



# Problem of Psychological Disorder and Memory in Kazuo Ishiguro's *A Pale View of Hills* and *Never Let Me Go*

Ms.K.Shiny, Ph.D Scholar, Tiruppur Kumaran College for Women, Tirupur

Dr. Bhagyalakshmi.A, Associate Professor of English, Tiruppur Kumaran College for Women, Tirupur

## Abstract

Kazuo Ishiguro is one of the world's most famous contemporary writers. Ishiguro in his works, he focuses on symbolism and narrative techniques which detailedly explore the themes of psychological disorder. *A Pale View of Hills*, Ishiguro's first novel has been described as having a culturally Japanese location and setting reached in its unique narrative style. Ishiguro constructs a unique twentieth century world in *Never Let me go*. The novel explains human cloning that transplant organs for human. Traumatic memories is the most predominant theme in Ishiguro's novels specifically in *A Pale view of hills* and *Never Let me go*.

**Keywords :** Symbolism, narrative techniques, psychological disorder, cloning, culture, memory, trauma.

## Full Paper:

Kazuo Ishiguro is one of the most famous contemporary novelists. He is a Japanese-born British writer. He is a Nobel Prize winner, screen writer and short story writer born in Nagasaki in 1954. Ishiguro left Japan at the age of five and moved to England, later he turned to be a British citizen. The home of Ishiguro is midway from Japan and England and is caught between Japanese and English culture. He won the Nobel Prize in literature in 2017.

Throughout his literary career, Ishiguro has created a wide range of characters, settings, and plots and has worked in many genres. He has been equally successful in creating female and male central characters. One of the most important themes has been the role of memory in shaping characters' understanding of themselves. A common

link among Kazuo Ishiguro's novels is written in first person narration. He also reveals part of his plots step by step, so the readers feel it as a detective story. His style of writing is somewhat loose and he makes the readers to arrange the plot and understand themselves. Each novel opens as a mystery and later slowly untie the mystery. Ishiguro's novels are preoccupied by the memories. His protagonists try to overcome the gap left by their loved ones and loss of family members.

Ishiguro grew up in post-war England. After the war, the country underwent heavy changes and rebuilt itself after the war. Due to Ishiguro's exposure to post-war environments, the concept of social change due to political change is a reoccurring theme in his works.

Every book of Ishiguro is written in a different style and genre. He has written detective novel, science fiction, post-war novel and fantasy novel. His novels are both realistic dramas and universal fables.

The novel, *A Pale View of Hills* feels close and personal to Ishiguro as the author came to the United Kingdom from Japan. The novel contrasts eastern and western cultural transition. The protagonist Etsuko is the narrator of the story. She lived in Nagasaki during 1950s. Her family was already becoming aware of traditional Japanese values and soon those traditional values were displaced by western beliefs. Etsuko's father in law Oganta San clearly noticed the change in loyalties.

Etsuko and Sachiko craved for independence. Both women decided to leave Japan for a western country, taking their daughters with them. In the end Keiko, the first daughter of Etsuko was unable to be happy in United Kingdom so she hanged herself in her room. Keiko's death becomes the key factor contributing to her mother's psychological condition. Etsuko's second daughter was Niki. She seemed to have a questionable relationship with her mother. The novel begins with Niki's conversation with her mother about her sister Keiko's death. Niki blindly accuses Etsuko as the only reason for Keiko's suicide. But Etsuko without directly accepts the situation, she manages her inner mind feelings and guilt and starts to narrate the post war happenings in Japan during the early 1950s. She talks about Jiro, her husband and her father in law Oganta San's traditional beliefs. Etsuko narrates the story of her Japanese friend Sachiko and her daughter Mariko. Etsuko learns Mariko is an unhappy child. Like Etsuko, Sachiko also takes her daughter Mariko to America after she married Mr. Frank, an American soldier.

Etsuko clearly opposes Sachiko's carelessness towards her daughter Mariko. Like her daughter Keiko, Mariko is a very problematic child, who often runs away from her home. Sachiko is not concerned about her child. Sachiko and Mariko were the two real people in Etsuko's life to realise her mistake that she had done in the past. Etsuko tries to recall the past by implying at her grief and blame through them.

