

## **After Dolly: Clones in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

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### **Abstract**

Biomedicine generates what Susan Merrill Squier (2004) defines as liminal lives, which range from stem cells to transplantable organs. They have potential for the prolongation of human life, but carry several complications. This article examines issues of clones in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) from biomedical and cultural theories. In his novel, Kathy and friends are cloned for organ donation, which requires them to sacrifice body parts to people in need of replacement. I argue that Ishiguro uses clones to question the idea of the human in the biomedical age. In my analysis, clones challenge the human-nonhuman boundary. Besides, clones draw attention to discourses and institutions which situate humans above other life forms. Finally, even though clones reflect the shift in the status of body parts from carriers of identity to bioproducts, Ishiguro suggests that they can make way for the re-evaluation of the value of life in the age of biomedicine.

**Keywords:** clones, organs, liminal, bare life, rubbish

In the contemporary age, biotechnology engenders the scrutiny of natural life. It rejects basic assumptions of what humans, animals, and machines are, in what condition they emerge, and how our life proceeds. The erasure of boundaries offers humans endless possibilities which range from transgenic foods to designer babies. In the medical field, biotechnological advances conceive what Susan Merrill Squier defines as liminal lives. The emergence of tissue culture in the early twentieth century forms the basis for modern biomedical techniques (Squier, 2004). Other liminal figures such as stem cells, adoptable embryos, and procurable organs follow. They arguably pave the way for the success of Ian Wilmut in cloning Dolly from an adult sheep at the Roslin Institute in 1996. The scientific breakthrough in cloning garners public attention because it embodies both hope and fear. On the one hand, cloning is beneficial to the prolongation of human life. Scientists have recently succeeded in cloning and turning skin cells into stem cells, which can grow into any types of tissue and organs (Knapton, 2014). It not only reduces the chance of rejection and raises the possibility of organ renewal but also meets the increasing demand for replacement. Since the late twentieth century, organ transplantation has developed from a medical practice to a global trade (Scheper-Hughes, 2000, p. 191). On the other hand, cloning instigates anxiety and fear that the next stage is

to replicate human beings (Shampo, Kyle, & Steensma, 2013). Ursula K. Leguin (1973) argues that “the duplication of anything complex enough to have a personality would involve the whole issue of what personality is – the question of individuality, of identity, of selfhood” (as cited in Ferreira, 2011, p. 21). Cloning has been a controversial issue in our culture.

The fascination with clones has been expressed by and across many disciplines. In literature, fiction can be understood as “a crucial site of permitted articulation for the desires driving these new biotechnologies” (Squier, 2004, p. 17). In other words, it is an imaginary zone in which writers can speculate or conduct thought experiment on scientific advances. Margaret Atwood (2011) explains:

What I mean by “science fiction” is those books that descend from H.G. Wells’s *The War of the Worlds*, which treats of an invasion by tentacled, blood-sucking Martians shot to Earth in metal canisters – things that could not possibly happen – whereas, for me, “speculative fiction” means plots that descend from Jules Verne’s books about submarines and balloon travel and such – things that really could happen but just hadn’t completely happened when the authors wrote the books. (p. 6)

Many novels express fantasies and anxieties about cloning. Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) is a classic literary precursor of cloning. In his workshop, Victor Frankenstein snatches materials from a graveyard and creates a species in his own image. Nevertheless, shocked by its physical anomaly, the scientist abandons his creature and refuses to make a companion, so the monster threatens to take revenge and destroy mankind. Squier explains that it is often “point of origin for the negative literary images of xenogenic desire” (p. 96). In the interwar period, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932) envisions the new social order in which humans are biologically and socially cloned. People who rebel against the state will be punished and eventually sent into exile. After the turn of the twenty-first century, Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* (2003) imagines the post-apocalyptic world where Snowman or Jimmy is the only human survivor among hybrid creatures. In reference to Shelley’s and Defoe’s novels, the last man recounts the past when cloning and other biotechnologies transform human society until it culminates in a disaster. Even though these speculative novels are set in alternative time and space, they express cultural fascination with cloning. Aaron S. Rosenfeld (2005) explains that “future histories” of SF “offer a critique of how we live and who we are now ... they speak in and to the present, if not of it” (as cited in McDonald, 2007, p. 76). In other words, they are “parable of the present than prediction of the future” (Squier, 2004, p. 201).

