



PROJECT MUSE®

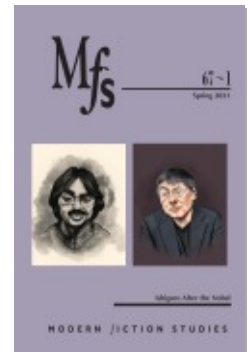
Ishiguro's "Strange Rubbish": Style and Sympathy in
Never Let Me Go

Adam Parkes

MFS Modern Fiction Studies, Volume 67, Number 1, Spring 2021, pp.
171-204 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2021.0007>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/786763>

🔗 *For content related to this article*

https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=article&id=786763



Ishiguro's "<Strange> Rubbish": Style and Sympathy in *Never Let Me Go*

Adam Parkes

Here is the famous opening paragraph of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, a novel about clones narrated by a clone:

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. That'll make it almost exactly twelve years. Now I know my being a carer so long isn't necessarily because they think I'm fantastic at what I do. There are some really good carers who've been told to stop after just two or three years. And I can think of one carer at least who went on for all of fourteen years despite being a complete waste of space. So I'm not trying to boast. But then I do know for a fact they've been pleased with my work, and by and large, I have too. My donors have always tended to do much better than expected. Their recovery times have been impressive, and hardly any of them have been classified as "agitated," even before fourth donation. Okay, maybe I *am* boasting now. But it means a lot to me, being able to do my work well, especially that bit about my donors staying "calm." I've developed a kind of instinct around donors. I

know when to hang around and comfort them, when to leave them to themselves; when to listen to everything they have to say, and when just to shrug and tell them to snap out of it. (*Never* 3)

Such writing seems designed to exaggerate its own plainness—its anti-literariness. Stylistic resistance to literary expectations is hardly new. A point that is often made about Hemingway—that what seems to be an anti-style is still a style—clearly obtains here. As Christopher Ricks has observed, moreover, the printed page tends to flatten any voice. For prose especially, the printed page “is crude in its notation of intonations; it cannot but harden intimations into what Beckett, in *Company*, calls imperations: ‘Same flat tone at all times’” (276). In *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro ostensibly parodies the drab euphemisms of modern bureaucracies and corporations (“carer,” “donation”) with their faux-therapeutic regard for emotional states (“calm,” “agitated”) (3). But the sort of writing we encounter in Kathy’s opening paragraph—punctuated by such tired idiomatic phrases as “waste of space,” “really good,” and “snap out of it”—pushes the resistance to style to a peculiar extreme.

Several readers have remarked on the apparent absence of or resistance to literary style in *Never Let Me Go*, and for some Kathy H.’s language presents a significant problem. These readers have not agreed, though, on what that problem consists of. Consider three early responses in a single venue, the *London Review of Books*. Contrasting Kathy with the first-person narrators of Ishiguro’s previous five novels and acknowledging the neat fit of style with narrator, Frank Kermode pronounced the new novel a “failure” (21):

This new book, *Never Let Me Go*, is different in one respect: it does have a first-person narrative but abandons the formality of the previous speakers in favour of a familiar, chatty style no doubt thought right for the character of a young woman of the place and date specified, namely ‘England, late 1990s.’ Whatever the virtues of this authorial decision, the texture of the writing becomes altogether less interesting, and this may be a reason why the novel seems to be, though only by the standards Ishiguro has set himself, a failure.

Had Kermode described Kathy’s narration as conversational, he would have conferred literary respectability or even distinction on the use of everyday language; his choice of the pejorative “chatty,” however, specifies a particular animus toward both the narrator and her creator. “Chatty” suggests the liveliness of human presence, if of a debased, gossipy kind.

