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Unreliable Narration in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005)

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Submitted by

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Dedication

To Dr Dallel Sarnou for her love and patience.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

In Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go* (2005), discusses the topic of medical revolutionary advances that touch human rights in the way it deals with the themes of human cloning. Although this was one of main themes raised by readers and critics, Ishiguro pointed out, that his work is not meant to be taken as a warning against science or bio technology. Thus, many readers wonder about what he really intended as a main theme especially that *Never Let Me Go* is rarely observed as a sci-fi novel. Human. Thanks to the uncanny nature of this novel's characters, the settings and narrational feature's proved an unprecedented uniqueness.

Narration which is to be the main filed of this research, is the aspect that I would consider as the most interesting for me, and *unreliable narration* in particular. This research will take *unreliability* in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go* (2005) as a theme and will examine it via the mechanisms of many approaches and viewed by the means of a set of the most influential theories.

CONTENTS

General introduction

An unreliable narrator is a first person narrator whose trustworthiness and credibility is exceedingly questionable. This narrator cannot be trusted, they can mislead the reader through the narrative either for ignorance, extreme naivety, inability to accurately observe the surroundings or, as in many cases; committing mistakes and lying. It is a storyteller who tells the reader a story that cannot be directly taken as true. This kind of narrators a can add much to horror, crime or mystery genre and intensify their obscure side. In fact, they are not always deliberately liars, but we as readers can notice them by observing the contradictions they make to their own actions or sayings back and forth in the narrative.

The use of this type of narrator would enormously reinforce the literary value of the story because compared to stories narrated from the point of view of the 'perfect' protagonist, who is always telling the reader the truth, the 'misunderstood' narrators might highlight much more fascinating details to be interpreted and decoded than characters who are 'infallible' doing what a protagonist have to fulfill.

In *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), Wayne Booth first recognized the critical concepts of the *reliable* and *unreliable* narrator. Booth defends that the notion of *reliability* was best defined in terms of its underlying relationship to the implied author. But his attempt was not mainly considered as a secure one. In the late years, many protracted debates have persisted regarding this central issue. And in the more recently years, more interesting unreliably-narrated works have induced critics to an exploration of this literary device. In this quest, however, most critics have attempted to keep the concept of *narrative unreliability* secured, in terms of the unreliable *narrator*'s relationship with the *implied author* mostly and also, following other perspective (Chatman 1978; Riggan 1981; Rimmon-Kenan 1983; Prince 1987; Booth 1991; Baah

1999; Phelan and Martin 1999; Yacobi 2001; Olson 2003; Booth 2005; Nünning 2005; Phelan 2005).

Being interested in the issue of perspectives and points of view in observing the world, I found myself automatically attracted to the aesthetic taste in narrational subjectivity and describing things around us. However, my passion in discovering people way of perceiving the world has been more oriented to literature after my reading of J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* in which the narration could be tricky and inconvenient but still, astonishingly, attractive and pleasurable.

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, as a work that embraces a very unique perspective of narration due the abnormal nature of it narrator Kathy H and the environment where she grew, attracted my attention and pleased my passion for subjective description and personal opinions that reveal one's true self and vision to life. I thought that understanding unreliability would be a way to obtain more 'access' to people's minds and philosophies in view of the fact that authors have proven a second personality during the process of writing; and this second personality is the one that makes an author differs from the others and concludes the author's experiences, interests, and intelligence.

As a fan of this literary device and due to my deep regard to Ishiguro's style of writing and unusual way of employing unreliability in *Never Let Me Go.* I came up with these questions:

1. The issue of Kathy's humanness has been raised frequently by critics and readers, and it has been thought to be the reason of her narrow way of understanding the events around her. Thus, one would wonder: is

unreliability in Never Let Me Go a result of Kathy's uncanny personality as a clone?

2. To what extent can we consider Kathy's voice as a source of information about the fact of her world? And in case Ishiguro's has aimed this novel to a certain type of 'an investigating reader' how much space of interpreting and decoding are we given as readers of *Never Let Me Go*?

In attempt to answer the previous questions, I set forward the following hypothesis:

- It is highly credible that unreliability is a literary device, however, it still can be found as a 'phenomenon'. In *Never Let Me Go*, it is doubtless that it has been intentionally employed by Ishiguro as a device. Nevertheless, the path it took may be subconscious and arbitrary to large extent.

- Unreliability is indeed intended for intelligent readers and it is impossible that we limit the wide range of interpretations of the narrator's voice, however, the author's thoughts and viewpoint are not a to be interpreted but rather they are meant to be detected and understood in a relatively similar way that cannot extremely digress from what it has been purposed by the author.

- Enjoying a 'blasé' mind is one of the key elements to understand unreliable narrations regarding the fact that even the most shocking event are banalized by the authors and narrators. However, in *Never Let Me Go* this cannot function as in other works in view of her abnormal fictional world and Kathy's contested humanity.

The research will involve a set of analysis of these ideas and explain the tendencies that *unreliability* took in the this book, by using the corpus (I.e. the novel itself) and the secondary resources that I had a huge difficulty to find which leads

me to ascribe some shortages in this research to this problem. The work will be divided into three parts whereby the first part will embody scholars' approaches to *unreliability* and points of view about it. The first part that I entitled Unreliability in literature will summarize the theoretical aspect of unreliability and will attempt to suggest the most accurate and reasonable definition of this literary device.

The second chapter entitled *The nature of Kathy and Ishiguro's presence in her voice* will be concerned with the relationship and *distance* between the *implied author* and *narrator*. It will discuss the nature of the clones in general and more precisely, the personality of Kathy H and attempt to find the most suitable interpretations of her voice with paying attention to the singularity of her nature as a clone and the fact that she had a poor interaction with the world as a Hailsham student.

The third and last chapter that I entitled *Unreliability in Never Let Me Go,* is the one that I consider the most significant one. It pays attention to the elements that made us consider Kathy's voice unreliable and discusses the possible interpretations of her storytelling. It analysis her voice within the setting and her interaction and distance with the *reader*, *naratee* and *implied author*; and everyone's positions and perspective of the facts and event of the novel.

Introduction

This part will introduce us to the concept of *unreliability* and shall expectedly provide us with a sufficient sum of understand of it by discussing the critics approaches and mechanism of analyzing this literary device. We will attempt to afford the theoretical aspect of unreliability according to what scholars have said about it not only in literature but in other productions that contain narration.

1 Definition of Unreliability

Wayne C Booth in *The Rhetoric of fiction* was the one who added the term *Unreliable Narrator* to the standard critical lexicon. He, however, described his new born terminology at the early 1960s such as "the implied author," "the postulated reader," Even further he suggests "narrator is often radically different from an implied author who creates him" (p.152). That is to say, a narrator is observed as unreliable if his description and way of expression convey personal vision and judgmental tendency that deviate from those of the implied author. Consequently, the unreliable narrator notion would mostly be seen as a "text-internal" matter between "the implied author" and the "postulated narrator (the second self of the author) (p. 151). Olson suggests that "Booth's emphasis on the pleasures of exclusion suggests that the reader and implied author belong to an in-group that shares values, judgments, and meanings from which the unreliable narrator is ousted" (p. 94). Even though, it remains the vanguard source of inspiration for narratologists, Wayne C Booth's definition of unreliable narrator had to go through many further classification and refinement by a fine number of narratological scholarly persons who generally direct a large sum of interest to the

author, narrator and reader interrelation, with no visible sense of agreement (see Chatman,1978, 1990; Cohn, 2000; Rimmon-kenan, 1983).

In the light of definition of Chris Baldick in his *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms.* We can figure out that the unreliable narrator is untrustworthy but not necessarily by his nature:

Unreliable narrator, a *NARRATOR whose account of events appears to be faulty, misleadingly biased, or otherwise distorted, so that it departs from the 'true' understanding of events shared between the reader and the *IMPLIED AUTHOR. The discrepancy between the unreliable narrator's view of events and the view that readers suspect to be more accurate creates a sense of *IRONY. The term does not necessarily mean that such a narrator is morally untrustworthy or a habitual liar (although this may be true in some cases), since the category also includes harmlessly naive, 'fallible', or ill-informed narrators. A classic case is Huck in *Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884): this 14-year-old narrator does not understand the full significance of the events he is relating and commenting on. Other kinds of unreliable narrator seem to be falsifying their accounts from motives of vanity or malice. In either case, the reader is offered the pleasure of picking up 'clues' in the narrative that betray the true state of affairs. This kind of *FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVE is particularly favoured in 20th-cetury fiction: a virtuoso display of its use is William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1928), which employs three unreliable narrators—an imbecile, a suicidal student, and an irritable racist bigot (269).

