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ABDERRAHMANE MIRA UNIVERSITY OF BEJAIA
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



**Moral Dilemmas in the Twentieth-Century
Dystopian Fiction: Personal Survival vs the Greater
Good in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005)**

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Candidate:

Katia Belhocine

Supervisor:

Mr. Farid Kaci

Members of the Jury:

Chair: Mr. Mehdi Yousfi

Supervisor: Mr. Farid Kaci

Examiner: Ms. Ourida Idres

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Abstract

The present dissertation explores the moral dilemmas in twentieth century dystopian fiction, with a specific focus on *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro. It aims at shedding light on the conflict between self-preservation and serving the needs of society that strips individuals of autonomy and moral agency, mainly through the application of utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics, alongside psychoanalytic and dystopian perspective particularly the concept of false utopia. This dissertation reveals that emotional suppression, passive acceptance and lack of freedom are the central forces that uphold the dystopian system and discourage resistance in *Never Let Me go*. The findings highlight how dystopian literature raises significant questions about the meaning of being human, and the cost of conformity in a dehumanized world.

Key words: Moral Dilemmas, Dystopian Fiction, 20th-Century Literature, Personal Survival, the Greater Good, False Utopia

Dedication

I dedicate this humble work to my family, whose constant support and encouragement have guided me throughout this journey, and to the one who stood by me with patience, strength, and quiet support.

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General Introduction

“Then there’s the solitude. You grow up surrounded by crowds of people, that’s all you’ve known, and suddenly you’re a carer. You spend hour after hour, on your own, driving across the country, center to center, hospital to hospital, sleeping overnights, no one to talk to about your worries, no one to have a laugh with. Just now and again you run into a student you know a carer or donor you recognize from the old days but there’s never much time. You’re always in a rush, or else you’re too exhausted to have a proper conversation. Soon enough, the long hours, the travelling, the broken sleep have all crept into your being and become part of you, so everyone can see it, in your posture” (*Never Let Me Go* 197).

Throughout the twentieth century, literature served as a mirror to the moral uncertainties of modern societies. In particular, the powerful genres of dystopian fiction have emerged to explore the consequences of social, technological and ethical choices taken to their extremes. Though the imagined futures in dystopian world are fictional, they often reflect deeply rooted fears about human nature, the control of a society and the cost of progress.

Dystopian fiction as a literary genre that portrays imagined societies, is characterized by societal control, oppression, and dehumanization. It frequently examines societies that maintain order and peace through questionable means, such as surveillance, propaganda, or bioengineering. It functions as a cautionary tale that warns the readers about the potential dangers of technological, or social systems when taken to the extreme. This genre not only critiques the dystopian system, but also highlights the psychological effects of living under constant control. Besides, it allows reading to think about important issues like the lack of freedom, justice and humanity. Within these frameworks, characters often confront with moral dilemmas, of whether to choose acceptance, or rebel in the name of justice, even if it means

personal loss. These conflicts lie at the heart of many dystopian works of the twentieth century like George Orwell's *1984*, and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*.

The central concern focused on to the twentieth century dystopian fiction, is the moral dilemmas faced by individuals who must choose between personal survival and the greater good. Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go* offers a lens through which the reader could better understand moral dilemmas particularly by focusing on the bad situations individuals face. The story often questions the price of freedom in an environment shaped by control and fear, where humans are considered less than human, who are clones that are bred for donating their organs. In other words, the world in the novel is presented as a false utopia that creates clones for the benefit of others, and masks the painful truths with education and creativity that exist in the boarding school Hailsham. This illusion of normalcy hides a dystopian system where the characters are raised to accept their fate.

Research on the work of Kazuo Ishiguro *Never Let Me go* during the twentieth century spans a wide range of perspectives. Scholarly interpretations of *Never Let Me Go* vary considerably, some adopt the posthuman framework, focusing on human rights and cloning while others focus on ethical dimensions and exploring the moral issues embedded in the narrative. Most of the previous research focus on memory, societal control, and the ethics of cloning that occur in the dystopian work *Never Let Me Go*.

In the view of Yingxuan Zhang in his work "Human Rights of Cloning in *Never Let Me Go* - A Posthuman Perspective", the societal and ethical issues surrounding cloning are violations of the clones' rights as they are treated as less than human despite possessing the same feelings, consciousness, and intelligence as regular people. He explains that treating the clones as experimental objects is one of the fundamental ethical crises, as he explains that the students of the boarding school are copied from the most marginalized groups in society, including criminals and drug addicts. According to him human cloning is a controversial issue,

especially with the advancement in science and technology, and the idea of human beings that could change to something beyond what is happening in the present is likely to happen one day in the future (33).

Although the story set in the future, the dystopian world that it describes is similar to the present reality. Beneath its science fiction surface, *Never Let Me Go* examines human experiences such as, creativity, innocence, childhood, and feelings which serve as a metaphor for human condition (37).

According to Kamal Sharma and Amrit Prasad Joshi in their article “Clones and Commodification: An Ethical Issue in Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*”, the clones live under constant control and live to serve the needs of society, highlighting their lack of freedom and rights. Relying on the conceptual approaches outlined by Kamal Sharma and Amrit Prasad Joshi, particularly the theories of Agamben, Donna Dickenson, and Foucault, the lack of human rights granted to the cloned characters of the story reveals the cruelty of humanity. From the perspective of Agamben, the clones live a bare life, and according to Donna Dickenson the characters bodies are treated as commodities for sale, whereas from Foucault’s view they experienced subjugation (56-57).

According to Wen Guo in his article “Human Cloning as the Other in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*”, Ishiguro’s work serves as a reflection of his political concerns. As Hailsham represents the author’s resurfacing suppressed sense of home and a mirror of 1990s Britain, especially a projection into a future where the division between us and them evolves into global concern. Wen Guo, in his study, focuses on Bhabha’s idea of living at home abroad or abroad at home. It is a kind of world in which people have no longer a clear identity as they are divided inside and they do not understand themselves and others. This unfamiliarity is similar to the story as characters kept knowing and not knowing at the same time (6).

Stephanie Petrillo in her article “MORAL THEORIES AND CLONING IN KAZUO ISHIGURO’S NEVER LET ME GO”, suggests that cloning for medical purposes can be morally acceptable, as it is described in the 2002 report *Human Cloning and Human Dignity* by the President’s Council on Bioethics. However, the system of cloning that is used in the story for organ donation is considered ethically wrong (45).

The system of cloning in *Never Let Me Go* can be considered as morally acceptable or wrong according to the theory applied including, consequentialism, natural law theory, Kantian ethics, rights-based theory, and virtue ethics. For example, Kantian theory suggests using people for organ donation is morally wrong. However, cloning for medical research using early-stage embryos is accepted, and the government should support the life-saving system (60-61).

Despite the extensive body of previous works, several important gaps are evident. Recent critics have overlooked some important aspects, which this study aims to explore further. While most of the previous research were about dehumanization and the loss of identity, social control, commodification of the human body, ethics of cloning, cosmopolitanism and the concept of home, in the novel of Kazuo Ishiguro, a gap is found through the examination of how characters within *Never Let Me Go* grapple with moral dilemmas that have not been previously explored by previous scholars, because they have not given much importance to the choices of the cloned characters including, Tommy, Kathy, and Ruth, especially in relation to their awareness of being organ donors in the future.

While previous researchers including, Stephanie Petrillo, Wen Guo, Yingxuan Zhang, Kamal Sharma, and Amrit Prasad Joshi have explored several themes, the specific conflict between the self and the greater good remains insufficiently examined. This gap highlights for further analysis of the moral dilemmas faced by the characters, and their inner struggles in a condemned society, which this study aims to address within the broader context of dystopian fiction during the twentieth century.

The study's importance lies in its potential to provide new perspectives into both Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, and the discourse of moral philosophy. This research will offer a better understanding of how literature can illuminate some issues regarding humanity and ethical questions, especially those concerning the ethics of scientific progress, and the impact a dystopian world can have on the characters decisions and internal conflicts, including their struggle for life, while social rules are important for them.

The main research problem revolves around the moral dilemmas faced by the cloned characters, who are students in an exclusive boarding school, as well as their hidden emotions. The inner struggles presented in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, and the external pressures of the society shape these dilemmas, as they have to choose between accepting their fate and fulfilling the needs of the school teachers, or find a way to change their future. This study is guided by the following main questions: How do the psychological conflicts between the inner desires and the societal expectations shape the moral decisions of the clones? And how does the dystopian environment in *Never Let Me Go* appear orderly and peaceful on the surface, but reveal hidden suppression and injustice underneath? This research seeks to dig deeper into these issues through the examination of the use of characters body for medical purposes, and their struggles that mirror real concerns surrounding free will, sacrifice, and human dignity.

This research employs close textual analysis, as ethical frameworks, including utilitarianism, virtue ethics, and deontology in order to examine the moral dilemmas faced by the cloned characters in *Never Let Me Go*, particularly in relation to the conflict between the self and the society's needs. Psychoanalytic theory is used to explore the internal conflicts between instinctual desires and the rational control. Dystopian perspective further supports the analysis in demonstrating the hidden system of control and oppression. Secondary sources are also incorporated in order to strengthen the ideas in the study and the analysis.

In terms of structure, the present work will be divided into two chapters. The first chapter will contain four sections. The first section will be exclusively devoted to the examination of moral dilemmas that will include the exploration of different situations. The second will deal with dystopian fiction by giving an explanation about the emergence of the term and focusing on utopia as it is its foundational concept. The third section will be about the social and historical background of *Never let Me Go*. As for the last section, it will be solely dedicated to defining ethical theories including utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics that offer distinct approaches to moral decision-making, and the theoretical framework of the study.

The second chapter will shift focus to the dystopian society depicted in the novel, as it will provide a deeper analysis of how the dystopian setting shapes the decisions of the characters. The analysis will focus on the moral dilemmas and the psychological conflicts of the clones as well as interpreting their choices through the use of ethical theories like deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics.

In the conclusion, I will use the fundamental findings of my research in order to reveal how moral dilemmas and conflicts uncover darker realities beneath the society and the orderly environment, ultimately emphasizing its dystopian critique the system of the boarding school Hailsham.

Chapter1: The Historical, Literary and Theoretical Background of the study.