In line with other speculative works, Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) explores the everyday life of students in an alternative England, late 1990s. At the age of 31, Kathy H. narrates her story from early days at the boarding school Hailsham to later stages in which she and friends have to move to different communities and perform their roles in society. Kathy will have fulfilled her duty as a carer by the end of the year, so she reminisces about significant events in her life. The novel conveys nostalgic and sentimental feelings, but it is arguably “a 1984 for the bioengineering age” (Browning, 2005) because “students” are cloned for organ donation, which requires them to care for donors for a period of time and sacrifice body parts to people in need of replacement until they “complete” or die, usually before or upto the fourth operation. This article investigates issues of clones in Ishiguro's novel from biomedical and cultural theories. I argue that Ishiguro uses clones to question the idea of the human in the biomedical age. In the first part, I will show that clones challenge the human-nonhuman boundary. In the second part, I will demonstrate that clones draw attention to discourses and institutions which privilege humans over other life forms. In the last part, I will explain that Ishiguro uses clones to reassess the value of life in the age of biomedicine.

### **1. What are clones and humans?**

In *Liminal Lives*, Squier (2004) responds to the impact of biomedicine by adapting the idea of liminality. The anthropologist Victor Turner argues that it is the state of transition from everyday life to a different level or position, such as birth, graduation, marriage, and funerals. With the advent of biomedical advances, Squier revises his cultural definition and proposes the concept of liminal lives:

I use the term to refer to those beings marginal to human life who hold rich potential for ongoing biomedical negotiations with, and interventions in, the paradigmatic life crises: birth, growth, aging, and death. Then I view human beings living in the era of these biomedical interventions as liminal ourselves, as we move between the old notion that the form and trajectory of any human life have certain inherent biological limits, and the new notion that both the form and the trajectory of our lives can be reshaped at will – whether our own or another's, whether for good or ill. (p. 9)

Liminal entities range from blood and tissue to organs and clones. They unsettle boundaries because even if they partake of human quality, they are used in clinical treatment as nonhuman products. In the biomedical age, moreover, humans move into the liminal position because they not only receive foreign substances into their bodies but also reconfigure their lifespans from finitude to

infinite. Squier's idea of liminal lives is useful for an analysis of clones and humans in Ishiguro's novel.

In *NLMG*, clones challenge categories of life forms. As liminal lives, clones reject classification because they share both human and nonhuman qualities. On the one hand, clones originate from humans who provide the genetic material. They are duplicated from human models, so they identify them as their possibles. "Since each of us was copied at some point from a normal person," Kathy explains, "there must be, for each of us, somewhere out there, a model getting on with his or her life. This meant, at least, in theory, you'd be able to find the person you were modelled from" (p. 137). The idea of possibles replicates the idea of the human family because models, who are often older than students, function as their biological parents or sources even if some would argue that they are only "a technical necessity for bringing us into the world" (p. 138). In addition, clones follow the course of human life from birth to death. They are schooled and then expected to perform social duties until they complete. They respond to the transition of life with sentiment such as despair and hope. Karl Shaddox (2013) contends that *NLMG* takes root in sentimental and abolitionist literature, so emotion plays an important role in (re)defining the idea of the human. Accordingly, clones are physically and mentally indistinguishable from ordinary people. In one instance, the owner of the shop mistakes them for art students when they stalk the woman they think are one of their possibles into the studio. It is very difficult to realise what they are until one of them blurts out the truth. "Do you think she'd have talked to us like that if she'd known what we really were?" Ruth asks Kathy angrily, "what do you think she'd have said if we'd asked her? "Excuse me, but do you think your friend was ever a clone model?" She'd have thrown us out" (p. 164). On the other hand, clones are intended for the nonhuman function because they have "the possibility of being harvested for a use that transcends their own life" (Squier, 2004, p. 4). Students are raised for organ donation in which body parts are harvested to people until they terminate. However, these medical references are not explicit to students and readers. Keith McDonald (2007) contends that the novel has "a particular subdued air rather than a spectacular take on the institutionalized cloning of individuals and their harvesting" (p. 76). Gabriele Griffin (2009) argues for scientific context in which *NLMG* emerges in the early 2000s: the legalisation of therapeutic cloning in the UK in 2002, the approval of cloning "a saviour sibling" for the treatment of a genetic disorder of Zain Hashmi in 2004, and the permission of Ian Wilmut to clone human embryos in 2005 (p. 646). Kathy and her friends maintain silence on what they are because they are uncomfortable with the problematic identity of clones.