The unreliable narrator does not assume knowing the characters' psychological status or what they are thinking, but he rather shares guesses about them. At many cases their guesses are not right, attempting to relate "unreliable narrator." This storyteller would observe the surrounding in a normal way and convey their own portrayal of it as any reader would do. (101).

2. Theoretical approaches

2.1 Wayne C. Booth approach

As the first one who introduced the term unreliable narrator, Wayne C. Booth was the earliest to rethink the reader part of narration. Thus, his approach to this sort of storytelling is considered reader-centered. He states,

"I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not" (158).

Booth's definition was criticized by Peter J. Rabinowitz for over focusing on a number of extra diegetic issues including the ethics and norms that necessarily have to be ruined by personal opinion of the narrator. Accordingly he proposed a modification of the approach to unreliable narration.

There are unreliable narrators (c.f. Booth). An unreliable narrator however, is not simply a narrator who 'does not tell the truth' – what fictional narrator ever tells the literal truth? Rather an unreliable narrator is one who tells lies, conceals information, misjudges with respect to the narrative audience – that is, one whose statements are untrue not by the standards of the real world or of the authorial audience but by the standards of his own narrative audience.

[…] In other words, all fictional narrators are false in that they are imitations. But some are imitations who tell the truth, some of people who lie (107).

2.2 Rabinowitz approach

Rabinowitz who had a different critical vision suggests that the concern must be rather the status of fictional discourse vis-à-vis factuality. He debates the question of "truth in fictionality", suggesting the four types of audience who function as "receptors" of any given work of literature:

1. Actual audience (people who read the book)

2. Authorial audience (audience to whom the text is addressed)

3. Narrative audience (imagined audience)

4. Ideal narrative audience (audience who accepts what the narrator is saying uncritically)

Rabinowitz also adds "In the proper reading of a novel, then, events which are portrayed must be treated as both 'true' and 'untrue' at the same time. Although there are many ways to understand this duality, I propose to analyze the four audiences which it generates." At the same manner, Tamar Yacobi has also came with a model formed of five criteria 'integrating mechanisms' that Instead of relying on the device of the implied author and a text-centered analysis of unreliable narration, assumes being able to decide if a narrator is reliable or not. Ansgar Nünning gives debates that unreliability in narration can be understood and reconceptualized only in the context of a solid theory and of the cognitive strategies of the reader.

[…] to determine a narrator's unreliability one need not rely merely on intuitive judgments. It is neither the reader's intuitions nor the implied author's norms and values that provide the clue to a narrator's unreliability, but a broad

range of definable signals. These include both textual data and the reader's preexisting conceptual knowledge of the world. In sum whether a narrator is called unreliable or not does not depend on the distance between the norms and values of the narrator and those of the implied author but between the distance that separates the narrator's view of the world from the reader's world-model and standards of normality (Rabinowitz).

When it is observed in this way, unreliable narration is considered as the readers understanding and deconstructing it according to their understanding. For example, dealing with discrepancies of narrator according to Nünning is certainly an outcome of over relying on the value judgment and difference and every individual's moral code which variable and reflects a personal taste or opinion. Recently, Nünning and Booth's points of view have been criticized by Greta Olson. She pointed out many discrepancies in their respective models. (Olson)

> *[...] Booth's text-immanent model of narrator unreliability has been criticized by Ansgar Nünning for disregarding the reader's role in the perception of reliability and for relying on the insufficiently defined concept of the implied author. Nünning updates Booth's work with a cognitive theory of unreliability that rests on the reader's values and her sense that a discrepancy exists between the narrator's statements and perceptions and other information given by the text.*

Furthermore she offers us "[…] an update of Booth's model by making his implicit differentiation between fallible and untrustworthy narrators explicit." Olson then debates "[…] that these two types of narrators elicit different responses in readers and are best described using scales for fallibility and untrustworthiness."[93–109] She

believes any text of fiction in which unreliability is used as a device would most accurately be observed via a naive trustworthiness and then should end with unreliability. Following this model she suggests that that face of being reliable or not is a decision that can only done by the reader in the simplest way.

2.3 Recent studies

As a narratological feature, the term *unreliability* is representing a highly significant concept. The critical investigations that dealt with unreliability are generally formed of two groups that might have a certain level of intersection. One group is the which, tackles unreliability as a text that the implied author has encoded and it is the encoded reader's job to decode. This group adopts a rhetorical approach. The second group by contrast prefers a constructivist/cognitivist approach that concentrates a process of interpretation and suggests that unreliability is only dependent on the divergent readings of the actual reader. The following pages are to deal with unreliability in a systematic way to provide a sufficient sum of understanding.

3 The Rhetorical Approach to Unreliability

3.1 Basic Understanding of the Concept

The "canonized" rhetorical definition of fictional unreliability of Booth (Nünning 1997a: 85) by the majority of narrative theorists. Chatman (1978) sees unreliability as the point of view conveyed through the discourse not his personality (234), since the narrator's personality is highly problematic and this is a logical reason of the birth of unreliability according to him. However, Chatman's concern with the

story-discourse distinction has driven him to narrow down the preoccupation to the narrator's untrustworthiness in storytelling. Thus, the implied reader's interference is one of the major reason of the lack of reliability of the storyteller (233).

When observing the unreliable reporting of story elements, we would notice a gap that comes between discourse and story. That is considered as a reflection of the narrator's misinterpretation and evaluation of characters and events. This clash is be found more seemingly between the author's implicit discourse and the narrator's explicit discourse.

Cohn's distinction between "unreliable narration" and "discordant narration" (2000: 307) is in fact in terms of the intentionally encoded fictional unreliability, there is still always an implicit clash between the narrator's discourse and the implied author's discourse even along the essential facts of the plot. The former only is in fact only concerning the axis of facts when the latter, in contrast, is more expected to be concerned with the values axis, which might lead to incoherence between the narrator and the author. However when we regard the factual unreliability that sets that is set behind this clash between "story facts and discourse presentation", one still have "discordant narration," due to the fact that we still have a gap between the "mis-" or "disinformed narrator" and the adequately or accurately informed implied author whose standards constitute a norm by which one can judge the narrational unreliability in literature by the rhetorical critic by any axis.

Due to the fact that the gap between extradiegetic or heterodiegetic narrator and the implied author is in most cases limited, with some exceptions (see e.g. Cohn 1999, 2000; Yacobi 2001; Pettersson 2005), many narratologists had to generally deal with unreliability in homodiegetic narration context. Remarkably in this type of narration,

the text contains only the account of a first-person narrator, and to that extent as we have decoding process in concern, the "implied author's norms" can only be an issue for the reader's judgment, inference and (see Booth [1961] 1983: 239–40). As Phelan (2005: 48) points out, flesh-and-blood readers can attempt only "to enter the authorial audience" with or without success.

A taxonomy was suggested by Hansen (2007: 241–44) of four types of unreliability where the first is *intranarrational* that takes place only within one narrator's discourse. The second one is *internarrational*, in which a narrator's unreliability is "unveiled by its contrasts" with other narrators' viewpoint. The third type is the *intertextual* unreliability, "based on manifest character types" such as naïfs and madmen. But one can only find a narrator mad or naïve generally throughout the some extra narraiotanal criteria of the of a storyteller's discourse according to the norms of the genre expectations and world knowledge in place of comparing this narrator with narrators who share some aspects with in other literary text. And finally, the fourth and last type is *extratextual* unreliability, which is dependent on "the knowledge the reader brings to the text" for its very presence. Because these criteria evoke a "shift" from "text to reader" (which raises the question of incompatible standards—see below), Hansen's (2007) classification of the fourth type does not quite match with the previous types classification , since readers who embody different strategies of reading, frames of conception or in different backgrounds may come with the extremely different intranarrational or internarrational phenomena.

