



## FRAGMENTED IDENTITIES AND SILENT SUFFERING: PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA AND SELF-PERCEPTION IN KAZUO ISHIGURO'S NEVER LET ME GO

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### **Abstract:**

In *'Never Let Me Go'*, Kazuo Ishiguro looks at the different parts of who we are, the emotional pain we experience, and how we see ourselves in a world that is not ideal. The story is about clones made only for organ donation. They struggle with questions about why they exist and who they are. This study looks at how Ishiguro shows the mental suffering caused by being treated like objects, focusing on how the clones' sense of self is broken and their voices are frequently ignored. By using psychoanalytic and existential theories, the paper examines how Ishiguro shows the silent pain and internal trauma of the clones through narrative structure, symbolism, and character development. This study looks at how trauma and feeling like you have little control over your life can impact how you see yourself and the satisfaction you get out of life. Ishiguro's novel can be used to think about modern bioethics, the importance of human life, and philosophical ideas about autonomy and authenticity when faced with pre-determined roles.

### **Introduction:**

*'Never Let Me Go'* examines the boundaries of human identity in a chilling way. In a dystopian world, clones are created for organ harvesting in Ishiguro's novel, exploring themes of existential and psychological challenges. The story focuses on Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy, who are clones raised in an institution called Hailsham. The institution uses art and education to help the clones become more human. Even though they grew up in a seemingly typical way, they are unable to make choices about their own lives. Their futures are limited to receiving donations and eventually dying. This book is a good starting point for exploring the idea of having mixed-up identities and suffering quietly. The clones feel a type of trauma because they know they have little control over their lives. They understand that they can be easily replaced, but they can't do anything about it. This article explores how the characters experience psychological trauma and how it affects how they see themselves. The research shows that characters have fragmented identities because of societal structures and internalized beliefs that make them feel like objects. The quiet struggles of Ishiguro's characters show the deep questions about identity in a society that relies heavily on technology. This novel is not just a dystopian story, but also a study on what makes a person who they are.

### **Literature Review:**

Many scholars have studied *'Never Let Me Go'* from different perspectives like bioethics, Posthumanism, and trauma theory. Kathy Knapp and other scholars believe that the dystopian elements in the novel focus on ethical issues related to modern biotechnology, such as cloning and genetic engineering. Eleanor Salter and others have talked about the novel as a study of how much control people have over their own actions, especially when viewed in the context of existential philosophy. Clones don't have the same rights or chances as regular people, showing a special inner conflict that reflects bigger worries about human rights and freedom. Psychologists, such as Emily Horton, focus on the emotional pain felt by Ishiguro's characters. Horton says that the characters' silence and submission show a type of psychological repression that stops them from understanding or fighting against their situation. This viewpoint provides important information about how trauma affects characters in Ishiguro's dystopian world, leading them to passively accept their roles. Some scholars, like David R. Critics have looked at how Ishiguro explores fragmented identity in his work. They say that his characters show how people's identities can be broken and changed by their roles in society. This paper explores how trauma, lack of control, and fragmented identity contribute to the depiction of suffering in Ishiguro's dystopian world.

### **Methodology:**

This study analyzes *'Never Let Me Go'* using qualitative methods. The main idea is to carefully read the text and examine its themes. This study examines the main characters' experiences, focusing on Kathy, using trauma theory, psychoanalytic theory, and existential philosophy. She tells the story in a way that helps readers connect with her and understand her situation. The paper explores how hidden memories, a sense of powerlessness, and intense hopelessness affect the characters' self-perception and identity. The experiences of the clones at Hailsham and their later understandings are examined using psychoanalytic theory, particularly Freud's concepts of repression and the uncanny. Existential philosophy, such as Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of bad faith and Martin Heidegger's ideas on authenticity, can help us see how the clones in Ishiguro's story come to terms with their destinies and achieve "completions." These philosophical concepts help us grasp the characters' challenges in discovering themselves and taking charge of their own destinies.

### **Analysis and Discussion:**

- **Fragmented Identities and the Loss of Self-Perception:** The clones have trouble combining their experiences to form a complete self-image, leading to fragmented identities and a loss of self-perception. Hailsham's education focuses on art to help students become more human, but it actually makes them feel like outsiders. This fake sense of normality makes them feel conflicted about wanting to have a sense of identity and purpose as humans, while also realizing that they are seen as disposable. The clones have mixed feelings about themselves because they are seen as both "human" and "resource," which makes them feel like their identity is split.

- **Silent Suffering and Psychological Trauma:** The clones are suffering silently because they are not allowed to talk about their roles. Experts who study trauma believe that if someone doesn't talk about their traumatic experience, it can make the effects even worse because they aren't able to express or deal with their pain. In *'Never Let Me Go'*, the clones do not have a way to show their pain to society, so they keep it inside. Kathy shows that she has accepted her fate by being passive and not resisting emotionally, as seen in her resigned tone. The fear of coming to an end affects all their relationships, choices, and feelings, making them feel numb as a way to protect themselves.
- **The Role of Memory and the Repression of Trauma:** Memory is very important in how Ishiguro shows trauma. Kathy often remembers her time at Hailsham, trying to find comfort in the memories of her school days. These memories were actually a form of teaching that she received during those years. Trauma theory says that survivors may block out painful memories to keep their mind organized. Kathy remembers only certain things, not the harsh reality of what will happen to them. This shows how she copes with the situation. The clones cannot face their roles completely, like how repression can cause psychological effects. Denying reality acts as a weak protection for them.
- **The Existential Crisis: Meaning, Autonomy, and Bad Faith:** The clones quietly accepting their destiny relates to Sartre's idea of "bad faith," where people deceive themselves and don't see their own freedom and choices. Even though the clones know they are stuck in a cycle of giving away their organs, they try to ignore their feelings of despair. Their lack of sincerity maintains their restricted sense of self, as they avoid pursuing any goals beyond the predetermined roles. The book implies that the clones' inability to make their own choices is influenced by outside forces and also by their own beliefs, as they define themselves based on the roles assigned to them by society.

#### **Conclusion:**

Kazuo Ishiguro explores themes of broken identity, mental turmoil, and quiet pain in the novel *'Never Let Me Go'*. The clones cannot alter their fate and are restricted by societal norms that prevent them from expressing their true selves. This demonstrates how trauma can affect how people view themselves and their identity. Their damaged self-concept, made worse by forgotten memories and unresolved trauma, makes them seem sad and symbolizes the struggles all people go through in finding purpose in life. Ishiguro's book demonstrates that without freedom to choose, people may develop weak identities and believe forced roles are part of them. *'Never Let Me Go'* warns against treating people as tools for society, with silenced and suffering characters. The silence of the clones and their identities raise important questions about people's decisions, respect, and the boundaries of scientific advancement. Ishiguro's writing prompts us to contemplate the essence of humanity in a world where we may lack control over our actions, our identity, and our perception of ourselves.

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