Clones rebuke our common assumption of what it means to be human. With the dawning of biomedicine, humans move into the liminal position because biotechnological advances enable the reconfiguration of lifespans from

finitude to infinitude (Squier, 2004, p. 9). In reference to Zygmunt Bauman, the human body is “capable of endless renewal” (Squier, 2004, p. 209). Nevertheless, it raises the issue of our identity. In *Posthumanism*, Pramod K. Nayar (2014) argues that humans are conceived as self-contained and sovereign, but they are now converted into life forms “living on through their incorporation of, and blurring corporeal borders with, other bodies and organs” (p. 1). Cloning calls into question the autonomous status of the human because his physical and mental features are replicable in clones, as Miss Emily expounds: “Most importantly, we demonstrated to the world that if students were reared in humane, cultivated environments, it was possible for them to grow to be as sensitive and intelligent as any ordinary human beings” (p. 256). When clones donate organs to people with diseases, they not only challenge the human-nonhuman border but also show our vulnerability. Griffin (2009) explains that the presence of clones reminds humans of “their ontology as mortal beings” (p. 654). The incorporation of foreign organs into our biological and social bodies demands a radical rethinking of what it means to be human, so it gives rise to public resistance. Donald Joralemon (1995) argues:

Organ transplantation seems to be protected by a massive dose of cultural denial, an ideological equivalent of the cyclosporine which prevents the individual body’s rejection of a strange organ. This dose of denial is needed to overcome the social body’s resistance to the alien idea of transplanation and the new kinds of bodies and publics that it requires. (as cited in Squier, 2004, p. 182) People naturally develop immunity to clones and foreign organs. In the postwar period, people deny their existence and treat them as “shadowy objects in the test tubes” (p. 256). People need medical supply, but they pretend that “these organs appeared from nowhere, or at most that they grew in a kind of vacuum” (p. 257). Hailsham claims to garner public approval of clones with the exhibition of their artwork because it can persuade people that clones have soul or personhood on which the notion of humanity is founded. Nonetheless, social resistance is on the linguistic and psychological level. Guardians would rather use special terms such as “students” and “completion” than describe them as clones and death.

In spite of medical benefits, clones provoke our negative attitude and reaction. The threat to categories and borders posed by clones invokes the attribute of monsters. In *Monster Theory*, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (1996) defines monsters as figures of “ontological liminality”:

This refusal to participate in the classificatory “order of things” is true of monsters generally: they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threaten to smash distinctions. (p. 6)

The monstrosity of clones generates anxiety and fear. People always express unease when they are reminded of the fact that students are cloned for organ donation. Kathy confesses to the reader: “We hated the way our guardians, usually on top of everything, became so awkward whenever we came near this territory. It unnerved us to see them change like that” (p. 69). Miss Lucy stutters when she explains why they should not smoke: “You’ve been told about it. You’re students. You’re ... special” (p. 68). Miss Emily admits that “I myself had to fight back my dread of you all almost every day at Hailsham” (p. 264). Our negative reaction to the monstrosity of clones develops into arachnophobia. Madame visits the school and collects artwork for the gallery; however, she keeps a distance from students because, according to Ruth, “she’s scared of us” (p. 33). In order to prove the hypothesis, students “swarm out” around her. In the face of clones, she is caught off guard and shocked:

As she came to a halt, I glanced quickly at her face – as did the others, I’m sure. And I can still see it now, the shudder she seemed to be suppressing, the real dread that one of us would accidentally brush against her. And though we just kept on walking, we all felt it; it was like we’d walked from the sun right into chilly shade. Ruth had been right: Madame was afraid of us. But she was afraid of us in the same way someone might be afraid of spiders. We hadn’t been ready for that. It had never occurred to us to wonder how we would feel, being seen like that, being the spiders. (p. 35)

Like the monster in *Frankenstein*, students are not prepared for such a fearful response from human creators. In another instance, Kathy and Tommy follow her address and asks for a deferral, but she reacts to them with fright as though “a pair of large spiders was set to crawl towards her” (p. 243). Her reaction reflects our negative attitude towards clones, so they are shunned and confined to the school in the remote corner of England. Another reason is that the genetic enhancement of clones gives them potential to replace their creators. Miss Emily tells Kathy that Hailsham is shut down in the aftermath of James Morningdale. Like Victor Frankenstein, he attempts to create “children with enhanced characteristics” such as intelligence and athleticism (p. 258). People objects to his project and relinquishes their support because they fear that clones will dominate and even exterminate human creators. “It’s one thing to create students, such as yourselves, for the donation programme,” Miss Emily explains, “but a generation of created children who’d taken their place in society? Children demonstrably superior to the rest of us? Oh no. That frightened people. They recoiled from that” (p. 258-9). Students are often looked at with disquiet and horror. When clones are treated as spiders, they identify with the specular image of social outcasts and have negative attitude toward themselves. “It’s like

walking past a mirror you've walked past every day of your life," Kathy says, "and suddenly it shows you something else, something troubling and strange" (p. 36).

