**Rhetorical Analysis of Never Let Me Go**

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The primary contention presented in ‘Never Let Me Go’ by Kazuo Ishigiro is challenging the boundaries of modern science by imagining a dystopian future where reproductive cloning has been normalized. In the world of today, advances in biotechnology especially when left unchecked or unaccounted for, can lead to serious social dilemmas where the concept of an intrinsic human identity has the potential to be lost. Ishigiro’s narrative in this novel invokes the reader’s attention to the fragility of the concept of human rights and how contemporary innovations in science threaten it. The predominant purpose for writing this novel, as it appears, is to feature this strange world where it is typical for humans to create living breathing copies of themselves and then to dismiss any concerns about these copies having human souls. All of these themes point towards the central point of the novel which questions the moral boundaries that modern science should be allowed to have. There is a considerable list of arguments which can be put behind the thesis that the purpose of writing this novel was questioning how contemporary and complex issues of human rights can arise from seemingly banal problems. It asserts and describes situations where humans can reach and effectively normalize exceptional levels of cruelty.

The novel begins with the narrator stating in a defeated tone that she is a ‘carer’. The crazy world of Hailsham is revealed for what it is later on. In the beginning, the narrator seems afraid of taking up personal space when she is extra careful about mentioning that she should not use too many words simply to introduce herself. The unhealthy levels of devotion and selflessness expected from the carers in this world that Ishigiro has created gets very effectively established in the first chapter. Carers are supposed to be loyal to the donors they’re allotted for and they must be sincere in the deference they show. It goes far enough to the idea that carers even protect the students and donors from their inevitable future. The text states, “All children have to be deceived if they are to grow up without trauma”. (Ishiguro) Cruelty is openly invoked again when death due to donation of vital organs is referred to as ‘completion’. It vividly implies that the clones are not considered human. Since their purpose of existence is organ donation for life extension of the original humans, death for them is simply a completion. An achievement of the function they were created for. The trauma it must induce is also named and explained excessively with constant descriptions of the constant emotional and mental persecution that donors and carers must experience. There is a perpetual state of confusion and anguish with respect to the children at Hailsham.

There is also a special description for the teachers and guardians at Hailsham. Censorship and apparent protection are all inevitable evils that must be present in a world that fails to acknowledge stunning disregards of human life and the values associated with humanity in general. The physical and social restraints at Hailsham are also explained liberally both in terms of the guardians who inculcate a sense of purpose in the students and in terms of the fences that make it physically impossible for the clones to escape. “The woods were at the top of the hill that rose behind Hailsham House. All we could see really was a dark fringe of trees, but I certainly wasn't the only one of my age to feel their presence day and night.” (Ishiguro) The darkness conjured with these words and the way the school has been described like a prison is proof enough of the type of world that Ishigiro has created. The students have become accustomed to the ‘guardians’ who keep them safe and protected from the rest of the world. The novel has actual quotes that tell that it was a real possibility that the students might ‘miss’ their guardians in the real world when they will have to ‘take care of each other’. (Ishiguro)

The incident which establishes a stark case for the imprisonment that has seeped into the very minds of the students is when they are finally free to go to Norfolk. Even when the students are free to go to a whole different city by themselves, they are emotionally restricted by their identities and only go to look for Ruth’s original. The heartbreak followed by failure is also an honest and great commentary on the way the clones have to mentally and physically stay within a box that the world has created for them. This box is their prison up until a ‘completion’ is reached. A wider perspective on the juxtaposition of hope and heartbreak is brought to a climax at the end of the novel when their seemingly childish belief bursts. They believed that there existed a possibility to defer donations if you could prove that you were a couple in love. The sheer naivety that was crucially built throughout the story and then suddenly destroyed at the end also works as a metaphor with regards to the outright disregard of the simple fact that the donors and carers were humans and the students at Hailsham were children. The reveal which calls Hailsham a ‘progressive’ institute in Ishigiro’s world also compares to the horrors it was continuously associated with throughout the story. It simply states that the rest of the world was even worse than Hailsham.

The case for establishing humanity and human rights as fragile and extremely vulnerable to our scientific advancements has therefore been effectively made by Ishigiro in Never Let Me Go.

# References

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2005. Print.