



# Never Let Me Go

Kazuo Ishiguro

Advanced English Literature (3.2)

David Marler - Rotterdam UAS

## Workshop Goals

### Never Let Me Go

The student demonstrates knowledge of and insight into the defining characteristics of *Never Let Me Go* and can analyze the text to determine its genre.

The student has a knowledge of the characteristics of the various genres (see reader) and can discuss dystopias and science fiction.

The student can use arguments and counterarguments in their essay and strengthen these arguments with evidence from their texts. (Online/ on Moodle)



## Workshop Activities

### Never Let Me Go

#### Activity 1

Focussing on Setting (20")

#### Activity 2

Class discussion (20")

#### Activity 3

To which genre does NLMG belong? (20")

#### Activity 4

Mini-presentations on genre (20")

#### Activity 5

Reader-response criticism (20")





Hailsham was one of the most influential places in the text. As Kathy goes around caring for donors, they often ask her to recall her time at Hailsham – a place of tenderness in a cruel world – even if she hadn't ever been there. The same can be said of some of the other places in the novel. For this activity, the students will be broken into groups and each group will be given a place in the novel. Their task is simple, they have to describe what the place looks like, and state the importance of this place in the novel to the various characters.

# Activity 1

## Focussing on setting

- You will be split into 5 groups. Each group will get a place in the novel and you will discuss the following task and come to a conclusive answer that you will share after your **10 minutes** of discussion is up. The task is:  
**Describe what the place looks like, and state the importance of this place in the novel to the various characters.**

1. Hailsham
2. The Cottages
3. Trip to Norfolk
4. Tommy's Recovery Centre (Kingsfield Recovery Centre)
5. Madame Marie-Claud's house

### Activity 1: Focusing on setting (20 minutes)

Hailsham was one of the most influential places in the text. As Kathy goes around caring for donors, they often ask her to recall her time at Hailsham – a place of tenderness in a cruel world – even if she hadn't ever been there. The same can be said of some of the other places in the novel. For this activity, the students will be broken into groups and each group will be given a place in the novel. Their task is simple, they have to describe what the place looks like, and state the importance of this place in the novel to the various characters.

- 1) Hailsham
- 2) The Cottages
- 3) Trip to Norfolk
- 4) Tommy's Recovery Centre (Kingsfield Recovery Centre)
- 5) Madame Marie-Claud's house

The students will be given 10 minutes to come up with a description and analysis of their respective setting. They will then present their answers max. 2 minutes.

## Workshop Activities

### Never Let Me Go

#### Activity 1

Focussing on Setting (20")

#### Activity 2

Class discussion (20")

#### Activity 3

To which genre does NLMG belong? (20")

#### Activity 4

Mini-presentations on genre (20")

#### Activity 5

Reader-response criticism (20")



**We know from the text that Hailsham was one of the best places in the novel. What do you think that the caretakers (and Madame) were trying to do with their kinder approach at Hailsham? Why did they have them focus on creating art?**

**Why do you think that characters in the novel never revolted, ran away, or refused to become donors?**



**How does Tommy change throughout the novel? Why does he continue to draw animals even when he leaves Hailsham?**

**How did the non-clone characters react towards the clones in the novel? What were their feelings towards the clones? Why do you think they acted that way?**

## Workshop Activities

### Never Let Me Go

#### Activity 1

Focussing on Setting (20")

#### Activity 2

Class discussion (20")

#### Activity 3

To which genre does NLMG belong? (20")

#### Activity 4

Mini-presentations on genre (20")

#### Activity 5

Reader-response criticism (20")



Try to shorten the lecture as much as possible to ensure more time for activity 5.

Activity 3: Lecture: To which genre does Never Let Me Go belong? (20 minutes)

In this lecture the students will learn about various genres. We will mainly focus on the characteristics of science fiction, dystopian novels, and horror. The basis will be to move from "realism" (or literary realism) towards the more speculative and fantastic fiction.

The lecture will also focus on the themes that are common to each genre.

# Kazuo Ishiguro

**Nobel Laureate**

- Sir Kazuo Ishiguro (British)
- Born 1954 Japan
- Moved to UK at age 5
- Set his first two novels in Japan, but admits he knows very little of Japan or Japanese fiction. His oeuvre is very English.
- Nobel Prize for Literature (2017)
- Wrote *Never Let Me Go* in 2005



**Which genre does *NLMG*  
belong to?**

Ask the students for their ideas here. Critics do not necessarily agree on this!

