



**BOOK REVIEW OF KAZUO ISHIGURO'S *NEVER LET ME GO***

**A FINAL PROJECT**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement

For S-1 Degree in Literature

In English Department, Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

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**2015**

## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

I states truthfully that this project is compiled by me without taking the results from other research in any university, in S-1, S-2, and S-3 degree ad in diploma. In addition, the writer ascertains that he does not take the material from other publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang, September 2015

Uswatun Hasanah

## **MOTTO AND DEDICATION**

- So verily, with the hardship, there is relief.

(Al Qur'an Surah Al Insyirah Ayat 5)

- If it is not started, there will be no change.

(Uswatun Hasanah)

- Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.

(Thomas A. Edison)

*This final project is dedicated to my beloved parents and*

*To everyone who helped me to accomplish this paper.*

*Thank you for supporting me.*

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I realize that this project is still far from perfect. Therefore, I will be glad to receive any constructive and recommendation to make this book review better.

Finally, I expect that this final project will be useful to the reader who is interested in reading Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*.

Semarang, September 2015

Uswatun Hasanah

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## **Book Review of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

### **1. Introduction**

Humans are the most perfect creatures of God. Humans are social creatures who can not live alone in this world. Humans have a need to interact and communicate with others. Without the help of others, human beings can not walk upright, and they also can not develop all the potential they have. Generally, humans live in this world to do something useful. When they can do something for other people, they will feel happy and proud of themselves. Sometimes to help others, some people are willing to sacrifice their own lives. When someone is sick and he or she needs blood donors, many people are willing to donate their blood for the sake of healing others. Now not only blood but also organs can be donated. There are many pros and cons regarding organ transplantation, yet it is undeniable that organ transplantation can help the survival of others and help someone to extend his life. Although it is not allowed for commercial purposes, organ donation is legal for humanitarian purposes.

An example of legal organ donor comes from Australia. Kim and Allan Turner registered all members of the family as organ donors in 2000. Four years later their daughter, Zaidee died because she suffered from a cerebral aneurysm. She was seven years old. Her parents' decision to enroll their family members as organ donors turned to be very useful. Zaidee's organ can save the lives of seven others. Kim and Allan also set up a foundation, Zaidee, to increase public

awareness about the importance of organ donation. (ABC Central Victoria, 2014 Par 3).

Organ donation also becomes part of the theme in fiction, such as in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* which portrays the issue of organ donation that is happening in this world. This science-fiction was published in 2005 and became a best-selling novel. This novel was also made into a film directed by Mark Romanek, with Alex Garland as the scriptwriter. This film was produced in 2010. This novel is interesting because it gives a thought about the issue of organ donation through human clone in which there are people who want to have a long life and want to avoid cancer by getting organ donor from their donors. The organ donors are obtained from human clone.

*Never Let Me Go* tells about the lives of cloned children that have to donate their organs when they are adults. This novel becomes interesting because there is a friendship between the main characters. Kathy H. is the main character who acts as the narrator. She recalls her past when she lives in Hailsham with her two friends. They are Ruth and Tommy. There is a triangle love in their friendship. It causes conflict. Eventually, their love brings Kathy and Tommy to fight for their lives. In the climax of the story, Tommy and Kathy ask for a postponement to a head guardian, Miss Emily, but they do not get it. All children in Hailsham must accept their fate to donate their organs. They also have to face the reality of their own death.

Based on the above description, *Never Let Me Go* is chosen as the object of this study because it has a very interesting story related to the issue of organ

donation in human clone. The theme of friendship also makes this novel become more interesting. The purpose of this paper is to provide an explanation about the strengths and weaknesses of the novel. Thus, it can help the reader to decide whether this novel is feasible for them to read or not.

## **2. Summary of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

The main character in this novel is Kathy H., who acts as narrator. Kathy has worked as a nurse of donor for 11 years. Remembering the past, Kathy studied and stayed in Hailsham. Kathy had two friends. They were Tommy and Ruth. When they were fifteen years old, Miss Lucy, a teacher, described what would happen to the students in the future. They would be organ donors. Before they made the first donation, they would become nurses first. However, the students did not understand Miss Lucy's explanation.

