

Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go and the Hidden Movement of Eugenics in Early 20th Century

D. Monica

M.A. M.Phil , St. John's college, Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli. 627007, India

Abstract

This article tries to explain the early advancement of science in the medical field. It goes further to the eugenics movement where humans are produced through cloning method, which was not widely accepted by the people. The paper also relies on the novel Never Let Me Go and the central character Kathy who is a clone. It also explains how the eugenics movement has affected the life of clones in the novel.

KEYWORDS: Cloning, Eugenics, Science, Organ donation.

Introduction: The condition of clones in the novel Never Let Me Go:

Science is an education process that allows the minds to question in an attempt to find answer. The growth of scientific equipments and technology were very recent. The changes science has made in our lives are very useful. These unpredictable changes where picture in the form of novels and other forms of art. One such novel is Kazuo Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go", in this novel the novelist attempts to project the life of cloned humans and their emotion.

The human clones in the novels only purpose is to donate their organs when the real human dies. The clones are grown in a situation that they are only for the purpose to donate their organ and they felt its right. They are designed in a way that their organs can be removed. They are biologically manipulated to follow their path. This novel circles around the central character and narrator Kathy, who is also a clone. The novelist effectively pictures the emotional trauma and the condition of the cruel scientific society through the narration. Other characters are Tom, Ruth and the teachers in the school Hailsham.

If we trace the narration of the novel, the whole story was taken place during the first half of the 20th century when the new ideas of Eugenics were at its peak. Eugenics idea spread among the Britain, educational society was also formed in the name of 'Eugenics Society' in 1926. The main purpose of Eugenics was to form a righteous society through cloning. Initially there were two ideas; one is achieving an intellectual society through the goinment of two peoples from the higher values and society in order to produce a valuable human into the society. Thus they wanted to record the DNA of the people. The other form is by coning through artificial labs. Selected people from high social rank over several generation by virtue, health and character involved in this artificial way of producing a valuable humans. Through this they wanted to achieve an intellectual society worldwide. Their aim is also to control the transmitting genetic diseases and disorder.

The Hidden Eugenic Movement:

Sir Thomas More's Utopia gave rise to the idea of eugenics. Utopia is a imaginary moralistic and intellectual county, where eugenics tries to implement the idea through the help of modern equipments. Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) was an important person when it comes to Eugenics movement. He coined the term Eugenics which means 'good by birth', he was influenced by Charles Darwin's theory of Natural Selection. He believed the society of people is determined by the environment they live. He argued that by developing the environment a child can develop his genetic quality and transport to the future generation. There were many other people involved in this movement were sexologist Havelock Ellis, Dr F. W. Mott. George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells also involved in this movement. Though this concept was not widely accepted by the religious people, they thought that is this against the law of God.

There were two types of eugenics positive and negative eugenics. Positive eugenics proposed by selecting two people from the higher rank in the society with no diseases, high virtue, high character to form a family. Through thought they thought they can build up a more positive society. In the negative eugenics they

The religious people opposed this movement because they believe God is the center of the creation, so no man can create a human being. They thought that the whole idea of eugenics is against God. The new idea of the growing technology made people afraid of the new scientific inventions. With the influence of the films and other art forms science was at its peak during the latter half of the 19th century. There were also some people who were afraid of the growing technology.

Eugenics was in the need of scientific and biotechnological equipments. They thought of producing artificial human beings through cloning. This movement had a great impact on all art forms, from then many questions arose in the concept of cloning. From then the cloning of humans were prohibited in Britain in 1990, by the Human Fertilization and Embryology Act. Though there are also some positive means of cloning it was found evil by the society.

With this concept, the novel Never Let Me Go grows on. The novel revolves around the central characters Kathy, Ruth and Tommy who are also clones and the student from Hailsham. The students from the school of Hailsham are cloned they are modified in such a way that if a natural human being is affected from an organ failure these clones should donate their organ. They are artificially cloned only for this purpose, this may seem evil but they are taught only for organ donation. In the school, under the control of Miss. Emily, the clones learn arts.

But in the middle part of the 19th century, some ordinary peoples, religious movements opposed the idea of cloning. The idea promoted by the eugenic movement also disported. The idea of cloning was banned in some parts of the world. It was through Madame, we come to know that the school for clones Hailsham was closed because of the government order.

But you must try and see it historically. After the war, in the early fifties, when the great breakthroughs in science followed one after the other so rapidly, there wasn't time to take stock, to ask the sensible questions. Suddenly there were all these new possibilities laid before us, all these ways to cure so many previously incurable conditions. This was what the world noticed the most, wanted the most. (NLMG 257)

The people started to know the negative side of the clones, that they are extraordinary humans with high intelligent. As Miss Emily tells Kathy and Tommy the end of the novel, the fear has always been present among the humans about the clones, "enhanced characteristics, superior intelligence, superior athleticism, that sort of things" (NLMG264). The people always have fear for clones because of their hidden birth.

