

## **Book Review of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

**Uswatun Hasanah dengan Dosen Pembimbing Eta Farmacelia Nurulhady**

**English Department, Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

### **1. Introduction**

Humans are social creatures who can not live alone in this world. Generally, humans live in this world to do something useful. When they can do something for other people, they will feel happy and proud of themselves. Sometimes to help others, some people are willing to sacrifice their own lives. When someone is sick and he or she needs blood donors, many people are willing to donate their blood for the sake of healing others. Now not only blood but also organs can be donated. Although it is not allowed for commercial purposes, organ donation is legal for humanitarian purposes.

An example of legal organ donor comes from Australia. Kim and Allan Turner registered all members of the family as organ donors in 2000. Four years later their daughter, Zaidee died because she suffered from a cerebral aneurysm. Zaidee's organ can save the lives of seven others. (ABC Central Victoria, 2014 Par 3).

Organ donation also becomes part of the theme in fiction, such as in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* which portrays the issue of organ donation that is happening in this world. This science-fiction was published in 2005 and became a best-selling novel. This novel is interesting because it gives a thought about the issue of organ donation through human clone in which there are people

who want to have a long life and want to avoid cancer by getting organ donor from their donors. The organ donors are obtained from human clone.

Based on the above description, *Never Let Me Go* is chosen as the object of this study because it has a very interesting story related to the issue of organ donation in human clone. The theme of friendship also makes this novel become more interesting. The purpose of this paper is to provide an explanation about the strengths and weaknesses of the novel. Thus, it can help the reader to decide whether this novel is feasible for them to read or not.

## **2. Summary of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

The main character in this novel is Kathy H., who acts as narrator. Kathy has worked as a nurse of donor for 11 years. Remembering the past, Kathy studied and stayed in Hailsham. Kathy had two friends. They were Tommy and Ruth.

After growing up, Kathy, Ruth and Tommy stayed at the Cottages. They also lived with two other donors. They were Chrissie and Rodney. One day Ruth, Tommy, Kathy, Chrissie and Rodney went to Norfolk. They wanted to prove the truth of a person who is considered similar to Ruth. There, Kathy and Tommy broke away from the group. Seeing that, Ruth felt jealous. Then she did everything possible to make Kathy stay away from Tommy. Kathy realized that Ruth did not like the proximity of Kathy and Tommy. Therefore, Kathy decided to leave Cottages. Then she began to work as a nurse.

A few years later, Kathy and Ruth reunited in Dover. Ruth said that she had made a donation. Her condition also became very weak. One day, Ruth and Kathy went to Kingsfield. They wanted to meet their friend, Tommy. Seeing the condition of Tommy, Ruth asked Kathy to care for him. Ruth also gave Madame's address in order for Kathy and Tommy to ask for a suspension to Madame. Thus, they could live together for several years.

After the death of Ruth, Tommy and Kathy went to Littlehampton. They wanted to meet Madame. They believed what people said. If they loved each other, they would get a suspension. After their return from Madame's house, Tommy felt disappointed and angry because he did not get a suspension. Finally, Tommy died when he had completed his fourth donation. In the end of the story, Kathy said that although she lost both her friends, she would never lose the memories with them in Hailsham.

### **3. Review of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

*Never Let Me Go* is a novel that is interesting to read. Kazuo Ishiguro as the author of this novel shows his ability to convey a moral message to the readers. He takes the conflicting issues that can attract the readers to read this book. *Never Let Me Go* has its strengths and weaknesses. They are described as the following.

#### **3.1. The Strengths of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

*Never Let Me Go* has the strengths in terms of theme, character, the title and cover. These strengths will be explained in this following discussion.

### **3.1.1. Theme**

A good story should certainly have a theme. Through the theme, reader can understand the main contents of a novel. This novel has a main theme of organ donor in human clone. This novel explains that at the time the world legalized organ donors of human clone. *Never Let me Go* has a setting of time in 1990's. In fact, in 1990's, human clone has not been done. The presence or absence of human clone in the world is still questionable. However, this novel is very interesting because the reader will think about human clone.

In the novel, human clone is created to provide vital organs. The examples of vital organs that can be donated are kidney, liver, heart etc. It is done for people who are more in need of it. The biggest happiness in life is if they can do something useful for others. This novel makes the reader think about how important life goals in this world are. People live in the world just once so they should be able to use the time as possible. The theme of organ donation can teach the reader to help each other.

### **3.1.2. Character**

Character is something that is very important in the novel because the character is very influential within the plot of the novel. Michael Meyer in his book that was entitled *The Bedford Introduction to Literature* gives definition of

character, which is “*Characters are influenced by events just as events are shaped by characters.*” (Meyer, 1990: 61) Character can make the story more interesting. The main character of this novel becomes the strength of the novel itself. The main character is someone who dominates the story from the beginning to the end of the story. The main character in this novel is Kathy H. who becomes the most important character in this novel. Kathy is a good woman. She is kind to anyone, including to her two friends. Although Ruth has a special relationship with Tommy, Kathy remains good with Ruth. Kathy also has a high curiosity.

There were lots of pictures of girls holding their legs open or sticking their bottoms out. I’ll admit, there have been times when I’ve looked at pictures like that and felt excited, though I’ve never fancied doing it with a girl. (Ishiguro, 2005: 102).

The quotation above is a form of Kathy’s curiosity towards sex. She always tries to find out about sex. Curiosity is very reasonable to be owned by a young woman.

Another character is Tommy, a grumpy man who likes to wear blue polo shirt. This is indicated when Tommy asks for a suspension from Madame but he does not get his desire.