Introduction

The present chapter establishes the historical, literary and theoretical basis for the analysis of moral dilemmas in dystopian literature. It is divided into four main sections. The first section is dedicated to the examination of moral dilemmas that will include the exploration of different situations which involve conflicting ethical principles. The second section will focus on dystopian fiction by giving an explanation about the emergence of the term and highlighting utopia as it is considered its foundational concept. The connection between utopia and dystopia will also be explored, by focusing on how the two concepts are intertwined. In order to provide a deeper understanding of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*, the third section will examine its social and historical background. The ethical theories including utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics that offer distinct approaches to moral decision-making and theoretical background of the study will be explored in the fourth and concluding section of the chapter to better understand the themes in the novel.

1.An Overview of Moral Dilemmas

Decision making is a process of selecting a choice or an action to achieve a desired goal, it can only be done after evaluating a choice and predicting the consequences of an action. Usually, people find it difficult to make choices in life, and feel unable to choose something and abandon other things, this difficult position is called Moral dilemma.

According to Rui Gao in his article "Contention of Moral Dilemma", Moral dilemma is a kind of self-contradiction or hard situation that people cannot escape as they have to decide and choose between two or more values and to abandon other obligations. The concept of moral dilemma is a subject of contention, as its definition varies across contexts. In western countries research that deals with moral dilemma explains it from the perspective of individual's

obligations that are unsolvable conflicts. This way of seeing moral dilemma is related to Kant's moral philosophy that our actions are based on duty and what makes an action moral is not its consequences but the sense of duty that we feel. In other words, facing moral dilemmas is when an individual has two choices and doesn't know which of the two actions to follow. The two choices can seem correct or both wrong and in some cases one can be right and the other wrong which makes it difficult to choose between A and B. Besides, Kant's theory suggests that we act morally because it is a responsibility, an obligation and our actions are driven by duty and what a person can gain from that choice is not important (6).

When a person confronts a moral dilemma, the morality of their choice is based on a sense of responsibility rather than on the consequences of choosing that option. This perspective gives a deeper insight into someone's duty as his decisions are not always about choosing the best outcome but about fulfilling one's obligations even if it would not bring good results. In this context, Kant's moral philosophy asserts that the rightness of an action is determined by the individual's duty, not the consequences it produces. To illustrate, in case one's decision would bring unhappiness or discomfort but it is a duty to make that choice, it is morally right and it is the proper thing to do.

Moral dilemmas often lead to feelings of remorse and guilt because people face difficult situations that affect their thoughts, behavior and feelings. Many studies in China linked these dilemmas to history meaning that many changes happen through time and among these changes: moral challenges. When the old moral beliefs start to fade away and the new ones are not yet established, people would not be able to make clear choices and usually fail to decide what to do. Besides, people often find it difficult to choose between the traditional and modern belief since taking a decision in the past was related to the benefit of a community even if it demands a self-sacrifice ,however in the present the individual's benefit is more prioritized, meaning that the way of thinking has changed from working for the good of a group of people and how they

prefer things to be to how a person thinks separated from others beliefs. Making choices is a hard process and creates confusion and moral chaos because people could not choose between the traditional way of thinking and the modern one which frequently lead to a feeling of unwillingness and incapable to know what is good or bad, right or wrong and feel the in between (Gao 6).

Moral dilemma can cause internal conflict and confusion when an individual is unable to make decisions or take actions, especially when the traditional and modern beliefs clash. In the past, people choose what is good for the community even if it requires self-sacrifice, whereas in the present, people tend to give more value to their own needs and desires. This shift in the way of thinking made it harder to a person to follow the old values or the new ones since they can feel a sense of guilt, uncertainty and unsure which option is the best to choose.

Moral dilemma is not only about choosing one option over another; it is the way the choice effects people's thoughts and how they feel about themselves and others afterward. Making a decision can creates a sense of regret and an individual would always think that he might have done something wrong in selecting a choice that perhaps may not be the best option (Gao 6).

According to Michael T Dale, Gawronski, Bertram, and Nyx L. Ng, in their article "Moral-Dilemma Judgments", Moral Dilemma was a key subject in psychological research particularly since Kohlberg's 1971 work on moral development. In modern research the focus is more on utilitarianism that concerns choosing what will be good for everyone and deontology that is concerned with having an outcome that is not the best by following some moral rules or values. In this case that a context can influence the choice of individuals between utilitarian choice that gives more importance to the satisfaction of a community over a personal desire, and the deontological choice that is a type of decision based on following rules regardless of their results. In other words, it is a way of choosing what is morally right or correct since it

aligns with a set of principles, and an action is judged according to whether it is good or not without taking into consideration the outcomes that an action can create which is completely different from utilitarianism that is based on the greater good over personal choice (1).

Moral decision-making has been studied by focusing on two major ethical theories: utilitarianism and deontology. Over time, psychological research evolved to explore how people make decisions, either prioritizing the benefit of others or the greater good or choosing what is morally right by following the moral principles. Furthermore, the choices people make are often influenced by the situations they find themselves in, and they usually find difficulties in taking actions since they feel unable to decide whether to follow moral rules or the greater good.

In the article "Moral dilemmas and moral rules", the study of moral dilemmas comes from good research in philosophy. The main goal of philosophy is to consider people's reactions to different dilemmas or problems in order to figure out the rules that align with those reactions. Among the studied types of moral dilemmas is the trolley problem that helps in understanding what can influence our moral decisions and choices. Two different cases to examine, one is the bystander case in which a person sees a train coming and will kill five innocent people. The possible way to save them is to flip a switch to change the train's path to a side track that would cause a death of one person. Philosophers said that it is permissible to save five people by killing one even though the individual is innocent. Another case is called the footbridge test in which the situation is similar but not the solution. Instead of a side track as a way to save five people, pushing a stranger off a footbridge would also save five people. However, philosophers believe that it is morally wrong to push the man. In order to understand people's reactions to these kinds of problems, philosophers tried to create a theory but it was hard to do it especially that most of them agreed that no single theory can fully understand people's moral intuitions (Shaun Nichols 2).

Trolley problem as one example of moral dilemmas challenge individuals to make decisions since both choices involve harm. The example is used to explore how people value principles and how their emotions play a role in their decision-making. Some philosophers argue that it is acceptable to sacrifice one person in order to save the life of many, whereas others consider killing someone crosses a moral line even if this act can help in saving the life of others. Thus, these kinds of dilemmas demonstrate that it is hard to create a universal ethical theory because an individual's moral feelings can differ from someone to another depending on their beliefs and the situation they are in.

The footbridge case can cause a great emotional engagement and is considered as personal rather than impersonal that is less in relation with feelings. Joshua Greene suggested that the footbridge case that encourages pushing someone to a train to kill him in order to save five other people is personal since it causes bodily harm to a specific person especially when it does not derive from deflecting an existing threat onto another person. This criterion is a way to differentiate the personal violation from the impersonal ones. However, when moral violations are impersonal, a person takes an action that inadvertently causes harm to another or when he wants to avoid a pre-existing danger. In other words, an action is evaluated differently taking into consideration the criteria introduced by Joshua Greene, and the intention of an individual while taking a decision. For example, pushing someone off a footbridge is a personal act that is done to prevent a great number of deaths, while pulling a lever to divert a trolley is impersonal and an indirect way of saving other people rather than directly harming an individual (Shaun Nichols 3).

When people think about morality or decide whether something is right or wrong, they often rely on rule-based accounts, which propose that actions are judged based on if they violate certain moral rules. The deontological accounts which is a philosophy introduced by some thinkers like Kant, suggest that some actions are totally wrong, no matter what the outcomes of

those actions are since they violate fundamental moral duties or rules. In contrast, a utilitarian account, views an action as morally wrong if it does not maximize the overall happiness or the greater good. In other words, the morality of an action is determined by its results, if it leads to the good of a great number of people. Therefore, these two types of accounts, deontological accounts and utilitarianism differ in the way they judge a morality of an action. As utilitarianism concerns evaluating an action by taking into consideration its consequences rather than whether that action breaks certain moral rules. However deontological accounts focus on the inherent rightness and wrongness of an action without taking into consideration whether the outcomes are good or bad. Additionally, it is agreed that certain actions are judged in relation to the cultural beliefs of a person or what he believes in as a right thing to do or a bad thing to completely avoid. As an example, if someone does not believe that a rule against self-defense, punishment and circumcision exists, he would not see these actions as wrong because there is no law that justifies its wrongness. Thus, an individual might not think that self-defense or punishment as impermissible (4).

The distinction that Joshua Greene made between personal and impersonal moral violations demonstrates how different actions can make people have a different feeling based on whether an action would cause harm and how much harm it causes. As an example, the footbridge case, which is about pushing someone to cause his death in order to save others life is considered a personal violation because it directly causes bodily harm to an individual. This is the opposite to other more impersonal actions, such as pulling a lever to divert a trolley, where the death of that person is caused indirectly. In addition, there is no physical contact when pulling a lever to divert a trolley which makes it easier for a person to choose this option over killing an individual to save five others. Greene's framework suggests that the evaluation of an action is based on whether a moral decision involves a personal harm or an impersonal one, especially taking into consideration the intention behind the decision made.

People make judgments depending on several factors that shape their decision making. An individual can evaluate an action focusing on the philosophical tradition that concerns the deep ideas about morality, of what is right or wrong or empirical tradition, focusing on observations in real world. Moreover, people often make judgments about morality depending on what they know about local rules which are certain guidelines that show how people should behave and treat others. In the study of moral and conventional distinctions, researchers agreed that when people make moral judgments as standing up during a story time, they take into consideration their knowledge about local rules, meaning that they can only behave according to the social norms of a place they are in which can vary from one country to another. For instance, people in the US believe that it is wrong not to tip servers in restaurants, while in China this rule is not followed by its citizens. Thus, the difference in culture, social norms and countries can shape the way a person judges a morality of certain actions. In addition, people's judgments are influenced by their knowledge of local rules, which differ from one culture to another, and these differences show a cross-cultural difference that influence people's decision about right and wrong (4).

People often make moral judgements about what is right and wrong to do by taking into consideration several factors, including philosophical ideas about morality and real-world observations. Their judgements are influenced and shaped by local rules and social norms that differ from one culture to another and vary across countries. As illustrated by the tipping example, practices that are standard in one culture may not exist at all in another, and what is considered customary in one country may be seen inappropriate in another. Thus, cultural differences play a crucial role in shaping people's decisions and how they assess the morality of an action.

