olduğu hafıza, keder, insan sevgisine duyulan özlem ve teknolojik olarak desteklenen biyomedikal gelişmeler ile etik arasındaki tutarsızlık temaları arasındaki karşılıklı etkileşim üzerinde durmaktadır. İnsan sevgisinin anlam ve gerekliliğini araştırmak, yaşamın insancıl yönü olarak öne çıkarken, bunlar romanın ibretlik bir hikâye olarak önemini artırdığı gibi etik niteliklerine de katkıda bulunmaktadır. Duygusal sömürü, sosyal koşullanma ve bireysel aşağılanma girdabında, klonların deneyimleri tanıklık nitelik sunarlar. Klonların çabalarının büyük bir kısmı, dayanışma ve hafıza yardımı ile anlam kazanmada kendi varlıklarını onaylamayı hedeflemektedir. Bu çalışmada, tipik özellikler sunmayan bu distopik anlatının okunması ile başka hiçbir şeyle telafi edilemeyen anlam arayışının yörüngesi ve hafızanın birleştirici gerekliliği ile kişilerarası sevginin hayati önemini izi eserde takip edilmekte ve gösterilmeye çalışılmaktadır.

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ABSTRACT

Never Let Me Go is the sixth novel by Kazuo Ishiguro published in 2005. The setting of the incidents depicted in the novel is England. Spanning more than two decades, between early 1970s up to the second half of the 1990s, hypothetic dystopian novel narrates the experiences of clones whose lives have been pre-determined, shortened and doomed due to forced organ donation so that human can live healthier and longer. Ishiguro's narrative dwells upon the interplay between the themes of memory, grief, longing for human affection and the discrepancy between technologically supported biomedical advances and ethics, all of which have far-reaching implications. While searching for the meaning and essentiality of human affection stand out to be the humanizing aspect of life, they also contribute to the moral qualities of the novel as well as increasing novel's significance as a cautionary story. In the vortex of emotional exploitation, social conditioning and individual degradation, clones' experiences present a testimonial quality. Much of clones' efforts aim at the affirmation of their existence in obtaining meaning with solidarity and memory. In this reading of this atypical dystopian narrative, the trajectory of quest for meaning, which cannot be made up for anything else, and the vitality of interpersonal affection with its unifying essentiality of memory is traced and tried to be pointed out.

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1. Introduction: *Never Let Me Go* as a Cautionary Tale

Never Let Me Go (2005) is the sixth novel written by Kazuo Ishiguro in which he deals with such leading themes as the meaning and the value of human life, memory and the morality in the face of mortality. The incidents of the novel, which are intrinsically about organ donation, human cloning and the profound grief felt by the donors whose lives are truncated, are set in the 1970s and extends to the second half of the 1990s. The story is narrated by Kathy H. (whose surname rightly gives the sense of a de-personalized individualized and recalls readers Kafkaesque characters.) who reminisces her stay in the boarding school called Hailsham and its afterwards.

Hailsham is the boarding school where clone children are prepared to be organ donors in their adulthood and where their fate— being a clone and destined to be ‘used’ to increase the life span of the ‘real’ people— is usually kept secret and only explained through latent manners and expressions, which are too complicated or advanced for them to understand. Deception runs rampant at Hailsham.

Kathy H. with her close friends Tommy and Ruth explicitly hear the truth about their lives from one of the teachers (more appropriately guardians as they are referred in the novel) of the Hailsham named Miss Lucy that they will never be able to realize their dreams and they will die when they donate their vital organs, all of which explains the euphemism of “complete” (Ishiguro, 2005: 96, 105, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135) or completion used for dying or death in Kathy’s memories. Miss Lucy ends up with being fired from the institution as she unfolds the truth about the lives of the clone donors.