3.2 Features and Causes of Unreliability

In terms of the difficulties in arriving at the implied author's norms, Rimmon-Kenan ([1983] 2002: 7–8) points to many textual features that may indicator of the

unreliability of narrator: (a) contradiction between the narrator's views and the real facts; (b) a gap between the true outcome of the action and the narrator's erroneous earlier report; (c) consistent clash between other characters' views and the narrator's; and (d) internal contradictions, double-edged images and the like in the narrator's own language. Wall (1994) draws our attention to the subconscious verbal particularities or "mind-style" of the first-person narrator (Fowler 1977; see also Shen 2005a) which "form discursive indicators of preoccupations" that "might be one of the most readily available signals that the narrator is unreliable" (Wall 1994: 20).

Given that numerous types of texts attempt to be more visible than the other different features of narrational unreliability. The emphasis of Wall's seems to be more capable applied to certain texts but not to others necessarily.

As for the cause of the unreliability of the storyteller. Chatman (1978: 233) highlights that it may emerge from a number of factors such as "cupidity (Jason Compson), cretinism (Benjy), gullibility (Dowling, the narrator of The Good Soldier), perplexity and lack of information (Marlow in Lord Jim), and innocence (Huck Finn)." Riggan (1981) who has devoted a deep study of unreliable narrators from all types as picaros, madmen, naïfs or clowns, pointing to the relation between a hardly arranged and deviant mind and the device of unreliability in narrating personal experiences of someone. Rimmon-Kenan ([1983] 2002: 101–02) declares the existence of only three main sources of unreliability in narration: "The narrator's limited knowledge; his personal involvement; and his problematic value-scheme (76–7) Fludernik, suggests, on the other hand, the different reasons that cause the same sorte of unreliability; e.g. the factual type may emerge from either a "deliberate lying" or from "the narrator's

insufficient access to the complete data," or it may form "symptoms of a pathological scenario."

Olson (2003) makes a distinction between "fallible" and "untrustworthy" narration, the former can accurately be attributed to external conditions when the latter is a consequence of the narrator's wrong position. Both unreliability types may cause highly different and distinct responses from the reader, whose job is come with justifications to the former according to the circumstantial involvement while keeping critical and skeptical towards the latter.

Dan Shen (Ph.D. Edinburgh) finds that Olson's differentiation value is unquestionable. However, his distinction would be more memorable if only she has used different terms such as "circumstantially unreliable" for the former type and "dispositionally unreliable" for the latter.

> *In fact, Booth, upon whose theory Olson bases her distinction, uses "untrustworthy," "fallible" and "unreliable" interchangeably* ([1961] 1983: 158). *While Booth makes a point of including the "circumstantial" kind, asserting that unreliability is "more often a matter of what James calls inconscience"* (159), *Schwarz excludes the "circumstantial," arguing that "Stevens is more an imperceptive than unreliable narrator; he is historically deaf to his implications rather than untruthful"* (1997: 197). *We need to bear in mind, however, that (un)reliability essentially concerns whether the narratorial discourse is able to report, interpret or evaluate events and characters correctly or sufficiently. No matter how honest a narrator is, so long as her/his discourse fails to meet these standards, the narration will* (see Phelan 2005, 2007; McCormick 2009).

3.3 Estranging vs. Bonding Unreliability

When previous research have mainly dealt with the ironic aspects of unreliability. Phelan (2007), on the other hand, observes a distinction between "estranging unreliability" and remain unreliable. Just as a person's view may change in the course of real life, the degree of a narrator's (un)reliability may vary at different stages of the narration "bonding unreliability". For him, narration in a comprehensive and balanced way needs certain effects and techniques on the readers. He emphasizes on the affective, and ethical relationship to the narrator. "The estranging type increases the distance between the narrator and the authorial audience, while the bonding type, conversely, reduces that distance". Phelan concentrates on bonding unreliability, of which he identifies six subtypes:

1) Literally unreliable but metaphorically reliable

2) Playful comparison between implied author and narrator

3) Naïve defamiliarization

4) Sincere but misguided self-deprecation

5) Partial progress towards the norm

6) Bonding through optimistic comparison

4 The Constructivist/Cognitivist Approach and its Relation to the Rhetorical

4.1 Yacobi's Integrating Mechanisms

Yacobi was the first one to pioneer the constructivist approach (1981, 2001, 2005), he directed attention to how textual incongruities can be resolved by the reader following five integrating mechanisms:

1) **The genetic:** attributes fictive oddities and inconsistencies to the author's production of the text, regarding them as the author's mistakes, among other things.

2) **The generic:** appeals to *generic* conventions of plot organization such as the progressive complication and the happy ending of comedy.

3) **The existential:** this principle refers incongruities to the fictive world, typically to canons of probability that deviate from those of reality, as in fairy tales or in Kafka's "Metamorphosis."

4) **The functional:** The "functional" mechanism attributes textual incongruities to the work's creative ends that require such oddities.

5) **The perspectival:** principle ascribes textual incongruities to the narrator's unreliable observation and evaluation as symptoms of narrator/author discord (see McCormick 2009 for a good application of these mechanisms).

Ph Dan Shen, argues that when we study Yacobi's mechanisms in scientific manner one would notice that they have considerably suggested various alternatives of strategies rather than supplementary ways to find logic in unreliable narration paradoxes. Accordingly, mechanisms 1 and 5 are diametrically opposing to each other in a diametrical way. While mechanisms 1 and 2 and 1 and 4 are not compatible with each other "(only the perspectival or the generic goes with the functional, the former

being a specific case of the latter). These competing or contradictory mechanisms, however, may function differently for readers with different world/literary knowledge or social identity or in different cultural/historical contexts."

4.2 Incompatible Yardsticks

To understand the relation between the two approaches concerned (i.e. rhetorical vs. constructivist/cognitivist), it is important to distinguish when and how they conflict and when and how they do not. In terms of critical coverage, there is no conflict, but rather complementarity. The rhetorical approach tries to reveal how the implied reader (a critic who tries to enter into that reading position) deals with one type of textual incongruity—the gap between narrator and implied author—while Yacobi's constructivist approach tries to show how different actual readers deal with textual incongruities in general. However, in terms of yardstick, there is a conflict between the two approaches. For Yacobi, who uses the reader's own "organizing activity" as the guiding principle (1981: 119), all five mechanisms are equally valid (e.g. regarding the narrator's problematic claim as the author's own mistake is as valid as treating it as a signal of the narrator's unreliability against authorial norms). It should be noted that many cognitivist narratologists do not share this position. Rather, they are concerned with generic readers who are equipped with the same "narrative competence" (Prince [1987] 2003: 61–2) and who share stereotypic assumptions, frames, scripts, schemata, or mental models in comprehending narrative in a "generic context" of reception (see Shen 2005b: 155–64).

From Yacobi's constructivist viewpoint, unreliability in narration concerning the perspectival mechanism, is in fact just "a reading-hypothesis" that, "like any conjecture, is open to adjustment, inversion, or even replacement by another hypothesis altogether […] What is deemed 'reliable' in one context, including reading-context, as well as authorial and generic framework, may turn out to be unreliable in another" (2005: 110). This makes a remarkable distinction in the rhetorical approach, which deals with the clash between narrator and implied author as being encoded and meant to be interpreted. If a flesh-and-blood reader can decode this gap in the way foreseen and expected by the implied author, they have accessed the position of the "implied reader" in a successful way. And as a result the reading process is then an "authorial" reading vs. misreading.

Interestingly, when constructivist and cognitivist critics, including Yacobi, proceed with analysis of narratorial unreliability, they themselves often take recourse to the methods of the rhetorical approach. In Yacobi's ground-breaking essay for the reader-oriented approach (1981), for instance, we see an implicit shift to the rhetorical stance. She starts by criticizing the rhetorical approach for placing unreliability in the narrator and/or the author rather than in the reader's organizing activity (119–20). Then she draws on a scheme proposed by MacKay (1972) for differentiating information and communication: the former is defined from the viewpoint of the receiver and the latter "cannot be defined without reference to the viewpoint of the transmitter" (122). As for the literary work, Yacobi asserts that usually there is no doubt "about the very existence of communicative intent on the author's part" and that the relations "between implied author and reader are by definition functional and hence located within the framework of an act of communication" (122–23).