Feelings and emotions play a big role in shaping the intuitions of many people. It is clear that how an individual makes moral decisions depends on how he feels about a situation

meaning that if someone feels that killing someone is wrong, he can not kill a person even if that action would lead to saving five others. Recent studies have used the trolley problem in order to see how people react and judge certain situations finding out that both emotions and the rules people believe in are the principal factors that shape our decision making. In other words, most people confront a moral dilemma in which they have to choose between two difficult choices, their feelings about a choice play a crucial role in how they make their decisions.

2.Dystopian Vs Utopian Fiction

2.1 Dystopia

Science fiction serves as a canvas for exploring life in the future and the possible outcomes of the advancement in technology and science. It allows us to imagine the world as a place that either guarantees happiness, health, success and wealth or a world of challenges, hardship, obstacles and oppression. Dystopia and utopia are subgenres of science fiction that represent opposite visions of the future.

Dystopian fiction is a genre in literature that explores the unrealistic societies that live under oppressive systems and their life is characterized by strict rules, sufferings, fear, loss and lack of freedom. According to Ashraf abdelbaky in his article “A Perfect World or an Oppressive World: A Critical Study of Utopia and Dystopia as Subgenres of Science Fiction”, the term Dystopia means “a bad place” and the opposite of the word utopia. In Meriam-Webster’s dictionary, the word dystopia is defined as “an imaginary place where people lead dehumanized and often fearful lives” (361).

A dystopia is a fictional setting in which people live under hard and oppressive conditions that offers no possibilities for change, opportunities and chances. A community fears to take decisions and to have a different opinion from the state or to be against their rules. In this place, a person loses his sense of humanity and individuality, in a way that they can feel

that they are just part from the system not a human being with his own thoughts, ideas and ideology. Certain rules are imposed to be followed that no one can think to reject the laws or act freely since their life is characterized by strict control and surveillance from the state.

In the article “Building on anticipation: Dystopia as empowerment”, dystopia is a kind of literature that shows a very negative and frightening future by taking into consideration the current events happening in the world and making it worse and darker. This type of stories convey some problems that concern the life of citizens that may lead to a dark future if the issues would not be solved in the present. Despite the fact that this future might definitely happen but taking actions would prevent actions from occurring (Frédéric Claisse and Pierre Delvenne 2).

Dystopia as genre that explores a future world of hardship, oppression and dangers, anticipation plays a key role in dystopian narratives as it is a fundamental human capacity that drives action. It reflects to people’s ability to foresee potential outcomes or results based on present trends and behaviors. The anticipatory knowledge is a set of established feelings, thoughts, ideas and beliefs about the coming future which is essential in guiding citizens to prepare for possible threats or dangers. In other words, the fictional dystopia is related to the non-fictional anticipatory knowledge that is produced by scientists or social scientists. By presenting a kind of life in the future filled with control, oppression and challenges, the narratives would instill a sense of urgency and possibility in the audience, thus the dystopian literature would empower readers and push them to reflect on current circumstances and think about possible solutions or actions they might take to prevent these problems. Furthermore, in the context of anticipatory knowledge, the elements of fiction and nonfiction are indistinct and not easily identified as different from each other, however both of these realms provide a comprehension that shapes society’s choices (2).

Dystopian narratives explore a future life filled with dangers, challenges and oppression that people will confront, where the concept of anticipation plays a significant role in shaping the stories. The concept of anticipation suggests predicting negative outcomes that will happen in the future based on the current events which can help people to prepare for potential threats and will do their best to avoid the coming disastrous events. Besides, dystopian fiction is related to real-world knowledge created by social scientists about the unfortunate fate. In other words, what social scientists create about the future world is reflected in dystopian narratives for the sake of preventing the undesirable results.

Scientists and dystopian writers create theories and stories in order to warn us about the events that might happen in the future. These events are catastrophic and pose serious risks that people need to avoid by taking actions. On the other hand, scientists insist as well on the apocalyptic potential of the threat meaning that if the event is unavoidable, taking action may not be necessary. In the same vein, Frédéric Claisse and Pierre Delvenne refer to the French sociologist Jean-Pierre Dupuy who explains that the only way to prevent a catastrophe to happen is to start thinking about it and most importantly as an action that has already happened. His theory is called enlightened catastrophism that encourages people to accept a catastrophe as something that is bound to happen and can not be changed, rather than something that people could manage or avoid as a kind of risk. This theory however encourages also to think about solutions and how to deal with problems when they come. In addition, enlightened catastrophism inspires people to find solutions to the disastrous events that might happen in the future by coming together and face the obstacles, in contrast to doom prophets who are the people that speak only about the terrible outcomes of certain events and leave people feel powerless to change the future. The same way that dystopian narratives are characterized by fictional stories that drive readers to think about a future that is pessimistic grim and consider what could happen if current issues get worse. The future described in most of works of

literature are related to the issues we see in today's life but taken to the extreme in a way that life seems a place to suffer in. In some works characters are fighting for their freedom and a better future without control by the government like Winston Smith in George Orwell's *1984*, Bernard in Aldous Leonard Huxley's *Brave New World* or D-503 in Zamyatin's *We*. Furthermore, in order to change the future, Dystopias bring the dark future to the present as a tool to push people to reflect on solutions before some issues occur. Therefore, acting as a time machines by bringing the future to today's world might be a way to let people expect anything to happen but work to make changes as well. Dystopian literature mainly ends with a call for action that we are capable of changing the present and avoid the bad things that could exist one day, the end is about hope and addressing the reader that he has the opportunity to take action and change what he fears to happen. The last message in dystopian works, is regarded as a warning about the future and an inspiration to motivate people to do something to prevent the negative future to exist (qtd. in Claisse and Delvenne 4-5).

Dystopian literature and scientific theories are interrelated concerning potential future catastrophes, sharing the same purpose of giving advance caution about the coming dangers and disastrous events of the future. Both scientists and dystopian authors use theories and stories in order to warn society of possible threats or destructions and the need for proactive measures to avert them. The concept of enlightened catastrophism presented by the French socialist Jean-Pierre Dupuy, indicates the importance of focusing on finding solutions and taking actions rather than feeling powerless and lost. A clear example of how obstacles are faced in dystopian narratives is seen through some characters journey, such as Winston Smith from *1984*, that illustrates his struggling against oppressive governments, and working to seek freedom and individuality. Ultimately, dystopian literature functions as narrative time machines, that brings dark futures to the present in order to inspire and motivate individuals to work for positive

change, highlighting that hope and optimism are the keys that helps an individual to avoid unfavorable outcomes.

2.2 Utopia

In the view of T.S.Varadharajan in his article “Utopia, Dystopia and Critical Utopia: An Overview”, the concept of utopia goes beyond Thomas More’s utopia 1515, that used the word in order to describe an ideal island free from problems. However, the idea itself can be traced back even further to Plato’s Republic 380BCE. Plato in his work introduces a society that is led by rulers who care about the benefit of everyone or the greater good, where the interests and needs of groups of people like warriors, merchants, craftsmen, and workers are taken care of. In this society everything is owned by the community in order to create equality between the rich and the poor. In addition, citizens in the republic are required to follow certain rules and act morally and ethically (17-18).

2.3 The Connection Between Dystopia and Utopia

According to Zhurkova M. S and Khomutnikova E.A in their article “The Genesis of Dystopian Meaning Structure and its Relation to Utopian Literary Tradition”, the dystopian literary tradition emerged as a reaction to the utopian literature that existed for over two thousand years. The first utopian literature that existed is Plato’s republic that was written around 360 BC however it became more independent from philosophy during the 16th century (186).

Zhurkova M. S and Khomutnikova E.A suggested that dystopian novels traced back to the eighteenth century, and were influenced by the utopian literary tradition that was not only the source of inspiration and the driving force behind dystopia but also its reflection in themes as dystopia mirrors the utopian themes in a distorted way. Utopia presents a perfect place for people to live and dream in, a world where equality and justice prevail. In contrast, dystopia is

characterized by misery and oppression, and represents a society that is unjust. The themes of dystopian literature are often exaggerated and shown in an altered way. The focus of dystopian literary tradition changed compared to the previous ages, in the 20th century it addressed the dangers of being detached from historical progress, the issue of dehumanization, the increase in consumerism. This period was marked by its influential dystopian novels that deal with issues and subjects that are significant and important nowadays (186).

Both Zhurkova M. S. and Khomutnikova E.A argue that dystopian narratives have roots in the eighteenth century, and emerged from the utopian genre. Dystopia is inspired by utopia, however it presents a distorted reflection of utopian themes. Utopian literary tradition depicts ideal worlds of happiness, fair and equality whereas dystopias depict oppressive worlds of injustice, challenges and filled with misery and sadness. In addition, this type of literature began to explore complex issues especially during the twentieth century. Among these influential concerns, a detachment from historical progress, dehumanization and the rise of consumerism.

Dystopia and Utopia are interrelated genres, that share similar range of issues, but represent different worlds in which people either face obstacles or live in heaven. As stated by Zhurkova M. S and Khomutnikova E.A in their article *The Genesis of Dystopian Meaning Structure and its Relation to Utopian Literary Tradition*, that the idea of the affinity between utopia and dystopia can be linked to the vision of plato in republic that justice is the goal of the ideal society. Plato believes that justice as a supreme good can only be achieved when each individual follows social rules and fulfill his duty. Each person in society should never change his role or position, as there is no opportunity for a change or improving his status. In addition, the ideal society introduced by Plato ensures stability in social hierarchy by preventing mixing social classes. In his vision, the importance is given more to the state's order and to its benefit and stability over the individual's freedom of choice and rights. Furthermore, the society is characterized by a citizen that often prioritize the state's interests over personal ones, in the

republic a person can sacrifice his desires for the sake of assuring a benefit or a welfare to the government as a way of applying justice and aiming to do everything that would be the reason to the development of the society. Plato has no worries about losing an individual freedom to achieve justice because it is only a part of the state system. Plato's society is seen as ideal from the perspective of the powerful and oppressive and unjust from the perspective of a citizen who puts aside his rights to reach the benefit of the state. Therefore, the republic is a utopia for the rulers who maintain power and benefit from the citizens on one hand, on other hand it is a dystopia for individuals who have no freedom. The ideal society for Plato focuses on justice that is applied only for one category of people, as he sacrifices his personal goals, happiness and freedom for the state's benefit since it is a duty for him to serve the state (187).