Children in the institution are encouraged to create art works for the mysterious lady called Madame. When children become older, they are moved to cottages on a farm for the preparation of ‘organ harvesting’. Kathy, Tommy and Ruth live together in the cottages and they meet other pupils of the same school and they are fully informed that they cannot have a proper life as they are *mere* clones. At an earlier age when their peers look for their own genesis, three friends look for their originals/possibles (the ones from whom they are genetically copied) but their search turns out to be in vain. By the way, Ruth, who lies to Kathy about Tommy’s feelings about Kathy, seduces Tommy. Their friendship breaks off. Only much later does Ruth confess that she seduced Tommy as she was afraid of being alone. Kathy has been a carer for those who donate and consequently will die soon. She also becomes the carer of Ruth, who gives Madame’s current address hoping that Kathy and Tommy will win a kind of deferral for their obligatory donations thanks to the art works they did in their childhood so they can be happy together even if it would be for a very short time before they ‘complete’. After Ruth dies in the operating table due to her donation, Kathy and Tommy find the Madame, headmistress of Hailsham, and submit their art works hoping that they can win extra time on the basis of the quality of their artifacts which will also prove the quality of their souls hence they can prove that they are worthwhile individuals for a possible deferral. Madame explains that art works that children made during their Hailsham years are not for looking into the quality of their souls but to investigate whether clones are humans and have souls at all. It is a shocking moment not only for the characters but also for the readers. Madame says they did their best to enliven and enrich the childhood of the clones and there has never been a such thing as deferral. Much to their frustration, a possible postponement of donation turns out to be a *sham* just as the name of the Dickensian school, Hailsham, behind of which the founding thought of its revitalizing and enriching claims connote.



2. Between Ethically Hazardous Biomedical Search for Longevity and Shrinking Human Aspect Heading for Meaningful Existence

Within the ostensibly idyllic atmosphere of Hailsham and its afterwards in the form of a vortex passing through the lives of the characters in the cottages and as donors and carers in hospitals, all efforts exerted by Tommy, Ruth and particularly by Kathy with the re-telling of her memory are directed towards creating meaning in their lives. Ishiguro's narration is a superb symbol of the lives of 'ordinary' people as theirs are not prescribed and shortened by compulsory vital organ donations yet they are still threatened by an inevitable phenomenon: Mortality. In a way, Ishiguro relates his message to readers reminding us that brevity (and longevity, as well) is not what really matters in adding meaning up to life. At the very crossroads of morality, mortality and meaning, narration gains the quality of a serene mediation just as it is related to the reader in the form of Kathy's afterthoughts.

Never Let Me Go can also be read as a different kind of futuristic dystopian narration into which the author integrates no explanation how the society in the novel proceeds so far as to the level of human cloning or what kind of practices have been developed to achieve this end. Instead, narration raises questions and warns humanity when biomedical science backed up by technology collides with moral issues, can one's life be sacrificed even if it is that of a clone? It seems that the benefit of clones (of their vital organs in this case) is so great to humanity that moral side of the biomedical advances in the narration is implied to have never been thoroughly questioned.

Clones are regarded to be fully humans to be forced to donate their organs at the cost of grave circumscription of their lives but at the same time they are observed to be somewhat half-humans or *not so much* humans that they can be used as a substitution for 'real' people and their vital organs can be 'harvested' when they are more or less close to 30 years old. As in the case of postcolonial discourse, just as the colonized subject is reformed or improved to become like the colonizer and s/he is still (desired to be) different as Bhabha asserts "almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994: 89), clones who are unable to construct their own identities, deprived of their freedom and stuck in the interstice (Bolat, 2022: 7) are in the same vein forced to mimic humans and/yet they are treated as not being fully human so that their 'masters' have a right to say over their bodies and their lives in general as the case is considered to be the matter of authority as well as ethics.

It may be surprising at the first glance that characters do not fight against or at least attempt to escape from the inevitable vicious circle of compulsory organ donation when they first learn about it. This is striking particularly in the case of Kathy and Tommy who ask for an imagined postponement instead of revolting against their doom. Their case conveys the idea that it is not the matter of fight or flight that may guarantee their lives and of their peace but the strength of facing the inescapable human mortality and trying to *make a sense* out of it be it is a life of an ordinary human being or that of a clone; and this idea has been supported by the author himself in an interview when being asked about the ostensible submissiveness of his characters when they do not escape or fight back:

We all face the inevitability of our lives coming to an end, of organs failing (if not being removed). People search for something that will carry on beyond death, through art or religion or love, but everyone has that same fate to accept. My interest, in this book, was in compressing that into 30-odd years of three individuals' lives. A lot of clone stories wind up being about slavery and a fight for freedom,



but I was specifically interested in looking at how Tommy and Kathy, at least, try to love and be friends to each other in the time that they have (Mead, 2005:1).

The society depicted in the novel heads towards exploiting clones viciously and recklessly as if the ultimate purpose of existence was to prolong life as far as possible and without any scruple but the narration points out a simple message to the world at large: Doing the decent thing as long as one lives, protecting interpersonal relationships no matter what happens (in the case of Ruth's change of character) leaving a peaceful memory for those who are still alive and passing away peacefully (as Kathy most probably does when a career of carer ends despite the profession is a sentimentally forced one over the shoulders of the clones.)