# Dystopian Fiction

## definition

“Dystopian literature is a form of speculative fiction that began as a response to utopian literature. A dystopia is an imagined community or society that is dehumanizing and frightening. A dystopia is an antonym of a utopia, which is a perfect society.” (source: [Writing Masterclass](#)).



## Dystopian Fiction

### common themes

1. government control
2. environmental destruction
3. technological control
4. survival
5. loss of individualism (Source: Margaret Atwood)



The Hunger Games, a young adult trilogy by Suzanne Collins beginning in 2008, takes place in the fictional world Panem, a future nation on the ruins of North America. Panem's totalitarian government called The Capitol holds most of the country's wealth and controls the citizens. Each year, children from Panem's 12 districts are selected to participate in a televised death match called the Hunger Games.

# Science Fiction

## Definition

"Science fiction is a time-sensitive subject in literature. Usually futuristic, science fiction speculates about alternative ways of life made possible by technological change, and hence has sometimes been called "speculative fiction." Like fantasy, and often associated with it, science fiction envisions alternative worlds with believably consistent rules and structures, set apart somehow from the ordinary or familiar world of our time and place. Distinct from fantasy, however, science fiction reflects on technology to consider how it might transform the conditions of our existence and change what it means to be human. "Sci Fi" is the genre that considers what strange new beings we might become-what mechanical forms we might invent for our bodies, what networks and systems might nourish or tap our life energies, and what machine shells might contain our souls." ([source: Dr. Beshero-Bondar](#))



Unlike dystopic fiction, Sci-Fi is often utopian. Look at StarTrek - it is a very positive future world.



# Science Fiction

## common themes

1. aliens
2. future science
3. the end of humans
4. artificial intelligence
5. science and its effects
6. technology



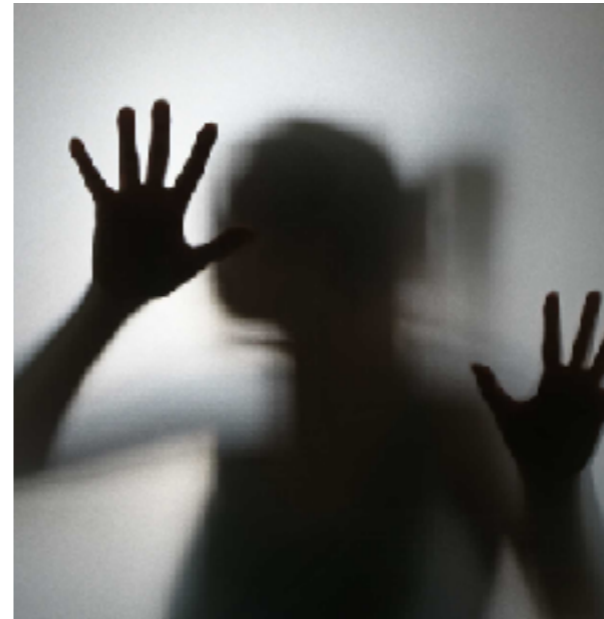
there are many more themes. Cloning is one of them!

# Horror

## definition

“Horror is a genre of literature, film, and television that is meant to scare, startle, shock, and even repulse audiences. The key focus of a horror novel, horror film, or horror TV show is to elicit a sense of dread in the reader through frightening images, themes, and situations. In the horror genre, story and characters are just as important as mood and atmosphere. A horror story often shocks and provokes with its exploration of the unknown.”

(source: [Masterclass](#))



# Horror

## common themes

1. death
2. the paranormal
3. the occult
4. dark fantasies
5. survivalism
6. science



## Workshop Activities

### Never Let Me Go

#### Activity 1

Focussing on Setting (20")

#### Activity 2

Class discussion (20")

#### Activity 3

To which genre does NLMG belong? (20")

#### Activity 4

Mini-presentations on genre (20")

#### Activity 5

Reader-response criticism (20")



## **Activity 4**

### **Mini-presentations on genre (10" in groups, 10" presentations)**

- You will be split up into 3 (or 6) groups.
- Each group will be given a genre (Dystopian, Sci-Fi, or Horror).
- You will have 10 minutes to come up with 3 instances from the novel that prove it is part of your group's literary genre.
- After 10 minutes, you will present to the group.
- Group 1 (and 4): Dystopian fiction
- Group 2 (and 5): Science fiction
- Group 3 (and 6): Horror
- Make sure to choose one person in your group to present (this person must not have shared already in class today!)

