

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

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

*Keywords:* Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, Derrida, deconstruction, clone, death

### Introduction

It is inevitable that one faces his own death one day; or that he faces the death of his beloved, and is deprived of the right to live with him in this life and feels it difficult to recover from the grief over his death; and it is never easy if either happens, although in *Hamlet* William Shakespeare (1623) writes, "The undiscovered country from whose bourn/ No traveler returns, puzzles the will,/ And makes us rather bear those ills we have/ Than fly to others that we know not of?" (3.1.81-84); and although "your father lost a father; / That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound/ In filial obligation for some term/ To do obsequious sorrow. .../ For what we know must be, and is as common/ As any the most vulgar thing to sense,/ Why should we in our peevish opposition/ Take it to heart?" (Shakespeare, 1623, 1.2.89-92, 98-101). Should science and medicine offer one an alternative and a chance to save his life or his beloved's, should he give it a try? Then, I find my answer in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. There are many discussions about the novel. Firstly, Justine Burley (2005) introduces that the novel "is set in the [background of] the 1990s, when the birth of Dolly the cloned sheep was announced and the human genome project was well under way" (p. 427) and when "Dolly provoked extensive[ly] scientific, political and ethical debate and renewed public unease about the implications of the new genetics and the now foreseeable prospect of human cloning" (Carroll, 2010, p. 61) and in the early 2000s, when the debates on cloning and biotechnological development were heated (Griffin, 2009, p. 646). The

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novel functions as “comment[s] critically on the history of the present” (Griffin, 2009, p. 653). Also, James Butcher highlights that there are sixty thousand people on the waiting list for kidney transplantation around 2004 and that there is possibility for xeno-transplantation if with proper pigs’ organs or new organs from stem cells growing; however, he refuses the idea that human clones are created for organ farming and harvesting (Butcher, 2005, p. 1299). Lastly, Titus Levy is a good critic to emphasize the issues of contemporary human rights in the clones’ world in the novel and describe the storytelling of the novel, through the voice of Kathy H., “as a constructive response to atrocity and as a potentially dubious method of overcoming traumatic experience” for the normals in the contemporary world, and he praises Ishiguro as sensitive to how the general public read “aestheticized forms of traumatic experience...with a mixture of empathy, indifference, and perversion,” the experience, which is the voice of exploitation and injustice for the human clones, the marginalized social groups in a dystopian society, in their struggle for “the fringes of supposedly democratic societies” (Levy, 2011, p. 1). I argue that in Jacques Derrida’s nature-culture structurality of the clones, it is Kathy H. who comes as center into which the other clones come as freeplay in the structurality of the real world, where it is normals who come as center into which clones come as freeplay under the structurality of power in the institutions where the clones’ culture comes as center into which Miss Emily’s ruling comes as freeplay by the structurality of authorship where the author comes as center into which the novel comes as freeplay, as Figure 1 shows:

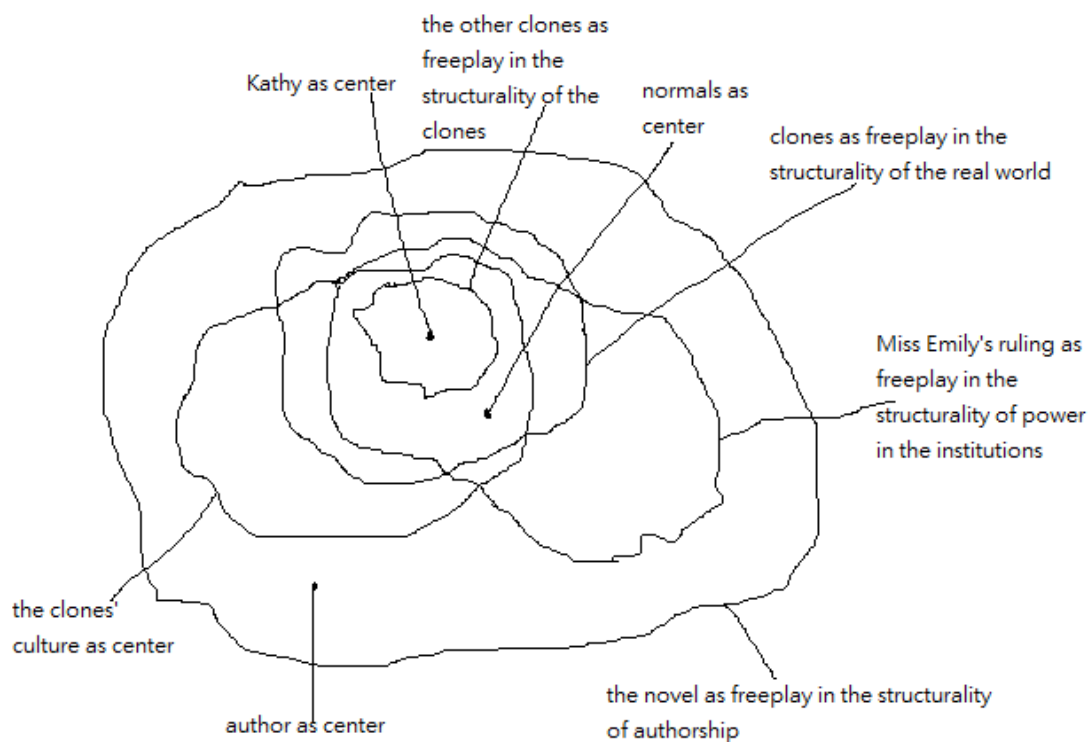


Figure 1. Derrida's Center-Freeplay Structurality Applied to the Novel.