One of the precarious aspects of modern society is accentuated and reflected onto the grater sphere. It is exactly at this point and under this very light *Never Let Me Go* as a whole proves to be a universal mediation and *human, all too human* story which helps readers see their own lives with refreshed eyes and sincerely realize that self-serving ends result in social and ethical enormities. Stalemate between the feelings of the clones and the desires of the people of modern society longing for healthy and longer lives promote clones to found profoundly meaningful interpersonal relationship which should be indeed assured among 'ordinary' people. Even when three friends' search for their originals/possibles ends in failure and when Ruth bursts out of anger and desperation shouting at her friends:

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. [...] If you want to look for possibles, if you want to do it properly, then you look in the gutter. You look in rubbish bins. Look down the toilet, that's where you'll find where we all came from (Ishiguro, 2005:77)

Tommy and Kathy accept their lot stoically and calm down frustrated Ruth. Ruth shows the sign that she has personally developed through time when she confesses that she disrupts the friendship between Kathy and Tommy and tries to make up for her earlier scheming plan in endeavouring to secure Tommy and Ruth's deferral when she gradually moves towards her death. Such human aspects or concerns of the story observed throughout the novel and the lack of exposition of technological advances and procedures differentiate the narration from being a typical dystopian, futuristic novel as some of the critics pointed out that *Never Let Me Go* deliberately avoids the sociopolitical didactics and arguments of dystopian literature (Mirsky, 2006:629); therefore, it is rightly discussed that "many critics puzzled over novel's genre, registering an affinity to science fiction [...] but arguing that it was not quite that" (Griffin, 2009:645). Under this light, *Never Let Me Go* proves to be somewhat *sui generis* while still playing within the borders of science fiction.

Triumvirate of Kathy, Tommy and Ruth, all of whom remind Beckett's tramps, are engrossed with finding a meaning onto which they can clutch despite the brevity of their lives and the dismal condition they are enmeshed in being destined to die younger:

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. 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've walked past every day of your life, and suddenly it shows you something else, something troubling and strange (Ishiguro, 2005:18).



Through their effort, they seem to awake those from their inauthentic slumber who deceive themselves into the vitality of their preoccupations, which are indeed nothing but paltry when compared with such existential questions as why they are here in this world, why strive in life and ultimately what it is all for. Clone's magnanimity and of their tenacious grip on meaning which readers see particularly in the identities of the three friends, stand out also with their resignation to human's self-serving aims. The more they cling to existential sphere, the less they become selfish to think their grave ends, the mere aspect of which singlehandedly proves their sensible, sensitive and ultimately their 'human/e' side.

Ishiguro's novel is about an alternative history of postwar era in which science progressed in biotechnology instead of nuclear researches that gave rise to the threat and fret of total atomic annihilation. As a cautionary tale, *Never Let Me Go* shows that 'humane' facade of scientific progress also evinced to be as destructive and mortifying as atomic age just as Madame, towards the end of the novel, states bitterly "More scientific, efficient, yes. More cures for the old sicknesses. Very good. But a harsh, cruel world" (Ishiguro, 2005:128). Harshness can be deciphered from children's hunger for affection in Hailsham as they crave for human sympathy and affective closeness from their guardians. In retrospect, Kathy utters such longings of all children as "Didn't we all dream from time to time about one guardian or other bending the rules and doing something special for us? A spontaneous hug, a secret letter, a gift?" (Ishiguro 2005:29). In the suffocating atmosphere of Hailsham, where children's destinies have already been insensitively sealed for themselves, even such minute expectations are inevitably bound to remain unfulfilled.

There are times when clones behave ruthlessly among themselves, even if it is on verbal level, to such an extent that even gentle Kathy chastises their friends when they imitate the 'ordinary' people they see on television and they all suppose or want to believe that it is the way they really behave: "It's not something worth copying," I told her. "It's not what people really do out there, in normal life, if that's what you were thinking" (Ishiguro, 2005:57). Even Ruth, who can be regarded as the foil to amiable, lenient Kathy with her tough character, cannot escape but is castigated no matter how hard she tries to counter back, cannot defend her point and illusions and put forward new arguments in vain to deride and frustrate Kathy about Tommy. Affection felt for confidants/confidantes even among clones, who are so fragile, is not immune from deterioration.