After growing up, Kathy, Ruth and Tommy stayed at the Cottages. They also lived with two other donors. They were Chrissie and Rodney. They had already been living at the Cottages. One day Ruth, Tommy, Kathy, Chrissie and Rodney went to Norfolk. They wanted to prove the truth of a person who is considered similar to Ruth. Not only her face is similar to Ruth but also her habits. She always tied back her hair in a simple ponytail. The way of laugh and wiggle head is similar to Ruth. There, Kathy and Tommy broke away from the group. Seeing that, Ruth felt jealous. Then she did everything possible to make Kathy stay away from Tommy. Kathy realized that Ruth did not like the proximity of

Kathy and Tommy. Therefore, Kathy decided to leave Cottages. Then she began to work as a nurse.

A few years later, Kathy and Ruth reunited in Dover. Ruth said that she had made a donation. Her condition also became very weak. Ruth always talked about Tommy. She realized that she should not alienate people who love each other only for their own selfishness. One day, Ruth and Kathy went to Kingsfield. They wanted to meet their friend, Tommy. Seeing the condition of Tommy, Ruth asked Kathy to care for him. Ruth also gave Madame's address. Madame was someone who always came every year to select the best works of students in Hailsham. Madame is regarded as one of the important person who had power in Hailsham. Therefore, Ruth gave Madame's address in order for Kathy and Tommy to ask for a suspension to Madame. Thus, they could live together for several years.

After the death of Ruth, Tommy and Kathy went to Littlehampton. They wanted to meet Madame. They believed what people said. If they loved each other, they would get a suspension. After their return from Madame's house, Tommy felt disappointed and angry because he did not get a suspension. After Kathy soothed him, Tommy began to accept that he had to complete the donation. Tommy died when he had completed his fourth donation. In the end of the story, Kathy said that although she lost both her friends, she would never lose the memories with them in Hailsham.

### **3. Review of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

*Never Let Me Go* is a novel that is interesting to read. Kazuo Ishiguro as the author of this novel shows his ability to convey a moral message to the readers. He takes the conflicting issues that can attract the readers to read this book. *Never Let Me Go* has its strengths and weaknesses. They are described as the following.

#### **3.1. The Strengths of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

*Never Let Me Go* has the strengths in terms of theme, character, the title and cover. These strengths will be explained in this following discussion.

##### **3.1.1. Theme**

A good story should certainly have a theme. Through the theme, reader can understand the main contents of a novel. This novel has a main theme of organ donor in human clone. This novel explains that at the time the world legalized organ donors of human clone. *Never Let me Go* has a setting of time in 1990's. In fact, in 1990's, human clone has not been done. The presence or absence of human clone in the world is still questionable. However, this novel is very interesting because the reader will think about human clone. They also will have visions of human clone. If one day there is someone who needs an organ donor, but there are no donors who are willing to donate their organs, the most appropriate solution is to create a human clone.

In the novel, human clone is created to provide vital organs. The examples of vital organs that can be donated are kidney, liver, heart etc. It is done for people who are more in need of it. The human clone not only donates one organ, but also donates more of the organs until they die. Even so, they still feel happy because they can help others. The biggest happiness in life is if they can do something useful for others. This novel makes the reader think about how important life goals in this world are. People live in the world just once so they should be able to use the time as possible. The theme of organ donation can teach the reader to help each other.

Moreover, the theme of organ donation becomes more interesting because this novel also tells about friendship. In the novel, friendship is portrayed as in real life. Love, sorrow, misunderstanding and even hatred, are natural things which happen in friendship. The conflict will not make the friendship break up. As friends, Kathy, Ruth and Tommy reinforce one another. Reality of the death that they have to face makes them aware that unity is more important.

True friendship is when a friend always stands beside them when they need a support. The strength of friendship in the novel is shown when they care for one another. Everything they do for the sake of their friends. When Ruth realizes that love of Kathy and Tommy is very strong, she is willing to take risks to find the address of Madame. The aim is for Kathy and Tommy to fight for their love. When they lose a friend, the memories with their friend will remain in their memories. They can never forget those memories easily. "I lost Ruth, then I lost Tommy, but I won't lose my memories of them." (Ishiguro, 2005:220). It shows

that their friendship means so much to Kathy that she will never forget the memories that have occurred.

The theme in this novel becomes its own power for the novel because this novel teaches about the importance of friends. Friends must mutually support and accompany one another in difficult or happy time.

### **3.1.2. Character**

Character is something that is very important in the novel because the character is very influential within the plot of the novel. Michael Meyer in his book that was entitled *The Bedford Introduction to Literature* gives definition of character, which is “*Characters are influenced by events just as events are shaped by characters.*” (Meyer, 1990: 61) Character can make the story more interesting. The main character of this novel becomes the strength of the novel itself. The main character is someone who dominates the story from the beginning to the end of the story. The main character in this novel is Kathy H. who becomes the most important character in this novel. Kathy is a good woman. She is kind to anyone, including to her two friends. Although Ruth has a special relationship with Tommy, Kathy remains good with Ruth. Kathy is also a woman who is submissive. Her resignation in accepting fate as a donor and her resignation in the love make the reader feel vexed with her. Kathy also has a high curiosity.