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

### Postmodernism and Humanism

The Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, in the eighteenth century, also called modernity, begins in 1492 and permeates in the twentieth century and further onwards in the twenty-first century, when reason and science are two main guidelines in human life and when many enlightened minds such as Francis Bacon, Sir Isaac Newton and Benjamin Franklin believe that the physical universe, truth and reality can be scientifically investigated and objectively explored (Bressler, 2007, pp. 96-97). Franklin and his contemporaries recognize a conceptual relationship “between vast natural systems of physical balance or imbalance...and human character and institutions” (Anderson, 1997, p. 122), which design is applied to by natural philosophers, including “[t]he physical design of the natural universe and the moral design of its creatures...[by] the same Designer” (Anderson, 1997, p. 122), these two designs, having “an identical end in the inconceivably diverse medium of creation” (Anderson, 1997, p. 122); and they believe that “[d]ifference was inevitably unity in disguise, according to these philosophical and scientific assumptions, while unity was inevitably expressed and embodied in difference” (Anderson, 1997, p. 122). Franklin designates the idea that God’s existence counts on humanity and that God gives in to individuals. Then, in God’s concession, humanity becomes the sole focus among all, and each individual, endowed with talents from God for reason, dominates his own fate and seeks his salvation in himself (Bressler, 2007, p. 97). Unlike Franklin and other modern philosophers, who argue that discourse, like a map, is “a representation of reality” (Bressler, 2007, pp. 98-99), Jacques Derrida challenges modernity in his declaration that objective reality or truth does not exist but is itself “relative, depending on the nature and variety of cultural and social influences in one’s life” (Bressler, 2007, p. 99). Agreeing with Martin Heidegger, Derrida posits the idea of rupture and discusses about consciousness or existence. He declares that mind encounters “the unfolding of the thing’s Being” (Sagut, 2009, p. 1) and that “truth is the projection of a thing’s Being to an observer’s mind. ...truth is but the mind’s determination about the present state of an outside reality. Truth is [merely] one’s interpretation or consciousness of a thing or reality” (Sagut, 2009, p. 1). The representation of discourse for the sole objective reality in modernity’s concept is replaced by a collage with meaning always changing in postmodernist’s view or poststructuralist’s (Bressler, 2007, p. 99). Then, interestingly enough, Derrida’s “[d]econstruction is...an activity of reading which remains closely tied to the texts it interrogates, and which can never set up independently as a self-enclosed system of operative concepts” (Norris, 1982, p. 31); and for Derrida, “‘the task of deconstruction’ is ‘to discover...the ‘other’ [aspect] of philosophy,’” (quoted in Selden et al., 2005, p. 169) and “the result [of it] is a questioning [and subverting]...of notions of identity, origin, intention, and the production of meaning” (Selden et al., 2005, p. 169).

For Derrida, in *différance* “meaning is always *deferred*, perhaps to the point of an endless supplementarity, by the play of signification. *Diff[é]rance* not only designates this theme but offers in its own unstable meaning a graphic example of the process at work” (Norris, 1982, p. 32, emphases in original). Derrida declares that even

[s]ubjectivity—like objectivity—is an effect of *différance*, an effect inscribed in a system of *différance*. This is why the *a* of *différance* also recalls that spacing is temporization, the detour and postponement by means of which intuition, perception, consummation—in a word, the relationship to the present, the reference to a present reality, to a *being*—are always *deferred*. [This present reality or being is] [d]eferred by virtue of the very principle of difference which holds that an element functions and signifies, takes on or conveys meaning, only by referring to another past or future element in an economy of traces. (Norris, 1982, pp. 28-29, emphases in original)

There is no fixed meaning in words, but many meanings, leading to one signifying after another, one freeplay after another, which seeks a final center in vain. It is as in the case of narrative detective stories for a narrative author to suspend the truth of discourse for the climax (Culler, 1997, p. 89). In *différance*, Derrida argues the idea of erasure and supplementation, or to decenter the center and reverse all binary oppositions, respectively; and he considers that each character can be self and other under erasure, the center and the decenter, in their interweaving relations (Bressler, 2007, pp. 122-124). In his idea of supplementation, meaning addition-substitution, which features in all human activity, writing not only supplements speech but replaces it. In nature-culture opposition, nature as a full presence precedes culture whereas the violent hierarchy is that nature is never pure but already polluted by culture (Selden et al., 2005, p. 166). For Derrida, supplementation in every binary opposition plays a role as freeplay to the center; that is, deception plays a supplementary role to truth, or in Bakhtin's dialogism, other does to self (Bressler, 2007, pp. 124-125). The presence of the other and writing are much emphasized when it comes to morality and its essential elements:

[t]here is no ethics without the presence of *the other* but also, and consequently, without absence, dissimulation, detour, difference, writing. The arche-writing is the origin of morality as of immorality. The nonethical opening of ethics. A violent opening. As in the case of the vulgar concept of writing, the ethical instance of violence must be rigorously suspended in order to repeat the genealogy of morals. (Derrida, 1997, pp. 139-140, emphases in original)

It is the opposite poles that establish their relationship of one existing for the existence of the other.

Also, Derrida's concept of *différance* meaning differ and defer, in his illustration of the word in speech and writing, is a tool for readers to ask *what if* questions (Bressler, 2007, p. 125). For Derrida, there is no ultimate truth or absolute meaning, but the meaning is being deferred on the journey of self-construction in relation to other not in their sameness but in their difference, one temporal meaning after another in the interpretation oscillation, one signifying after another, where *what if* occurs and where the author misspeaks (Bressler, 2007, pp. 125-128, 132; Norris, 1982, p. 32). In Derrida's criticism on logocentrism, center does indeed exist inside a structure where center assures this structure of being as presence. In his term *différance* for the divided nature of the sign, he declares that spatially "differ" is a sign spaced out in a system and that temporally "defer" is a signifier postponing presence. Unlike speech with immediate and full presence, writing physically in its system as secondary, leaving a trace, can repeat itself and thus requests (re)interpretation, which arouses philosophers' fear to ruin the arbitrariness of philosophic truth (Selden et al., 2005, pp. 164-165). However, in Bacon's philosophy, Derrida's violent hierarchy in pairing writing as secondary with its materiality to pollute speech and speech as full presence is a hierarchy that can be reversed since writing and speech are both signifying processes lacking presence (Selden et al., 2005, p. 165); or even more, "speech is a species of writing" (Selden et al., 2005, p. 166), which means writing encloses speech. For Derrida (1982), writing changes itself into a new leaf and attacks the original hierarchy of speech/writing (p. 42):

Writing...brings low what was high, and the irruptive emergence of a new "concept"... [It is] a new concept of writing, that *simultaneously* provokes the overturning of the hierarchy speech/writing, and the entire system attached to it, *and* releases the dissonance of a writing within speech, thereby disorganizing the entire inherited order and invading the entire field. (Derrida, 1982, p. 42, emphases in original)

Thus, writing overrides speech and absence overrides presence. By analogy, philosophy under erasure is a form of literature, and literal language under erasure is a form of figurative language because under erasure, words are many signifiers without fixed meanings in them and language has its own freeplay character in the author's

misspeaking (Sagut, 2009, p. 2; Bressler, 2007, pp. 123, 124, 128; Selden et al., 2005, p. 166). Derrida declares some features in writing: "a written sign is a mark" (quoted in Selden et al., 2005, p. 167) repeated in the absence of the subject in a specific context and that of a specific addressee; it breaks its real context and in different contexts, it is interpreted, regardless of authorial intent (quoted in Selden et al., 2005, p. 167). For Derrida, the author does not have his authorial intent; however, he misspeaks or slips his language and reveals what he fears to say (Bressler, 2007, pp. 126, 128, 132) in his metaphors:

[m]etaphor must therefore be understood as the process of the idea or meaning (of the signified, if one wishes) before being understood as the play of signifiers. ...this representation of the object, signifying the object and signified by the word or by the linguistic signifier in general, may also indirectly signify an affect or a passion. ...metaphor is the relation between signifier and signified within the order of ideas and things.... The literal or proper meaning will be the relationship of the idea to the affect that it *expresses*. And it is the *inadequation of the designation* (metaphor) which properly *expresses* the passion. (Derrida, 1997, p. 275, emphases and parentheses in original)

It is this passion that a metaphor aims to achieve in its meaning.

