



THE DARK SIDES OF SCIENCE IN KAZUO ISHIGURO NEVER LET ME GO

Rosa Maria Simamora¹, Tasiana Indun Nainggolan²

Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas

Email : rosasimamora1967@gmail.com

Abstract

This thesis describes the dark sides of science in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. In this novel, Ishiguro clearly presents Kathy, the novel's main character, as a representation of people who become the victims of the dark sides of science by Madame, Miss Lucy, and Miss Emily end in dying. This study uses narrative qualitative research and applies literary sociology theory by Wellek and Warren saying that the work of literature, the purpose as well as the things that are implicit in the work itself and that are related to social problems. The analysis is focused on alienation and exploitation as the dark sides of science and technology. In this study, there are two concepts of alienation. The people who alienate others are represented by Madame, Miss Lucy, and Miss Emily towards the characters Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy. The people who are alienated are represented by Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy who are placed by figures as representatives of the government or companies who agree with the development of science and technology, who are cloned in a Hailsham dormitory with strict rules that are lonely and hopeless. Exploitation in this study is represented by the characters Kathy H, Ruth and Tommy carried out by Madame, Miss Lucy, and Miss Emily who act as if they are educating and looking after the clones even though they are representatives of the authorities to ensure that the clones are in a healthy condition until time for donation. The clones, Kathy H, Ruth, and Tommy are exploited by strange and strict rules, hopeless, cruel, and are not allowed to become parents because the most important thing is their body organs without regard for their humanity. The study concludes that Kazuo Ishiguro in *Never Let Me Go* conveys the dangerous dark side of science to people i.e. alienation, and exploitation.

Keywords: science, technology, alienation, exploitation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Science and technology always develop in line with the development of human life. They were starting from the Industrial Revolution era to the millennial century. However, things that cannot be avoided are the attachment of negative and positive impacts. One example is gadgets which can be very detrimental, especially to the younger generation. Based on Kominfo.go.id, internet users in the current digital era have increased to 147 million people, and 90% of them are accessed via smartphone and children are no exception. Meanwhile, it is no longer common knowledge that not everything on the internet is positive, most of it contains immoral content, violence, gambling, and the

distribution of illegal drugs. There are only 250 thousand sites that contain positive things, so there are around 800 thousand sites that have been blocked because they contain negative content (kominfo.go.id). Based on kompas.com the government, together with four crucial institutions forming regulation concerns about this condition

Kazuo Ishiguro is one of the writers who participate and cares about discussing issues related to the dark sides of science. Kazuo Ishiguro was born in Nagasaki, Japan, on November 8, 1954. Ishiguro arrived in England in 1960 after his father Shizuo, an oceanographer, joined a British government research project in the North Sea. They settled in Guildford, a town in southern England, where he studied English schools



when a child but spoke Japanese with his parents at home. After completing Woking County Grammar School, he was accepted at the University of Kent at Canterbury (UKC) in 1974 for a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy and English literature. In the fall of 1976, he continued his university studies, and he received his degree in 1978 (Sim 6).

He started working on his first unpublished novel in 1976 (nobleprize.org). Ishiguro gradually became an influential cultural figure today. Real-life human situations are the dominant themes he examines in his novels so that readers can understand them easily. He is known as a cultural symbol who can understand other people's perspectives, a person who is safer and is not influenced by identity politics, and who supports traditional values in the past. Since then, it has held a unique place in English literature and various scientific fields, claiming it as its own (Sim 5).

Never Let Me Go (2005) which won runner-up for the 2005 Booker Prize, the 2006 Arthur C. Clarke Award, and the 2005 National Book Critics Circle Award. Won Corine International Buchpreis, Serono Literary Prize, Novel Award Europe Casino de Santiago, shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. This novel was also included in the 100 Best English Novels summarized by TIME magazine from 1923 to 2005. It also received the ALA Alex Award in 2006 and was made into a film directed by Mark Romanek in 2010 (world encyclopedia).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Clarification of Terms

The Latin word *scientia*, which denotes *knowledge*, originally came from the Latin verb *sciens*, which was a conjugation of the Latin verb *scire*, which means to know. Science is knowledge obtained by systematic research, scientific disciplines, or the scientific process (newworldencyclopedia). Science, when viewed from a technological perspective, has two impacts on human life, depending on the individual (Riyana 1). If used correctly and by the portion, this will have a big impact on humans; however, if

used incorrectly and excessively, it will lead to the dark side of science itself. The use of science in various ways gives rise to negative impacts, alienation, and exploitation. Alienation is a condition where a person/group is unable to have good interactions with the world around them, causing feelings of isolation, unhappiness, not participating in activities with other people, causing broken relationships (Adibifar 64). Acts of exploitation are actions with or without the victim's consent which include but are not limited to things that are not permitted such as slavery, oppression, and physical use of reproductive organs, carried out in violation of existing laws by moving or transplanting body organs to gain profits by related parties (Kass 11).