## 2. The biopower of organ donation

Even if clones are described as spiders, they donate organs to people in need of replacement. Ishiguro calls attention to discourses and institutions which situate humans above clones. In *Homo Sacer*, Giorgio Agamben (1998) revises Michel Foucault's biopolitics and proposes the formulation of sovereign power and bare life. In his discussion, he examines the life of *homo sacer* or the sacred man, who "may be killed yet not sacrificed" (p. 8). In the ancient law, he is included in politics in the form of exclusion, so he can be condemned to death without legal punishment. Even though he is in the political order, he is denied human rights and confronted with the intervention of power. Then Agamben extends the notion of bare life to other figures in history. For instance, Jews are subject to Adolf Hitler's health programmes ranging from eugenics to concentration camps. Medical and political authorities wield power to decide on the nation's biological life. Most importantly, Agamben contends that the camp is not a historical event, but "the hidden matrix and *nomos* of the political space in which we are still living" (p. 166). It is realised when the sovereign executes the state of exception:

The camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule. In the camp, the state of exception, which was essentially a temporary suspension of the rule of law on the basis of a factual state of danger, is now given a permanent spatial arrangement, which as such nevertheless remains outside the normal order. (p. 169)

The extrajudicial nature of the camp renders the notion of crime inapplicable. When Jews enter the camp, they are deprived of national identity and subject to inhuman acts. Agamben's thought of bare life and the camp is useful for an analysis of biopower in Ishiguro's novel.

In *NLMG*, Ishiguro draws attention to inequities of power between humans and clones. In the biomedical age, clones are caught in society which privileges humans over other life forms. People who have access to organ replacement can fulfill the desire for longevity. Miss Emily explains that "their overwhelming concern was that their own children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, did not die from cancer, motor neurone disease, and heart disease" (p. 257-8). They are complacent about the idea that they can renew their bodies and extend their life expectancy at the expense of others. The practice of organ donation, therefore, sustains the production of bare life. For instance, Ruth suffers intense pain after she has the second donation. "It was like she was

willing her eyes to see right inside herself, so she could patrol and marshal all the better the separate areas of pain in her body,” Kathy says, “she was, strictly speaking, still conscious, but wasn’t accessible to me as I stood there beside her metal bed” (p. 231). She is biologically alive, but oblivious to any other presence. In another instance, Tommy talks to Kathy about what might happen at the stage of organ donation:

But Tommy would have known I had nothing to back up my words. He’d have known, too, he was raising questions to which even doctors had no certain answer. You’ll have heard the same talk. How maybe, after the fourth donation, even if you’ve technically completed, you’re still conscious in some sort of way; how then you find there are more donations, plenty of them, on the other side of that line; how there are no more recovery centres, no carers, no friends; how there’s nothing to do except watch your remaining donations until they switch you off. (p. 274)

It is possible that a donor is biologically alive, but medically dead because it reaches the last stage. Unlike cadaver organ transplantation, a live-donor system requires medical care from doctors and carers because clones are still necessary for future transplants. However, Tommy fears that after his organs are harvested, he will be deprived of life-support facilities and then left in despair. Both cases show that clones are reduced to bare life because they are on the threshold of death and capable of being killed or euthanased by doctors. The bare life of clones invites us to think about animals. Anat Pick (2011) explains that the human-animal relationship can be seen as “a site of contestation” and “an arena in which relations of power operate in their exemplary purity (that is, operate with the fewest moral or material obstacles)” (p. 1). In one instance, the couple comes to ask for a deferral, but Madame feels sorry for their misfortune because it does not really exist. Before she leaves, she refers to them as “poor creatures” and touches Kathy’s cheek with tear (p. 267). Tiffany Tsao (2012) argues that it can be understood as the relationship between supreme creators and their creations because scientific advances in *NLMG* provide people “not only with the ability to create life in their own image, but also with immortality, achieving by cutting their creations’ lives short” (p. 220).