Derrida, inspired by Levi-Strauss, suggests that "all interpretation is really a form of play, with each participant handling slippery texts [a kind of center] whose meanings are often illusive" (Bressler, 2007, p. 132; Sagut, 2009, p. 1). Derrida (1978) discusses a centered structure: the structurality of structure as a structure itself has its center, "a point of presence, a fixed origin," which constructs the structurality of structure and meanwhile "grounds the play of substitutions" (pp. 278, 289). The center and the totality seem to be individual objects: "[t]he center is at the center of the totality, and yet, since the center does not belong to the totality ([it] is not part of the totality), the totality *has its center elsewhere*. The center is not the center" (Derrida, 1978, p. 279, parenthesis and emphases in original). It is like that the center escapes from its own structurality of the structure and "the concept of [a] centered structure is in fact the concept of a play" (p. 279). Then the history of the idea of a structure merely becomes "a linked chain of determinations of the center," a center for another, creating an ongoing quest for a final center or end (p. 279). In Derrida's perspective of observing culture, he discusses the nature-culture opposition in Levi-Strauss's example of incest prohibition. Derrida asserts that the concept of something cooked brings that of something raw into existence despite raw's precedence over cooked in nature just as how the concept of culture brings that of nature into existence despite nature's precedence over culture in life (Fry). Derrida (1978) defines, in Levi-Strauss's words, nature as something "*universal and spontaneous*" (p. 283) and something "[in]dependent of[f] any particular culture or of[f] any determinate norm" (p. 283), but culture as something "depend[ent] upon a system of *norms*...[.]" "*varying* from one social structure to another" (Derrida, 1978, p. 283, emphases in original). Their relationship is depicted as "a declaration of absolute interdependency" and one as "causative of the other" (Fry). Levi-Strauss's nature-culture opposition turns into Derrida's concept of center-freeplay in a centered structure: nature is center into which culture comes as freeplay (Derrida, 1978, pp. 278-283); by analogy, the normal is center into which the clones come as freeplay.

When it comes to the role of a reader, Derrida proceeds deconstruction by reader's "locat[ing] the moment when a text *transgresses the laws it appears to set up for itself*" and when a text breaks into pieces (Selden et al., 2005, p. 167 emphases in original), which is, for Derrida, the locus of reader's reversal in his interpreting the text (Bressler, 2007, pp. 127-129), or the place for the reader to suspend undecidable meaning of the text (p. 128), to ask what-if questions (p. 125) and to bear new perspectives (p. 127). Evidently, Derrida, like Charles E. Bressler, emphasizes the role of readers: Readers juxtapose the images of the collage from the aesthetic texts

and interact with texts. Each reader, with his own unique divergent background and in his dominant social and cultural group, has his own subjective and perspectival interpretation of reality, creating many realities and no absolute center, opposed to the basic philosophy in modernity, logocentrism, the undiscoverable—objective truth or ultimate reality like God, reason, science, humanity (Bressler, 2007, pp. 99-102). Briefly, for postmodern thinkers with Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard and Rorty combined (Bressler, 2007, p. 100), no one can have complete knowledge; thus, what one embraces is not individualism and conquest but tolerance, understanding, collaboration and holism, and what he emphasizes is not rationality solely but rationality with emotions, feelings and intuition for valid interpretations and guidelines in this pluralistic society (quoted in Bressler, 2007, p. 100).

Many theorists debate their ideas of Marx's over humanism as a human essence either beyond history or in its historical context; actually, they are equally significant and the role of history as a process is hence repositioned in humanism. To begin with, Michéle Barrett (1991) proposes that the term "humanist" was "derogatory" especially in the realm of culture (p. 93 in Hawthorn, 2000, p. 156) but this idea of humanism had changed in the last twenty or thirty years of the nineteenth century (Hawthorn, 2000, p. 156). Also, Louis Althusser (1969) highlights at the heart of humanism with attainment of human freedom as its goal, lies a human essence beyond history and society, not in social structures nor cultural formations but in an individual human being, which is not realist but idealist, ahistorical, and individualistic, "often involving the projection of the characteristics of one form of society [onto] human beings at large" (p. 221 in Hawthorn, 2000, p. 156). Althusser further emphasizes Marx' idea that human individual's essential being is "what man makes from his life activity" or from his life as a process; and that human beings as a whole are the existence of a species and "man is a being that treats its species as its own essential being—that treats itself as a species being" (Marx, 1970, p. 113 quoted in Hawthorn, 2000, p. 156). Lastly, for Pauline Johnson (1984), a human essence in Marx's idea "refers specifically to the process of transformation and development which characterizes the history of the species" (p. 36 quoted in Hawthorn, 2000, pp. 156-157). To conclude, Barrett (1991) designates that humanism as an ideology has its "immensely progressive role" either as "a secularizing force" or as an "important role in contemporary politics" (p. 93 in Hawthorn, 2000, p. 157); that is, human essence is not situated outside its historical context (Hawthorn, 2000, p. 158-159).

In the twentieth century, a humanist tradition bases itself on Marx's historicist and non-essentialist emphases and it extends further on. Alan Sinfield (1992) supports the same view as Arnold Kettle's that humanity "is not an essential condition towards which [people] may aspire, but what people have as a consequence of being socialized into human communities" (p. 291 quoted in Hawthorn, 2000, p. 158). Also, Kwame Anthony Appiah even exemplifies that contingency and moral worth are not contradictory and that the essence of "humanism can be provisional, historically contingent, anti-essentialist (in other words, postmodern) and still be demanding. [People] can surely maintain a powerful engagement with the concern to avoid cruelty and pain while... [recognizing] the contingency of that concern" (Ashcroft et al., 1995, p. 123 quoted in Hawthorn, 2000, p. 158). Over the debates, a main direction for humanism emerges: "if a non-essentialist humanism can be established...the free play of the signifier may be, if not arrested, at least slowed down. Even if the human is not a fixed or a unitary reference point, it may denote certain relatively stable (if contested) reference points, whose history, movements and conflicts can be plotted" (Hawthorn, 2000, p. 158).

