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ETHICAL LITERARY CRITICISM; KAZUO ISHIGURO'S WORKS THROUGH ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Ethical literary criticism can be described as an approach to interpreting modern English literature, offering readers a chance to explore the moral complexities and ethical dilemmas of the stories that shape our understanding of the world. As we learn the different types of contemporary literary works, we face with characters, themes, and narratives that present profound ethical dilemmas and challenge us to reflection the human choices. This research analyzes Ishiguro's works through ethical side, analyzing the ethical dilemmas faced by his characters, the ethical responsibilities of authorities, and the societal reflections described within his narratives.

Keywords: literary criticism, ethical literary criticism, moral critique, fiction, novel, organ donors, euthanasia.

Introduction

Kazuo Ishiguro, the Nobel Prize-winning author, is famous for his works that include deep human emotions, relationships, and societal norms. Therefore, there can be found different views about Ishiguro's works as they can be interpreted differently by the critics, particularly, "Never let me go".

"As with any work of fiction, Ishiguro's novel can be interpreted from different perspectives and applied to different contexts. It, therefore, comes as no surprise that there have been numerous focused and contextualized readings of the novel by scholars in the domains of political theory, critical feminist theory and queer theory"

"The novel has also been used as a framework for a fresh engagement with a range of legal issues, including multi parentage and even alternatives to the current same-sex marriage regime".

Ishiguro's novel, which is a famous work of fiction, may thus have great practical importance in that it also closely related to the reality that someone's healthy organ can save another's life. As an example, the overwhelming demand for healthy organs and events like the recent Netcare scandal in Kwa-Zulu-Natal where kidneys were bought from the poor to be transplanted into Israeli patient suggest that the events depicted in the novel might indeed be closer to possible reality than we would like to believe. With this in mind, we look at systems of obtaining donor organs and propose an alternative approach in the upcoming chapters of the dissertation.

Through deep examination of novels such as "Never Let Me Go," "The Remains of the Day," and "Klara and the Sun," this research aims to reflect the ethical dilemmas of Ishiguro's novels and the importance of understanding morality and human behavior. Kazuo Ishiguro's literary works explore variety of human emotions, moral issues, and societal reflections, attracting readers into his unique



world where ethical dilemmas shape the lives of characters. Through his novels, Ishiguro presents ideas that describe the complexities of human behavior, the consequences of individual choices, and the broader ethical frameworks that control societies. Kazuo Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go" presents a dystopian world where clones are created for the purpose of organ donation. Through the characters of Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy, Ishiguro provides obvious ethical dilemmas that challenge societal laws and raise questions about the value of human life. Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro raises a number of ethical questions, including:

the ethics of cloning;

using clones as organ donors;

euthanasia; ("the practice of ending the life of a patient to limit the patient's suffering".)

Ishiguro does not provide any answers to these questions neither in his novels nor in his interviews. Instead, he gives us the ethical dilemmas faced by the characters in the novel. The first dilemma in the novel that the reader faces is the ethics of cloning, which is a complex and controversial issue.

There are a number of potential benefits to cloning, including:

Medical benefits: to create organs and tissues for transplant, which could save the lives of many people.

Reproductive benefits: to help infertile couples have children.

Scientific benefits: to study human development and disease.

However, there are also a "number of potential risks associated with cloning, including: Health risks: cloned animals have a higher risk of developing health problems than naturally conceived animals. Social risks: this process can lead to a society where people are treated as commodities. Ethical risks: it raises a number of ethical questions, such as: Is it ethical to create a human being who is genetically identical to another person? Do clones have the same rights as other human beings?"

So, the main question to discuss is the ethics of using clones as organ donors is another complex and controversial issue. On the one hand, cloning could provide a much-needed source of organs for transplant. On the other hand, there are concerns about the ethical implications of using clones as organ donors. One concern is that using clones as organ donors could lead to different acceptance of humanity. Once we start using clones for organ donation, it could become easier to justify using them for other purposes, such as experimentation or even slavery which is not quite normal. Another concern is that using clones as organ donors could devalue human life. If we start to see clones as nothing more than a source of spare parts, it could lead us to lose sight of the value of all human life. The ethics of euthanasia is another complex and controversial issue. "There are a number of arguments in favor of euthanasia, including:

Freedom: People should have the right to choose to end their own lives if they are suffering from a terminal illness.

Compassion: This process can be a compassionate way to end the suffering of someone who is dying.

Dignity: Euthanasia can allow people to die with dignity and on their own terms."

However, this is not as easy as it is described and given in the novel. There can be some complexities that are related to this process. For example, there can be some errors: there is a risk that euthanasia could be performed on people who are not actually terminally ill or who are not competent to make a decision about ending their own lives. The next one is, abuse: euthanasia could be abused by family members or caregivers who want to get rid of a loved one.