Yacobi values the variability of context here. However, the general context is only concerned with textual materials, because it is only dealing with "the modalities of the unreliable source(s) of narration vis-à-vis authorial communication" (123). Yacobi points a distinguishing between two types of unreliable narrators: the unself-conscious versus the self-conscious, the unreliability of latter is in fact "harder to detect than the unsuspecting monologist's" (124). This position is unambiguously rhetorical: the implied reader here "detects" unreliability using the textual features that the author has encoded by the implied author to be interpreted. In a similar envirenemt, Yacobi is not considering unreliability "within the reader's organizing activity" but in the storyteller and the writer, and as a result the yardstick that we need with unreliability is the norms of the implied author or "overall design" (125).

"Authorial Rhetoric, Narratorial (Un)reliability, Divergent Readings." One of Yacobi's recent essay (2005).As it is included in her analysis (e.g. 1981: 124–25), for the sake of grasping "authorial rhetoric," any critic has to have as an aim the attempt to access the position of the implied reader. So as to arrive at the authorial reading, argues Shen:

>   *By contrast, in interpretive practice we find "divergent readings" attributable to the differences among actual readers and various contexts. It is very important to investigate divergent actual readings—unreliability in different actual readers' eyes—either synchronically or diachronically (see Zerweck 2001; V. Nünning 2004; Yacobi 2005). But if we acknowledge, in Yacobi's own words, that a literary narrative is a "communicative act" that "cannot be defined without reference to the viewpoint of the transmitter," we*

must avoid taking actual readers rather than the implied author as the basis for

narratoinal unreliability. (Shen 2005)

4.3 Nünning's Shifting Position

We can find another representative of the constructivist/cognitivist approach in the work of Ansgar Nünning. We can also observe some shifts to the rhetorical position (1997), a constructivist attitude is adopted in this case: "a structure is not by its nature inherent in a literary text; rather the structurally is construed by the perceiving human consciousness" (115). However it stand out in this assertion:

> *"The information on which the projection of an unreliable narrator is based derives at least as much from within the mind of the beholder as from textual data. To put it quite bluntly: A pederast would not find anything wrong with Nabokov's Lolita; a male chauvinist fetishist who gets his kicks out of making love to dummies is unlikely to detect any distance between his norms and those of the mad monologist in Ian McEwan's 'Dead As They Come'."* (Nünning 1999: 61)

The measure of unreliability remains with the norms of the reader that are highly ethically problematic in conflict with the norms of the implied, a question of the former subverting the latter. In contrast to this, Nünning (1997) concentrates on "the textual and contextual signals that suggest to the reader that a narrator's reliability may be suspect" (83). In places of this kind, Nünning's reader is in related to "the value and norm system of the whole text" (87) and accordingly it is identical with the implied reader that the rhetorical approach focuses on.

Nünning after this (2005) attempts to synthesize the constructivist/cognitivist and rhetorical approaches. He criticizes openly the former approach for it neglected the authorial or textual function (105), however the rhetorical approach was not safe from criticism for having failed to afford sufficient attention to readers' interpretive strategies or conceptual frameworks (91–9). Nünning's synthetic "cognitive-rhetorical" raises many questions such as: "What textual and contextual signals suggest to the reader that the narrator's reliability may be suspect? How does an implied author (as redefined by Phelan) manage to furnish the narrator's discourse and the text with clues that allow the critic to recognize an unreliable narrator when he or she sees one?" (101). these questions, however, come only from the rhetorical account of Nünning's "synthesis." The constructivist/cognitivist approach will raise, on the other hand; some very different questions such as: When faced with the same textual features, what different interpretations might readers come up with? What different conceptual frameworks or cultural contexts underlie the divergent readings?

5 Cognitive Investigation with the Rhetorical Yardstick

Obviously, it is possible for us to tackle a cognitive approach to unreliability without having to employ a rhetorical yardstick. Nünning (2004) directs attention to different type of readers changing interpretive frames throughout historical contexts. The essay was started with a quote from Booth ([1961] 1983: 239): "The history of unreliable narrators from Gargantua to Lolita is in fact full of traps for the unsuspecting reader." following Booth's rhetorical measures, Vera Nünning tries to expose many traps of interpretation—how various historical contexts impact readers' schema of conception and falsify the original meaning, which results "misreadings" (A. Nünning 2005: 99). By considering conceptual frames We can extend the point that only the rhetorical yardstick is valid in studying Nabokov's Lolita, Zerweck (2001: 165)

highlights that, "depending on whether real-world frames or literary frames are applied by the individual reader," thus, it is possible to read the novel in two opposite ways: either as "a highly unreliable narrative" or "as a subtle metafictional game" in the case of being dropped in this game that plays with the literary convention of unreliability, the rhetorical critic is meant to decide the more suitable interpretive hypothesis as the one the implied author intended when writing. In contrast, the cognitivist critic can hardly afford a description to opposing readings. But it is the interpretive frames of the implied author that Nabokov had thought of and expected the implied reader to recognize and share with him. That really matters to reach to the very intended meaning of the text.

6 Unreliability in Film and Autobiography

6.1 Unreliability in Film

The Unreliable narration device "can be found in a wide range of narratives across the genres, the media, and different disciplines" (A. Nünning 2005: 90). Even though both the rhetorical and the cognitivist/constructivist approaches to unreliability have consternated manly on fictional prose, many narratologists have focused their attention on unreliable narration in movies and autobiography, among other genres. Chatman (1978: 235–37, 1990: 124–38) expands the discussion of unreliability to film, in which the possibility of the emergence of more dramatic impact is higher. *"since a voice-over depicting story events may be belied by what the audience sees on the screen. Interestingly, the cinematic camera can also be used to mislead the audience temporally for certain effects* (Chatman 1978: 236–37, 1990: 131–32; see also Currie 1995; Bordwell 1985; Kozloff 1988)."

6.2 Unreliability in Autobiography

The same manifestations of unreliable narration as in fiction: misreporting, - misinterpreting, misevaluating or underreporting, misinterpreting, evaluating can be found in non-fictional genre "autobiography" in the domain verbal producing. Since in this non-fictional genre, whether the reporting is right or accurate often causes the concentration of attention only on certain elements. In terms of this factual type of unreliability, On the other hand in other fictional genres whether verbal or visual—the indicators of unreliability are often "intratextual" issues (textual inconsistencies or incongruities), in autobiography, argues Shen "the case is more complicated, since unreliability can occur not only at the intratextual level but also at the extratextual and intertextual levels". If the portrayal of events in an autobiography, however include the text itself. In this case it would not match with extratextual reality, we will be obliged to face an "extratextual unreliability"; and in case two or more works of autobiography narrate the same life experience underreporting, of events (see Shen & Xu 2007 for a detailed discussion).

Speaking about the element of relation between narrator and author, there is an important difference between fiction and autobiography. In autobiography, the implied author and narrator often mingled into one, since it often "an art of direct telling from author to audience" (Phelan 2005: 67) in which the author is the by nature, the narrator. As distinct from fiction, unreliability, in the autobiographical standards of "direct storytelling," is mostly a question of the "cognizant" reader's judgment at the expense of the "I" as the second self of the narrator-author (Shen & Xu 2007: 47–9). In addition, in autobiography, indicators of "factual unreliability" exist that are not supposedly found in fiction, exemplifies Shen: features indicating that the autobiographer (author-narrator) is fictionalizing her/his experiences (see Cohn 1999).

Autobiography, as a non-fictional genre has a lot of basic feature in common with the rest of non-fictional narratives, such as those in daily conversation and news reporting. Therefore, what has been said about autobiographical unreliability can strongly be applied in amplifying the degrees of unreliability in comparison to unreliability of narration in other types of non-fictional works as well (see Currie 1995: 19; cf. Fludernik 2001: 97–8; → Identity and Narration).