Dystopian and utopian literary traditions are closely related genres that address similar issues by presenting contrasting worlds. One world is dystopian and oppressive where individuals face obstacles, while the other is a good place to live in filled with justice and perfection. The connection between the two genres is linked to Plato's vision in the republic in which the foundation of a society is based on justice. Plato argues that when an individual follows societal rules, justice is achieved as the most important goal. His ideal society maintains stability by giving more importance to the state's interests over individual's desires and own goals. As a form of justice people of this society may sacrifice their own desires for the benefit of the state. Thus, this world is seen as a dystopia for those who lose their freedom and an ideal society by those who maintain power and control over citizens.

3.The Socio-historical Background of *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro

Liu Ya in his article "Interpretation of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* from the Two Cultures Controversy" discusses Kazuo Ishiguro's novel in the context of the two cultures controversy. The novel *Never Let Me Go* written by noble-prize winning author Kazuo Ishiguro, follows the tradition in English literature of examining the conflict between science and

humanity. It focuses on the theme of cloning, highlighting the complex idea about the nature of human identity and finding the meaning of being a human in a world influenced by advanced technology (1).

Liu Ya suggests that in March 2005, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a declaration that prohibited research on human cloning. Soon after, the Japanese-British author Kazuo Ishiguro published his novel *Never Let Me Go*. The novel tells the story of clones by using a cold tone in order to discover their lives and feelings. The novel was interpreted by scholars and readers from different perspectives including a dystopian world, a discussion on ethics in technology and science, a story that focuses on a personal development of a character from childhood to adulthood, and considering power dynamics. The novel engages with the contemporary issue of human cloning and organ donation and considered one of the most successful novels. Previous literary works as *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley and *Human Cloning* by D. Lovick also dealt with the same topic as Kazuo Ishiguro's novel. stepping further back in time, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelly was the first novel used in order to criticize the misuse of science. When considering *Never Let Me Go* in a broader historical and social context, it is clear that it reflects the ongoing debate between science and technology in one hand, and human values on the other hand in Britain and globally (1).

The socio historical background of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go* is centered on the themes of cloning, ethics and individual's rights and freedom. Set in an alternate version of England and deals with issues about decision-making in a dystopian world that reflects the real-world issues about bioethics as well as the advancement in science and technology. Besides, the society described in the story values science over human life, rights and freedom. The characters in the novel are students in a boarding school called Hailsham, they are chosen for donating their organs and they are treated based on their biology over their humanity.

4. Foundational Theories and Ethical Guidelines applied in the Study

4.1 Ethical Theories

4.1.1 Utilitarianism

Moral dilemmas are part of human's life as he is required to make choices that might affect the individual's life, and his relationship with others. In such situations, frameworks for moral reasoning become essential and important. One such framework is utilitarianism, a philosophy that advocates taking actions that would lead to the overall happiness and minimize sufferings. For instance, when people are obliged to choose between two different things and feel unable to take action and abandon others, they feel powerless and cannot choose between personal survival and the greater good. In utilitarian philosophy prioritizing the overall happiness is much more important than personal contentment and satisfaction. Thus, utilitarianism encourages people to maximize the overall fulfillment over personal well-being.

John Stuart Mill, in his essay utilitarianism, clarifies the definition of the concept of utilitarian philosophy since it was misunderstood and often juxtaposed with concepts like utility and pleasure. Stuart Mill addresses themes that later resonate with the work of the cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who is known for his contributions to cultural studies. According to Stuart Hall, the overall happiness is the fundamental standard for moral rightness. For some people speaking about utility means pleasure in a very simple or basic way. However, Hall clarifies the misconception of the theory, arguing that utility which means something useful or something that brings good outcomes, is not only about pleasure or having fun. Instead, it is about the greater good as its main purpose, and promoting happiness for everyone not just for the individual. Besides, utilitarianism is about finding what makes a great number of people happy rather than focusing on the personal pleasure or contentment (qtd. in Mill 12).

Utilitarianism is a philosophy that suggests making choices based on how much happiness or unhappiness an action can bring. If an action can lead to more happiness than

unhappiness, it is considered as good and works for the benefit of society rather than the individual's pleasure.

4.1.2 Deontology

Moral dilemmas often arise in situations where people must make choices that challenge their ethical beliefs, values and principles. These dilemmas force individuals to confront with difficult choices that may affect their relationships with others and their well-being. In these situations, a lot of people turn to frameworks like deontology for guidance. This theory focuses on the results of an action rather than the principles behind it. In other words, it is about doing what is morally right regardless of its consequences, and it focuses on following some rules and moral norms. Unlike utilitarianism, which focuses on the consequences of an action, meaning that if an action brings the greatest happiness, it is the right thing to do, deontology is concerned with the morality of an action itself, regardless of its outcomes.

Bertram Gawronski and Jennifer S. Beer in their article “What makes moral dilemma judgments “utilitarian” or “deontological”?”, suggest that there is a difference in the two ethical theories that judge the morality of an action. Highlighting that an action should be considered acceptable from the deontological perspective, if it aligns with moral norms, and unacceptable if it violates them. Therefore, the deontological responses would be sensitive and responsive to those norms. Notably, the implications associated with moral norms have rarely been tested in a research about moral dilemma. As it is limited in this area to a narrow focus on proscriptive elements only, meaning that most studies focus only on proscriptive norms which are the rules that people should not do without considering the prescriptive norms that are the rules that an individual should do. However, in moral dilemma research it is essential to take into consideration both proscriptive and prescriptive norms in making judgments, otherwise a person might reject doing an action not because it breaks a moral rule but just he does not want

to act. Thus, it is incorrect to consider a certain action as deontological if someone's decision is based on a general preference to not act rather than following those moral norms (2-3).

In moral dilemmas, people often have to choose between two or more different choices or conflicting principles, that they need a framework in order to decide whether an action is right or wrong based on rules rather than outcomes. The deontological theory developed by a German philosopher Immanuel Kant, considers an action as right if does not violate moral rules, and can be regarded as wrong if it breaks moral principles. In other words, this theory focuses on doing what is right and acceptable rather than doing what can bring overall happiness. However, the majority of research focus on the proscriptive norms which are the rules about what people should not do, with little focus on prescriptive rules that state what a person should do. Therefore, not examining both kinds of norms, cannot give a clearer understanding about moral dilemmas and judgments.

In literature, utilitarianism and deontology often shape characters decisions, choices and the ethical dilemmas they face. Characters that are influenced by utilitarianism theory, make choices or take action based on what can bring the greater good to a great number of people without taking into consideration the consequences of an action. Besides, they usually sacrifice themselves, their happiness, their desires and goals for the good of others. On the other hand, characters who follow the deontological principle make choices according to what is morally right and what their duty is regardless of the outcomes of their choices. In addition, an individual's actions are guided by a strict sense of right and wrong even if it can lead to their loss of personal freedom, happiness, and objectives. These theories are used in order to create a tension or a moral conflict in literature because characters in a novel feel unstuck and struggle between doing what is morally right to them, following rules and social norms or doing what the society consider can bring a best outcome for the most of people.

4.1.3 Virtue Ethics

In the view of Julia Annas in her work “Oxford Handbooks Online”, virtue ethics is different from a habit. Virtue is a person’s quality or characteristic to act or to do something automatically. For instance, being honest or generous is the way an individual has the habit to act generously. However, a virtue is more than a habit that is done without thinking. In addition, a virtue involves making choices and having a purpose to each one, and there should always be a reason for doing something, unlike a habit that happen without much thought. For example, choosing to be honest for a reason is different from having the habit to do it. Thus, virtues are formed through conscious reasoning rather than an automatic behavior (2).

Virtue ethics is a positive quality that a person develops over time like being honest and brave. Unlike a habit that happens automatically without thinking, Virtue involves thinking to make good choices for a good reason. When a person is in a situation that he is obliged to choose between two difficult choices, Virtue plays a crucial role in moral dilemmas as it helps to take decisions that aligns with people’s values and character.

4.2 Theoretical Framework

4.2.1 Psychoanalytic Theory

To analyze the novel *Never Let Me Go*, I will draw on psychoanalysis theory, particularly Sigmund Freud’s theory by using his structural model of the psyche and demonstrating the tension between the id, ego and superego of the characters as they face moral dilemmas of following the social norms or to satisfy the unconscious desires. By using Freud’s ideas, I will examine how the characters in the novel deal with their choices and internal conflicts that arise from societal expectations and hidden desires. Ultimately, the Freudian theory will show how the character's actions are shaped by the struggle between the inner forces including the id, ego and superego.

In the analysis, I aim to explore how the internal forces that shape human's behavior, play a crucial role in understanding the individual actions and decision making. First, I will examine the id as it is described in the article entitled "Id, Ego, and Superego" as the part of the unconscious mind that reacts instantly to basic needs and desires. The child's personality at birth is made up only of the id, and later on develops an ego and superego. The id does not have any understanding of what is right to do and what is wrong, because it is focused on satisfying the instinctual needs. It operates through a primitive process of thinking that is illogical, driven by fantasy and disconnected from reality. Freud described the id as "cauldron of seething excitations," highlighting that is full of energy urgently pushing for immediate release, as it is the primitive component of the individual's personality (McLeod 3-4).

The next focus will be on the ego that is the logical part of the mind that functions on the conscious level, it balances the urges of the id and the social norms and rules of the superego. The ego that means "I" in Latin is the conscious part of an individual's personality and the image people present to others. The ego forms to manage the conflict between the unrealistic demands of the id with the realities of the external world. As the ego operates through logic and reason, it functions as the part that makes decisions (5).

The superego will serve as the key concept in my analysis, as the characters actions in the novel are shaped by rules given by society. Freud's superego represents the moral aspect of the mind, reflecting the social norms and values absorbed by society. In contrast to the instinctual desires of the id, the superego directs individuals' behavior to act morally, which creates feelings of pride when a person follows the superego, and feelings of guilt when he did not fulfill the expectations (7).

Repression theory will be utilized in my analysis in order to deepen the exploration of the character's psyche within the narrative, as it is defined by Simon Boag in his article "Freudian Repression, the Common View, and Pathological Science", repression is a

mechanism that blocks upsetting and distressing thoughts like guilt and psychological discomfort from entering the conscious awareness. Its objective is to work as a defense in keeping thoughts such as shame, out of the conscious mind (76).