In Kazuo Ishiguro's next novel "Klara and the Sun," the intersection of humanity and artificial intelligence (AI) challenges readers to reconsider what it means to be human and the significance of our relationship with technology. Through the eyes of Klara, an Artificial Friend designed to provide companionship to a young girl named Josie, whilst Ishiguro shows the complexities of AI companionship, the examples of empathy, and the ethical considerations surrounding human-robot interactions. One of the central themes in "Klara and the Sun" is Klara's ability of understanding and empathy. Despite being an artificial being, Klara demonstrates a keen sense of empathy towards Josie and others around her. Her observations of human emotions and behaviors lead her to develop a thorough understanding of the complexities of human relationships and the nuances of emotional responses. Through Klara's interactions with Josie and her family, readers witness her growth as a character with a moral sense of her own. Klara's decisions, such as her willingness to sacrifice herself for Josie's well-being, raise questions about the nature of empathy and the psychological boundaries of AI. Ishiguro challenges readers to consider whether Klara's actions stem from programmed responses or genuine moral senses. However, as Klara's bond with Josie deepens, questions about the nature of their relationship and the ethical responsibilities involved arise. Readers are faced with the ethical dilemma of whether it is morally acceptable to form deep emotional connections with AI companions, knowing that they are programmed and designed to fulfill specific roles.

In general, there can be found a number of ethical questions in the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro "Klara and the Sun", including:

The ethics of creating artificial intelligence that is increasingly human-like.

Replacing human beings, friends or even some jobs that require less human contact with AI.

Treating AI as property even though it is ready to sacrifice itself for the advantage of the little girl, Josie.

The right or wrongness of creating extremely human-like AI is a rapidly evolving field. "One ethical concern is that AI could be used to create autonomous weapons systems that could kill without human being. Another ethical concern is that AI could be used to create surveillance systems that could track and monitor people without their consent". Another ethical concern raised by Klara and the Sun is the possibility of replacing human beings with AI. As AI becomes more capable, it is possible that AI could replace human beings in a variety of jobs and other roles. Another ethical issue in Klara and the Sun is the question of whether AI should be treated as property or as a free being. If AI is treated as property, then it can be bought, sold, and used in any way that the owner sees fit. However, if AI is granted some form of legal freedom, then it would have certain rights and responsibilities.

In Kazuo Ishiguro's following novel which is called "The Remains of the Day," the themes of duty, loyalty, and personal sacrifice are described, attracting the readers to the ethical dilemmas of Stevens' commitment to his role as a butler. Through the character of Stevens, Ishiguro presents a moral obligation, and the consequences of suppressing personal desires in service to a larger cause. Stevens, the dedicated butler of Darlington Hall, embodies the traditional values of loyalty and duty to an almost obsessive level. His commitment to his role as a butler, as defined by his employer Lord Darlington, becomes the central focus of his life. Ishiguro presents readers with the ethical dilemma of whether such loyalty to duty is acceptable or misguidance. Stevens' sense of duty extends beyond just service; it becomes an integral part of his identity. His belief in the importance of a butler's dignity and professionalism leads him to suppress his own emotions, desires, and



personal needs in service to his employer. Ishiguro wants readers to question the ethical boundaries of duty when it comes at the expense of personal fulfillment and emotional authenticity. As Stevens narrates his memories and experiences at Darlington Hall, Ishiguro reveals the level of Stevens' moral blindness. Stevens' loyalty to Lord Darlington, despite the questionable political views and misguided beliefs, highlights the ethical complexities. Through Stevens' narrative, Ishiguro wants the readers to identify the actions of turning a blind eye to injustice, immorality, and the consequences of one's actions. The first obvious ethical dilemma that is experienced by the readers is Steven's overly loyal character. The hero does not even think about how far should loyalty to one's employer go or is it ever right to follow orders that one knows to be morally wrong. He just follows them without even questioning.

Here is an example from the novel itself;

"Stevens continues to serve Lord Darlington even after he learns of his master's support for the Nazis. Stevens says, "I had served Lord Darlington for many years, and I had always considered it my duty to obey his orders without question."

This particular part shows us how hilariously obsessive can someone's obedience can get. The next example of ethical issue given in the novel is a person's duty in front of their employer, even though his orders may oppose to his own morals and rules.

"Stevens feels that he has a duty to serve Lord Darlington, even though he knows that Lord Darlington's actions are morally wrong. Stevens says, "I had always believed that my duty to Lord Darlington came before all else".

So, here a question arises, when is it right to disobey orders or is it ever right to disobey the law.

In conclusion, Kazuo Ishiguro's body of work offers a profound exploration of ethical dilemmas that resonate deeply with contemporary society. Through his nuanced characters and intricate narratives, Ishiguro invites readers to grapple with questions of memory, identity, and moral responsibility. His portrayal of the human condition emphasizes the complexities of choice and consequence, prompting us to reflect on our own ethical frameworks. By examining themes such as loss, regret, and the search for meaning, Ishiguro not only captivates his audience but also challenges them to confront the moral implications of their actions. Ultimately, his literature serves as a mirror for our own ethical journeys, reminding us that the struggle between right and wrong is an intrinsic part of the human experience.

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