Unreliable narrator viewed by readers

Many readers would not mind a narrator who is not omniscient as long he is faithful in his description. However most reader would not prefer a lying narrator. Even though the viewpoint is objective, in light of the fact that the storyteller has made the illusion of a subjective perspective, readers are then more intimate with the characters. The narrator is not claiming he actually knows what goes on in the character's mind, but is only making assumptions. The viewpoint is objective because the narrator is viewing the character from the outside, giving no true report of subjective states. The other common narrative viewpoints are all subjective, which means the narrator has access to the interior mental and emotional states of at least one character (101).

Conclusion

Unreliability is always expressed via the voice of a first person narrator who does not give a clear picture of the events and settings to the reader. An *unreliable narrator* is not always a narrator who does not tell the truth. They can be also a narrator, who does not reveal all parts of story or who does not respect the sequence of events in the story's time line. This can be a result of a "fallible" narrator or an extremely naive one. One the other hand, an *unreliable narrator* can be a person who misjudges his

surroundings and who does not always offer 'real' or 'faire' descriptions of the settings and events.

All the approaches that dealt with unreliability agree, in general, upon the fact that unreliability as a device takes its narrative value from the readers ability of constructing and interpreting.

Introduction

This chapter will attempt to discover the nature of the clones as children and the way they have been raised in Hailsham and what is the significance of all this nature on Kathy H's personality within her fictional world. This part will also try to discover Ishiguro's presence as an implied author and his relationship with the Kathy H, the narrator and to what extant is his voice heard in her narration.

1 Kathy's voice and discourse analysis

"My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years. That sounds long enough, I know, but actually they want me to go on for another eight months, until the end of this year."

The "now'" and the "actually", that reflect how ordinary she finds her situations, the generalizations and unclearness of "they" and the exactness of "eight months, until the end of this year": Ishiguro who enjoys a fine ear to the daily humdrum has managed to create a version of 'normal talks' for Kathy's parallel fictional world. Kathy who is a "carer". Kathy calls the clones who are in the middle of their donation period "donors", she uses this jargon speaking of one of them in the third page:

> "He'd just come through his third donation, it hadn't gone well, and he must have known he wasn't going to make it." And so the association, the elision, is swiftly clarified. This is a book about evil, the evil of death, the evil of banality: "he must have known he wasn't going to make it."

2 The environment of the narrative and its effects on Kathy's persona

The setting of Never Let Me Go takes place in the late 20th century, in parallel fictional version of "an England" in which there are human beings who have been cloned and made for the purposes of donating their vital organs as soon as they attain adulthood. These people that we call "clones" are raised in an institutions built to for the clone community called Hailsham, where Kathy grew up as a young girl before her "promotion".

Hailsham is a big place surrounded by playground known as "the woods". It is controlled and supervised by "guardians" who have the responsibility of organizing the children's outdoor activities. Once the cloned children have attained the age of maturity they need to leave Hailsham and start a new type of normal young individual life, in which, however, they are offered a limited access to the normal world awaiting the donors to make their first "donation". This is the part where our carer Kathy's job in life comes in: in taking care of the donors during their donation and the end that is called "completion" in the clones register. Although this role extended her life timeline, Kathy had to suffer the series of operations and deaths young individuals of her kind.

2.1 Ishiguro's dystopia

The title of *Never Let Me Go* would give it an impression of being a romance that or at least a work that glorifies love and intimate relationships. Which might lead many to question what can be treated as a main genre of this novel. Never Let Me Go has been too often as a work of science fiction and not quite scientific by other however, its dystopian figure is uncontested. Especially, being a work of Ishiguro's who is known

for producing dystopian versions of what keeps unpleased him in humanity. But the dilemmas of the novel's period of time are not in fact, those of Ishiguro's dystopia: ill scientific achievements, violating the moral structure of life, and 'people' who are completely unconscious about the least of their rights. In many ways, what we would call the "scientific" basis is hardly present and mostly unseen: it is clones emotions and sentimental side itself that Ishiguro is interested in, for the children who never had the chance to have parents or be adopted, children who could never experience true childhood or at least be introduced to "what" really they are in this huge world. And what would possibly disturb most of Never Let Me Go readers is that a Hailsham child without parents has no other option but dying young for the sake of being exploited; that their bodies are not sacred.

2.2 Hailsham children morals and values

As we read, a suspicions starts to rise, that the children of Hailsham are blinded by the credo that their personal value and the significance of their lives depends entirely on their ability to create art. From their earliest childhood they paint and sculpt and produce poetry. After, they exchange or "sell" their works to one another at an auctions that is called "Exchanges"; the best art production at the school is selected to be sent what is called "the Gallery", managed by an old woman known as Madame, who frequents Hailsham two or three times a year in her fancy clothes to select the art that pleases her. Kathy's best friend Tommy, who was highly talented at sport activates as a child, has always bullied and mistreated for not being good at art; when he informs Kathy that one of the "guardians" has secretly reassured him that his failure in art should not keep him concerned, she receives this "viewpoint" as a scandalous heresy.

2.3 Art as the only religion for the clones

Somehow Ishiguro seems to be sharing a similar picture to the atheist vision towards religion that blinds our vision from recognizing the knowledge or awareness of our own moral code, knowledge in the context of Hailsham is essentially narrowed. Art is the only religion in Hailsahm and it could make one respected or disliked depending on the level of mastering and producing the artistic techniques works in a very similar way to what religion represents in different societies in many part of human history.

3 Kathy's questions and self-identification within her community's highest moral practice (art)

At a certain point in the narrative, Kathy remembers the fact that poems were seen as equivalent to paintings or sculptures at the "Exchanges": She always question this and found it strange.

> *"We'd spend precious tokens on an exercise book full of that stuff rather than on something really nice for [putting] around our beds. If we were so keen on a person's poetry, why didn't we just borrow it and copy it down ourselves any old afternoon?"* (16).

4 Ishiguro as an implied author and his contradicting dualities in the novel

Ishiguro's veil slips somewhat at this point: why go to such degree to recognize and downgrade the craft of writing? Is it accurate to say that he is suggesting that this what culture does to us? Or, maybe he implies his point of view in the voice of Kathy? *Never Let Me Go*, like the clones it portrays, a world that has a face twofold sort, for it values the life of humans and despises the clones. The book, would require a read who can "see into" the clone's souls and understand their inhumanness at the same time.

Playing with our human values and morals in positioning deciding one's position towards these clones would be the most disturbing and difficult burden in reading *Never let Me Go.*

5 Discrepancy, distance and unreliability in Kathy's voice

The discrepancy between the narrator's attitude and the reader's expectations of Kathy's behavior causes the tension and ambiguity that characterizes the reader's way of perceiving the narrative. This deviance from the reader's expectations of what was presumed to be a 'human', response to the conditions of the cloned people existence affords the ground for the reader's personal image of the 'dehumanizing mechanisms' applied by the fictional non-cloned or normal humans, which, actually, works to question Kathy's humanness outside the frame of the fictional world.

In order to complement Kathy's narration, we, as non-cloned, 'normal' people can sufficiently fill the gaps in Kathy's limited knowledge of the world because her lacuna corresponds with our normal knowledge as humans. Once these clones "who are, and what lies ahead of

[them]" (80) has been clarified when we are conscious from our reading of the text that Kathy and her colleagues are "different from [their] guardians, and also from the normal people outside" (66). For instance, her assumptions of intimate relationships, her common background and shared issues with the reader, only function to form what we have called distance between the 'normal' reader, on the one hand, and the non-human narrator on the other. By repeatedly quite directly inviting the readers to compare their lives with hers - "I don't know how it was where you were," "I don't know if you had collections where you were" (13, 38) -

which evokes the constant referencing to the non-fictional, England in the 1990s of the reader's, where it is impossible to be imagined that some humans could in fact be cloned for the sake of extracting organs - the contrast between circumstances Kathy is living and ours is continually brought to the foreground for Kathy does not have the tiniest idea of how things 'where we were', what and how live and where we grew up. When asking us to compare the two Englands, our attention is frequently to the poignant contrast between the conditions of two worlds - the fictional and the non-fictional. When more closely examined, the comparison made, exposes that the source of a lot of its power ascribes to the fact that disturbing parallel is half masked: as a fine number reviewers and critics highlight (D'hoker 165, Harrisson). It its been noted that Kathy's circumstances can be quite comparable to the normal human conditions for we all have a predictable life-span that is relatively similar - our lives involve naturally our attitude shaped by the unpleasant or difficult circumstances we find ourselves powerless to change or at least lighten the difficulty, and we all act as best as we can, within the limits and chances we have, to make the life we have as easy and meaningful as possible.

