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BIOPOLITICS IN KAZUO ISHIGURO'S NEVER LET ME GO

Submission Date: July 19, 2024, Accepted Date: July 24, 2024,

Published Date: July 29, 2024

Crossref doi: <https://doi.org/10.37547/ajsshr/Volume04Issue07-10>

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ABSTRACT

The researcher seeks to analyze and demonstrate the concept of biopolitics and its originators. Biopolitics is an interdisciplinary field that explores the intersection between human biology and politics. It involves the exercise of political power to administer and control life and populations. The research will examine how biopolitics is portrayed in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel, "Never Let Me Go", which presents an alternate universe set in 1990s England. In this fictional society, cloned humans are created for the sole purpose of donating their organs. Through the novel's characters, the research will explore different manifestations of suffering from an existentialist perspective. The concept of organ donation in the novel can be interpreted as a metaphorical expression of human life and its universal awareness of finitude. The research will analyze how Kazuo Ishiguro presents the idea that the two seemingly distinct groups of clones and "ordinary people" on the donor side share similar perspectives on life, death, and the overall human experience. This aligns with Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics, which involves securing, maintaining, and controlling life. By examining the society depicted in Never Let Me Go, the research will investigate how biopolitical practices have influenced and shaped that fictional world. This analysis will provide insights into the impact of biopolitics on the individuals and the broader social dynamics portrayed in the novel.

KEYWORDS

Populations, securing, maintaining, and controlling life.

INTRODUCTION

Biopolitics marks a significant historical transformation from a politics so Biopolitics refers to a political framework that focuses on the management and control of life and populations. It involves strategies and techniques to ensure the preservation, sustainability, and multiplication of life, as well as the organization and regulation of life processes. Biopower, on the other hand, refers to the practical implementation of biopolitics within society. It encompasses the various power mechanisms and techniques that are employed to exert control over life and shape its conditions. According to Foucault, biopower represents a fundamental shift in power mechanisms compared to the classical era of Western civilization. It involves a transformation in the way power operates, moving beyond mere repression and punishment. Biopower is characterized by its positive effects on life, aiming to manage, optimize, and enhance it. It involves detailed surveillance, regulation, and control over individuals and populations.

In his work "The Will to Knowledge," Foucault explores the idea of power that acts upon life, subjecting it to precise control and comprehensive regulation. This power seeks to produce knowledge about life, categorize individuals based on their biological characteristics, and intervene in their lives to promote specific forms of conduct and behaviors. Hence genealogically, Foucault takes us from a 'sovereign who must be defended' (Evans, 2003:413-433). To the

society (species, group) to be defended, as the name of his earlier lecture series affirms. In The Will to Knowledge, Foucault explains: war is no longer waged in the name of a sovereign to be defended, but for the sake of the existence of all. In the name of the necessity of life, entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of genocide. Regardless of gender, race, social status, or religion, the consideration of death has haunted people from the beginning. Death has become a subject discussed with solemnity and great interest. While there are many different approaches, perspectives, and beliefs about death-philosophical, religious, spiritual, etc.-there is a pivotal point in the fact that every imaginable assumption is mere speculation. As Martin Heidegger reminds us, 'there is no scientific method for empirical examination of one's death, and there is no possibility for objective experiments or analyses' (Heidegger, 1962: 137).

In Kazuo Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go", the protagonist, Cathy, gradually reveals the startling truth about the gift program "I" and portrays herself and her peers as survivors of an abominable English history based on an elective ideology. The author opened up a variety of debates related to the subject, including the good and morality of cloning, the nature of the subject, biopolitics, and the issue of transhumanism. Ishiguro effectively incited art critics and researchers to different readings of the content, decoding the novel as a depiction of social and political abuse, the

mistreatment of an undervalued group, and the violation of basic freedoms. Although the novel is treated as an example of an injury account, the researcher suggests that it is essentially different from an injury account about a cloned human being who is abused and ultimately butchered by a "typical individual." The researcher understands the novel to be highly metaphorical and symbolic.

LITERARY METHOD

"Never Let Me Go", one of Ishiguro's best-known novels, is told in the form of Cathy, an uncertain narrator, reminiscing about her childhood. The tone is very casual and conversational, with the diction of a typical 1990s British high school girl. Cathy often repeats phrases and begins sentences with conjunctions. In addition, to make the characters' spoken language even more realistic, Ishiguro uses short sentences throughout the novel.