2.2 Theory and Method

This is a narrative qualitative research proposed by Creswell states that that narrative is a kind of qualitative in which the investigator illustrates the lives of characters, accumulates and tells stories about individuals' lives, and writes narratives of characteristic experiences (54). The data are collected from books, online journal, online dictionary and other online sources. This study employs literary sociology. Literary sociology uses the medium of language to present a life that consists largely of social reality (Wellek & Warren 109). They say that the relationship between literature and society can be classified into three points. First, the sociology of the author; second, the content of the literary work, which is of a social nature, that is, the work of literature, the purpose as well as the things that are implicit in the work itself and that relate to social problems; the last is the impact of literature on society (112). The writer focuses on number two, that is the work itself, where intellectuals can interpret this work as a social phenomenon.

III. THE ANALYSIS

Never Let Me Go is about the lives of clones Kathy, Tommy, and Ruth, at a remote, exclusive boarding school in the English



countryside, Hailsham. These clones who are the result of technological advances, are deliberately created so that they could become donors for diseases that are difficult to cure. Kathy, Tommy, Ruth, and their friends who feel different from normal humans, are isolated, and mysterious rules limit their movement. They have to check their health weekly to ensure their organs are in healthy condition until the time for donation. The song *Never Let Me Go* from Judy Bridgewater's *Songs after Dark* cassette conveys that Kathy and all the other clones with her at school are forced to give up everything i.e. their relationships, freedom, and organs. Therefore, their bodies and their lives do not belong to them. Kathy witnesses her best friend Ruth who gives up and dies after her organ donation in the second stage, and Tommy who completes his organ donation in the fourth stage and finally dies too.

The major characters are Kathy H, Ruth, and, Tommy. The minor characters are Madame, Miss Lucy, and Miss Emily. Kathy is the round character also the protagonist who is also the narrator from where the story is told from her point of view. As the main character and storyteller, she is a strong character in the novel, so in every event, she is always present. Kathy is a caring and diligent person and can accept her fate as a clone by putting aside the desire to become a mother and have a family. She suffers from loneliness after losing her best friend Ruth and her lover Tommy. Kathy's best friend who is manipulative and difficult to understand. She is a helpless person, so there is no rebellion during the donation until she is taken away. Tommy is Kathy and Ruth's best friend who has a temper and often throws tantrums. He is suffered because he is treated badly by the people around him. He knows his identity but he is helpless, so just like his two friends, he accepts what happened to him.

This novel is set in 1990 in England, especially the fictional schools of Hailsham, Cottages, Norfolk, Dover, and Kingsfield, where at that time the development of

science and technology, one of which was cloning biotechnology, was booming.

3.1 Alienation

Ishiguro creates characters Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy to represent human beings as the result of the dark sides of science and who are alienated. Alienation is one of the dark sides of scientific and technological progress influencing many aspects of human life (Adibifar 62). Hailsham is the place where Kathy met Ruth and Tommy and is also the source of her suffering. It was there where she felt how clones were treated differently with many regulations that limited their movements. The prohibition of leaving the dormitory was one of the prohibitions she always heard from the guards. Therefore, she did not know about the outside world and witnessed what it was like apart from the stories of her guardians. Seeman in Healy states that alienation has five components, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, and self-alienation (8-9).

Kathy feels external isolation at Hailsham, where the dormitory cut off from social relations between herself and the outside world, causing a lack of social interaction between herself and other people. She is described as an obedient person who does not put up much resistance to all the rules in the dormitory, and although she often thinks about her inability to explore the outside world, she does not show any rebellion. It is because Kathy is powerless when she realizes the fact that she is a clone.