Ishiguro's narration is not only about search for meaning and the need for affection that must be shown towards those who are afflicted with the same agonies, the wounds we share with others but it is also about rehabilitating significance and of the need and the force of preserving one's memory. Although Kathy's story, together with those of clones, is heartrending, she does not want to eradicate or simply forget "the lost corner of England" (Ishiguro, 2005:79) where they lived agonizingly; on the contrary, Kathy is aware of the fact that it is the very memory—no matter how chilling it is— which assures that she and her friends once existed in this world. Accordingly, Kathy mediates upon her life and memories while looking at the ploughed fields surrounded by barbed wires which have a symbolic meaning that the duty of 'being harvested' for their vital organs set for them is still being carried out and they are set apart from organic life just as the fields are separated by wires. Kathy, who even after losing all her close friends, highlights the importance of her memories:

I was talking to one of my donors a few days ago who was complaining about how 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 see them ever fading. I lost



Ruth, then I lost Tommy, but I won't lose my memories of them [...] I'm glad that's the way it'll be. It's like with my memories of Tommy and of Ruth. Once I'm able to have a quieter life, in whichever centre they send me to, I'll have Hailsham with me, safely in my head, and that'll be something no one can take away (Ishiguro, 2005:135).

Past, where memories reside, may be the location of loss and the place of abysmal and appalling experiences which are willingly or unwillingly stuffed into but it may also be the very location from where one's life and identity can be recovered and held up as a proof that one really lives or has lived. Holding on the memories either realized through individually or collectively is not only for remembering but also for being remembered; therefore, it achieves a testimonial quality, an "act of resistance against the collective forgetting of those who wish to deny their existence" (Teo, 2014:83). Instead of letting all the undesired experiences go, characters in the novel, particularly Kathy herself, always desires to remember them in the mood of eulogy that develops into a phenomenon of affirmation of their existence both for themselves and readers. And this kind of designation of not a happy but a peaceful memory is not indeed directed towards forgetting the past with all its viciousness and grief but remembering it without resentment, hatred and animosity (Ricour, 2004:11-24) through which she demonstrates a more mature character than her 'originals.'

In Hailsham, where institutionalized genocide was legalized, humane feelings and gentle treatment of the clone children are still being observed even if it is because of quite different reasons. When Kathy visits Madame for a possible deferral with Tommy, she also explains eponymous title of the novel; she acknowledges that though Hailsham is a grave institution, they were often treated with affection as she once witnessed that Madame was crying when she saw her dancing to the song *Never Let Me Go*. Kathy further discloses that she was imagining that the song was describing a woman who was said that she was not going to have a baby but she had one and she was holding it tightly to her chest and wants her baby *never let her go*. Kathy was right that Madame was sad back then when she saw the little Kathy dancing to the song *Never Let Me Go* but she was right with very wrong reasons. Madame explains that:

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. That is what I saw. It wasn't really you, what you were doing, I know that. But I saw you and it broke my heart. And I've never forgotten (Ishiguro, 2005:128).

Madame saw the humanity of old kind in the identity of the little child and she believed what she saw was the sign that humanity did not want to come to terms with the realities and necessities of the *brave new world*. Sentimentality observed in the novel is attacked by Bruce Robbins, who deals with such subject matters as the extrapolation (and of the difficulty/impossibility) of upward mobility between our societies and that of the imagined dystopian one depicted in the novel and the deflation of one's rightful anger (as in the case of Tommy's tantrums) through institutions and their personnel (Kathy in this case as a carer of her friends) in welfare states, criticizes Ishiguro's narration as it is heavily haunted by platitudes or trite comments and counselling the most basic ethical judgements even in the matters of life and death.

Ishiguro has so often seemed to be committed to making only the most banal and uncontroversial ethical statements, statements of the sort I've invented for my title: "cruelty is bad." Cruelty is bad. All things considered, "civility" would be preferable. But here at least cruelty and incivility also seem to be part of a more expansive and counter-intuitive political vision, one that allows us to consider caring here as possibly conflicting with caring there, that allows us to consider the



welfare state as a distanced, anger-bearing project in which the anger is a necessary part of a genuine concern for people's welfare (Robbins, 2007:301).

