Marxist Ideology In Never Let Me Go

Kazuo Ishuguro's 'Never Let Me Go' is a unique, Dystopian novel that could be interpreted as a Marxist fable. According to Marxist ideology, the working class has always been exploited to support the Capitalist oppressors, and here the idea is carried through to its logical conclusion. Ishugro's message, which has been clearly conveyed by the clones - all drawn from the lower orders of society - are used to support the bourgeoisie. The working classes have given their bodies and their health to the cause of industrialization, or to war, to protect the interests of the ruling elite. In this fable, they literally give their bodies and their lives piece by piece (through the ironically named "donations".) Through the perspective of Kathy, we are exposed to the everyday life of a clone, showing the struggles faced in the post industrialised society.

Ishuguro's description of the oppressed students at Hailsham reveals the lack of awareness of the life they have been brought into. Their inability to question their place in the hierarchy even after leaving Hailsham represents their position as the lower class, further emphasising the absence of information and freedom given to them. The bourgeoisie, as the ruling force, has control over the students and their fate as seen through Miss Lucy as she gives a direct statement; 'Your lives are set out for you...You'll become adults, then…you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you was created to do', Chapter 7 this implies that they have constantly been fed all this information about their future before they really understood their purpose in life. Throughout this novel, the characters are shown to be dehumanised into the robotised, industrialised society as they are constantly monitored with electronic bracelets, making them feel trapped and imprisoned demonstrating the lack of awareness of the outside world. In addition, the nurses in charge of keeping their organs healthy for use in the future strengthens this sense of dehumanisation, by treating them like robots rather than human beings, as though they are machines whose only purpose is donating organs, this is shown in. Moreover, through the perspective of Kathy (a clone), we see the lack of identity and understanding of who the person she is, as she questions whether her identity is connected to the person she was modeled from. This message is made clear by Ishuguro as he portrays the strength of the ruling class, to the point where their identity is hidden or unknown, therefore there is no longer an enemy to fight against.

The reasons against forming a rebellion are endless, so why didn't they? Throughout their years at Hailsham they were raised into believing that donating their organs was their only purpose so they had learnt to accept it rather than questioning their fate. As Ishuguro stated himself in an interview; 'their circumstances seem normal to them, therefore, they feel a sense of duty', rather than filling their lives with sorrow. Carers are shown to reinforce the fate of the people as they assume that it's the only thing that could happen to them so instead of questioning their fate, through their mothering, they reinforce the suppression and this gives them a greater sense of responsibility. As shown at the start of the novel, Kathy takes pride in her job; 'It means a lot to me, being able to do my work well, especially that bit about my donors staying 'calm'', this sense of pride enables them to have something to look forward to in their short lives. On the other hand, in this Marxist fable, students at Hailsham are so confined that they are punished if they question the situation they've been forced in or their destiny. Although this could create suspicion for the clones, they completely avoid any situation in which their fate is questioned for example, when Marge K. asks Miss Lucy about smoking (an activity

strictly prohibited at Hailsham) and whose prohibition is, therefore, part of the students' internalised ideology, Kathy and her friends take action: 'For days afterwards I remember how we made Marge's life an utter misery'. Ishuguro demonstrates that these oppressed students are rather afraid of rebelling and similarly in Marxism, the proletariat, struggle in an attempt to make their voices heard. Fears of standing out and being noticed by others could lead to other punishments and the implicit suggestion made by Ishuguro is that the only way we can stop the exploitation of people for the war of another class is through abolishing class altogether (ideal of socialism meritocracy) proving that the way to heal this perpetual difficulty is getting rid of stratification.

Hailsham was considered a place where the clones felt safe and innocent. Towards the end of the novel, when the students are told that it had been demolished, their innocence seems to vanish. To the students, Hailsham was a place in which they were nurtured and given a fair education. Throughout their time there they were given books to read, art galleries were created and they were even given the chance to appreciate music. This is shown when it says 'That was why we collected your art. We selected the best of it and put on special exhibitions. 'There, look!' we could say. 'Look at this art! How dare you claim these children are anything less than fully human?' (22.24). Here Miss Emily discusses the importance of art and how it's a joy of life. By participating in regular activities, the clones feel less like robotic figures and more like typical humans. As a protest against the Marxist ideology, Miss Emily and Madame use art as propaganda for the pro-clone movement. Life at Hailsham was very different in comparison to other government homes, where they were treated more like animals than humans. Miss Emily explains to Kathy the horrible state of the other homes when she says; 'At this very moment there are students being reared in deplorable conditions you Hailsham students could hardly imagine', indicating that even though the students of Hailsham are of the lower class, there are still people living harder lives than them, highlighting the immense power of the bourgeoisie over the lower classes. When Kathy mentions a donor she cared for, she explains how 'desperately he didn't want to be reminded' of the place in 'Dorset' where he grew up, instead he wanted to hear about Hailsham ('Hailsham. I bet that was a beautiful place'). Similarly, even though Hailsham students are presented as more privileged than others, they are still oppressed as they were never allowed to go beyond the grounds making them very restricted in their experience. These suggestions show that they remain victims because of the carers who smother them with attention and love, this confirms their fate as they become aware that they're modelled from the lowest in society. In addition to this, they refuse to think too deeply about their position in the hierarchy, we see this in chapter 14 when Kathy says to Ruth 'But I think Tommy's right', 'It's daft to assume you'll have the same sort of life as your model. I agree with Tommy. It's just a bit of fun. We shouldn't get too serious about it', this implies that questioning their fate might cause them to go into a state of agitation, or fear which could be avoided.

Never Let Me Go can also be seen as a 'coming of age' novel where the nature of human relationships is represented. Before they grow up to know their true purpose in life, they live the lives of regular human beings who are able to freely feel and express the emotions of anger, love and jealousy. Through the characters, Kathy, Ruth and Tommy, the romantic tragedy is visible and conflict is constantly present between them since childhood. We are exposed to the relationship between Tommy and Ruth which builds great jealousy in Kathy, just like natural human relationships, the jealousy felt by Kathy represents the struggles of love and life. Tommy is presented as a character who shows extreme anger as a child, where he would occasionally have anger outbursts, implying that he knew about the future ahead of him. Ishiguro also

portrays the dangers of scientific experimentation which has no moral boundaries, predicting how the future of society would turn out without considering moral implications. The dangers of the current societal trends towards unbridled scientific experiment and the increasing stratification of society, are what cause the cruel, corrupt world in which the clones have been deceived into.

For the most part, this novel clearly presents the conflict in the lives of the clones, who are restricted from living normal lives, and are robbed of their identity. The materialistic world they have been manufactured in shows the struggles in social and political change. Ishiguro conveys how the clones are immediately raised into Hailsham (the place which they call home) after they have been created, without the right to choose how to live their life. As they grow older the students of Hailsham are never recognised as ordinary humans, increasing their fear of standing out and being noticed by the public. The bourgeoisie (ruling class), represented by the guardians at Hailsham have full control over the oppressed students, and make sure they are healthy and fit for donating solely for the use of the ruling class. The Marxist ideology covers the state of the clones in this novel, proving that society is insurmountable as the consequences of the proletariat making themselves heard are fraught with danger.