In analyzing *Never Let Me Go* I have chosen to apply the Freud's structural model of the id, ego and superego alongside his theory of repression because these concepts offer a valuable insight into the characters inner struggles and the moral dilemmas they face. Freud's model helps reveal how the characters desire, the societal conditions and their attempts to find balance create the tension between the greater good and pursuing one's personal desires. In addition, repression theory in particular sheds light on how the characters suppress impulses in order to live within a system that decided their fate.

4.2.2 Dystopian Theory

I aim to analyze *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro using the dystopian literary theory that often explores the effect of oppressive social systems on individuals by highlighting their struggles in a world of misery. The society in the novel is characterized by its exploitation of the clones, who are conditioned to accept their fate of being organ donors and have no right to change their future. Besides, characters in the novel especially Kathy, Ruth and Tommy were controlled and unable to follow other rules or principles other than that. Thus, the dystopian elements in the novel will demonstrate the moral problems that came with scientific progress, that changed the world of humanity into a dehumanized one where societies treat human beings as tools to use for a specific purpose without considering their feelings, dreams and rights.

In analyzing *Never Let Me Go* through the lens of dystopian literary theory, I will apply the concept of false utopias, as explored by M. Keith Booker in his book *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism* (1994), demonstrating the hidden reality of dystopian society that often appears orderly on the surface but conceal deep injustice and

control. Drawing on dystopian works like Orwell's *1984* and Huxley's *Brave New World*, Booker explains how dystopian societies often disguise oppression beneath a surface of order and normalcy, and these worlds hide uncomfortable and horrifying truths behind a surface of normalcy (15).

Building on this idea of hidden dehumanization, I will apply the concept of false utopias to *Never Let Me Go* in order to reveal how Hailsham represents the horrific boarding school where clones were raised for organ donations, although it was presented as a safe and caring place. This appearance helped in hiding the cruelty system that used clones as a tools for organ harvesting.

Conclusion

The concepts defined in this chapter including dystopia and utopia and the definitions of the ethical theories will provide a valuable framework in analyzing the novel *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro. The approach used in the analysis of the work will be further discussed in the second chapter by demonstrating the key elements of the literary theories found in the novel as well as dealing with the moral dilemmas of the characters.

Chapter 2

Moral Dilemmas and the Repressed Self in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

Introduction

This chapter offers a multidisciplinary analysis of *Never Let Me Go* by exploring the moral dilemmas faced by the characters in the novel with a combined lens of psychoanalytic theory, dystopian theory as well as the ethical philosophy. The novel, as a significant dystopian work of the twentieth century, embodies the central issues of the genre, such as societal control and the moral consequences of sacrificing individuals for the greater good. In order to support this analysis, a biography of the author is provided, followed by a synopsis of the novel in order to provide the necessary background by giving an overview of the story and its dystopian setting.

1. Author's Background and Narrative Overview

1.1 Biography of The Author

In an article “Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System” that includes an interview with Kazuo Ishiguro, several details about his early life and education emerge, demonstrating his recognition as a contemporary writer. Kazuo Ishiguro was born in Nagasaki, Japan, in 1954. When he was a child his family moved to Guilford, Surrey, in England, after his father got a chance to work as an oceanographer on a North Sea oil project. Ishiguro grew up and received his education in the UK, having a degree in English and Philosophy from the university of Kent in 1978. He completed his postgraduate studies in creative writing at the University of East Anglia in 1980, and was taught by the novelist and critic Malcolm Bradbury.

Today, Ishiguro is considered as one of Britain's most distinguished contemporary authors, with a literary influence that extends well beyond the English-speaking world. His

novels have been translated into twenty-eight languages, among his highly regarded works *The Remains of the Day* that was awarded the prestigious Booker Prize and was adapted later into a widely praised 1993 film by Merchant-Ivory Productions. The screenplays by the novelist Ruth Prawer Jhabvala earned eight Academy Award nominations, raising Ishiguro's international profile. He, at the present days remains active as a novelist while also working on screenplays (Shaffer 2).

1.2 Synopsis of *Never Let Me Go*

The novel was written at the beginning of the 21st-century during a period of development in biological and medical sciences, particularly in the field of cloning and organ donation. In alternate England, *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro depicts a society where human clones like Kathy, Ruth and Tommy are created solely for the purpose of donating their organs. The story is narrated by Kathy H a thirty-one-year-old woman and a carer for over eleven years. Kathy reflects on her time at Hailsham, a boarding school where children were raised with little knowledge about their future fate but taught to be creative by their guardians who praise students for their art works and writing poetry. The students at Hailsham were given little information about their future life, while they were somewhat aware of the fact that they were different from people outside the school. Aside from creative subjects, the guardians gave them the ability to engage in physical activities in order to offer them a normal childhood and distract them from the reality of their existence and the inescapable future that is awaiting them. As the students of Hailsham get older, some hints were dropped by the guardians which made the children feel uncomfortable and uneasy, but they were conditioned to focus on their creativity and education and never question their fate. Once they left Hailsham, the students moved to the cottages where they lived independently for the first time and their relationship with each other became complex. Kathy, Tommy and Ruth quickly discovered how different the cottages were from Hailsham. Unlike the controlled environment they have known in

Hailsham, the cottages were more informal since they were no longer surrounded by guardians and no instructions were given to them. The transition they experienced from a creative atmosphere to an independent place forced them to face new challenges and realizations about their life. The relationship between the three main characters was complex and changed over time, especially when they were living at the cottages. Kathy and Tommy had a close friendship that slowly turned into love that was unspoken, whereas Ruth was jealous of the growing bond between Tommy and Kathy and she tried to control their feelings by being closer to Tommy and manipulated every situation. Despite the tension between the three, Kathy was always loyal to her friend Ruth, but all of them were forced by time to face not only their feelings for each other, but most importantly the reality about their future. As their journey unfolds, the moment Ruth was in a center in Dover for donating her organs, Kathy and Tommy went to visit Madame which marked the undeniable truth about their existence, knowing that education, personal connection and creativity only served as distractions from the future that they cannot escape, realizing that what they had been taught was meaningless in the face of their purpose as organ donors.

2. Moral Dilemmas in a Condemned Society

Kazuo Ishiguro explores hunting moral dilemmas faced by both the clones and the teachers of Hailsham. Characters must choose between what is right and what is wrong, acceptance and resistance to injustice as well as love and duty. These dilemmas reveal how deeply ethics are intertwined with power and control of society and the individual's choices that define their relationships and their sense of self.

One of the moral dilemmas in *Never let Me Go* is the struggle to tell the truth about the clone's future or to protect them with half-truths, meaning that the teachers indirectly tell them that at the age of twenty they will start donations by giving justifications that it is what all of them supposed to do. Guardians like Miss Emily and Miss Lucy struggle to make decisions. As

Miss Emily was hiding the truth from the students and decided their fate, but tried to make them believe that they are special and unique for being Hailsham students as they get creative abilities and they write and read poetry at just a young age. However, Miss Lucy believes that the better way the clones would be educated in Hailsham is by telling them the truth, that none of them can be an actor, teacher, doctor or dream to go to America, because that would never happen, since their future is already decided for them.

Miss Lucy faced a moral dilemma, as she was influenced by the system of Hailsham and the donation program that she started to tell the students to keep themselves healthy, since it is important to donate healthy organs in the future. (*Never Let Me Go* 67). After that, she decided to tell them what other guardians never told them about the future. She explained to a group of boys that were discussing about future dreams and career, that they dream to go to America to be actors. Miss Lucy reveals that no one can go to America because they are different from regular people and the unique purpose of their existence is to donate organs to save other people (78-79).

This dilemma illustrates how miss Lucy was in between choosing to follow the system of the boarding school by teaching them and indirectly speaking about their future, or to reveal the truth without lying at them, even if their happiness can be shattered by the painful reality. For this reason, she lost her job in the exclusive boarding school, because she did not follow the rules of saving the childhood of the clones by sheltering them and distracting them from the dark side of the school system.

Another major illustration of moral dilemmas in the novel is how the characters were unable to decide between fighting against their predetermined fate or accept it with dignity. Characters like Tommy, Ruth and Kathy rarely rebel or question their future and accepted the systematic injustice in the school. The clones were told a story that one boy tried to run away from Hailsham and found tied to a tree, which created the feeling of fear, that the clones never

tried to escape. This anecdote whether it is true or a myth, conditioned them from thinking to go outside. (50).

Characters faced a moral dilemma in which they wanted to live their life as regular people, but believed as well that they can not change their future. This dilemma is powerfully demonstrated in the scene when both Tommy and Kathy went to Madame's house to ask for a deferral to live longer. This dilemma is about whether to hold onto hope for a future they were never promised or to accept the reality of their predetermined fate. Tommy asked her "... is that everything we did, all the lessons, everything. It was all about what you just told us? There was nothing more to it than that?" (*Never Let Me Go* 255).

Tommy's question about the importance of their education in Hailsham, reflects his wish to live longer, to live beyond the function they were created for. Both Tommy and Kathy face moral dilemma between accepting their fate or fighting to get a chance to live their life as they wished even if it means confronting the system of Hailsham and program donations.

3. The Dystopian Landscape in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

As argued by Kalina Maleska in her article "Clones are humans: THE DYSTOPIAN ELEMENTS IN KAZUO ISHIGURO'S NEVER LET ME GO", clones are separated from the rest of society. In a system where people were divided into levels, Hailsham students were treated as a lower class. In the novel the narrator Kathy H reflects on her time at the boarding school telling her story in an emotional and personal way that readers may consider them as humans. The book does not demonstrate the difference between the clones and regular people or say that they are different, instead it shows it in a very indirect way (126).

The novel *Never Let Me Go* offers an example about how the clones in Hailsham were separated from regular people in the scene where Kathy H was addressing the reader describing Hailsham and the guardians, saying that at a young age they did not know much things about

themselves, but they know that they are different from other people outside the school and even the guardians, and all the children have never looked for the meaning of all this. Besides, she was trying to discover things about the reader's journey and childhood as if she is speaking to someone who was a student in a boarding school similar to Hailsham, asking if they got the same feeling as Kathy when she knew she is not like the guardians. She explained that whatever the guardians try to do in order to prepare them with videos, talks, warnings and everything would not succeed to truly convey the emotional reality of the clone's situation. It was hard for the students in the school to grasp the reality of their situation at just nine years old, especially in a place like Hailsham where the guardians were attentive, interact warmly and the environment feels safe and being called sweetheart by a delivery men (*Never Let Me Go* 37).