The literary devices in "Never Let Me Go" are very simple and create a childlike tone. On the other hand, the novel also quotes the song "Never Let Me Go" by Judy Bridgewater as a symbol of human emotion. As Cathy listens and dances to the song, she imagines a woman finally conceiving her longed-for child and singing "Never Let Me Go" while holding and rocking the baby. The symbolism and allusions create a chilling image as the reader understands that Cathy, a clone, will never have a child of her own and has never been

held by her own mother. Despite all this, Kathy shows just the same longing for love as any other human. Ishiguro also employed metaphors to make the language even more passive so nothing is said directly and certainly. In addition to the metaphors, Ishiguro used euphemism in the novel such as "completion" for death and "recovery centers" for where the donors resided in after donations. (Elkins, 2020:35)

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The novel has attracted many critics and writers, and various researchers have tackled the novel and addressed different aspects of it. The main conflict in the novel is the internal struggle of the main characters, Cathy, Tommy, and Ruth, to persevere and find hope and love. Their conflict is that they continue to dream and hope for the future because of their humanity, but the harsh reality they learned at an early age will not make their dreams come true. Ultimately, they struggle within each other and within themselves, seeking to broaden their range of human emotions and experiences and to seek a stab at a hopeful future. According to Margaret Atwood, in her article "Kazuo Ishiguro's Novels Are Really Scary" (2005), Ishiguro's works offer a thought-provoking and unsettling examination of the impact of dehumanization on marginalized groups. Atwood praises Ishiguro's skillful portrayal of these effects, noting that they are not immediately apparent but deeply disturbing in their subtlety. The characters, particularly Cathy, are

relatable and their introspective questions about the purpose of art resonate with a broader audience. Atwood emphasizes that the individuals in Ishiguro's narratives are not depicted as traditional heroes, adding to the complexity and realism of his storytelling.

The ending is not pleasant. But it is a masterful work by a master craftsman who has chosen a difficult subject: himself seen through a looking glass. As Martin Heidegger said of the biopolitics entwined in society, the consideration of the concept of death has burdened people from the beginning, regardless of gender, race, social status, or religion. Death has become a subject that is discussed with solemnity and great concern. While there are many different approaches, perspectives, and beliefs about death-philosophical, religious, spiritual, etc.-an important point is the fact that every imaginable assumption is mere speculation. There is no scientific method to empirically test one's death, no possibility of objective experimentation or analysis (Heidegger, 1962.150-155). This existential suffering arises from the awareness of an unfulfilled life and the inevitability of death. In this paper, the researcher proposes an existential reading of Kazuo Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go", highlighting the perception and experience of life's finitude as the central theme. The novel's story and characters shed light on existential issues of meaning, purpose, and the underlying anxiety and fear of death. This

interpretation challenges the view of the novel as a typical trauma narrative. As Titus Levy puts it, a trauma narrative generally contains “jarring memories of abuse, predation, and scarring violence” (Levy, 2011, p.10). There is no introduction into the political and social situation of the country, no explanation who, how, and why, and the motives of the “normal people” seem to be rather selfish than hate-driven. The answer is perhaps not much, because the dividing line between these two groups is already remarkably thin. Ishiguro uses the topic of cloning to wrap the novel's existential themes in a metallic, fashionable cover of science fiction that casts a reflection of an improbable but not impossible future. Although the clone may be thought of as simply human, it may be possible to take a different view of what existential philosophy calls the "essence" of the clone. One of the central claims of existentialism comes from Jean-Paul Sartre's statement that existence precedes essence" (Sartre, 1946: 132-134). This idea reverses the classic metaphysical statement that the essence precedes existence, so to speak, the essence is more important than its existence. In Sartre's formulation, which placed emphasis on human beings, people are thrown into existence without any predetermined essence, which is subsequently created by their very own values and decisions, through which they give their life a meaning and purpose. As he puts it, “man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism” (Sartre, 1946, p. 3). It felt

right. After all, it's what we're supposed to be doing, isn't it?" (Ishiguro, 2006, p. 223). From the existential point of view, the fact that clones do not try to escape or revolt against the system that condemns them to certain death might not be seen as so surprising. As such, it illustrates the subtleties of human existence.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the utilization of biopolitics in the novel "Never Let Me Go", authored by Kazuo Ishiguro in 2005. The primary character and narrator of the story is Cathy, a clone created for the purpose of organ donation. Through her experiences, the novel explores themes of exploitation, identity, and resistance within a biopolitical framework. By analyzing the portrayal of Cathy and her interactions with the society de and its implications. It seeks to shed light on the advantages and disadvantages of biopolitical practices as illustrated in the narrative. Furthermore, the study will delve into the impact of biopolitics on the broader society within the novel. picted in the book, this study aims to identify how biopolitics is employed .