Her powerlessness has ironically make her consciously accept her fate as a clone and donor for normal people, so a proud tragic tone with a feeling of sadness, implies her recognition as a caregiver for her potential donor recipient. Her sense of ironic pride is proof of her powerlessness when she is willing to give what is the most invaluable in her life: her vital organs, part by part, and feels sweet sorrow for the good progress of the donor.

Ishiguro creates Kathy as a lack of self-confidence character in changing the course



of her life to show desperation and losing hope as a form of her powerlessness as Kathy's condition as a clone is revealed in that concept. Becoming a donor can be some people's will based on an agreement, and usually, a donor is ready to give her vital organs to someone close to her who is needy. However, in this story, Kathy becomes a figure who is willing to accept fate, surrenders and is unable to put up the slightest resistance.

The forest behind the dormitory is a scary place for them, even though they have never explored or gone through it and if they try to approach it or go through it, they will not be safe and survive if they return to Hailsham. It is narrated as follows

“There are all kinds of terrible stories about the woods...The woods played most in our imagination after dark” (51).

Hailsham is a setting for sadness, despair, and powerlessness that can be felt by readers through the character of Kathy. In Hailsham, they have limited time and movement, and a future they cannot design. They feel abnormal and different from human beings. They are lonely, their whole life is spent doing routines such as clones, health checks, being creative, and spending time talking with their dorm mates. One thing they never feel and know is love from a family, parents, and siblings. They do not know if they have parents. Abnormality is what makes Kathy abandon her plans and dreams of becoming a mother. Her existence as a clone means that she has no power over herself to marry, bear children, and become a mother, that is the fact that they have to accept makes them lonely.

Readers can feel Kathy's sadness in the sad song from her favorite cassette from the album entitled *Song After Dark* by Judy Bridgewater, humming and closing her eyes, and swinging her body and arms like she is holding a baby, expressed her longing and great desire to become a mother and suffering from loneliness. The cassette becomes a symbol of a memory that Kathy will always love and want to remember.

Songs hold memories of the events undergo. The song is a tool that conveys she will never be a mother. She is forced to give up everything about her dreams of the future.

The clone's misconception is that the success of a clone's life is that they can reach the final stage up to the fourth donation, whereas what should be the fourth donation means that there is nothing left of what they had. Kathy feels a dilemma regarding the future: what will their future life be like, what they will become. Here, they begin to feel that their existence is meaningless, not knowing what the purpose of their existence is. However, they are given awareness by their guardians, saying that they do not need to worry about what they will be like in the future. The students at Hailsham are special, there is no need to daydream and question the future, because they are in Hailsham becoming vital organ donors for non-clone humans.

“None of you will go to America, none of you will be film stars. you'll start to donate your vital organs...You're not like the actors you watch on your videos, you're not even like me” (82).

Their guardian, Miss Lucy firmly directly conveys that they are different from the guardians: their goals, futures, and jobs have been set before they know. Isolation makes them unable to do their activities except those that have been determined, do not meet different people. Hailsham's bankruptcy makes the students move to a new place the Cottages, in this place they are free to interact, including forming relationships with each other without any restrictions like non-clone human and they are also free to travel wherever they want without being haunted by warnings from their guards.

However, the warmth and freedom that Kathy and her friends feel is not last forever, because they cannot be released from their responsibilities as clones. When the time for donation come, her friend Ruth carries out the stages of donating her vital organs and had to give up on the third donation. Kathy



feels a very deep loss when her best friend gives up after her third donation. Then, she has to lose her friend and partner, Tommy, who she loves. She becomes Tommy's caretaker before he gives up on his fourth donation.

“The memories I value most, I don't see the, ever fading. I lost Ruth, then I lost Tommy, but I won't lose my memories of them” (280).

In conclusion, the development of science in creating clones for excessive human interest going things without thinking about the conditions of the discovery. Creating human cloning to donate their vital organs to normal humans, creates dormitories with strict prohibitions and regulations that make the clones isolated, and end with death.

3.2 Exploitation

In this novel, Ishiguro creates the character Kathy to represent exploitation. Exploitation is one of the dark sides of scientific and technological progress, especially cloning biotechnology. Checking health routinely and weekly is dangerous to human life. Kass says cloning as one of the results has quite a big impact on life because it is considered a dangerous and unethical action (11).