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

I would like to ask the question of what if the clones and the clones' world are not created and what if the clones are normals or human, which is the reversal of the novel; and I also would like to reveal that Ishiguro leaves a trace in the name Kathy H. since alphabetically there should be from Kathy A. to Kathy G. and then Kathy H. (3), which is unique (Vorhaus, 2007, p. 99) and which has no surname in it (Butcher, 2005, p. 1299). The meaning of her existence and the novel are being deferred. It is Kathy H. who comes as center into which the other clones come as freeplay in the structurality of the clones; and other clones play a supplementary role to Kathy. There are three life phases in the novel "set in England in the late 1990s" (Butcher, 2005, p. 1299): Hailsham for childhood, Cottage for maturity and recovery center for adulthood. For education in their childhood, the clones live in Hailsham, which provides the human clones with "the opportunity for free and full development of individual personalities, the chance to grow up enjoying the freedoms[,] envisioned by human rights law and literature" the same as normals (Levy, 2011, p. 6). Next, they learn to be independent in Cottage. If they cannot endure the boring life in Cottage, they will be active to move onto the next phase, to be a carer in the recovery center: in Cottage, Kathy expresses, "[w]e'd always move about together and seemed to spend large parts of the day awkwardly standing outside the farmhouse, not knowing what else to do" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 119). The same is true when they cannot endure the tiring life as a carer, they will become a donor without a deferral. Kathy as a center plays the role model in these three phases and does her duty well. She is thoughtful and has a perspective. She is responsible and she feels proud of being a carer and a donor-to-be after realizing the whole cruel donating system (Jones, 2010, p. 33).

I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years. That sounds long enough, I know but actually they want me to go on for another eight months until the end of this year. That'll make it almost exactly twelve years. ... I do know for a fact they've been pleased with my work, and by and large, I have too. My donors have always tended to do much better than expected. Their recovery times have been impressive, and hardly any of them have been classified as "agitated," even before fourth donation. ...it means a lot to me, being able to do my work well. ...I know when to hang around and comfort them, when to leave them to themselves[,] when to listen to everything they have to say, and when just to shrug and tell them to snap out of it. (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 3)

However, her friend "calculating Ruth" (Deb, 2005, p. 55) as freeplay follows the trend in the scene when from a television series she imitates to hit Tommy on the arm during her good-bye and she succumbs to the fate (Ishiguro, 2005, pp. 120-121); and "short-tempered Tommy" (Deb, 2005, p. 55) as freeplay is indecisive between the fate and his freewill, between Ruth and Kathy, respectively. Surprisingly enough, not mutual love gains the right of deferral of the organ donation but Kathy's contribution and responsibility do. She is a carer for eleven years (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 3) and till the end of the novel since she has not yet gotten tired with her present phase, a carer but rather she enjoys being a carer and feels a sense of fulfillment:

I do know for a fact they've been pleased with my work.... My donors have always tended to do much better than expected. Their recovery times have been impressive, and hardly any of them have been classified as "agitated," even before fourth donation. ... it means a lot to me, being able to do my work well. (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 3)

Thus, temporarily Kathy does not have to move onto the final step, the organ donation, for what Levy (2011) has called "the perverse responsibilities" in a social system (p. 6), claimed by a cruel real world. Kathy displays "courageous act of protest" as heroic (Levy, 2011, p. 4) and her role as "a cog in the bioconsumerist culture" (McDonald, 2007, p. 81) since she offers humanistic expression to the people of her kind, human clones, a

marginalized minority in a monolithic majority to seek their right to be included in them (Slaughter, 2007, p. 157 quoted in Levy, 2011, p. 4); her voice “stand[s] in for the clone community as a whole” (Levy, 2011, p. 3).

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

It is normals who come as center into which clones come as freeplay in the structurality of the real world; clones play a supplementary role to normals. Kathy desires to be like normals, and the world of Kathy, Tommy and Ruth is no different from that of any normals; and neither are the clones different from any normals (Vorhaus, 2007, p. 99), in their personal growth since early childhood to maturity, and to adulthood. As the clones are getting old and tired of their present life, they start to donate significant organs like Ruth (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 214) and Tommy (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 237) until death completes them and parts them from their family and friends, merely like normals in certain diseases and in ill health by losing their sick organs in a surgery room. Then, a real life seems to be a life waiting for death if without love. Truthfully, there is an absence that if normals need a human organ, they pay the fee, sign the contract with Miss Emily and then serve as role models for manufacturing the clones in trading human organs for transplantation. Later in the novel, even the clones realize that they have their possibles or normals as their prototypes:

[s]ince each of us was copied at some point from a normal person, there must be, for each of us, somewhere out there, a model getting on with his or her life. This meant, at least in theory, you'd be able to find the person you were modeled from. That's why, when you were out there yourself—in the towns, shopping centres, transport café—you kept an eye out for “possibles”—the people who might have been the models for you and your friends. (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 139)

Therefore, normals and clones are connected to each other. Just when a normal gets ill and needs an organ, a clone donates one and gets ill, since all lost things return in Norfolk (McDonald, 2007, p. 81), the lost corner of England (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 169), implying Hailsham, all for the normals' benefits. Under the donation system, Kathy and Tommy's belief in the theory of love and deferral signifies hope in both worlds. Although there is true love involved between lovers, neither the clones nor the normals can change their life course to death; namely, they cannot delay donating organs nor getting diseases. However, if with true love, either of them can experience his life with support and company until death separates them from their beloved, which is the spirit of life, despite pain or agony. Or, with belief in God and metaphysical pattern and leaning, and love, one leads a meaningful life in the kingdom that God numbers and finishes (Wood, 2005, p. 39).

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

It is the clones' culture that comes as center into which Miss Emily's ruling comes as freeplay under the structurality of power in the institutions; Miss Emily's ruling plays a supplementary role to the clones' culture; and the center is there and not there: “[t]he rebellious free-spirited individual is at once a product of the freedoms offered by society, and a threat to the order and stability of that community” (Levy, 2011, p. 4). By attaining human freedom as a goal and by socializing in the institutions, the three main characters, Kathy, Tommy and Ruth, seek their human essence and struggle for humanism in the world of human clones with Kathy as the main voice, created by Miss Emily as the medium in the real world of the normals.

In her ruling of an entire donation system, Miss Emily implants the ideology of the twisted social responsibilities into the clones and she educates them in her ruling practices such as Exchanges, Sales or Madame's gallery, where the clones construct their identities (Carroll, 2010, pp. 62, 66). Kathy explains their Exchanges:



I should explain a bit here about the Exchanges we had at Hailsham. Four times a year—spring, summer, autumn, winter—we had a kind of big exhibition-cum-sale of all the things we'd been creating in the three months since the last Exchange. Paintings, drawings, pottery; all sorts of "sculptures" made from whatever was the craze of the day—bashed-up cans, maybe, or bottle tops stuck onto cardboard. For each thing you put in, you were paid in Exchange Tokens—the guardians decided how many your particular masterpiece merited—and then on the day of the Exchange you went along with your tokens and "bought" the stuff you liked. The rule was you could only buy work done by students in your own year.... (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 16)

Also, she discusses their Sales: "[t]he Sales were important to us because that was how we got hold of things from outside" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 41) and Madam's gallery:

I keep thinking about all these things. Like why Madame comes and takes away our best pictures. What's that for exactly?

"It's for the Gallery."

"But what *is* her gallery? She keeps coming here and taking away our best work. She must have stacks of it by now. I asked Miss Geraldine once how long Madame's been coming here, and she said for as long as Hailsham's been here. What is this gallery? Why should she have a gallery of things done by us?" ... Certainly, it hadn't been from the guardians: they never mentioned the Gallery, and there was an unspoken rule that we should never even raise the subject in their presence. (Ishiguro, 2005, pp. 30-31, emphasis in original)

Although later in the novel Kathy becomes a universal individual in her struggle for a place in the hierarchical society and her voice represents the clone community (Levy, 2011, p. 3), the clones form their culture and practices in Miss Emily's ruling and they react to it differently. For example, Kathy recognizes Miss Emily's conspiracy about ideology imposition, an idea offered by Tommy that the clones in Hailsham are taught with information always an early step beyond their age and they seem to accept the information that they do not really comprehend. Kathy and the other students are forbidden from comprehending the truth, evident in Miss Lucy's exploding the reality of the donating system and the deceit of life in Hailsham (Marks, 2010, p. 350; Levy, 2011, pp. 10-11, 5): "you've been told and not told. You've been told, but none of you really understand... You'll become adults... you'll start to donate your vital organs... You were brought into this world for a purpose, and your futures, all of them, have been decided" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 81). Tommy unveils his discovery to Kathy:

The guardians had, throughout all our years at Hailsham, timed very carefully and deliberately everything they told us, so that we were always just too young to understand properly the latest piece of information. But of course we'd take it in at some level, so that before long all this stuff was there in our heads without us ever having examined it properly. (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 82)