Ishiguro highlights the role of the institution in the exercise of biopower over clones. Squier explains that the practice of organ transplantation has developed medically into “the form of an increasing victory over the immune system’s tendency to reject transplanted organ” and socially into “an increasingly institutionalized system of interlinked greater and lesser coercions that shape the populace toward more and more widespread involvement with the donation system” (p. 200). The school transforms itself into the camp where students are prepared for this ultimate goal. Instead of freedom, they are given a

life purpose. Miss Lucy states this mission when she hears them talk about dream futures:

You lives are set out for you. You'll become adults, then before you're old, before you're even middle-aged, you'll start donating your vital organs. That's what each of you was created to do. You're not like the actors you watch on your videos, you're not even like me. You're brought into this world for a purpose, and you futures, all of them, have been decided. (p. 80)

Unlike humans, clones have a definite life trajectory because they are solely destined to donate their body parts to people in need of replacement until they terminate. Moreover, the school assumes the care of biological health because their organs are important to human life. Medical check-ups and lectures are given to ensure that they are ready for organ donation. Guardians prohibit them from smoking because it is detrimental to their organs. Kathy remembers that her teachers are serious about this issue: they give lectures when references to cigarettes come up, they tear pages from books that contain smokers, and they show pictures of how smoking can damage bodies (p. 67). Miss Lucy states that "so keeping yourselves well, keeping yourselves very healthy inside, that's much more important for each of you than it is for me" (p. 68). However, clones cannot identify the similarity between the school and the camp. In an English's class, Miss Lucy and students discuss the imprisonment of soldiers, but all of them, except Kathy, make fun of their horrible situation:

We'd been looking at some poetry, but had somehow drifted onto talking about soldiers in World War Two being kept in prison camps. One of the boys asked if the fences around the camps had been electrified, and then someone else had said how strange it must have been, living in a place like that, where you could commit suicide any time you liked just by touching a fence. This might be intended as a serious point, but the rest of us thought it pretty funny. We were all laughing and talking at once, and then Laura – typical of her – got up on her seat and did a hysterical impersonation of someone reaching out and getting electrocuted. For a moment things got riotous, with everyone shouting and mimicking touching electric fences. I went on watching Miss Lucy through all this and I could see, just for a second, a ghostly expression come over her face as she watched the class in front of her. Then – I kept watching carefully – she pulled herself together, smiled and said: "It's just as well the fences of Hailsham aren't electrified. You get terrible accidents sometimes". (p. 77)

The enclosure of Hailsham is different from other fences. When Kathy looks out the window, she is scared by “a dark fringe of trees” which “cast a shadow over the whole of Hailsham” (p. 49). There are two rumours that a boy is found dead when he goes beyond the boundary and a girl becomes a ghost after she crosses the fence, but is not let back in by guardians. Other senior students insist that they are “what the guardians had told them when they were younger” (p. 50). There are not electric fences, but students cannot escape from the biopolitical system. Miss Lucy’s reference to accidents hints the future destination of clones. In one instance, Tommy gets a gash on his elbow. After he receives first aid, Kathy notices “bits of skin starting to bond” and “soft red bits peeping up from underneath” (p. 83). His classmates tease him about the possibility of unzipping because his organs might come out of his body (p. 84). In fact, they amuse themselves “as some way of acknowledging what was in front of us” (p. 86). Kathy and Ruth believe that “it was up to each of us to make our lives what we could” (p. 138). Nonetheless, the fantasy of dream futures and the search for possibles are futile because there is only one destination for them.

As Ishiguro suggests, the practice of organ donation perpetuates the exploitation of clones. Since the late twentieth century, organ replacement has grown from a medical procedure to a global trade in which organs are circulated in “a transnational space with surgeons, patients, organ donors, recipients, brokers, and intermediaries – some with criminal connections – following new paths of capital and technology in the global economy” (Schepher-Hughes, 2000, p. 191). However, students are not fully informed of this. Miss Lucy tells them that “we weren’t being taught enough about donations and the rest of it” (p. 29), so they are unaware of the network of organ donation which interlinks educational, medical, and economic institutions. Tommy thinks that there is a conspiracy theory in which guardians tell students when they are “too young to understand properly the latest piece of information” (p. 81). They do not understand what it means to donate organs until the situation unfolds to them. When it is too late, they resign and comfort themselves with the idea that organ donation is “the natural course to follow” (p. 194). Moreover, students are instilled with a sense of duty and pride to contribute to the system. At Hailsham, students are encouraged to create artwork for the exchange. It is “a kind of big exhibition cum-sale of all the things we had been creating” (p. 16). They submit their artwork, receive tokens from guardians, and use them to buy things from friends. The contribution to the exchange indicates their social status at school: “A lot of time, how you were regarded at Hailsham, how much you were liked and respected, had to do with how good you were at creating” (p. 16). When Madame collects the best artwork for the gallery, students will feel “a hugh triumph” (p. 38). Miss Emily insists that it is “most distinguished honour” to have artwork selected by Madame (p. 39). However, the creation of artwork prepares students for organ donation. Kathy tells the reader: “When the time