Research Questions

- 1-What is biopolitics?
- 2-How could biopolitics effect on the society?

METHODOLOGY

By shedding light on Kazuo Ishiguro's novel "Never let me go", this study's theory seeks to demonstrate the validity of the term "biopolitics" in its proper sense, along with its various orientations and multiple meanings in past and present events, the divisions it has today, and the existence of radical biopolitical movements with a political orientation. By addressing the many arguments and assertions put out by opponents of the biopolitics approach, this study strives to give an in-depth analysis of the notion of biopolitics.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of this thesis will be the main topic of this chapter. By outlining the numerous arguments and assertions made by opponents of the biopolitics approach, it will try to explore the idea of biopolitics in detail. " Michel Foucault describes biopolitics as a political approach that focuses on managing populations and life itself, with the aim of preserving and organizing it. Biopower, on the other hand, refers to the way biopolitics is implemented in society and represents a significant transformation in power mechanisms during the classical period in Western society. In his work "The Will to Knowledge," Foucault explores power that has a positive influence on life, aiming to control and enhance it through strict regulations and laws. Foucault is speaking about a power he later designates as "biopower, a power

which significantly – has a ‘positive influence on life’ (Crome, 2009, pp. 46-61).

This new biopower suggests a "profound change in the mechanics of power," and it differs from the oppressive and harmful power that Foucault connects with the "jurisprudential-discursive" idea, a power that "effects take the form of limits and lacks." In fact, Foucault offers a thorough critique of the workings of this repressive power in both *The "Will to Knowledge"* and *"Society Must Be Defended"*, showing how it serves to hide the fact that other productive and "positive" power capacities are also at work, especially in the governmentality of 19th-century capitalism. The "deductions" are no longer the foundation of authority. The "deduction" is no longer the main source of power; rather, it is just one of several factors that tends to work to motivate, bolster, regulate, supervise, improve, and organize the forces that are subordinate to it. A significant historical transition from the politics of sovereignty to the politics of society is represented by biopolitics. As a result, Foucault leads us in a genealogical manner from "the sovereign that must be defended" to, as his earlier lecture series' title states, "the society (species, group) that must be defended." In *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault describes how Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of

wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital (Terranova, 2009).

One perceived limitation of biopower and biopolitics is the apparent neglect of subjectivity within Foucault's work. In his examination of politics concerning populations and species, Foucault does not explicitly address the concept of the biopolitical subject. This can be seen as a limitation when considering the role of biopolitics and biopower within the broader context of Foucault's body of work, especially considering his statement in 1982 that his objective was to chart the various ways in which individuals are made subjects within our culture (Rabinow, 2006).

However, in this context, it is crucial to take into account how other types of power, such as repressive and disciplinary power, which have a more immediate effect on the body and subjectivity, interact with biopower and biopolitics. It also offers significant room for considering the biopolitical. In the dystopian future of forced organ harvesting (or "donation") and cloning that the book imagines, *"Never Let Me Go"* by Kazuo Ishiguro begins by outlining the inner workings of a caregiver's vocation. Cathy is about to put a stop to a lengthy career as a caregiver and start a sequence of contributions that will ultimately lead to her passing away, or, in the book's morbid jargon, her impending completion. This suggests a connection between Kathy's success in "getting it right" and her fellow clones' "acceptance of their fate," which is essential to

comprehending how the entire narrative should be viewed. According to Kathy, the ability to retain donors' composure and cooperation is the sign of a skilled and effective care provider. Most certainly, this is the book's most significant theme. It is a method to think about the cooperation of those who are about to be destroyed themselves in the two-way activity (of care and gift) that enables and brings about that devastation. In other words, what processes and techniques enable the technical discourse of "good work" to conceal the horrifying reality of forced organ donation and eventual "completion" by genetically modified half-humans? The researcher wants to particularly address these questions in this paper. Within this society of physical deprivation, Kathy's focus on the emotive side of interpersonal contact (with donors, acquaintances, and peers) and the production and fabrication of her own subjectivity expose her satanic nature. The researcher will try to illustrate how this is both a principle of the procedural logic that underpins a predatory extractivist society and a method adopted by those who are genuinely dedicated to it to obfuscate their ideology. In fact, as various reviewers have pointed out, affect—a special creature of immaterial labor—plays a key part in this work. However, in order to accurately locate the shift to influence the new definition of work that became available in the late 20th century (i.e., the hypothetical 1990s in which this novel is set), it is imperative to analyze the modes of production and value