A clone must be fit and strong to get the best quality of its organs. For this reason, Kathy at Hailsham always undergoes a health check process which is carried out weekly. She is well-prepared and able to face deadly diseases. She must always be under medical supervision to maintain the quality of her body, especially her vital organs.

“I don't know how it was were, but at Hailsham, we had to have some form of medical almost every week usually up in Room 18 at the very top of the house with stern Nurshe Trisha” (14).

The quotation shows that their health condition check must be forced weekly as if they were unhuman beings. It means that they are exploited as Wright says that an

action that involves other people, certain groups, certain groups, or certain individuals by carrying out acts of exploitation, for their benefit and is usually carried out by actions that are detrimental to the party concerned, by depriving the rights, well-being is an action that directs exploitation (Cited in Widyaningrum 9).

Ishiguro creates Miss Lucy as one of the company's officers to on per wise the clones. She limits the clones' freedom to smoke because it can damage their health. It sounds good on the surface, but in fact, Miss Lucy forbids smoking not for the good health condition of the clones or the long lives of the clones, but for the sake of themselves and the sake of the company to get profit. In this case, they are exploited as Regulation of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia number 21 of 2007 stated that "exploitation can be defined as actions with or without the victim's consent which include but are not limited to prostitution, forced labor or services, slavery, or practices similar to slavery, oppression, reproductive organs or unlawfully moving or transplanting organs or body tissue or the use of a person's energy or abilities by another party to obtain material and material benefits."

“But what you must understand is that for you, all of you, it's much, much worse to smoke than it ever was for me..You've been told about it. You're...*special*” (69).

Miss Lucy says “special” to show ironic fake advice and compliment that they are not. It means healthy organs will be sold at high prices to the needy market. Another strict rule that is prohibited for them is having children. They are permitted to have relationships: dating and sexual relations. They wanted their relationship to be blessed with family and children. It is narrated as follows

“the people out there were different from us students: they could have babies for sex. And even though, as we know. It was completely impossible for any of us to have babies, out there, we



had to behave like them" (84).

Transplantation organs to get material things is a form of exploitation felt by students at Hailsham, especially for women: the use of organs for transplantation into non-clone humans. The prohibition in Hailsham dormitory is a reality that has to be accepted by the clones, especially Kathy, who wants a baby and wants to become a mother.

Prohibition of smoking, drinking alcohol, and pregnancy are very important things with a certain tragic purpose. The clone's health is maintained but the goal is death. A clone that is old enough will donate until the fourth stage or until the stage where the clone can survive, and at the end, she/he will die after all the objects (vital organs) have been handed over or taken. However, Miss Lucy firmly explains the huge differences between students who are clones and non-clone humans like herself. There is a difference in socially and biologically between them. It is narrated as follows

"though we certainly knew though not in any deep sense that we were different from our guardians, and also from the normal people outside we perhaps even knew that a long way down the line there were donating waiting us" (70).

Ishiguro creates the character Madame as the representation of the company, institution, and government who have legalized the clones as one of the science and developing rules. Kathy, who witnessed Tommy, was so worried about the failure of her fourth-stage donation that Tommy managed to get through and finish it. The remaining Kathy will also go through the donation stage. She knows that she will have the same fate as her two friends,

"The memories I value most, I don't see, ever fading. I lost Ruth, then I lost Tommy, but I won't lose my memories of them" (280).

In conclusion, the development of science in creating clones for excessive human interest going things without thinking

about the conditions of the discovery. Creating human cloning to donate their vital organs for normal humans, makes the clones oppressed, lose their freedom, treat the clones like slaves, and end with death.

IV. CONCLUSION

The dark sides phenomena that arise from the progress of science in society are clearly shown through its deviations, i.e. alienation and exploitation. There are two concepts of alienation, i.e. people who alienate others, and those who are alienated. Madame, Miss Lucy, and Miss Emily represent the characters who alienate others. Kathy H, Ruth, and Tommy represent those who are alienated. Alienation is represented by characters as representatives of the government or company who agree with developing science and technology that found that cloning. The clones' life is separated and different from the normal humans by creating them in a lonely, hopeless, and strictly regulating dormitory. This condition is supported by the setting.

Exploitation is represented by Madame, Miss Lucy, and Miss Emily who act as if they are looking after and educating the clones even though they are only representatives of the authorities to ensure that the clones are always in good health until the vital organs are harvested to be given to donor recipients. The clones are exploited by the strange,

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