There were lots of pictures of girls holding their legs open or sticking their bottoms out. I’ll admit, there have been times when I’ve looked at pictures like that and felt excited, though I’ve never fancied doing it with a girl. (Ishiguro, 2005: 102).

The quotation above is a form of Kathy's curiosity towards sex. She always tries to find out about sex. Curiosity is very reasonable to be owned by a young woman.

Another character is Tommy, a grumpy man who likes to wear blue polo shirt. This is indicated when Tommy asks for a suspension from Madame but he does not get his desire.

The moon wasn't quite full, but it was bright enough, and I could make out in the mid-distance, near where the field began to fall away, Tommy's figure, raging, shouting, flinging his fists and kicking out. (Ishiguro, 2005: 210).

Tommy's anger makes the reader wonder what actually happens to him. Why he becomes so irritable? Tommy also has characteristic that is not decisive. Tommy's characteristic makes the reader do not like him. A man must have a firm and courageous nature. Tommy becomes an important character because he is a man who is loved by his two friends.

The next interesting character is Ruth. She is a woman who has the power when childhood. "There were between six and ten of us, the figure changing whenever Ruth allowed in a new member or expelled someone." (Ishiguro, 2005: 40). The quotation above shows that Ruth is a leader of a group that has full control over the members of the group. This character becomes more interesting because in childhood, girls usually tend to be shy and do not have the courage. Ruth has daring nature to her friends because she is more dominating than her friends. She also has a selfish and jealous nature. Ruth's selfishness causes conflict with her best friend. It makes the story become interesting because of what Ruth has done can lead to conflict. On the other hand, she has a high sense

of caring for her friends. She is willing to take the risk to find the address of her friend Madame so that both can fight for their love.

Through the characters, the reader can imagine how the strength of the relationship between Kathy, Ruth and Tommy. It shows the relationship of true friendship. The characters in this novel also can make the story more vivid and it is as if they were real.

### **3.1.3. The Title and Cover of the Novel**

The title and cover are interconnected to each other. A good title and cover will make readers more interested in reading the novel. Good title is concise, easy to remember and in accordance with the contents of the novel. The word uses quite just two or three words in order to attract the readers. It will make the reader become curious when the reader sees it for the first time. *Never Let Me Go* is a very interesting title for the readers. It has simple words. It is also easy to remember. This book cover depicts a person wearing women's red shirt, sitting pensively alone in a park with green grass (See *Appendix 1*). She is also seen being turned down and folded her hands. Picture of the cover novel indicates a problem that she is facing. She tries to calm herself by being in the park. The picture also makes the reader more interested and curious about what the conflict contained in the novel. It also will make the reader to read the novel more and more.

In Dermawan's article, psychologically, the green color on the cover symbolizes silence, loyalty, serenity, and confidence. Yellow-green color symbolizes friendship, anxiety and warmth. The red color in the cover symbolizes

strength, courage and happiness. (Dermawan, 2011 Par 4). From the above explanation, the color composition makes the reader arise feelings of melancholy. The color composition of the cover novel explains that there is a woman who is silent, dreamy somewhere to get peace and strength in dealing with the problem.

There is suitability between the cover of novel with scenes in the end of story. In the end of the story it is shown that Kathy has lost two friends. Then one day she goes to Norfolk. She stands in an extensive field. She wants to find rest, but she recalls her past with her friends. She also imagines a figure of Tommy who is waving his arms. He also calls Kathy. It brings tears to Kathy's eyes. Although Kathy has lost both her friend, but she is happy. She is able to remember all the memories about them. "The memories I value most, I don't see them ever fading. I lost Ruth, then I lost Tommy, but I won't lose my memories of them." (Ishiguro, 2005:220). The quotation above indicates that Kathy never forgets the memories with her friends. She tries to remain steadfast and strong although her two friends have died. Kathy's happiness in the memories with her two friends shows her strength in the face of her problem.

### **3.2. The Weaknesses of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

Besides the strengths, *Never Let Me Go* also has some weaknesses. They are plot, the ending of the novel, and sex scene. These weaknesses will be explained in this following discussion.