accumulation that emerge under postmodern capitalism. Such a research will enable us to comprehend Ishiguro's book as a historically particular and nevertheless applicable case study, along with the ethical and political contradictions it rehearses. When Kathy suggests that, after so many years of care work, she has "developed a kind of instinct around donors" (Del Valle Alcalá, 2019: p.60).

The biopolitical²¹ character of this priceless, risky, "literal" life is furthered as the reader gradually but inevitably learns that Kathy, like all the other kids at Hailsham, is a clone. As I indicated in the previously "I borrow the word "biopolitics" from Michel Foucault's work at the Collège de France, where he defined it in the framework of his study of altering power forms from the seventeenth century until the mid-1970s, when he was lecturing". (De Boever, 2013: 62-65)

Application of Biopolitics In Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

Kazuo Ishiguro is a Japanese-English author. He was born in Nagasaki, Japan, moved to the UK with his family in 1960, and earned his B.A. from the University of Kent in 1978 and his M.A. from the University of East Anglia's Creative Writing Course in 1980. He acquired British citizenship in 1982. *A Pale View of the Hills*, Ishiguro's debut book, was published in 1982 and chronicles the postwar memories of Etsuko, a Japanese lady dealing with the suicide of her daughter

Keiko. Masuji Ono's life is chronicled in *The Artist of the Floating World* (1986), which is set in a post-World War II Japan that is becoming more westernized and examines his prior work as a political artist of imperialist propaganda.

The first few pages of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel "Never Let Me Go" are imaginatively opened. The author considered the book could be summed up in three words: Britain, the late 1990s. The plot revolves around Cathy, Tommy, Ruth, and the love triangle that initially appeared at Hailsham School. The abrupt appearance of an enraged guard exclaiming, "None of you may go to America, and none of you may become a motion picture star, the life line is drawn for you," sums up the lives of these three. What each of you was typically designed for? This makes it possible to observe how the detrimental impact of biopolitics dominates all human activity and voice in his work. The attempt by the state to regulate the capabilities and forms of life is known as biopolitics. For the sake of explanation, let's use the current conflict in the United States around women's reproductive rights (premature birth, birth control, etc.) as an example of biopolitics and the control that biopolitics exerts over women's bodies as an example of biopower. Then, it is important to learn how biopolitics affected the novel "Never Let Me Go" by Ishiguro and what relationship there is between the two.

"Never Let Me Go" is described by Kathy and starts with memories

In the novel's opening chapters, theories approximately Tommy's outrage serve as a vehicle for Kathy to clarify a few of the ethics—habits, rules and regulations— that shape community life at Hailsham. In this way, the per user learns about the Guardians observing over the clones (logically slanted readers might listen echoes of Plato and his Republic, a classic within the history of utopia, and one in which genetic counseling may be a central theme). We moreover learn almost the art exchanges that take put at the school and the gallery of student artwork curated by the school's headmistress, a Belgian or French woman referred to as Madame The reality that these words are capitalized suggests that they work inside the community of Hailsham as god-terms: they have been around until the end of time, they cannot be touched. They are the cornerstones of life at Hailsham. But for Tommy, all the understudies show up to be buying into them with much enthusiasm.

It is an aesthetics of presence of a kind, but one that is practiced in this case within the most critical circumstances, in full refusal of the reality that constitutes it. "When one of these objects goes lost, as happens for example with a music tape that Kathy is particularly attached to, all of existence enters into a state of crisis, in the same way that a child cannot be consoled when it has lost" (Whitehead, 2011p.83)

What psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott calls a transitional object.¹⁹ as it were that object will be able to create up for the misfortune, and without it, presence cannot be complete. This appears that life at Hailsham is dubiously adjusted between belief, its fabric bolster framework, and the chance of them being unsettled. Such a presence might be characterized as strict. Consider, for example, that when Kathy loses her tape, she by one means or another considers she will find it back in Norfolk, which is portrayed by one of their instructors as “the lost corner of England. Since the lost and found section at Hailsham is also called the lost corner, Kathy somehow establishes an association between the two. "Interestingly, the novel confirms this madness she will indeed find the tape back during an excursion to Norfolk, when she will even wonder, that she lost" (Rich, 2015p. 651).