Robbins goes on to attack the author's complacency and mercilessly lampoons Ishiguro's ethical contentment in imposing the basic expressions of common sense:

It would be interesting to ask, in other words, whether what seems to be an ethical platitude — don't work too hard, remember there are more important things in life, like your family, like love — might turn out to be a loud warning against ethical platitudes, and in particular against the easy ethical comfort with which Ishiguro is so often associated: the idea that your first moral obligation is to be good to your family and to those immediately around you, to be a loving husband or parent or friend. Be nice. Don't be cruel (Robbins, 2007:301).

In his own jocular and savage way, the literary scholar tries to warn the reader (and the author, as well) that the moral responsibility requires much more acumen, impartiality, awareness and honesty as well as dexterity of authorship otherwise 'ethical platitudes' of which Robbins is so dissatisfied with are inevitable. Although *Never Let Me Go* is claimed to be tainted by easy ethical judgements, its taste and main argument as a literary work are not tarnished or fully eclipsed by and it is still able to sustain its worth in its genre.

In Kathy's speculative memoir, by the which the normalization of the atrocity of organ donation is observed alongside the other macabre experiences, traces of Shelley's masterpiece, *Frankenstein* can be followed. Besides many grim things, one particular instance must be highlighted. Just as the monster in *Frankenstein* secretly tries to observe the De Laceys with wonder and the anticipation of human affection, Kathy and her friends in the same way observe the office personnel while they are trying to find their originals. What is shared between the monster and the clone friends is the human/e aspiration to be loved and appreciated unconditionally; irrespective of one's appearance or/and being a genetically 'copied creature.' Ishiguro's narration turns out to be a palimpsestic text since it follows the tradition of the novels written within the context of the nexus of creator and creation leading to interpretations from the theological perspectives in postmodern fiction. This kind of reading adds further multi-layered dimensions to *Never Let Me Go* as the clones are the creatures created by human being in the exact appearance of themselves and the humans are the creatures created by God, which becomes even more poignant in Judo-Christian tradition in which God is believed to have created the human in His own image and has (or commands) an utmost control over their fate, lives and lifespans. The third layer of the relationship between creators and creations in *Never Let Me Go* is added when Tommy's drawings of creatures/quasi-animal drawings are integrated into the story. The *purpose* of God in the creation of human is subjected to a myriad of interpretations depending on the faith one believes in and the angle from which one looks. Tommy's 'creatures' are for the *purpose* of proving that he deserves a deferral. And ultimately clones are created so that human beings can have longer and healthier lives, the three dimensions of which are tied up with one phenomenon; purpose-driven acts. Except that of God, the purpose of the rest serves either the needs of humans or humane expectations. Rebecca Walkowitz criticizes this treatment of taking everything not as ends but as means to service to the needs of humans to the extent of drawing the issue to the rights of animals. She argues that "Ishiguro has written *Never Let Me Go* as a critique of anthropocentrism, the idea that it is ethical or acceptable to sacrifice non-human animals to the needs and desires of human life" (Walkowitz, 2007:224). The same approach is maintained by Mark Rollins, who prefers reading *Never Let Me Go* through the lenses of ends and means case debunking another misleading manipulation. He stresses that "Ishiguro's dystopia criticizes the labor and consumer practices



of contemporary capitalism [...] how the principles of gift exchange can be perversely appropriated by the practice of commodification” (Rollins, 2015: 351). Dehumanization of clones as well as humans can be averted through abiding by Kant’s second categorical imperative suggesting that one must treat others as ends rather than means.

The clone children in the institution are encouraged to produce little artifacts as if the activity was done for exchanging these things as gifts among themselves. It is indeed a kind of activity directed towards making children accept their fates, which is far from what is seen in the appearance of gift-exchanging. Human sentiments—even if they are those of clones and the fact that these are still children—are shown to be easy for manipulation. This becomes even excruciating when Kathy cannot get away from this type of attitude (seeing herself either donor or carer) and maintains the same mindset as opposed to her friends revolting—even if it is on verbal level—on and off against their predetermined lives. Exchanging gifts becomes a means of social conditioning among clones to regard themselves (and their vital organs) as gifts for the maintenance of healthier and longer lives of ‘their originals.’ By making use of the gift-exchange both as an abstract strategy and concrete instrument, the act of manipulation and the commodification of humane feelings are aggravated particularly when clones are considered that they have no parental intimacy as they do not have fathers, mothers, brothers and siblings as a haven for affection; a site for sharing familial intimacy and above all, they are all devoid of the ability to have offspring; thus, proving that they are ‘convenient’ subjects (or to be more precise ‘objects’) for social manipulation, emotional exploitation and individual degradation.