### 3.2.1. Plot

The plot of this novel makes the reader become confused. Kazuo tells this novel with the flashback and flash forward plot. The narrator of this novel is Kathy. Readers need more concentration to read this book in order to understand the story well. The story of this novel begins with the narration of Kathy who tells her circumstances. Kathy is a nurse. Then Kathy immediately tells that Ruth and Tommy have also donated their organ. After that, the story goes to childhood life of Kathy and her friends. Then suddenly the plot of this novel goes back to a scene of Kathy that will end as a nurse. Then the plot of this novel goes back again to adulthood of Kathy and her friends. The end of story tells about the initial situation again. Ruth and Tommy finally die because they donate their organ.

The plot above makes the readers feel bored because the readers have to give more attention to the story. It will also make the reader confuse about the plot. The novel shows that at that time, there are scientists who create a human clone so that people can have a child in accordance with the desired character.

It concerned a scientist called James Morningdale, quite talented in his way. He carried on his work in a remote part of Scotland, where I suppose he thought he'd attract less attention. What he wanted was to offer people the possibility of having children with enhanced characteristics. Superior intelligence, superior athleticism, that sort of thing. (Ishiguro, 2005: 202).

Unfortunately, there is not explanation about the picture of how human clone is created. Then the mechanism of organ donation and what organ should be donated is also not described in detail. It makes the reader wonder and they will be curious. It will be more interesting to the reader if it is all explained detail. However, the reader will get some idea of human clone in this novel. Human

clone physically and morally are just like humans in general. They have a feeling to have someone and to be owned by someone.

### **3.2.2. The Ending of *Never Let Me Go***

The ending is an answer from the climax of the story. *Never Let Me Go* gives the reader an open ending. Authors write stories with explanations that are not specific. The explanations that are not specific can make the reader guess the next story. The author ends this story of the novel with a sad story. It can be seen when the main character, Kathy, sees her friends' die because they have donated their organs. The story of *Never Let Me Go* ends when Kathy goes to Norfolk. She stands looking at the broad fields. She reminds her past. There she also sees a figure like Tommy waves hand. He calls Kathy. The delusion makes Kathy tears in her eyes. After that, Kathy decides to go back to the car and go wherever she should go.

The story of this novel ends here. The author does not explain where Kathy will go. It makes the reader confused with the decision of Kathy. In the phrase "go where she should go", the reader can interpret that she decides to finish her organ donor then she dies. However, it can also be interpreted that she goes somewhere to escape and fight for her life. The ending of this story does not tell the reader what happened next with Kathy. When the readers read a story with an open ending, it will bring something to hang their minds. An open ending leaves the reader to be curious about the next story. Story of *Never Let Me Go* will be better if it has a closed ending with a sad or happy story. Closed ending like that has clarity ending story. Readers do not have to guess what will happen next.

### **3.2.3. Sex Scene**

In this novel, Ishiguro describes the sex scenes of some characters clearly. When Kathy becomes a nurse for Tommy, their relationship is getting closer. Finally, their proximity makes Kathy and Tommy have sexual activity. Kathy explains the sex scenes that she did with Tommy very clearly.

If he was on top, I'd put my knees right up for him; of whatever position we used, I'd say anything, do anything I thought would make it better, more passionate, but it still never quite went away. (Ishiguro, 2005: 183).

*Never Let Me Go* is not supposed to explain the sex scenes very clearly. The sex scenes are not needed because the story in the novel is not focusing on the romance novel. This novel has the theme of organ donor in human clone. However, the novel is tucking a little love story. It will not affect the interest for the reader even though no sex scenes. The sex scene here shows that human clone also has the same feelings as human beings in general. They have a passion for sex.

## **4. Conclusion**

*Never Let Me Go* is a science fiction novel. This novel tells the story of human clone that should accept fate to donate their organs. This novel has a power to attract the reader. The strengths of the novel are the theme, character and the title and cover. Theme of organ donation makes the reader think about the purpose of life. Through this theme, the reader is taught to help each other. Donating organs is one of the glorious things to help fellow human beings. The theme of

friendship teaches readers about the importance of friends. Good friend is a friend who always accompanies the joy and sorrow. The strength of the relationship between one of the characters and another characters make the reader can follow the story so well that it makes as if seen to be real. Kathy brings great character to this novel. She has a good character and loyal to her friends. The cover of the novel is very interesting. It causes the reader into thinking “What conflicts exist in the novel?” The main weakness in this novel is the plot. This novel has the flashback and flash forward plot. Readers need more concentration to read this book in order to understand the story well.