Strangely, most of the clones remain passive and accept their fate as their responsibility to the real-world society in their doomed position and do not revolt against it (Marks, 2010, p. 348; Butcher, 2005, p. 1299) because their logic to this responsibility is twisted (Levy, 2011, p. 3) and they are "creatures of habit" (Wood, 2005, p. 37). For instance, after Ruth does a job as a carer for five years, she expresses her willingness to donate organs: "I was pretty much ready when I became a donor. It felt right. After all, it's what we're *supposed* to be doing, isn't it" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 227, emphasis in original; Levy, 2011, p. 3)? In attaining their human freedom and restoring their chances to live as their goals, Kathy and Tommy intend to save their lives by their mutual love and by the creative artistic works (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 254). They discuss deferral with Miss Emily and Tommy shows her his artistic works (Ishiguro, 2005, pp. 254, 258), but finally all the efforts are in

vain (Ishiguro, 2005, pp. 256-258) since it turns out to be “[a] wishful rumour” (Ishiguro, 2005, pp. 258-259). Tommy and Ruth donate their organs four times (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 280) and two times (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 235), respectively, as expected and are finally completed, which means death in the novel. It is possible that facing the monolithic social forces and the deaths of her friends, Kathy will eventually abandon her personal freedom and donate organs simply like Tommy and Ruth, the part that has not been mentioned in the novel, which is indeed “an unjust capitulation to the demands of an oppressive social order” in a realistic version of the Bildungsroman (Levy, 2011, p. 4); or, Kathy will age and fade like normals.

Nonetheless, in her manipulation, Miss Emily intends to keep the theory of love and deferral as the human clones’ hope of delaying their organ donation and thus keeps those clones living the same regular life as normals (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 261), implying whether life is meaningful counts on whether it is in a meaningful process. Although the clones are predestined to donate their organs and complete one day in the recovery center, Miss Emily creates a perfect environment and the best interests for the clones to live their life (Wood, 2005, p. 38), creating the theme of a life with predestination or freewill. In the case of the clones’ infertility, the clones are told that they cannot bear children, which seems related to a test of their freewill. It is probably not true that the clones are incapable of carrying babies and giving them birth but that they do not believe in their fertility, dare not break the guardian’s rules and do nothing to solve problems. The issue of bearing children is unveiled well in Kathy’s enjoying Judy Bridgewater’s song “Never Let Me Go”:

What I’d imagine was a woman who’d been told she couldn’t have babies, who’d really, really want them all her life. Then there’s a sort of miracle and she has a baby, and she holds this baby very close to her and walks around singing: “Baby, never let me go...” partly because she’s so happy, but also because she’s so afraid something will happen, that the baby will get ill or be taken away from her. (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 70)

This is indeed what culture as an expression of the clones comes as center into which what culture imposes on them comes as freeplay. Then, in Miss Emily’s arrangement of imposed ideology, the clones’ responsibility for the society, or their predestination for organ donation, are three phases for the world of the human clones, Hailsham, Cottages, and caring centers (Wood, 2005, p. 36), where the idea of the organ harvesting is even “internally normalized by the donors themselves” (McDonald, 2007, p. 78). Hailsham, for example, in Miss Emily’s ruling, educates students in the world of clones as well as those in the world of normals but it “constricts individual autonomy, stunting rebellious impulses by strategically acclimating students to their predetermined role in society” (Levy, 2011, p. 5). Hailsham as “the educational [humane] environment provides protagonists with a microcosm of the wider world they are later to experience” (McDonald, 2007, pp. 76-77; Marks, 2010, p. 348) since childhood is “a social construction which is both culturally and historically determined” (Scratton, 1997, p. 2 quoted in McDonald, 2007, p. 77) “in a nexus of [given] ideological forces” (McDonald, 2007, p. 77). Confessing to Kathy and Tommy, Miss Emily stands for the real world of normals and their desire and demand for healthy organs and for clones as means (Marks, 2010, p. 350) of therapeutic ends (Carroll, 2010, p. 61) and as the exploited (Levy, 2011, p. 8):

[t]here was no going back. However uncomfortable people were about your existence, their overwhelming concern was that their own children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, did not die from cancer, motor neurone disease, heart disease. So for a long time you were kept in the shadows, and people did their best not to think about you. And if they did, they tried to convince themselves you weren’t really like us. That you were less than human, so it didn’t matter. (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 263)

She feels proud in her deceit that she offers clones an excellent and supportive life in Hailsham, a good shelter, better than any other institutes and that she takes good care of them in sad predestination, the regular procedures for organ donation (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 268; Levy, 2011, p. 6). Though from the clones' perspective, if they prove their souls in their creative artistic works to the world, they can defer or stop organ donation (Marks, 2010, p. 349); unfortunately, in Miss Emily's eyes, for Shameem Black, those creative artistic works prove that clones are good products for a wrong purpose (Levy, 2011, pp. 11-12):

We demonstrated to the world that if students were reared in humane, cultivated environments, it was possible for them to grow to be as sensitive and intelligent as any ordinary human being. Before that, all clones...existed only to supply medical science. (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 261)

Under Miss Emily's careful manipulation, the clones, except Kathy, gradually step onto their predestination.