In the closing end of the novel, Morningdale scandal is introduced. According to the novel there was a person named James Morningdale, who wanted to create "Superior intelligence, superior athleticism" (NLMG258) through cloning. So he chooses a small village in Scotland and works on his research. But he was found out, that he is going against the nature. So there after, genetic engineering was prohibited all over the World. This was during nineteen fifties. There were also other people like Morningdale wanted to create a supreme being that made fear among the people, which made to put an end to all the genetic research in the novel.

It was never such a large matter in the wider world. 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. Of course, there'd been others with similar ambitions, but this Morningdale fellow, he'd taken his research much further than anyone before him, far beyond legal boundaries. Well, he was discovered, they put an end to his work and that seemed to be that. (NLMG 258)

People only realized lately that the organs came from nowhere:

And for a long time, people preferred to believe these organs appeared from nowhere or at most that they grew in a kind of vacuum... by the time they came to consider just how you were reared, whether you should have been brought into existence at all, well by then it was too late. (NLMG 257)

This was one reality from the society of England during the end of Second World War. At first the idea of cloning, genetic engineering was new to the people and also to the scientist. So they promoted well. When they started to realize that the growing technology and science are against nature, people started to regret, because of the fear. In the novel, the funds to run the school were not given, after the Morningdale Scandal: "all those influential people would once been so keen to help us, well of course, they all

vanished" (NLMG259), the words of Miss Emily. This was also the reality of England, during the end of the Second World War.

This was the mentality of the humans at that time. But it was too late for the clones in the novel. They are produced and have lived half through their life. Tommy and Kathy the two clones fell in love, they wanted to be together for some more time, but they are not allowed. When they asked time to Miss Emily says, "Your life must now run the course that's been set for it" (NLMG261). That is they should be prepared for their organ donation. The clones are well educated, intelligent and well brought up. So they asked question against the whole system. "Why did we do all of that work in the first place? Why train us, encourage us, make us produce all of that? If we're just going to give donations any way, then die, why all there lessons? Why all those books and discussions?" (NLMG254).

This was the only rebellious question asked by Kathy in the novel. When the clones realized their place in the society, they want concern for their feelings and emotions, though they have set up their mind for donation. They wanted to clear why all the efforts were put in to educate them, it only they are going to donate their organ and die. This was the realization of the clones about their life. It was cruel when Miss. Emily replied, that they were educated to show the world that the clones have soul inside them, when the art of clones exposed in an art gallery. There'd be cabinet ministers, bishops all sorts of famous people coming to attend. There were speeches, large funds pleaded. "There look". We could say. "Look at this art! How dare claim these children are anything less than fully human? Oh yes, there was a lot of support for our movement back then, the tide was with us" (NLMG256-257)

The schoolers wanted to prove the world that the clones are human beings and have minds of all other humans. The subject of cloning and the clones humans were new to the people, so they are afraid as well as excited to see the clones in the form of humans. They funded in much in the school to promote the organization. But once they realized that, it's against nature and God's will, they stopped funding. This shows the attitude of humans towards clones, the humans look down upon the clones, and they thought the only purpose of clones is to donate their organ for the welfare of humans. The clones in the novel are also used to the idea that they are only for organ donation.

It was the impact of eugenic movement in the novel. When the idea of eugenics, by Galton was promoted it was a new theory and all the people and scientist were overjoyed with the idea. This was the result of the production of clones in the novel. When they started to realize that it was against Nature and God, and also this idea can be used for the negative purpose, the people were afraid, because the clones came from nowhere. They can even turn into monsters. If a small mistake done in the grooming of clones, it may become a threat to the whole mankind. So as a result they are closed genetic engineering and turn back to Nature and God. This was the result of closing Hailsham and similar other institution in the novel.

The students in Hailsham can donate their organs for four times and then they die. When the students come to know about this they thought this is absurd, because the life they have to suffer after one organ donation. This makes the humans more evil. It seems

really cruel where the teachers care for them from their childhood teaching them about life and taking it away from them. They do not really do anything in between their donations, it is not an enjoyable time for them, they are in a lot of pain and sometimes it takes them months to recover. And as soon as they are feeling better they get the call for the next one.

Conclusion:

Through this many question arose in the mind of readers, is there anybody waiting for the organs of these students? Or someone has financially inversting on the student? Or for the sake of charity, to the welfare of the people in the society? And if so, why not take them all at the same time, if the organs are going to several different people anyway?

The world is full of patients who are waiting for new organs. The sooner they get the organs the better. The issue of cloning can be seen as a vehicle for the discussion on what makes us human, and what makes the clones inhuman.

Blaker, Charles P. Eugenics: Glaton and After. Cambridge: UP of Harvard, 1952.

Lynn, Richard. Eugenics. United States of America: Greenwood Publishing

Group. 2001.

Dinello, Daniel. Technophobia! Science Fiction of Posthuman Technology. USA: UP of Texas, 2005.