6 Kathy's narrowed knowledge of life

Kathy's immature experiences and her way understanding the world are bound by her limited knowledge of the non-clones inner worlds; their emotional responses, preoccupations, thoughts, and attitudes are all an outcome of what she had been taught to observe as inexplicably and fundamentally different from her own. An accurate example is the guardians' explanation of why and how sexual intercourses were not the same for clones and for "normal people outside" (82). Miss Emily, The chief guardian,

was just done of demonstrating to Kathy's class at Hailsham, the general technical aspects of the sexual act by using a pointer and two skeletons, as she went on to alert them about 'other' issues in connection with the matter:

> *with the skeleton in an obscene heap on the desktop, she turned away and began telling us how we had to be careful who we had sex with [...] because, she said, 'sex affects emotions in ways you'd never expect.' We had to be careful about having sex in the outside world, especially with people who weren't students, because out there sex meant all sorts of things. [...] And the reason it meant so much - so much more than, say, dancing or table-tennis - was because the people out there were different from us students: they could have babies from sex. [...] And even though, as we knew, it was completely impossible for any of us to have babies, out there, we had to behave like them. We had to respect the rules and treat sex as something pretty special.* (66)

The models Miss Emily uses to teach the children about sex represented aptly The underlying assumption of her words in terms of the fact that skeletons did mirror the human body but only by hinting at it due to Miss Emily's assumption that the students' experience of sex is anticipated to be different from the sex practiced by the "people out there" in a way the student would "never expect" it is fundamentally different in its basic skeletal form than what it really is, and it means "more than, say, dancing or table-tennis", and that what makes it 'really' human which was disregarded in Miss Emily's lecture. She also missed that, once visiting the outside world, students are anticipated expected to experience the desire of being a normal human, but can

"never expect" to have the same feelings 'normal people' feel, because of their very nature as clones.

7 Suspecting Kathy's humanness and narration as a result

When rethinking the reasons that makes us distrust Kathy H.'s ability to afford us a correct account, and what is 'true', about herself and the fictional world of the narrative - also wrong and/or incomplete remembering of events and her subjective way of interpreting others' feeling and actions, which we progressively learn to foresee and correct for in the frame of the fictional and non-fictional. Readers seem to have the mission of interpreting and decoding Kathy's emotional state and how she, her friends, their relationships and their childhood are subjectively portrayed, not only to the narratee, but also and more importantly, to Kathy herself. The growing realization of how much it is at debatable for her to be a human or have a 'have a soul that adds more suspicion in her capacity to narrate without deviating away from a perspective or orientation we, normal humans can relate to. Our suspicions towards Kathy's reliability outside her fictional world are resulted after we learn with Kathy and her friends at Hailsham that the clones have been always regarded as "inferior to humans" within the context of the fictional world. We, at the end, become sure as Kathy does - within Miss Emily's revealing interview - that the clones' humanity is not recognized by the majority of the non-clones,

> *However uncomfortable people were about your existence, their overwhelming concern was that their own children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, did not die from cancer, motor neurone disease, heart disease. So for a long time you were kept in the shadows, and people did their best not to think about you. And if they did, they tried to convince themselves you weren't*

really like us. That you were less than human, so it didn't matter. [...] Here was the world, requiring the students to donate. While that remained the case, there would always be a barrier against seeing you as properly human. (258)

7.1 Kathy the clone and the issue of the 'other'

Proceeding with Kathy in the first part of her narration, the reader is presumably proceeding with the 'other', the non-human, the "creatures" (36) rather than with her 'human side'. Perhaps, What many readers would find disturbing is when it is clear that these clones are being exploited, as it is stated in the novel - for the humans to attain greater health for themselves and their beloved ones - and even more disturbing when noticing calm and reserved manners towards her conditions as donator and the and inhumane treatment receives.

8   The reader's relationship with Kathy's voice

Examining the interaction between the narrator and reader, and when we return to the issue of Kathy's implied narratee, observing that the discrepancy between the reader's and narrator's viewpoint is sensed only by the reader – with Kathy unawareness of this gap – obliges the readers to position themselves as 'eavesdroppers'. The discomfort we feel when reading an account that, obviously, was not meant for 'our kind' – goes hand in glove with the sympathy on would feel towards Kathy knowing that she is unsure if she could identify herself with the non-clones of the outside. Because, as highlighted earlier, the central question brought to the fore by the narrative situation of Never Let Me Go is with whom the readers will side themselves: the mistreated, dehumanized, traumatized and exploited (yet possibly inferior to human) clones, or the 'normal' oppressors. What we can consider as tricky here is the fact that both sides seem to embody some shared human characteristics.

Kathy's words, "you choose your own kind" are directed to the policy of separation serving the normal humans' mistreatment of the clones, but they also insinuates that this view towards separateness and differentness is one of the things which Kathy has been 'taught' to accept and subscribe to.

> *We'd been taught to think about each other, but never about the guardians [...]we never considered anything from her [Miss Lucy's] viewpoint and it never occurred to us to say or do anything to support her.* (87) *So when you get a chance to choose, of course, you choose your own kind.* (04)

Conclusion

Kathy H is one of the most debatable narrators in postmodern literature. She proves a very unique point of view about the world and an extreme nativity. The issues of her contested humanity and otherness have enormously raised the questionability of her nature and the extent to which we can trust her narration in accordance with her balanced character and calm voice within the dystopian world she lives in. Kathy narrowed vision was not only a result of the environment where she was raised but also quite possibly it was an aspect of her non-human nature as a clone.

Introduction

This chapter is to discuss the dimensions of unreliability in Never Let Me Go. We will focus on the concepts of the distance and discrepancy between, the implied author, reader, narrator and narratee. We will highlight the oblivion and openness everyone's of them enjoys toward the others. In addition, we will point out the features that lead us to consider Kathy's voice as unreliable or not. Also, we will analysis the narrator's voice within the settings and attempt to come up with the most accurate interpretation as intended by the author.

1 The distance between *narrator* and *reader* (D'hoker's positions)

As it is noted by Kathleen Wall and Elke D'hoker, when investigating Ishiguro's narrators the term *unreliable narration* is used indiscriminately most of the time by critics and expert readers as well, which leads to attempt a deeper analysis of Ishiguro's technique of narration. D'hoker, in her analysis of unreliability in Ishiguro's novels states that "the concept of unreliable narration tells us very little about Ishiguro's narrative technique", calling for a "more precise definition" (148). She investigates definitions of unreliability in narration, concentrating on Booth's *distance* "between the *fallible* or *unreliable narrator* and the *implied author* who carries the reader with him in judging the narrator" where "the speaker himself is the butt of the ironic point"(304), and on Nünning's notion of "dramatic irony or discrepant awareness", is different from Booth's in such a degree it does not project the irony in the "distance between the norms and values of the narrator and those of the implied author but between [sic] the distance that separates the narrator's view of the world from the reader's or critic's world model" (61). D'hoker approves Nünning's analysis of unreliable narration and how he focuses on the "conflict between the narrator's report of the 'facts' on the level of the story and

the interpretations and judgments provided by the narrator" (Nünning 1999:58, quoted in D'hoker 150), and moves to introducing her analysis the concept of

> *[t]he interpretation of unreliability [which] depends to a large extent on the reader's ability to recognise that conflict and gauge that distance so as to arrive at a version of what really happened and at an interpretation of the narrator's frame of mind* (D'hoker 150, my emphasis).