came, you'd be able just to unzip a bit of yourself, a kidney or something would slide out, and you'd hand it over" (p. 86). Rumours are also circulated in order to fool students. One of them is the idea of deferral. At the Cottages, some veterans hear the rumour and discuss it. "If you were a boy and a girl, and you were in love with each other, really, properly in love, and if you could show it, then the people who run Hailsham, they sorted it out for you," Chrissie explains, "they sorted it out so you could have a few years together before you began your donations" (p. 151). Tommy comes up with the theory that the echelon of the system will allow them to live longer if their artwork is qualified. In the hope of being granted a deferral, he begins to draw pictures again. Nonetheless, when he realises that it is fabrication, he bursts out his rage in the field. It is similar to the scene in which he throws tantrum when he is bullied. Kathy thinks that "at some level you always knew" (p. 270). They are "pawns in the game" (p. 261) because Madame uses their artwork to raise fund for the system. "That is why we collected your art," she explains, "we selected the best of it and put on special exhibitions. In the early days, at the height of our influence, we were organising large events all around the country. There'd be cabinets, bishops, all sorts of famous people coming to attend. There were speeches, large funds pledged" (p. 256). The reader might encourage the idea of resistance. However, it is impossible because they cannot bite the hand that feeds them. Miss Emily claims that Hailsham improves the living condition of clones, so the notion of care obliges students to the institution even though it takes advantage of them. The system cares for students from the early stage in the form of schooling to later stages in the form of medical services. Miss Emily tells her students: "Whatever else, we at least saw to it that all of you in our care, you grow up in wonderful surroundings. And we saw to it too, after you left us, you were kept away from the worst of those horrors" (p. 256). When they donate organs, they will be provided with support from carers and recovery centers. For instance, Kathy looks after a man who has been through the third donation and asks her to tell him the story of Hailsham:

What he wanted was not just to hear about Hailsham, but to remember Hailsham, just like it had been his own childhood. He knew he was close to completing and so that's what he was doing: getting me to describe things to him, so they'd really sink in, so that maybe during those sleepless nights, with the drugs and the pain and the exhaustion, the line would blur between what were memories and what were his. (p. 5)

The notion of care can alleviate the pain of organ donors and sustain the illusion of Hailsham. Miss Emily admits that sheltering is deceptive because the school "kept things from you", "lied to you", and even "fooled you" (p. 263). However, they gradually acquiesce and prepare themselves for organ donation. Eventually,

Kathy is ready to perform the most important service in her life: “I’ll welcome a chance to rest – to stop and think and remember” (p. 37).

### 3. The value of life

In *Rubbish Theory*, Michael Thompson (1979) explains that objects can be classified either as transient objects which “decrease in value over time and have finite life-spans” or as durable objects which “increase in value over time and have (ideally) infinite life-spans” (p. 7). People often keep durable objects because they are more economically and aesthetically valuable than perishable objects. However, Thompson proposes the category of rubbish which does not have a fixed value and an inherent life-span: “If rubbishness was self-evident and derived from the intrinsic physical properties of objects then this division of body products into rubbish and non-rubbish items would be fixed and unchangeable. Yet, in recent years, some body products have crossed from one side to the other” (p. 10). In other words, the idea of rubbish is culturally unstable. For example, sweat is now seen as rubbish, but was associated with the speech of Churchill. The notion of rubbish can “provide the path for the seemingly impossible transfer of an object from transience to durability” (p. 9). Thompson’s concept of objects is useful for an analysis of the value of life in Ishiguro’s novel.