Other readers have found Kathy's language to be considerably less animated. Both James Wood and Jacqueline Rose have characterized Kathy's language as flat, interpreting her style as an index of character. Contrasting *Never Let Me Go* with Adam Mars-Jones's *Pilcrow* (2008), Wood describes Kathy as "flat as paper," as opposed to Mars-Jones's John Cromer, who is "a paper Ariel, darting around with his insights and whimsicalities" (25). Wood continues:

But both books are variations on prison fiction, in which the flea-sized banality is of greater sustaining interest to the trapped protagonists than the whale-sized adventure, where snot might be of more interest than snow. Ishiguro's book is set in a boarding school whose pupils, we gradually learn, are clones who will die in their twenties, as part of a government plan to harvest new organs. Stylistically, I would rather live in Mars-Jones's word-palace; metaphysically, I would rather feel the walls of Ishiguro's prison squeeze me, because his pessimism seems powerfully relentless.

On a verbal level, Wood clearly feels drawn more to Mars-Jones than to Ishiguro, but he allows that the alleged poverty of Kathy's style pays off on another, metaphysical level: by its very pauciloquence, Kathy's language not only reinforces the experience of dire limitation and entrapment she is describing but also involves the reader in that same experience. Wood's stated preference for Ishiguro's strenuous pessimism over Mars-Jones's whimsicalities feels nonetheless like a concession. Whether or not one agrees that *Pilcrow* is the place to look for the crown jewels of contemporary English prose style, it's hard not to hear Wood hankering after that word-palace.

For Rose, the "flat, semi-detached quality" (26) of Kathy's language constitutes an aesthetic and ethical virtue because it implicates Ishiguro's readers in the drama enacted by his characters. The problem of style, Rose argues, takes us deep into the novel's most fundamental questions about clones and humanity and about the possibility of readerly sympathy—questions that have continued to exercise Ishiguro's readers.¹ On this view, the rigor and unrelenting logic with which Ishiguro pursues these questions stylistically ensure the novel's success as a work of art:

Do clones have souls? Or, to put it another way, do clones know that they are clones? In Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* the flat, semi-detached quality of the narrative voice is the novel's way of asking the question. Only at the end of the book do you realise that any difficulties you may have had as a reader with Kathy, the teller of the tale—any withholding of empathy, slight, uncomfortable mistrust,

even boredom—have turned you into an active participant in the struggle waged silently behind the scenes, as the world first denies then comes to recognise that it has created beings with their own inner lives who are painfully aware of what lies in store. Ishiguro's clones have been built to discard their limbs to surgery, and then die—or, in official speak, to 'complete' . . . only at the end of *Never Let Me Go* do you realise that Kathy's ability to recall her story, like the early slave narratives, is in itself proof of her soul.

Readers may experience the epiphany Rose describes well before the end of the book, but these sentences offer genuine insight into the artistic purpose motivating a version of plain style so extreme that it seems at times almost no style at all. Mistrust, boredom, not only withholding of empathy but impatience and even a disinclination to continue reading, to hear out a character whose narrative motivation seems, above all, to get a hearing: such feelings are likely to play a significant part in the response of any reader who pays attention to the verbal texture of a novel. Indeed, one issue at stake for Ishiguro's readers concerns the very status of clones in a novel: Can clones be characters? Or are they just copies of characters? That Ishiguro's clones turn out to be victims of grotesque exploitation—they have been reared only to supply vital organs to non-clones needing transplant operations—gives such questions particular urgency.

As Rose suggests, these are not emotional issues alone. They involve ethical questions and aesthetic questions—and questions about the relative claims of the ethical and the aesthetic. If we find it hard to stay with Kathy, if we find her language and storytelling style not merely plain but dull, dull even to the point of wanting to put the book down, are we not encountering the limits of our sympathy as readers and perhaps as human beings? If we rationalize our decision to stop listening by consoling ourselves that, no, Kathy isn't fully human, are we not simply enacting an extreme version of the normal experience of not liking other people, or at least of not liking all other people? ("Other people are quite dreadful" [212], as Oscar Wilde's Lord Goring puts it.) Alternatively, if we do keep reading in spite of distaste, allowing ethical preconceptions (we should like other people) to trump aesthetic considerations, aren't we travestying our aesthetic judgment, denying the reasons we read literature and refusing the reality of our preferences—aesthetic, first of all (we like some novels more than others), but ethical also (we like some people more than others)? Most readers entertain such basic questions as "Do I like this character?" and "Is this character interesting?" Unlikeability is usually allowed to have some degree

of literary value and even prestige; it may be more interesting than likeability. But when sophisticated readers encounter characters they consider uninteresting, they tend to ask whether the lack of interest is the result of authorial choice or of an intentional artistic strategy, as Kermode argues, or of a failure of sympathy or insight on their own part, as Rose suggests. Despite their different aesthetic assessments of Ishiguro's novel, Kermode, Rose, and Wood agree that this book takes up the challenge of the uninteresting—or apparently uninteresting—to an extraordinary degree.