Finally, D'hoker places the most important issue of unreliable narration (as a form of structural irony) in "the narrator's aberrant or misguided interpretation or evaluation of narrative events" (150). Never the less she generalizes all except one of Ishiguro's unreliable narrators apart from this "Ishiguro typical form" of narrative unreliability, labeling his use of the technique as being "aberrant", and as such "[loosening] the superior bond between implied author and reader and [bringing] the reader closer again to the narrator" (166), turning it "difficult, if not downright impossible, for the reader to accurately judge the distance between the narrator and the fictional world" (165). The argument states, the reader and narrator, are put more closely together "because the reader is frustrated in his or her attempt to arrive at a more accurate version of the facts" (D'hoker 166, my emphasis). For D'hoker, "Ishiguro's narrators are [...] still called unreliable [...] due to the ironic distance [...] that continues to exist in all narratives, albeit in differing degrees" (165). The following paragraphs are meant to investigate the dynamic and type of the *distance* that separates *narrator* and *reader* in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and suggest an analysis that embodies more details of the elements that constitutes the 'deviance' in Ishiguro's employment of *narrative unreliability* in this text.

1.1 The role of distance and perspective in creating unreliability

Never Let Me Go is narrated in a way that the distance between *narrator* and *reader* is highly present. Although the clear discrepancy between *narratee* and *reader*, through the narrator's oblivion to this discrepancy, through the reader's initial oblivion to the extent of this discrepancy, and through the mutual impenetrability of the reader's perspective and the narrator, which, additionally, portrays the gap between the cloned and the normal humans in the narrative.

1.2 The intended implied reader and naratee for *Never Let Me Go*

As noted by many (particularly Willems), Kathy's *implied narratee* shares a very similar background to hers in such a degree that this person is expected to understand the immediate context of the terminology of the novel such as 'carer', 'donor' and 'completion', yet who has never been to Hailsham like Kathy. The narratee is obviously not a 'non-cloned', 'normal' person - as they are referred to continually by Kathy H - and he or she does not seem to be of the people close to her in the story. On the other hand, the reader's perspective which is by necessity, a normal human (non-cloned human being) creates a discrepancy. The effects of this discrepancy between *reader* and *narratee* are to be dealt with in a more detailed manner later on in the coming pages. At this point, the main focus is on how *reader* and *narrator* are related with regard to what they know about the fictional world or the narrative. As this story is narrated with *hindsight*, during the time of narration Kathy H is already aware of the facts that characterize her fictional world and that the narrative will reveal via her narration: she knows that she is a clone made to grow and donate organs and die as a result, so the normal people would expectedly achieve higher living standards. When starting to read the novel, the reader assumes that the instructions that frame this narrative correspond with the facts of this fictional world that we live in precisely in "England, 1990s" (5) Then when Kathy demonstrates her knowledge of the

extraordinary facts of this fictional world of ours. Kathy H, at this very early point in the book, is proclaiming that she is the one who knows more about the fictional world than we readers do, and we still need to pursuit her narration to understand the singularity of her abnormal environment and that we do not know enough about it without constructing the fragmented parts of her narration, which, as a result makes the *reader* and *author* contradict with the *narrator* which would produce a typical *narrative unreliability*. This consequently makes the *author* and *narrator*, or *narratee* and *narrator*, equal in their knowledge in contrast to the inferiorly informed *reader*. This situation is meant to play with the *reader* who is in sometimes unaware of the 'conspiracy', which makes of unreliability such a tricky device full of twisting events and endings.

2 Interpreting and investigating to fill the gaps in Kathy's narration

Away from the discrepancy between *narratee* and *reader* and its effects, an important feature that reinforces unreliability in the work is the variability and impenetrability of the *reader* and *narrator*'s opinion and perspective on the world of the novel. That is to say that on the level of their experience of the fictional world, the two world views on the world have already been shaped by personal experience and interaction with the surroundings that can be either fictional or nonfictional and promotes interpretability as a result, which is the natural approach to understand any unreliable narration.

3 Adopting Kathy's technique of learning about the facts of her world

As we read forward in the novel, it becomes lucid that the way we are only informed about the features of Kathy's fictional world throughout her attempts to combine understanding and information about it. This in facts is clearer when we notice the information she obtains about the world outside Hailsham where things were "told, and not told" (79, 82), and the knowledge was indirectly "smuggled into their heads" (81) by their guardians. Kathy explains how she was acquiring knowledge about her surroundings by stating that it was "something we'd all of us grown up with [...] I'm sure I was pretty typical in not being able to remember how or when I'd first heard about it" (31). In a pretty similar manner, the reader moves decently into the first third of the narrative without having been 'openly' introduced to the essential characters of this fictional world and how it significantly differs from reality. That resembles the case of Hailsham children, we were "told and not told". We readers have one access to the general frame of the novel which is gathering this pieces of information up from Kathy's untrustworthy narration and personal remarks.

Likewise, we keep on building a larger picture about Kathy's 'position of the story', her perspective as a clone, and her dehumanized "other". In other words, the 'what' rather than the 'who' of this fictional version of England where she is learning more and more about us, or rather about the normal humans of her world, the 'normal'.

4 Discovering Kathy's character and surroundings via her narration, and familiarizing the reader with her fictional world.

Willingly by Ishiguro, it is this tiny instruction "England, 1990s" that clarifies Kathy's narration within most of the rare instances where the implied author's voice is misleadingly heard over her storytelling. It makes the readers feel familiar with this uncanny place by relating it to England that we know. The readers reaction to all these

new and interesting facts about Kathy's and the lives of her friends "who ran them, or how they fitted into the larger world" (114) – makes us response emotively regarding the inhuman way the clones are treated and the normal people's policy and attitude towards them, or both.

K. Wall (1994) suggests that "a distance between what the narrator says and what the whole structure shaped by the implied author 'means' [...] produces structural irony" (21). This would be very accurate to analyze Never *Let Me Go*. However, it still requires that we keep our attention on the *reader*'s role. Since the reader's participation is primordial to create the irony produced by "the whole structure shaped by the author" (53)

> *[Discussions] of the unreliable narrator too frequently imply an ironic distance that is inherently critical, the implied author and implied reader silently nudging one another in the ribs at the folly and delusion of the narrator* (Wall 21)

It is essential to problematize this notion of the *author* vs. *reader*; both of them united against the misled and misleading *narrator* to comprehend the particularities of the narrative situation of *Never Let Me Go*: here the *implied author* is isolated from the narrative without a clear voice that would at least hint a little clearly to his view - and the reader is left to decide for themself what to think of the fictional world and its narrator. The measured voice of Kathy, is seemingly a reflection of her surroundings and her conscious and conscientious work to befit her very human shortages of perception and memory, mixed with flashes of intimacy and a shared background between her as a *narrator* and *narratee*, encourages the *reader* to easily accede into this

old times familiar "England, late 1990s" described to us by an excellently reasonable, decent and straightforward, narrator, who will, however prove an unprecedented unreliability   in   the   coming   pages.   .

5 Unreliability or abnormality (D'hoker's debate)

Interestingly D'hoker labels Kathy as "perhaps the most reliable of Ishiguro's narrators" (164). According to D'hoker, she is not successful to understand some aspects of the normal world 'out there' that are quite ordinary to the reader. Nevertheless, in general there are many remarkable distortions of this fictional world so that it is not necessary to the reader to generate an alternative picture of the facts. (164). D'hoker point of view on Ishiguro's aberrant use of unreliability ascribes to the deviation from common aspects of narrative unreliability to the reader's lack of understanding of the facts of the fictional world, and/or to his or her failure to understand the narrator's state of mind and background in general or during narration,. If we take D'hoker's claim that the narrative unreliability in *Never Let Me Go* is somehow far from being omnipresent, we are consequently left to decide what it is precisely in the novel's context that produces this 'abnormality'.

5.1 How to perceive a narrator with a contested humanness?

When it comes to the relevant information about the fictional world needed for the reader's 'sufficient' knowledge of the facts it is delayed and somewhat difficult to identify, however, it is clearly there for both *narrator* and *reader* to interpret and position themselves to. At a certain point in the novel, we find ourselves faced with Kathy on the one hand, so far observed as rather easy to identify or at least rely on for

information. She starts to reveal herself to be a very complicated narrator at the least, and contradictorily different and impossible to convene with, the *other*; and the *normal* people of the her world, in other words 'our kind', and on the other hand, difficult to accept the policy towards clones, and potentially responsible for utterly inhuman and unfair practices resembling crimes against humanity.