In *NLMG*, clones reflect the shift in the notion of body parts from carriers of identity to bio-products. Basically, Squier (2004) explains that organs can be understood in many ways:

The value and significance of a human organ or body part is no longer self-evident, but rather is produced through a complex set of institutional negotiations involving medicine, art, society, the legal system, human emotions, and economic calculations. From the initial distinction between worthless organs and valuable ones, we have now moved to distinguishing between the various reasons for which organs are valued: as metonymic representation of a loved one, as the actual/memorial essence of the deceased, as information, as replacement parts, as exchangeable commodity. (p. 178)

The practice of organ donation, however, necessitates the transition in the status of body parts from durable to transient objects. When clones decrease in value, people can take away their organs to make human life more durable. This change is expressed in artwork of students such as pictures, poetry, and handicrafts. In the light of Romanticism, Miss Emily argues that art reveals “what you were like inside” or “your souls” (p. 173, 255). The analogy between artwork and organs is formed in the mind of Kathy: “I suddenly remembered a drawing Laura had done of her intestines and laughed” (p. 173). Tommy is

inspired to draw animals because he thinks that artwork expresses his selfhood and personality by which the possibility of deferral is measured. Nevertheless, Kathy is confounded when he shows them to her:

So I was taken aback at how densely detailed each one was. In fact, it took a moment to see they were animals at all. The first impression was like one you'd get if you took the back off a radio set: tiny canals, weaving tendons, miniature screws and wheels were all drawn with obsessive precision, and only when you held the page away could you see it was some kind of armadillo, say, or a bird. (p. 184-5)

His imaginary creatures have such industrial quality that she could hardly identify them as animals. When she becomes his carer, she sees them again and feels that they are “laboured” and “copied” (p. 237). The decrease in value of his artwork coincides with the moment when he donates organs and prepares for a deferral. Clones do not convey any essence because their organs are transient objects or spare parts in the biomarket.

The commodification of body parts has economic and psychological effects on clones. In *I Am the Other*, Maria Aline Salgueiro Seabra Ferreira (2005) refers to the idea of Walter Benjamin and contends that “the mechanical reproduction of an object undermines its unique aura, given that through repetition of the same they become evened out to relative unimportance and worthlessness” (p. 25). In other words, mass production can entail the devaluation of clones and the profound apprehension about their identity. Basically, cloning cancels out the notion of origins and instills in students the psychological sense of lack. For instance, Ruth founds the group of secret guards to protect Miss Geraldine from abduction, but she does not take further action because it is simply the fantasy of young children who need to affirm that they are special and close to their teacher. Ruth also claims that she receives the pencil case from Miss Geraldine because she needs to impress others with the idea that she is the most favorite student, but Kathy finds out that it is taken from the sale: “So what if she'd fibbed a little about her pencil case? Didn't we all dream from time to time about one guardian or other bending the rules and doing something special for us? Spontaneous hug, a secret letter, a gift?” (p. 60). When students settle in the new community, Kathy tells the reader that Keffers, the patriarch of the Cottages, is different from guardians, so he could not provide any mental comfort. Instead, clones copy how other people behave in order to derive affirmation. This is what Jean Baudrillard (2000) describes as social cloning: “Through school systems, media, culture, and mass information, singular beings become identical copies of one another” (as cited in Ferreira, 2005, p. 59). Kathy notices that veterans or senior students copy manners from characters on the television: how they gesture, sit on sofas, argue, and storm out

of the room (p. 119). In order to be a part of them, Ruth copies their behavior and forces her boyfriend to adopt how other couples interact in public. Kathy tells her that “it’s not something worth copying” because “it’s not what people really do out there” (p. 121). However, she knows that Ruth’s performance is aimed to derive affirmation for Hailsham students from veterans:

But it seems to me Ruth believed, at some level, she was doing all this on behalf of us all. And my role, as her closest friend, was to give her silent support, as if I was in front row of the audience when she was performing on stage. She was struggling to become someone else, and maybe felt the pressure more than the rest of us because, as I say, she’d somehow taken on the responsibility for all of us. (p. 128)

Eventually, students have to confront the ontological question of who they are. They believe that the search for their possibles or human models can answer the question of their identity. Kathy explains that “when you saw the person you were copied from, you’d get some insight into who you were deep down, and maybe too, you’d see something of what your life held in store” (p. 137-8). At the Cottages, students discuss dream futures. Ruth identifies with the idea of working in the office when she sees the picture in the magazine:

It showed this beautifully modern open-plan office with three or four people who worked in it having some kind of joke with each other. The place looked sparkling and so did the people. Ruth was staring at this picture and, when she noticed me beside her, said: “Now that would be a proper place to work”. (p. 142)