“Someone Narrating in Contemporary England”

The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers—acquired by the University of Texas in 2015 and available to the public since 2017—allow us to reconsider these emotional, ethical, and aesthetic issues in light of Ishiguro's compositional practice and, in particular, to revisit the questions of language raised by some of the novel's most influential early readers. The archive reveals a writer who worries incessantly about choosing the right word or phrase in order to fashion a tone and an idiom that would seem appropriate for “someone narrating in contemporary England”: “These are technical things, like actors doing accents. The challenge isn't so much achieving a voice that's more vernacular, or more formal, it's getting one that properly presents that narrator's character. It's finding a voice that allows a reader to respond to a character not just through what he or she does in the story, but also *how* she speaks and thinks” (“Interview”).² Instead of trying to conjure “marvellous sentences like Martin Amis or Salman Rushdie that crackle with vitality” (“For Me”), Ishiguro worked to develop a vernacular prose style to express what he described to his editor at Faber as “an ‘alternative history’ conceit . . . in my version of late C20th England” (“Notes for Jon Riley”). This, as he explains in notes for an interview, was “an England on [<with>] an overcast day [<sky>], <with> flat bare fields, weak sunshine, drab streets, abandoned farms, empty roads . . . an England with [a] <the> kind of stark, chilly beauty I associate with certain remote areas and half-forgotten seaside towns” (“Interview”).

Comparing handwritten drafts and typescripts with the published novel reveals the extent of Ishiguro's investment in crafting a style that would not only express the general themes of “the human condition & love” (“Clones 1” [6 Mar. 2000]), but would also suit

his narrator and her situation. Verbal nuance is crucial. Take, for example, the opening sentence of Part Two, which in one outline Ishiguro designated the period of “Youth” (“Rough Papers 8”). In the published version, Kathy says: “Sometimes I’ll be driving on a long weaving road across marshland, or maybe past rows of furrowed fields, the sky big and grey and never changing mile after mile, and I find I’m thinking about my essay, the one I was supposed to be writing back then, when we were at the Cottages” (*Never* 115). In what is probably the earliest version of the opening of Part Two, an undated manuscript marked with numerous deletions and insertions, Ishiguro wrote:

Sometimes[, when I’m] <I’ll be> driving [across] [<, say,>] on a [long road over winding] [<lonely>] <long> road [through] <winding across> marshland, [say,] or [past big] <maybe> [<going>] past [empty] [<silent>] [ploughed] <rows of silent> fields, [when] [<with>] [when] the sky’[s]<’s> [doe] big and grey and [doesn’t] <never> [ch seem to] changing mile after mile, [and] and I’ll find I’m thinking [again] about my [essay] essay, the one I was [writing at the Cottages] supposed to [write at the] <be writing back then at> the Cottages. (“Rough Papers 15 (1)”)

“Driving . . . winding”: we may overhear Ishiguro trying out sonic effects and hovering before deciding to discard the accented assonance (drive/wind) and retain only the weak rhyme—hence “driving . . . weaving” (*Never* 115). Also considered and rejected is the pathetic fallacy of the “lonely road,” which involves another instance of assonance that Ishiguro must have felt Kathy could do without. Three typescripts dating from the same period (February 2001–July 2003) show Ishiguro continuing to explore alternative forms of diction and syntax. “Sometimes I’ll be driving on a long [road] weaving <road> across marshland, or maybe past rows of [silent] <ploughed> fields,” one begins (“Rough Papers 15 (2)”). “Sometimes I’ll be driving on a long weaving road across marshland, or maybe past rows of ploughed up fields,” begins an unedited version (“Rough Papers 15 (3)”). “Sometimes I’ll be driving on a long weaving road across marshland, or maybe past rows of [ploughed up] <furrowed> fields,” Kathy says in a third version (“Rough Papers 15 (4)”).