Accordingly with the definition of unreliability that is mentioned above, our knowledge as readers of the facts of Kathy's fictional world in some parts moves beyond the understanding of the narrator herself. This is a result of the fact that Kathy is trapped so mainly in her narrow perspective, resulted by the way she grew up to disregard any sense of similarity between herself and non-clones. Thus it is natural that many reader would experience a sense of superiority and omniscience (Booth, 300-5). She might seem to enjoy a superiority of knowledge. This assumed superior knowledge neither the reader could prove exists nor clearly seen in the text nor readily presented by the narrator, but it rather an outcome of the reader's position as one of the non-cloned humans. So, our consequently delayed understanding of the specific facts of the fictional world is best related to the discrepancy between what we know about Kathy's world and what she assumes about the extent of the knowledge we have, or, as D'hoker argues, "the distance between *narratee* and *reader*" (164). Thus, having exluded the narrator's inferior access of the facts available to her to grasp, with taking into consideration the extent of the deviance in the narrative unreliability found in Never Let Me Go, what remains is the question of how the provided facts are interpreted by both *narrator* and *reader*. Seemingly, we would safely argue that the seam interlinking lays in the text of the narrative with the "ethics" (Phelan 60, quoted in D'hoker) of the reader to build someone's personal structure of the novel. As a result, failing, to understand the facts of the fictional world is not what lets us unsure or confused when

reading about Kathy's world and life, which leads us to the second part of D'hoker's explanation that suggests a key to understanding the deviance of the narrative unreliability in *Never Let Me Go i*s the reader's inability to arrive at a good understanding of the narrator's state of mind. Being aware of the fact that Kathy is a clone created to donate organs, our initial view towards her changes due to the fact that she is not as a complicated narrator – a person that we can expect to react as we expect we would react in similar conditions - and we start, as a result, to receive her narrative voice from a new *distance*. This *distance* embodies an awareness of a huge difference between *reader* and *narrator* and it contains undoubtedly a rousing suspicion in Kathy's credibility or ability to deliver the truth faithfully and her sanity and, finally, as it has been raised by many readers and critics her humanity, because her gentle, calm voice - her "civil tongue" (Howard) – contradicts with the oppression she experiences. This new kind of narrators provokes [T]he technique of narrative unreliability, it also supplies the reader with the three kinds of 'pleasure' recognized by Booth in terms of the effects of unreliable narration in inducing the reader to read between the lines. The three type of pleasure of Booth that this novel affords are the 'pleasure of collaboration'. In reassuring and recompensing the interpretative efforts of the reader, the reader is subsequently granted the 'pleasure of deciphering, contracting and decoding'. Ishiguro also defuses a large sum of the 'pleasure of collusion'. (154-5) in which the reader faced with these extraordinary and rather shockingly uncanny facts about the fictional world of the novel, and with these new keys to Kathy's state of mind, we are left with no choice but to feel the suspicion, not only all in what has been directly narrated, but also in all that we have ineligibly learnt and interpreted about this unique narrator. Presumably, any reader would start raising some central questions of this sort: what would I do in her shoes? Would I possibly behave and react in the same way, or might

Kathy's reactions and behavior to her circumstances be traced back to a fundamental difference between and her and me? Is her behavior and her mind state human or not? To what extent could she be reliable for information, and what are the accurate corrective mechanisms required for the reading and understanding of her narrative? Thus, Kathy's state of mind, as well as her humanness, have become of the essential questions to understand the novel. It also may prove that *Never Let Me Go* is indeed more clearly understood within the structure of D'hoker's analysis of Ishiguro's deviant use of the device of unreliability, in which the deviance is in this case related to the reader's variable interpretation understanding of the narrator's voice. The *distance* between *narrator* and *reader*, resulted by questioning our interpretation of Kathy's relative humanity and reliability, as mentioned, reduces the "pleasure" the reader normally derives from enjoying superior knowledge of the facts of the fictional world, which, consequently, troubles the reader's reaction towards the novel by creating a sort of tension, or possibly, what D'hoker calls an "openness" (160). This tension can be related to the reader's narrow understanding, not of the sequence of events or even of the storytelling, but Kathy's understanding of herself and of what is it, and is it not, to be a human. Because, this "fabrication of soothing stories to mediate an all too harsh reality, the avoidance or negation of traumatic events, the capriciousness of memory and the need to justify and rationalise one's behaviour" (D'hoker 164) is a thing that we would not always approach readily or happily, but it is, however, basically human. What really accounts for the tension we whiteness in reading this narrative is the extremity, from our viewpoint, of the circumstances Kathy adopts herself with via these technique. At this manner, Kathy's state of mind and her responses to the facts of her world, in accordance with the issue of her very human nature, become one of the primordial questions for the reader's reactions to, and understanding of the narrative.

Conclusion

It is not far from being true that the Novel's unreliability can be imputed to Kathy's abnormal nature. The fictional world's facts are portrayed tacitly by Kathy whereby her voice is not only 'telling' the event but also, discovering her surroundings which makes the reader and the implied author share the process of learning about this abnormal world with Kathy. In addition to being naive, Kathy's unreliability is undoubtedly a result of her narrowed knowledge as a student of Hailsahm.

I have mentioned in the second and third chapters some aspects that made many readers find *Never Let Me Go* disturbing to read especially for those who started reading it without any background about the abnormal settings where the story takes place, and then moved to understanding Kathy's reaction to the inhuman way she and her "kind" are being treated. I would suggest, that unreliable narrations require different reading strategies and expectations, which is the case with *Never Let Me Go*. Suggesting a number of these strategies is not the aim of this research but, I believe it would be inspiring to think some of them.

In the first chapter of this research we discussed some approaches to *unreliability* and we noted that the mechanisms of these approaches are vastly different. Attention was also drawn to the fact that scholars do not seem to agree upon one understanding of this literary device. However, most of the scholars who dealt closely with this issue do recognize relatively close defections that descend for the most part from Booth's definitions in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961).

One of my hypothesis suggests that this literary device that we define as *unreliability*, could be a phenomenon and not a playful way of the author to add more pleasure to the narrative always. "Phenomenon" here, does not refer to the fact that *unreliability* has been employed in the first place, but rather to the manifold way it takes place beyond the voice of the narrator. It is quite logical to think that it is the author's intelligence in mastering the craft of discourse that makes them able to produce a 'casual spontaneous' speech that perfectly resembles reality, uttered by an untrustworthy storyteller who will have their sanity and maturity questioned. However, once we are convinced of the implied author's presence and contribution in the process of writing this last claim would not be as unshakable as it used to seem to be. My debate that unreliability in general, and in *Never Let Me Go* specifically, could be a "Phenomenon"

is induced by my conviction that *unreliability* is mostly used as a writing strategy to fulfill the absence of 'a real plot' and interesting events. I am not taking my claim to an over generalization, however I would safely state that it is unequivocal that most of postmodern unreliably narrated works are characterized by a typical plotlessness and focusing on causalities, due to the postmodern blasé attitude towards life, this led authors such as, Ishiguro, in this narrative we are studying, to attract our attention to more 'interstation' details that we can manage to discover and rethink in the narrators voice.

In the second chapter we examined the implied author and narrator's relationship, distance and perspectives. We could prove that Ishiguro as an implied author was always present in the narrator's voice however the distance is relatively different, between them depending on the speech itself and what it tackles during the moment of narration.

In the third chapter we analyzed the character of Kathy within the frame of the novel and attempted to attain an understanding of her nature as a clone and to what extant she is a human. It is not far from being true that Kathy narrow knowledge was due to her non-human psychology although she proved some purely human feelings and reactions in the story. Nevertheless, being not completely human has contributed to a large extent in her limited understanding of the world and her unreliability in narrating consequently. We also, highlighted that, filling the gaps in the narrator's narration using 'interpretation' is the best source of information when reading such an untrustworthy storytelling.

This research was an attempt to comprehend this interesting literary device. And to summarize some of what has said about it. It was expected to offer more ink in this

issue but the lack of access to more libraries prevented such an involvement. The first chapter, has not sufficiently covered all the definitions however it could at the very least share some of the academically popular one's. The last two chapter, expressed my thoughts and impression on *unreliability* and one *Never Let Me Go* in specific. I hope I have managed to inspire more interesting debates and raise more refreshing question that might spark other research in the future or possibly suggest other perspective in tackling the issue of *unreliability*.

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