Ishiguro in his novel *Never Let Me Go* creates an unimaginative world, where the main characters are confused as a human being as they are clones and searching for an identity as a separate individual. The novel is a science fiction. Kathy is the main character of the novel. When the novel begins Kathy. H is a thirty one year old clone. Kathy. H narrates the story through her memory. She remembers the boarding school of Hailsham, where Kathy and her friends Tommy and Ruth are the fellow clones. When Kathy and her friends were twelve years old, the adults from Hailsham informed them that, first they would be carers next they would become donors when they die.

Kathy's autobiographical narration of the story witnesses the traumatic events in her life. Her inner conflict is living in a dystopian world which is full of malpractice and treatments. Kathy talks about the clones and their terrible living. She starts her argument by religious context, using Bible as example. Adam as the clones and Eve as the superiors. It is not possible for the clones to become humans and for the humans to become God. Kathy relates several incidents about Ruth, her friend. Ruth pretends to be talented at chess when she does not actually know how to play. She pretends that a pencil case has been a gift from her favourite teacher which she had bought it for herself. But Kathy becomes good friends with her, and when she loses her favourite cassette tape which features a song called *Never Let Me Go*, Ruth tries to help find it.

Kathy feels Hailsham is the place filled with happy memories. All the guardians in Hailsham love the students and protect them. This kind of memory picturizes positive feelings for Kathy. But Kathy's problem is related to her identity, her relationship with others and her conflict with the wider world. It is not possible for any clone to live joyfully in an desperate institution away from city. Their intentional aim is to become an organ donor or to die. Kathy's unpleasant memory about Hailsham is revealed through her narrative. It unfolds her concern about Ruth's desire to demand and own the things. Ishiguro portrays the characters Kathy and Etsuko equally. Like Kathy, Etsuko also recollects her traumatic memories through her friend Sachiko and her daughter Mariko.

Kathy recalls the memory with Ruth that once Ruth asks her to play with the imagery horses. Kathy is very sure that Ruth does not able to own the horses in real. Because clones are not allowed to own this kind of things in their life. These horses exist only in Ruth's imagination and this context explains Ruth's wish to possess something on her own. The things that the clones own is sales and exchange. When the clones try to sell or buy something, the institution will record everything clearly. The clones are impossible to possess something on their own. So it is very clear that having a horse as a pet is impossible for the clones. Kathy allows Ruth to imagine her fantasy about having horses. Kathy as a staff dislikes the rules formulated by Hailsham and so she desires to break the situation at the institution and she wants to be a leader to change the environment in Hailsham.

Hailsham provides the opportunity for the students to produce artworks. But the staff always discourage the students from producing this kind of works. Students after completion of their artwork show their work to Miss Lucy. She refuses to encourage the students and her comments will be always negative. When Tommy, Kathy's friend shows the artwork to Miss Lucy, she commented that as rubbish. After hearing this comment Tommy dislikes to create artworks. Miss Lucy's only ambition is not to make the students create art work further. She feels that the students who create artwork will become a human soon, so she always comments negatively.

Miss Emily gives her students the writing assignment. When the students explain about their work to Miss Emily, she does not encourage the students to complete the task. She hesitates to support the students because the students' writing process can develop their critical thinking. Kathy writes about Victorian novels. Victorian literature always focuses on freedom. So Kathy writes the essay in relation to Victorian literature and indirectly points out Hailsham's policy and the treatment of clones and their liberty, equality and freedom.

In both novels, the protagonists do not reveal their psychological problems through their narrative straightforwardly. *A Pale View of Hills* presents the problem of Etsuko as arising directly from the death of her daughter. Ishiguro is interested in exploring the conflict within the lives of the characters. The conflict has been caused by their desire to achieve professional. *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro no longer focuses on the idea of professional or familial relationships. On the contrary, he explores how the memory of the character contributing to her problems. Ishiguro not only focuses on the causes of the characters' psychological problems, he also introduces literary techniques into the narratives to suggest the characters' symptoms.

**References:**

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