The moon wasn’t quite full, but it was bright enough, and I could make out in the mid-distance, near where the field began to fall away, Tommy’s figure, raging, shouting, flinging his fists and kicking out. (Ishiguro, 2005: 210).

Tommy’s anger makes the reader wonder what actually happens to him. Why he becomes so irritable? Tommy becomes an important character because he is a man who is loved by his two friends.

The next interesting character is Ruth. She is a woman who has the power when childhood. “There were between six and ten of us, the figure changing whenever Ruth allowed in a new member or expelled someone.” (Ishiguro, 2005: 40). The quotation above shows that Ruth is a leader of a group that has full control over the members of the group. This character becomes more interesting because in childhood, girls usually tend to be shy and do not have the courage. Ruth has daring nature to her friends because she is more dominating than her friends.

Through the characters, the reader can imagine how the strength of the relationship between Kathy, Ruth and Tommy. It shows the relationship of true friendship. The characters in this novel also can make the story more vivid and it is as if they were real.

### **3.1.3. The Title and Cover of the Novel**

The title and cover are interconnected to each other. A good title and cover will make readers more interested in reading the novel. Good title is concise, easy to remember and in accordance with the contents of the novel. The word uses quite just two or three words in order to attract the readers. It will make the reader become curious when the reader sees it for the first time. *Never Let Me Go* is a very interesting title for the readers. It has simple words. It is also easy to remember. This book cover depicts a person wearing women’s red shirt, sitting pensively alone in a park with green grass (See *Appendix 1*). She is also seen being turned down and folded her hands. Picture of the cover novel indicates a problem that she is facing. She tries to calm herself by being in the park. The

picture also makes the reader more interested and curious about what the conflict contained in the novel. It also will make the reader to read the novel more and more.

There is suitability between the cover of novel with scenes in the end of story. In the end of the story it is shown that Kathy has lost two friends. Then one day she goes to Norfolk. She stands in an extensive field. She wants to find rest, but she recalls her past with her friends. It brings tears to Kathy's eyes. Although Kathy has lost both her friend, but she is happy. She is able to remember all the memories about them. "The memories I value most, I don't see them ever fading. I lost Ruth, then I lost Tommy, but I won't lose my memories of them." (Ishiguro, 2005:220). The quotation above indicates that Kathy never forgets the memories with her friends. She tries to remain steadfast and strong although her two friends have died. Kathy's happiness in the memories with her two friends shows her strength in the face of her problem.

### **3.2. The Weaknesses of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

Besides the strengths, *Never Let Me Go* also has some weaknesses. They are plot, the ending of the novel, and sex scene. These weaknesses will be explained in this following discussion.

#### **3.2.1. Plot**

The plot of this novel makes the reader become confused. Kazuo tells this novel with the flashback and flash forward plot. The narrator of this novel is Kathy. Readers need more concentration to read this book in order to understand

the story well. The story of this novel begins with the narration of Kathy who tells her circumstances. Kathy is a nurse. Then Kathy immediately tells that Ruth and Tommy have also donated their organ. After that, the story goes to childhood life of Kathy and her friends. Then suddenly the plot of this novel goes back to a scene of Kathy that will end as a nurse. Then the plot of this novel goes back again to adulthood of Kathy and her friends. The end of story tells about the initial situation again. Ruth and Tommy finally die because they donate their organ.

### **3.2.2. The Ending of *Never Let Me Go***

The ending is an answer from the climax of the story. *Never Let Me Go* gives the reader an open ending. Authors write stories with explanations that are not specific. The explanations that are not specific can make the reader guess the next story. In the end of the story, Kathy decides to go back to the car and go wherever she should go. In the phrase “go where she should go”, the reader can interpret that she decides to finish her organ donor then she dies. However, it can also be interpreted that she goes somewhere to escape and fight for her life. The ending of this story does not tell the reader what happened next with Kathy. When the readers read a story with an open ending, it will bring something to hang their minds. An open ending leaves the reader to be curious about the next story. Story of *Never Let Me Go* will be better if it has a closed ending with a sad or happy story. Closed ending like that has clarity ending story. Readers do not have to guess what will happen next.

### **3.2.3. Sex Scene**



In this novel, Ishiguro describes the sex scenes of some characters clearly. When Kathy becomes a nurse for Tommy, their relationship is getting closer. Finally, their proximity makes Kathy and Tommy have sexual activity. Kathy explains the sex scenes that she did with Tommy very clearly.

If he was on top, I'd put my knees right up for him; of whatever position we used, I'd say anything, do anything I thought would make it better, more passionate, but it still never quite went away. (Ishiguro, 2005: 183).

*Never Let Me Go* is not supposed to explain the sex scenes very clearly. The sex scenes are not needed because the story in the novel is not focusing on the romance novel. This novel has the theme of organ donor in human clone. However, the novel is tucking a little love story. It will not affect the interest for the reader even though no sex scenes. The sex scene here shows that human clone also has the same feelings as human beings in general. They have a passion for sex.

#### **4. Conclusion**

*Never Let Me Go* is a science fiction novel. This novel tells the story of human clone that should accept fate to donate their organs. This novel has a power to attract the reader. The strengths of the novel are the theme, character and the title and cover. Theme of organ donation makes the reader think about the purpose of life. Through this theme, the reader is taught to help each other. Donating organs is one of the glorious things to help fellow human beings. The main weakness in this novel is the plot. This novel has the flashback and flash forward plot. Readers need more concentration to read this book in order to understand the story well.

*Never Let Me Go* is a recommended novel to read by readers who love fiction novels. This novel builds a good imagination about human clone. This novel gives a thought about the issue of organ donation through human clone in which there are people who want to have a long life. They also want to avoid cancer by getting donor organs from their donors. The organ donor can be obtained from human clone.

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