The definition of human beings appears a question: like Butcher (2005), who questions what makes people human (p. 1300) and like Ishiguro, who questions what a soul is (quoted in Griffin, 2009, p. 658), I wonder whether clones are true human beings, have human characters and deserve the same human rights. By definition, a human being can be viewed as a human being if he can present his humanity or human essence by creating things and socializing in his human community or historical context, by which it means that he can present his soul and character; so does a human clone. Thus, human clones are not merely commodities but human beings, simply on the condition that they are creative enough to create artistic works for Madame's gallery even from the guardians' perspective (Griffin, 2009, p. 655; Carroll, 2010, p. 68), whose importance is emphasized (Jones, 2010, p. 32) pitifully for product promotion (Jones, 2010, p. 32); on the condition that clones' bodies are "more than the sums of their parts" (Griffin, 2009, p. 655); and on the condition that they are the oppressed intelligible (Butler quoted in Carroll, 2010, p. 63) or individuals, which thus proves that they have the same souls in them as normals, since even from the medical perspective, an embryo with conception already is counted as human (Marks, 2010, p. 340): "She told Roy that things like pictures, poetry, all that kind of stuff, she said they *revealed what you were like inside*. She said *they revealed your soul*" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 175, emphases in original). Madam speaks the same idea as well: "your art will reveal your inner selves! That's it, isn't it? Because your art will display your *souls*!" (Ishiguro, 2009, p. 254, emphasis in original). That is the reason why Tommy shows Miss Emily his artistic works to save their lives near the end of the novel. Indeed, the clones are more human than the normals in the novel since they show more bonds, intimacy and commitment in the case of the existence of Hailsham and since normals' system of the clones' successive organ donations is an act of inhuman (Griffin, 2009, pp. 655-656). The clones are as social as the normals and they are human. Hailsham is meaningful for the clones and for Kathy not because it is Edenic paradise, an environment for good health care and education but because it is a place that helps the human clones bind one another over space and time (Levy, 2011, p. 5), which shows the clones' sense of their own cultural and historical background, the essence of being human and that of humanism; namely, in Kathy's eyes, without Hailsham, the clones may lose chance to stay linked with one another and lose their sense of belongingness and root.

### **The Author as Center and the Novel as Freeplay**

It is the author who comes as center into which the novel comes as freeplay in the structurality of authorship; and the novel plays a supplementary role to the author. The novel uses the technique of postmodern

narrative and meta-referencing and “distance[s] Ishiguro from the writing process” (McDonald, 2007, p. 79) in Kathy’s address:

I don’t know how it was where you were, but at Hailsham we had to have some form of medical almost every week—usually up in Room 18 at the very top of the house—with stern Nurse Trisha, or Crow Face, as we called her. (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 13)

The reader senses the reader-writer exchange and Kathy functions as the voice of “an autobiographical account of events” and she “stamp[s] her authentic authorial voice upon the work” (McDonald, 2007, p. 79) to an imagined reader as a peer by using the second-person address (Levy, 2011, p. 9; Carroll, 2010, p. 68). The reader and the narrator both look for traces of lives lost in the novel (McDonald, 2007, p. 82). The novel also “provides us with a window into a culture of genetic engineering and cloning technology in which people are exploited and killed by a state[,] seeking the wider benefits of organ farming, a window that nevertheless reflects in part the decisions facing contemporary culture” (McDonald, 2010, p. 76). Furthermore, the novel is “the dissensual Bildungsroman, a genre that promotes the benefits of free and full personality development[,] while calling attention to the oppressive structural institutions that constrain individual autonomy” (Levy, 2011, p. 5); and it “suggests ways in which ethics might be reconfigured and expanded for a posthumanist age” (Marks, 2010, p. 351). The clones’ world is in truth “another reality, an imagined past that could represent a real future” (McDonald, 2007, p. 82).

### Conclusion

It is a world and non-world, where clones lead their lives and non-lives as human and non-human. Ishiguro presents the clones’ world or the three institutes, presented to the reader, with Kathy as the main voice in parallel with the real world, hidden from the reader, with Miss Emily as the medium. When facing the death of family and friends, the normals in the real world have two choices: one choice is to let go of their beloved and the other is never to let go. It is this choice of never letting go of normals’ beloved that makes Miss Emily create the world of the human clones. It is absence over presence that the title “Never Let Me Go” actually embeds in the novel its opposite meaning “just let go” (Deb, 2005, p. 55) as a metaphor, which echoes in Linda Pastan’s poem “Go Gentle,” where the speaker requires his ill father in great pain, to let go of life for death to hold up; conversely, for love, the speaker has to try best, and then also let go of his father and accept the loss of him, which exposes the limitation of the study that how one can deal with the grief over the death of his beloved one and let go of it. Namely, if normals never let go, they will never let go of clone farming and harvesting, “an aporia,” referring to an “unpassable path” (Norris, 1982, p. 49), and a pass against God’s will. Through embedded meaning “just let go” in the novel in the way that “[b]y indirections find directions out” (Shakespeare, 1623, 2.1.65), Ishiguro creates Aristotle’s catharsis, the effect of tragedy (1961, p. 35), for the readers.

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