It may be a reflection on the connection between the first and the copy (the clone), but it too affirms to the profoundly scripted life of Hailsham students—a life that the novel, since it affirms it, appears to be complicit with (more on this afterward). Hailsham life is in truth so scripted that it dangers to collapse beneath any kind of study. It could be a world that can as it were exist on the condition that one does not inquire as well numerous questions. That this precious, precarious, literal life is intensely bio political is revealed along the way, as the reader slowly but surely

finds out that Kathy as well as all the other students at Hailsham are clones. (De Boever, 2013, p. 66).

The more stunning perspective of the novel, in any case, are the chapters in which the school’s biopolitical administration is described. Because the students’ sole purpose is to ultimate donate their organs to regular human beings who are in need of them, it is of the utmost importance that they stay focused on “keeping yourselves well, keeping yourselves very healthy inside. This entails, as we all know (this is one of the uncanny ways in which the clones’ biopolitical existence overlaps with our own), not smoking I don’t know how it was where you were, Kathy writes, thus explicitly involving the reader in the narrative, " but at Hailsham the guardians were really strict about smoking"(Suter, 2011.p.21).

At the time when the talks around smoking and sex are taking put, be that as it may, none of the students knew “that none of us seem have babies. Typically something that's only revealed to them at an afterward time. It is since of this reason, most likely, that Miss Lucy—the Hailsham teachers who is most clashed approximately the school’s project—comes to compare Hailsham to a concentration camp. When she is talking about troopers in World War two being kept in jail camps one day, and at that point somebody else had said how unusual it must have been, living in a put like that, where you may commit suicide any time you preferred just by touching the fence. How unusual

undoubtedly! It's fair as well, Miss Lucy says after a minute of reflection, the wall at Hailsham aren't electrified. You get appalling mishaps sometimes. The comment is talked discreetly, and while Kathy picks it up few of the other understudies do. But it is an important observation, of course, and one that empowers the peruser to see the relation between Hailsham's exceedingly scripted mode of presence and the camps. Of course, pundits will say that life at Hailsham, with the different comforts it still includes, can in no way be compared to life within the camps; and of course, they are right. But doubtlessly one can moreover see what Miss Lucy is insinuating to here: a certain rationale that presence at Hailsham and presence within the camp (on the off chance that it can still be called that) share. In expansion, one finds out through this remark that there are wall around Hailsham. It raises the address of whether anyone has really ever seen such a fence, or attempted to cross it. All things considered, there are rumors—and these increment after they have left Hailsham and moved to the Bungalows, a home for upper-level students—about benefactors getting what is called a deferral, and being able to postpone donating for three to four a long time" (Lee, 2021, p.121)

CONCLUSION

To sum up, study of Kazuo Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go", we were able to identify how the novel's protagonist and society are affected by biopolitics. The

bio-dystopian theme of "Never Let Me Go" invites biopolitical analysis, and as such, the novel's institutions as medical, military, political, educational, and other disciplinary bodies have been studied in depth. In contrast, this paper focuses on the use of emotion as a disciplinary tool, whether with modest intentions, as seen at Hailsham, or otherwise, as seen in the cottages and rehabilitation centers outside. This paper argues for the possibility of resistance by examining how emotion is used in organ harvesting "programs" and how Kathy fits into that system. Kathy's quotidian resistance to caring for her donors and herself is not outside the program and has clear limits. This is because the use of emotion as a disciplinary tool slowly and continuously transforms the students into docile bodies that seem radically different from those of non-cloned humans. In this inclusive biopolitical environment, however, life generates hope. In the case of cloning, it comes in the form of grace. But this grace is even crueler because this hope is not a mere rumor, but exists within the biopolitical system implanted in the clone. Moreover, this cruel optimism deprives the clones of even the last shred of hope when they learn the truth. Only by finding a way to comfort her aching body, a way to rely on no one but herself, will Kathy be able to live. For Kathy, this comfort comes in the form of using her memories of Hailsham to calm others forms of resistance, such as maintaining a sense of self, can become the comfort for survival.

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