This scene demonstrates how the clones were not able to question their fate or understand the meaning of being different and separated from other people, as they were conditioned from a young age to accept their situation of being far from other people's world. The children in Hailsham were not violated but emotionally manipulated with a little knowledge to prepare them for donating healthy organs in the future.

Never Let Me Go is told from the point of view of a clone that can not move into a social class of regular people, especially that the society in the novel or the guardians gave no possibility for the clones to join other people outside. The book is similar to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* where divisions of groups in society is also created by genetic engineering. The clones are made using the genes of other people and not born naturally, and they are considered different from the rest of society, and this difference is permanent. No matter what the students of Hailsham do, whether they make art or work hard, it does not change the fact that they are not as regular people and they are created to be different. The clones were taught from a young age to accept their fate of being an organ donor in the future, when they turn twenty, and they would never become part of the world of others (Maleska 127).

Never Let Me Go presents an example of a false utopia, where the surface of order masks an inhumane system that uses clones for a medical purpose. The boarding school appears perfect, designed to give the students the chance to be creative, read and write poetry. However, beneath the illusion the setting is horrific and different from the world outside Hailsham. Besides, the students were unaware of their future, they were told to be organ donors but never understood it as an eventual death. Furthermore, the guardians show love with kind words and care towards the students, but they hide the truth of using their bodies in a cruel way. The system in the novel is built on hurting people and sacrificing them in order to save many others which is the main moral problem of the story.

The concept is best illustrated in the scene when Kathy was describing Hailsham and the woods surrounding it, and the stories told about that place:

There were all kinds of horrible stories about the woods. Once, not so long before we all got to Hailsham, a boy had had a big row with his friends and run off beyond the Hailsham boundaries. His body had been found two days later, up in those woods, tied to a tree with the hands and feet chopped off. Another rumor had it that a girl's ghost wandered through those trees. She'd been a Hailsham student until one day she'd climbed over a fence just to see what it was like outside. This was a long time before us, when the guardians were much stricter, cruel even, and when she tried to get back in, she wasn't allowed. She kept hanging around outside the fences, pleading to be let back in, but no one let her. Eventually, she'd gone off somewhere out there, something had happened and she'd died. But her ghost was always wandering about the woods, gazing over Hailsham, pining to be let back in (*Never Let Me Go* 50).

This scene illustrates how the guardians used frightening tales in order to discourage the students to explore the world outside, and to see Hailsham as heaven and the best place to someone to be in. The story of a boy being tied to a tree because he went to the woods is an

example of how the guardians made the world appear dangerous, and only Hailsham is safe and protective. The quote exemplifies the concept of a false utopia by showing the boarding school as a safe environment on the surface, but its dark side is hidden as the guardians were controlling and manipulating the students.

The illusion of Hailsham in *Never Let Me Go* reflects the kind of failed utopian vision that M. Keith Booker explored in his discussion of modern skepticism toward utopia in his book *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism*, Drawing on Robert C Eliott's work, Booker notes:

To believe in utopia one must believe that through the exercise of their reason men can control and in major ways alter for the better their social environment. . . . To believe in utopia one must have faith of a kind that our history has made nearly inaccessible. This is one major form of the crisis of faith under which Western culture reels (16).

According to Booker, believing in utopia requires faith in the idea that people can use their reason in order to improve society, which is hard to maintain in the present because of the past attempts at creating perfect environments and ideal societies. In other words, people have no longer beliefs that human reason can fix social problems, or make society better and just. This concept of false utopia relates to Hailsham that masks a dystopian reality by showing the school that creates a better life for the clones by educating them so that society will change its view of them. However, the boarding school's guardians treat the students as tools for donations of their organs.

Another layer of the novel's dystopian reality emerges in the scene when Tommy and Kathy went to Madame's house in order to ask for a deferral and know why all those years in Hailsham, the students were giving her their art works. Tommy and Ruth held the belief that the art works that have been collected by Madame may change their fate and live longer.

However, Madame's answer to Tommy's question demonstrates the painful reality about the system. Madame reveals:

... Let's answer the simplest one, and perhaps it will answer all the rest. Why did we take your artwork? Why did we do that? You said an interesting thing earlier, Tommy. When you were discussing this with Marie-Claude. You said because your art would reveal what you were like. What you were like inside. That's what you said, wasn't it? Well, you weren't far wrong about that. 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* (*Never Let Me Go* 250).

What Madame's words reveal is that Hailsham was a utopian appearance as the students were educated and creative, but conceals deep dystopian truths. The students of Hailsham believed that their arts are signs of their humanity and describes who they are as people, but the truth is that their works were used to justify their exploitation, and to prove that they have souls. Thus, the society at Hailsham appeared to be concerned with the education, creativity and nurturing the students' development, but the fact is that it is built on a false utopia that hides the grim purpose of their existence. The system was dystopian that used idealistic notions of art and education to indirectly maintain control over the students' minds.

A further instance of a false utopia in the novel is presented in Madame's response to Kathy during their visit, as she reveals the historical forces that lead to the creation of the exclusive boarding school. She explains

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. And that was how things stood until our little movement came along. But do you see what we were up against? We were virtually attempting to square the circle. Here was the world, requiring students to donate. While

that remained the case, there would always be a barrier against seeing you as properly human (252).

In this passage Madame explains how people accepted the donation program. Even though they knew the clones are human, they considered them as different and less human so they can use them for organ donations. Miss Emily and Madame tried to change this thinking by creating Hailsham, an idealistic place for the clones to be treated with more respect. However, Madame admits that it was impossible to change people's way of thinking because the system was built upon the purpose of using the clones for donations. For this reason, the society in Hailsham was a false utopia that was treating the clones as fully humans to prove that they have done their best to educate them, but they will kill them for the purpose of saving more human people.

The concept of false utopia is explored in Booker's book *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism*, as he explained how dystopian fiction uses defamiliarization, a technique that presents familiar things in unfamiliar ways in order that readers would see social problems from new perspectives. By setting stories in distant and imagined worlds, the works challenge readers to question systems or practices in a given society that may be accepted and considered normal. This method is related to Bertolt Brecht's alienation effect which tries to make ordinary things feel unfamiliar so that people start thinking deeply about them. For this reason, certain practices feel strange, but for a purpose. In dystopian fiction, authors often use different worlds to make readers find and see societal issues more clearly in real life. Thus, what seems normal in dystopian fiction may not be right and can be unfair or cruel underneath (19).

Dystopian stories often show worlds that hide painful realities but that appear perfect on the surface. Authors present schools, education or technology as different from what exists in real life in order that readers would think and question whether it is considered normal, good and accepted or morally wrong. In *Never Let Me Go* Ishiguro presents Hailsham as a perfect

place as they give the opportunity for the students to be creative and unique. However, as the story develops, this form of education appears that it hides a darker purpose which prepares students from a young age to donate their organs in the future. Besides, readers by presenting a different place from real-life schools, will question what is right and what is wrong. By using unfamiliar version of education, the morality, human rights and humanity is questioned.

4. Approaches to Ethics in *Never Let Me Go*

4.1 Utilitarianism

Many dystopian novels present obvious signs of oppression like violence and harsh government, but *Never Let Me Go* demonstrates a society that indirectly maintains power over its people, and shows a powerful system of control. In Ishiguro's story the society is described as calm and the setting is peaceful as the students of Hailsham were treated kindly but they were controlled from the start to be prepared for the solely purpose of donating their organs. The guardians show care to the students just in order to use their bodies for medical purposes. This system is built on utilitarianism as an ethical theory concerned with finding that makes a great number of people happy rather than focusing on the personal desires. This belief suggests sacrificing a group of people if it can help the greater good. Force or violence were not used against the characters in *Never Let Me Go*, as society used emotional conditional to control their lives and decide their fate by preparing them from childhood to adulthood to be good students and die when they complete donations.

This is evident in the scene when miss lucy was explaining to the students the importance of keeping themselves healthy and to avoid smoking. In this scene miss lucy was attempting to convey how it can be much worse if they smoke than any other person. She explained that it was a big mistake for her that she smoked for a little while that they should be more mindful about their health and avoid cigarettes (*Never Let Me Go* 67).

Ishiguro reveals subtly on how children in Hailsham were emotionally conditioned not for their personal protection only but for the greater good. One example of this is when Miss Lucy said: “You’ve been told about it. You’re students. You’re . . . special. So keeping yourselves well, keeping yourselves very healthy inside, that’s much more important for each of you than it is for me.”(*Never Let Me Go* 67).

This quote shows that the students in Hailsham were constantly reminded about their uniqueness as if they were the chosen ones. The preference is always shown to them from the guardians, and Miss Lucy made it much clearer that they have to keep themselves well and to stay away from smoking so that when they get older, they will donate healthy organs. By showing emotions and care to the clones in the boarding school, the guardians maintain control over them and made them follow the system and distracting them from what a child can be interested in at a young age as natural curiosities and having fun.

4.2 Deontology and the Immorality of Using Clones as Means to an End

From Immanuel Kant’s moral philosophy, *Never Let Me Go* used an unethical system that treats the students in Hailsham not as ends in themselves, but as means to an end. Deontology as an ethical theory holds that each individual is valuable and should be treated with respect regardless of the consequences. However, Ishiguro’s society presents a dystopian world of clones like Kathy, Tommy and Ruth who are deliberately raised for a single purpose of providing organs to regular people. The lives of the clones in the novel are seen as useful and their value is not in their freedom and individuality but in their utility. This goes against Kant’s theory that people should never be used for society’s benefit no matter what the result could be. Even though characters like Miss Emily and Madame explained that all that time in Hailsham, they were trying to help the clones, they instead took from them their freedom, choice and dream. The novel thereby demonstrates how dangerous it is when society ignores what is

morally right and prepare the clones for donating their organs in order to make their system progresses.

This concept is evident in the scene when miss Lucy explains to the clones that they will never reach their goals or decide what kind of life they will live when they get old. Miss Lucy heard one of the children in Hailsham speaking to his friend about a kind of life an actor has and dreams of having a chance to go to America to become an actor. After she heard the conversation between the two boys, she addressed to all the children that none of them will go to America, none of them will be a film star and none of them will work in supermarkets. She added that the children's lives are set out for them, and when they become adults, they will start donating their vital organs. This was what each of them was created to do in their life and none of the guardians explained it to them as miss Lucy did. She told them that they had been told but not told because the children did not understand the reality of their fate. Besides, she said that they are not like the actors they watch on their videos and they are not even like her as they exist for a purpose, and they have no right to decide their future. Miss Lucy explained the importance of keeping all what she said in mind because they will leave Hailsham and start their donations, thus it is essential to know who they are and what will happen to them when they become adults. (*Never Let Me Go* 78-79)

Hailsham's students were treated as tools, and never respected as individuals in order that society reach its goal. Characters like Kathy, Tommy and Ruth were used to help others to live longer, since they consider them less human. This system of education in the exclusive boarding school and the donations program make is unethical, because they ignore the basic value of clones as human beings.