Naïve search for human/e affection is the very thing that drives clones to the edge of being deceived, which is particularly pertinent to Kathy’s case. Kathy’s inability to think herself as a distinct individual who can have her own wishes forces her to consider herself as a donor or carer, the attitude of which ultimately is protested by Tommy:

But is it really that important? Okay, it’s really nice to have a good carer. But in the end, is it really so important? The donors will all donate, just the same, and then they’ll complete [...] But all this rushing about you do. All this getting exhausted and being by yourself. I’ve been watching you. It’s wearing you out (Ishiguro, 2005:133).

When Kathy’s homespun innocence merged with her best intentions, it leads her to embrace the career of being a good carer in the form of a submissive clone, who is indeed desperately—and may be unconsciously—in search of fellowship, human attachment, desire for amicability, intimacy and devotion all become a fetish object to which Kathy is strongly attached. It is argued that “the objects to which we may prefer to stay attached even when they become obstacles to our flourishing may be the very objects that wear us out, that become the vehicles for our slow death by attrition” (Casid, 2012:130). Throughout her narration, Kathy is observed to have displayed self-denial with alacrity. That’s why Kathy hinders her own development and catapults herself into the domain of blindness, into a sphere where a kind of retreat of personal development has ensued and consequently captivated her.

Once Ruth tells the trio that one of their friends died during her second donation, the incident is regarded as a shame that she cannot complete the forth one and they even consider themselves lucky that the same did not happen to themselves. Imagination as a liberating instrument on the part of the characters has been overwhelmingly crumbled and self-denial has been pushed into the limits of enslavement just as it is argued that “This is the mentality, you might protest, of someone who cannot see his own enslavement [...] The characters in this novel—those who are ‘students’ or ‘carers’ or ‘donors’, at least—have limits placed on their imaginations that are invisible to them, and this is true of the novel’s narrator, too” (Mullan, 2009:109). When Tommy throws tantrums that they were deceived since there is no deferral and they are destined to die in the hands of their ‘makers’ and later utters the words, which can be taken on behalf of



Kathy and some other clones, “Me being an idiot. That’s all it ever was” (Ishiguro, 2005:130). Kathy is observed to lack the maturity to display an attitude that can be regarded as true to herself. Kathy’s altruism, excessive cordiality and tactfulness have prevented her to see her servile attitude and get her to disregard the delicate balance between ‘being good’ and ‘being too good’ at the expense of making her self fragile to be *exploited* in every sense of the word. No matter how hackneyed all these judgements appear, their validity is poised on the grounds of their simplicity and austerity as it is argued in *Kazuo Ishiguro’s Gestural Poetics* that “Moments of genuine gravity, however, are seldom spectacular, often banal” (Sloane, 2021:4). Although Ishiguro’s narration seems to have been embroidered with pathetic experiences and memories, prosaic arguments and adage-like expressions, they are the things that contribute to the universality of the work and the validity of its message(s).

3. Conclusion: Things That a Retrospective Narrative Conveys

Never Let Me Go is first and foremost about the oscillation among such notions of search for meaning or meaningful existence, craving for human affection and sympathy, survival and altruism, all of which prove to be a potent caution in the context of the novel. While clones are physically and —more than that— psychologically emasculated for a parochial purpose of the longevity of human life and of its supposed virtue, the undertones of the narration reveal the opposing undercurrents and the challenges between biomedical advances backed up technology and ethics of curtailing the lives of those sacrificed without much concern and scruple. Accordingly, clones’ quest for meaning despite their truncated lives is able to render a testimonial quality in the affirmation of their existence and the nexus of creator and creation is achieved to be conveyed through a simple retrospective memory.

Pain and sorrow felt by clones owing to avariciousness of human being for longer and healthier lives are deteriorated by means of degradation and manipulation of those who have already been/made desperate. Memory and lingering recollections herein represent a watershed for the integrity of one’s life no matter how it has been deteriorated. Rather than being a sentimental slush, the themes accentuated as well as tacitly touched upon in the novel turn out to be the bedrocks of humanity inviting us all to ponder upon.

Among many, one of the overriding and indelible messages of the novel is that ostracizing affection, quest for meaning, ethics and morality in an attempt to evade mortality can be the bane of humanity. Not only ethics and morality but also meaning and interpersonal sympathy with the unifying essentiality of memory, rather than longevity, are the sine qua non of a worthwhile life if it is aimed to thrive.

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