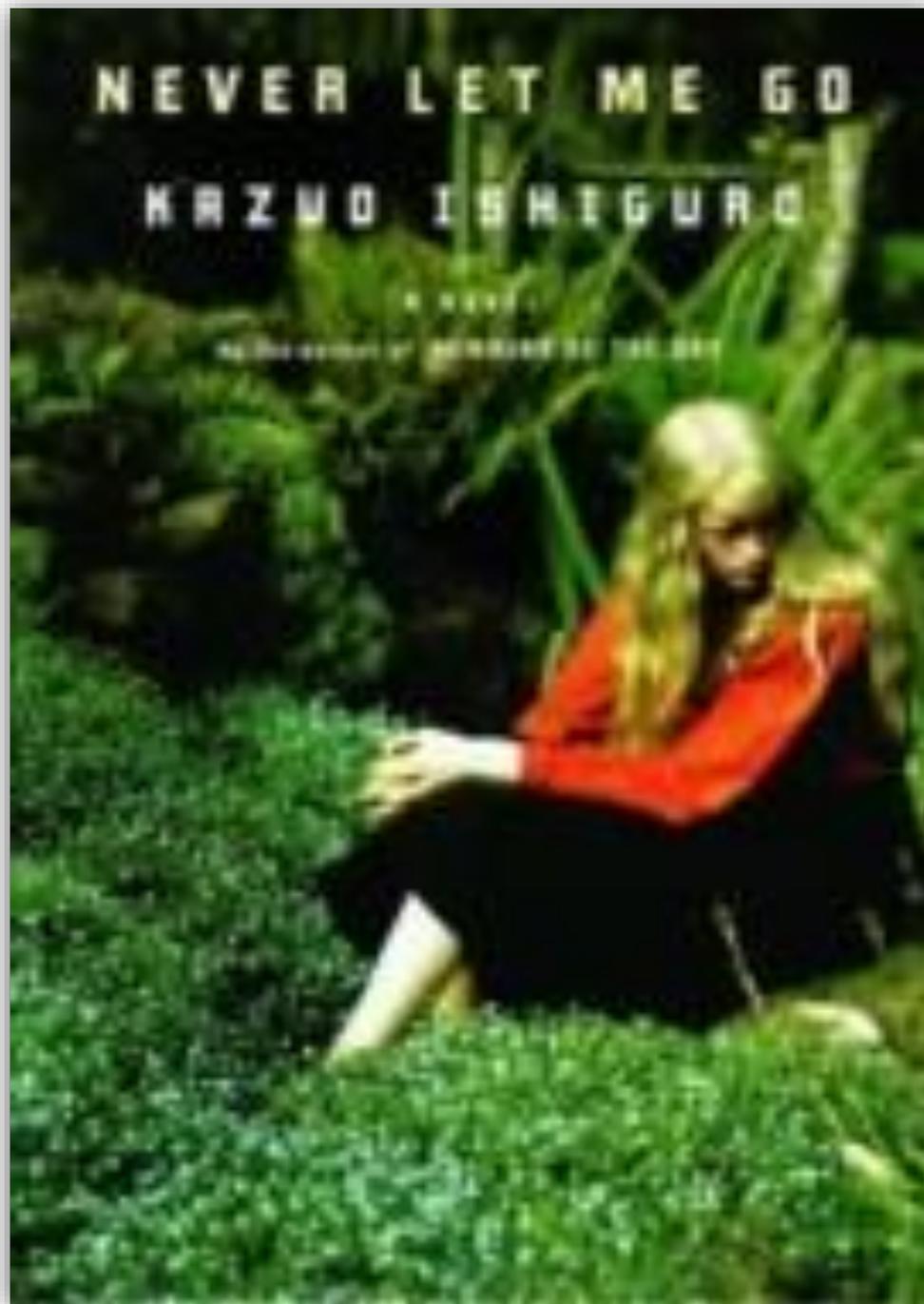
*Never Let Me Go* is a recommended novel to read by readers who love fiction novels. This novel builds a good imagination about human clone. This novel gives a thought about the issue of organ donation through human clone in which there are people who want to have a long life. They also want to avoid cancer by getting donor organs from their donors. The organ donor can be obtained from human clone. Nowadays, clone against human is still controversial and it has not to be accepted by the world yet. However, it does not rule out the possibility that someday human clone would be accepted by the world. This novel is worth reading because people could take and learn some moral lesson from this novel.

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*Appendix 1*

**Cover**



*Appendix 2*

**Product Details**

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