4.3 Virtue and Moral Choice in *Never Let Me Go*

Through the virtue ethics perspective, *Never Let Me Go* explores morality with personal and small actions and expressions of care, love and loyalty rather than acts of rebellion. Virtue ethics, based on Aristotelian philosophy, focuses on developing characters with good traits like kindness, courage and compassion that help them to live a good and flourishing life. Although, the clones in the novel were conditioned to live a life that society decided for them and to not have a chance to flourish, characters like Kathy demonstrate that moral value can exist even in a dystopian world of unfair conditions of living. The narrator Kathy H expressed empathy and showed a careful care for her friends which revealed her strong moral character. Although she can not change her fate of being a donor in the future, she still acts with kindness and never hurt the feelings of others, which from virtue ethics, Ishiguro developed a moral character that knows how to do the right thing naturally and be responsible.

The Narrator's display of kindness is presented in the novel in the scene when Tommy approaches Kathy to offer an apology because he struck her during a moment of intense emotional distress because he was often teased by other students and they always mock him of being not creative. Tommy was grappling with feelings of being misunderstood, isolation and anger, and when Kathy tried to help him, he did not control his frustration and delivered a sudden slap. Kathy as a steady moral character in the novel, reassures him that it was an accident, she did not blame him of slapping her in front of everyone, instead she understood that he did not mean to hit her. Kathy's willingness to forgive Tommy demonstrates her capacity for kindness, understanding and most importantly her emotional maturity (*Never Let Me Go* 15).

Thus, this scene reflects the principles of virtue ethics as the character was expressing empathy over hate or anger which demonstrates the importance of moral characters in the novel.

Virtue ethics focuses on moral character and emphasizes values such as kindness, patience, and understanding. Moreover, moral characters show compassion even in difficult situations like Kathy who cares about others feelings, and chooses to be nice instead of seeking revenge or cruelty which shows that Kathy is truly a good person.

5. Freudian Psychoanalysis in *Never Let Me Go*

5.1 The Conflict Between the Superego and the Id in *Never Let Me Go*

In *Never Let Me Go* Ishiguro explores the moral dilemmas faced by the characters as they have to either choose fulfilling the needs of society, or accepting the imposed fatality that mirror the Freudian conflict between the superego and the id. According to Freud, the id is the primitive part in human psyche that seeks its immediate gratification of desires without taking into consideration the social rules, in the same way that characters in the novel have the ability to choose what makes them happy and not following the social expectations that are imposed on them. However they chose to act in service of the collective good. The characters' actions as Tommy, Ruth and Kathy were shaped by the superego which is that part of the psyche that is shaped from childhood by social norms, ethics and morals.

The narrator Kathy faced moral dilemmas that highlight the conflict between her desires and the expectations of society. Her internal conflict between the id and the superego is illustrated in the scene when she and Tommy went to visit Madame's house in order to ask for a deferral since they believed that they can live longer and delay the donation program. When Kathy and Tommy arrived to Madame's house, they were surprised to find Miss Emily one of the guardians in Hailsham there, and it is she who responds to all their questions about the deferral. The couple wanted to know if by proving that they share a real emotional connection, they could extend their remaining time. Kathy asked her "is it the case, then, that deferrals don't exist? There's nothing you can do?" (*Never Let Me Go* 248).

This scene indicates the psychological tension between the id and the superego as Kathy's question for a deferral reveals a moment where her id expresses a deep and instinctual desire to live and love. However, Miss Emily's response that to delay the donation program did not exist and the clones can never change the rules, reflects the cold reality of the system they live in, and the superego upholds all the societal rules that decided their fate. The conflict between the id and the superego is reflected in Kathy who asks for more time to live, and in the superego or the society that denies the id's desires forcing her to accept a life that is shaped by duty. Freud suggests:

In our analyses we discover that there are people in whom the faculties of self-criticism and conscience — mental activities, that is, that rank as extremely high ones — are unconscious and unconsciously produce effects of the greatest importance; the example of resistance remaining unconscious during analysis is therefore by no means unique (*The Ego and the Id* 21).

According to him the superego that governs self-criticism and conscience, can operate unconsciously and have an effect on an individual's behavior. In other words, people may be influenced by their inner resistance or their inner sense of right and wrong without being aware. Thus, the superego can come into conflict with the id, since it opposes the individual's instinctual desires. As it is reflected in Kathy's visit to Madame's house to ask for a deferral, wishing to prolong her and Tommy's time together. The desire to live and ask for a deferral was in conflict with the system of donating organs, which shaped the behavior of both Tommy and Kathy and accepting the fate.

Another significant passage in the novel that illustrates the tension between the id and the superego is in the scene when Tommy and Kathy were in Madame's house. Madame who was answering to the questions of the students presents the superego, as her belief in the greater good demonstrates how the superego can suppress individual desires for the sake of getting

what she needs and for the favor of what society considers as morally accepted. While Kathy represents the id, as she struggles with her instinctual desires that reflect the id's pursuit of emotional fulfillment. Miss Emily explains that even though the students were used for a medical purpose, they had the chance to live a good life in Hailsham, she said: "You have to accept that sometimes that's how things happen in this world. People's opinions, their feelings, they go one way, then the other. It just so happens you grew up at a certain point in this process."(*Never Let Me Go* 255). Kathy was unsettled by Miss Emily's statement, as she was saying they exist just for societal function, she reveals that what might have been a temporary fad for others, for them, it is a very essence of their lives. (255).

In this scene, Miss Emily's words reflect the superego, as she speaks from the perspective of society's rules and conditions. She justified their fate by speaking about how people's opinions change and they simply grew, exactly as their life that is a kind of a process as they grow up and start donations. This demonstrates how the superego accepts the painful things for the greater good. On the other hand, Kathy represents the id as she wanted to live longer, and for her being treated less than human is not only part of history, but it is unfair because the society steals from them their life, happiness, love, connections and their dreams. This shows the conflict between the id and the superego, because society controls the lives of the clones and neglects their psychological and emotional well-being.

5.2 Hidden Fears and Repressed Realities in *Never Let Me Go*

Characters in *Never Let Me Go* often face moral dilemmas, especially when they were young and did not know much about themselves. Their lives were controlled by external forces that dictate their future. Because they were unable to make decisions, they repress their emotions and thoughts. In Freudian terms, this repression is a defense mechanism that protects them from stress, since their inner desires clash with the expectations of the world. Thus, they act so calmly in sad situations instead of crying or expressing anger.

The most striking example of repression in *Never Let Me Go* is in the way characters like Ruth were hiding the painful truth about donations. When Ruth, Tommy and Kathy went together to see a stranded, decaying boat in a marshy field, they had serious discussions about donations and about their feelings of being carers and the challenges that come with it. In this scene Ruth represses uncomfortable feelings about donations, saying: “I think I was a pretty decent carer. But five years felt about enough for me. I was like you, Tommy. I was pretty much ready when I became a donor. It felt right. After all, it is what we’re *supposed* to be doing, isn’t it?” (*Never Let Me Go* 217).

This passage demonstrates that Ruth accepted her fate calmly without showing that the process was difficult. She suppresses her deeper fears and emotions by showing that she is strong. Also, she admits that being a donor was the right thing that happened to her and she was ready for it. This calm acceptance is a form of Freudian repression, as Ruth was hiding her feelings and the reality about donating organs.

Another example of the characters repression is presented in the way they speak about the death after donations as completing instead of saying dying. In the scene when Tommy, Ruth and Kathy were in Marshland, they were talking about Chrissie and Rodney who were the older students they met when they moved to the cottages after leaving Hailsham. Ruth said: “I’ll tell you something I heard. I heard about Chrissie. I heard she completed during her second donation.” (*Never Let Me Go* 215).

In this quote Ruth was telling Tommy and Kathy that Chrissie completed her donation meaning that she passed away. In *Never Let Me Go* the word complete is used to say that someone has died, as it is a gentle way of saying she is not alive. Ruth is speaking about the death of someone they knew but none of them showed emotions since they believed that all of them have to donate their organs and accept it as it is decided by Hailsham guardians. This passage shows how the characters learned to speak about death in an emotionless way which

reflects their repression of fears and sadness about the future that is waiting for them. Through Ruth's talk about Chrissie and Rodney in a distant way, it demonstrates how she internalized the system she was raised in that even in sad situations Ruth and her friends did not express their fears.

In *introductory lectures on psychoanalysis*, Freud explains that patients that suffer from neuroses like anxiety, depression or physical symptoms without medical cause, often unconsciously resist the very treatment they seek. He explained the struggle against treatment by saying:

The patient, who is suffering so much from his symptoms and is causing those about him to share his sufferings, who is ready to undertake so many sacrifices in time, money, effort, and self-discipline in order to be freed from those symptoms, we are to believe that this same patient puts up a struggle in the interest of his illness against the person who is helping him (321-322).

Repression is also evident in the scene when Kathy learned to hide her feelings instead of crying or showing emotions. She explains how she was secretive about her music tape and how it meant so much for her that she kept it hidden from others. She says that it is so special for her, because it contains the song *Never Let Me go*. Furthermore, the singer Judy sings "Never let me go . . . Oh baby, baby . . . Never let me go . . ." that Kathy liked this part because she was imagining a woman that had been told she could not have babies, but the miracle was that she had a baby that when she holds him, she does not want to leave him alone since she was happy and at the same time, she was afraid that something could happen to her (*Never Let Me Go* 68-69).

Kathy's attachment to her tape is considered as a Freudian repression, as the song represents her deep emotional longing for love and comfort that she cannot express openly in a

controlled environment like Hailsham. She hides both her tape and her feelings, choosing to enjoy the moment alone where she can imagine a world filled with love. Because she is raised in a place where nobody can express his emotions, and the system in Hailsham denies the emotional needs of the clones. Thus, her feelings are pushed into the unconscious, that come only when she wants that or in private moments. Kathy's act of listening to this song and dancing on it, is a way to cope with her repressed desires.