Activity 4: Genre presentations what is LMGO's genre? (20 minutes)

For this activity, the students will be split into three (or six) groups. Each group will be given a genre and the definition (see above). Each group will have 10 minutes to come up with at least three instances from the text that prove that the novel is part of their literary genre. In the last 10 minutes, the students will present their findings with the group. If you are working with six groups, then they will present their findings in two smaller groups.

## Workshop Activities

### Never Let Me Go

#### Activity 1

Focussing on Setting (20")

#### Activity 2

Class discussion (20")

#### Activity 3

To which genre does NLMG belong? (20")

#### Activity 4

Mini-presentations on genre (20")

#### Activity 5

Reader-response criticism (20")



Try to shorten the lecture as much as possible to ensure more time for activity 5.

Activity 3: Lecture: To which genre does Never Let Me Go belong? (20 minutes)

In this lecture the students will learn about various genres. We will mainly focus on the characteristics of science fiction, dystopian novels, and horror. The basis will be to move from "realism" (or literary realism) towards the more speculative and fantastic fiction.

The lecture will also focus on the themes that are common to each genre.

# Reader-Response

## literary criticism

“reader-response criticism considers readers’ reactions to literature as vital to interpreting the meaning of the text. However, reader-response criticism can take a number of different approaches. A critic deploying reader-response theory can use a psychoanalytic lens, a feminist lens, or even a structuralist lens. What these different lenses have in common when using a reader-response approach is they maintain “...that what a text is cannot be separated from what it does” (Tyson 154).” (Source: [Purdue Owl](#))



Reader response criticism is especially important for future educators because it relies heavily on the feelings or emotions that a text elicits in the reader – one of the basic principles of reading’s purpose in education.

AKA. The reader’s response to the text (what they think, what they feel, what they experience) is important to understanding the meaning of the text. *If the reader does not see an object as a symbol, it most likely isn’t one.*

## Activity 5

### Reader response criticism

- You will take ten minutes to think and write down a small paragraph about how you experienced the ending of *Never Let Me Go*. Consider your feelings, how the language worked, the emotions it elicited, the questions it left you with.
- You will then spend 10 minutes in small groups sharing your texts.

Reread the final paragraph for the students:

“I found I was standing before acres of ploughed earth. There was a fence keeping me from stepping into the field, with two lines of barbed wire, and I could see how this fence and the cluster of three or four trees above me were the only things breaking the wind for miles. All along the fence, especially along the lower line of wire, all sorts of rubbish had caught and tangled. It was like the debris you get on a sea-shore: the wind must have carried some of it for miles and miles before finally coming up against these trees and these two lines of wire. Up in the branches of the trees, too, I could see, flapping about, torn plastic sheeting and bits of old carrier bags. That was the only time, as I stood there, looking at that strange rubbish, feeling the wind coming across those empty fields, that I started to imagine just a little fantasy thing, because this was Norfolk after all, and it was only a couple of weeks since I’d lost him. I was thinking about the rubbish, the flapping plastic in the branches, the shore-line of odd stuff caught along the fencing, and I half-closed my eyes and imagined this was the spot where everything I’d ever lost since my childhood had washed up, and I was now standing here in front of it, and if I waited long enough, a tiny figure would appear on the horizon across the field, and gradually get larger until I’d see it was Tommy, and he’d wave, maybe even call. The fantasy never got beyond that – I didn’t let it – and though the tears rolled down my face, I wasn’t sobbing or out of control. I just waited a bit, then turned back to the car, to drive off to wherever it was I was supposed to be.” (from "Never Let Me Go (English Edition)" by Kazuo Ishiguro)”

The students will then be asked to take five minutes to write down “what they have learned or taken from *Never Let Me Go*.” They will write a short review and then share them in small groups.