When she hears the story of her possible from other veterans, they go on the Norfolk trip to prove the theory. At the office, they see through the glass and look at real people with admiration: “People were moving about between desks, or leaning on a partition, chatting and sharing jokes, while others had pulled their swivel chairs close to each other and were enjoying a coffee and sandwich” (p. 156). In Lacon’s term, clones identify with the mirror image of humans and form the whole picture of themselves, but the (mis)identification is alienating because the image is external to itself. After Ruth follows her model into the studio, she eventually admits that the woman is not her possible. To her disappointment, she wallows in anger and self-pity because human clones are valueless: “We’re modelled from trash. Junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps. Convicts, maybe, just so long as they aren’t psychos” (p. 164). It is similar to Kathy because she identifies with the image of porn characters, which betrays her low self-esteem. “So I thought if I find her picture, in one of those magazines, it’ll at least explain it,” Kathy says, “I wouldn’t want to go and find

her on anything. It would just, you know, kind of explain why I am the way I am” (p. 179).

However, Ishiguro’s clones can make way for the re-evaluation of the value of life. Many objects are seen as rubbish, but clones assign value to them. At the sale, second-hand items are out of order and discarded, but they are precious to Hailsham students:

There’d be nothing remotely special and we’d spend our tokens just renewing stuff that was wearing out or broken with more of the same. But the point was, I suppose, we’d all of us in the past found something at a Sale, something that had become special: a jacket, a watch, a pair of craft scissors never used but kept proudly next to a bed. We’d all found something like that at one time, and so however much we tried to pretend otherwise, we couldn’t ever shake off the old feelings of hope and excitement. (p. 41)

Similarly, clones are thrown away from human society, but they choose to treasure one another. In one instance, Ruth and Tommy help Kathy find the lost tape of “Never Let Me Go”. Ruth fails to find it, so she buys her friend a different one from the sale. It cannot compensate for the original tape, but it is valuable to Kathy because it reminds her of Ruth: “It’s an object, like a brooch or a ring, and especially now Ruth has gone, it’s become one of my most precious possessions” (p. 75). In Norfolk, Tommy thinks of looking for the lost tape at second-hand shops. They discover the tape, but it may or may not be the original cassette because, like clones, “there might be thousands of these knocking about” (p. 170). It cannot make up for the original one, but it is precious to Kathy because it represents Tommy and the past: “If I happen to get the tape out and look at it, it brings back memories of that afternoon in Norfolk every bit as much as it does our Hailsham days” (p. 171). Rebecca L. Walkowitz (2015) contends that “the preciousness of both tapes is an effect of the social relationships they have helped to establish” (p. 111). She argues that *NLMG* enhances “the value of unoriginal expression” (p. 101) because it attributes “uniqueness not to a prior existence but to social embeddedness and unpredictable futurity” (p. 111). Kathy values her friends and perishable objects. When Tommy completes, she goes to Norfolk because it is “England’s lost corner, where all the lost property found in the country ended up” (p. 65). Even if the field is filled with rubbish, it is valuable to Kathy:

I was thinking about the rubbish, the flapping plastic in the branches, the shore-line of odd stuff caught along the fencing, and I half-closed my eyes and imagined this was the spot where everything I’d ever lost since my childhood had washed up, and I was now standing here in front of it,

and if I waited long enough, a tiny figure would appear on the horizon across the field, and gradually get larger until I'd see it was Tommy, and he'd wave, maybe even call. The fantasy never got beyond that – I didn't let it – and though the tears rolled down my face, I wasn't sobbing or out of control. I just waited a bit, then turned back to the car, to drive off to wherever it was I was supposed to be. (p. 282)

The end of the novel is bleak because Kathy will donate organs and then complete following Ruth, Tommy, and other cloned students, as Miss Emily says: "Your life must now run the course that's been set for it" (p. 261). Madame admits that the brave new world promises "more cures for the old sicknesses", but it is such "a harsh, cruel world" for naive students (p. 267). The biomedical advance enables the prolongation of human life, but it carries many complications. The speculative world of *NLMG* not only gives caution to our contemporary society but also engages our emotion and moral duty to other life forms. Kathy H. collects everything ranging from broken objects to bits and pieces of memory of lost people in her life. Before Ruth completes, she regretfully admits that "I wish now I'd done that too" (p. 129) because she discards collections from Hailsham in order to move on with her new life at the Cottages. On the other hand, Kathy stows all of them in her pine chest and her late friends in the book we are reading in the hope of transforming their perishability into durability in our heart.

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