Sigmund Freud in his work *introductory lectures on psychoanalysis*, explains how repression operates differently from conscious rejection. He explained that repression happens without the ego's awareness. Besides, it leads to symptom formation, meaning that the repressed material can not be expressed directly, but returns in disguised forms as obsessions, dreams and phobias. Freud studied patients with neurotic symptoms and concluded that they were resulted from unconscious conflicts, particularly childhood's unresolvable desires. He suggests that "It is a very different matter if we suppose that the same impulse is subjected to repression. In that case it would retain its energy and no memory of it would remain behind; moreover, the process of repression would be accomplished unnoticed by the ego." (330).

Freud contrasts repression with conscious rejection, meaning that a mental impulse like a wish or desire is pushed out of awareness entirely, not only denied and hidden. Usually these impulses stem from the id or the instinctual part of the psyche which are the threat to the superego that represents moral constraints. Moreover, he argued that when feelings are repressed, the psychic energy associated with the impulse remains active. In this case the impulse will find an indirect expression to express the hidden emotions through neurotic symptoms. All the repressed memories and desires are disruptive when they resurface.

Kathy's emotional projection onto the music tape of Judy Bridgewater, and her dancing scene of holding a pillow to her chest as if she were holding a baby, are rich scenes of Freudian repression. She cannot confront the tragedy of her life, and the truth behind being a student in

Hailsham, because she will be an organ donator. For this reason, she expressed her longing and love in a symbolic way and remains partially unconscious. In this scene, Kathy's repressed feelings surface, which reveals the hidden emotions behind her calmness.

Never Let Me Go also demonstrates repression in the scene where Tommy has a furious outburst on the playing field because he was not chosen for the football team and he was left behind. Instead of responding to them with sarcasm, he lost control and started screaming in frustration that all the other boys were laughing at him more for his exclusive reaction, seeing it as childish and strange. This moment highlights how Tommy is emotionally vulnerable, but it also underscores the repression of feelings of being inferior from others in Hailsham. Besides, Tommy is discouraged from expressing his real emotions and question the school that also judges a student for his creativity. Meaning that, when a student is not creative as Tommy, he will be considered as inferior and most importantly emotionally troubled and lacks in creativity (*Never Let Me Go* 11).

From a Freudian perspective, Tommy's angry outburst on the playing field is a moment where repressed emotions break through the surface. In his view, repression involves by pushing unacceptable feelings and thoughts into the unconscious in order to avoid anxiety. At Hailsham, Tommy repressed his feelings of being inferior and disliked the fact that he was not creative as all his friends, as when he did his artworks the guardians collected the best ones, and never collected his work, which made him feel inferior. Thus, his outburst is seen as a rupture in his repressive defenses, as he has emotional difficulties and limited creative abilities that made him feel different, less skilled and insecure.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Never Let Me Go* offers a thoughtful reflection on the moral and psychological impact of a society that is built on sacrificing few people to save many. By

analyzing the novel using psychoanalytic and dystopian theory as well as emphasizing the ethical philosophy, this chapter has shown how Ishiguro made readers think of the dehumanization behind the progress. The characters' moral dilemmas and struggles within the story and the horror of their fate reveal a world that values order and control over humanity and justice. Ishiguro's work that is a significant contribution to the twentieth century dystopian literature, serves as both a warning and a reflection of the ethical dilemmas of the real world, meaning that even the most civilized societies mask painful realities and are built on invisible dehumanization.

General conclusion

This dissertation has explored how twentieth century dystopian fiction examines the tension between the self and the greater good, emphasizing the moral dilemmas faced by characters in the condemned societies. Through the work of Kazuo Ishiguro *Never Let Me Go*, the ethical choices are portrayed in a way that individuals are unable to make decisions due to the oppressive environment surrounding them.

In Ishiguro's work, the moral dilemmas that individuals face reflect not only the external social pressures but also the internal struggles and the deep psychological conflicts. Characters are frequently torn between the instinct for self-preservation and the rules or social norms imposed by society. This conflict between individual priorities and welfare on the one hand, and social interests on the other, is intensified in the context of a false utopia which is a society that appears ideal while it demands conformity through psychological repression and ideological control.

In the light of this, an overview of moral dilemmas has initially been provided, drawing upon a variety of examples and experiences of people in order to illustrate the complexity of ethical decision-making. The section, in fact, has offered a deeper exploration by highlighting theoretical situations and giving real-life scenarios that demonstrate how individuals face the difficulty to choose between two hard options.

The foundation of dystopian fiction and an examination of the idea of utopia as well as the relation between the two genres have also been covered throughout this research. The connection between the two concepts has revealed how utopian literature may become dystopian when the pursuit of perfection goes wrong. Also, describing how society is structured and what makes the system in it oppressive and harmful through the lens of ethical theories like

utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics, allowed a deeper understanding of moral failures within dystopian societies.

Each ethical theory provided a different perspective on why an action is unjust and unacceptable, by showing how dystopian societies violate ethical principles, either by ignoring individual rights, prioritizing the consequences of an action over its morality, or destroying personal values. Through the use of utilitarianism, it became possible to see how a system that seems logical on the surface can still be harmful and masks a painful reality.

The examination of utilitarianism has depicted its focus that is put on doing what brings the most happiness to a great number of people, which may be seen reasonable. However, in dystopian world this idea is used to justify controlling individuals and taking from them their rights. Besides, applying other ethical theories like deontology is important in recognizing when society is mistreating individuals or manipulating minority groups.

Viewing dystopian systems through the lens of virtue ethics has also revealed the importance of keeping moral values in a corrupted world. It highlighted the inner strength to resist injustice and be human in inhumane system, which is closely connected to the moral dilemmas characters face, as they have to choose between following the rules of the society or doing what they believe is the right thing to do. These difficult choices demonstrate how holding on to moral values is a form of resistance in a dystopian world.

The psychoanalytic approach, more specifically the Freudian model of human consciousness as well as the concept of repression, has also been applied to better understand the characters' psychological dimensions in *Never Let Me Go*. Freud's division of the mind into the id, ego and superego provided a valuable framework for analyzing the characters' internal conflict, especially between their instinctual desires and the rules of society. Repression is equally significant in demonstrating how characters suppress painful truths and accept their

fate. Characters often maintain a fragile sense of normalcy in an oppressive and dehumanized world, by suppressing their desires and feelings.

Through the use of dystopian perspective, particularly the concept of false utopia, the society appears ideal on the surface, but masks painful truths and it is deeply flawed and oppressive. This concept is employed in *Never Let Me Go* as Hailsham appears peaceful and offers the illusion of safe and structured environment for the students. However, beneath the surface lies an exploitative system that indirectly oppresses and dehumanizes human beings. The notion of false utopia is central because the novel critiques ideal institutions that conceal hidden exploitation and control.

This research work has shown the importance of moral dilemmas to the structure and meaning of the twentieth century dystopian fiction, particularly the tension between the self and the greater good. The study revealed how the individual has the difficulty to choose between prioritizing his happiness and well-being, and the overall happiness. Additionally, it has shown that in unfair societies, characters decisions are affected by fear, lack of freedom and societal expectations. By focusing on these conflicts, the research shows how dystopian narratives raise questions about the cost of following the rules imposed by society. In *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro not only criticizes the system of oppression and control, but also encourages readers to think about how people make moral choices in extreme situations.

While this research has focused on the twentieth century dystopian literature, further research could explore the power of language and silence in a dystopian narrative. The characters' frequent silence in *Never Let Me Go*, especially regarding their fate and future, plays a pivotal role when facing moral dilemmas. Besides, the novel illustrates how language, or the deliberate absence of it serves as a tool in manipulating and controlling individual's minds and decisions. Future studies therefore, could offer deeper insights into how speech and silence can have an impact on people and shape their moral choices.

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Summary

This dissertation explores moral dilemmas in the twentieth century dystopian fiction, with a particular focus on *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro. It aims to shed light on the conflict between the instinct for personal survival and the obligation to serve a society that deprives individuals of autonomy and moral responsibility. The study draws on some ethical theories such as utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, as well as psychoanalytic and dystopian perspectives, especially the concept of the false utopia. This research reveals that the suppression of emotions, passive acceptance, and the absence of freedom are the foundational elements of the dystopian system portrayed, preventing any form of resistance. The findings highlight how dystopian literature questions the nature of humanity and the cost of conformity in a world devoid of humanism.

ملخص

تتناول هذه الأطروحة المعضلات الأخلاقية في أدب الديستوبيا في القرن العشرين، الذي هو تصور أدبي لمجتمع خيالي يعاني من القمع و انعدام الحرية و العدالة، مع تركيز خاص على رواية *لا تدعني أرحل* للكاتب كازو إيشيغورو. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على الصراع بين البقاء و تفضيل النجاة والواجب في خدمة مجتمع يسلب الأفراد استقلالهم ومسؤوليتهم الأخلاقية. وتعتمد الدراسة على نظريات مثل النفعية، والديونتولوجيا، وأخلاقيات الفضيلة، بالإضافة إلى المنظورات التحليلية النفسية والديستوبية. تكشف هذه الدراسة أن كبت المشاعر، والقبول السلبي، وغياب الحرية هي الأسس التي يقوم عليها النظام الديستوبي، مما يمنع أي شكل من أشكال المقاومة. وتوضح النتائج كيف يطرح الأدب الديستوبي تساؤلات حول الطبيعة الإنسانية و ثمن الامتثال في عالم خالٍ من النزعة الإنسانية.

Résumé

La présente thèse explore les dilemmes moraux dans la fiction dystopique du XXe siècle, n se concentrant particulièrement sur *Never Let Me Go* de Kazuo Ishiguro. Elle vise à mettre en lumière le conflit entre l'instinct de survie et l'obligation de servir une société qui prive les individus de leur autonomie et de leur responsabilité morale, principalement à travers l'application de théories comme, l'utilitarisme, de la déontologie, de l'éthique des vertus, ainsi qu'à l'aide de perspectives psychanalytiques et dystopiques, notamment le concept de fausse utopie. Cette étude révèle que la suppression des émotions, l'acceptation passive et l'absence de liberté sont les piliers du système dystopique présenté, et qu'ils empêchent toute forme de résistance. Les résultats mettent en évidence la manière dont la littérature dystopique interroge la nature de l'humanité et le prix de la conformité dans un monde dépourvu d'humanisme.