Only in the second complete draft of October 2002–August 2003, a typescript with newly added chapter divisions and titled “The Students of Hailsham Grange, or NEVER LET ME GO,” does Ishiguro settle on the language used in the published version of this passage: the language that produces what he would call “the stark,

chilly beauty” of his England’s “flat bare fields, weak sunshine, drab streets, abandoned farms, empty roads” (“Interview”). The fields, though, are “furrowed” in the second complete draft (“Draft 2 (2)”), suggesting Kathy’s furrowed brow, rather than “empty,” “silent,” or “ploughed”—the last possibility was perhaps rejected because it might imply a detour into the symbolism of fertility that Ishiguro doesn’t want to take, or at least not here. The simple colloquial phrase “back then,” inserted near the end of the sentence in the earlier manuscript (“Rough Papers 15 (1)”), registers the contemporary idiomatic quality of Kathy’s voice that Kermode found “chatty” (21).

Colloquialism plays a crucial role, too, in establishing Kathy’s voice as a distinctive form of late-twentieth-century vernacular English at the very beginning of the novel. In Part One, Kathy recalls her childhood at Hailsham, a special school for clones that Ishiguro envisaged as a “rural sort of environment, cross between boarding school & organic farm” (“Clones 1” [1 Dec. 2000]). The opening paragraph went through numerous drafts, which show Ishiguro vacillating over how long Kathy has been working as a carer (the time ranges from four years to nearly twelve) and how many donations (from three to five) her donors go through while remaining calm. The drafts also reveal how Ishiguro gradually creates the idiomatic timbre of his narrator’s voice, one that draws heavily on the contemporary idiom of the English lower middle class. In what is almost certainly the earliest version, Kathy introduces herself in this fashion:

My name is Kathy H[.]. I’m thirty-one years old, and [for the past eleven years,] I’ve been a carer [now <now>] <now> for [the last eleven] nearly eleven years. That [so] might sound a long [enough] time, but actually, they’ve told me they want me to carry on for another five, six, even seven years. They’ve been pleased with my work, and by and large, [so have I.] I have too. [B] Almost [every da] <every one of the> [all the] donors I’ve [cared for] looked after have “done well”. Their recovery times [are great] <have been impressive;>; they’ve remained “calm,” even by [their] <their> fourth or fifth donations. I’ve never had a donor get “agitated” before third donation. [[So] <So, [as I say,] they’re pleased [with me] <with me> and want me to carry on.] I know this [might] sounds like I’m boasting, and maybe I am. But I’ve learnt to do my work well, and it means a lot to me, especially about them staying ‘calm’. When the day comes, when [for me to give donations] <it’s my turn,>, I don’t know how long I’ll be able to stay ‘calm’ <[myself]> <myself>. But as a carer, I’ve developed a <[sort] re w/x> sense[.],—a kind of knack, if you like—[about] <about> how to [keep people calm.] be [of use] <useful> to donors. [When they’re going through it all,] I

know when [you should] <to> stay <and> [with them] and comfort them, and when [you should] <to> leave them [by] <to> themselves. When [you should] <to> listen to everything they've got to say, and when [you should just] <[to]> <just to> shrug and tell them to snap out of it. ("Clones 2")

The last phrase allows the paragraph itself to close with a sharp snap, while conveying a certain impatience or dissociation on Kathy's part—feelings that must be essential for a health worker's emotional self-preservation, though not perhaps what one would like to hear from a friend. But the note on which the paragraph ends in the published text is there from the beginning.

As Ishiguro reworked this passage, such demotic phrases became increasingly prominent. In the first neat draft, the novel begins:

My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years. That sounds [a] long [time] <enough>, I know, but actually they want me to go on for another eight months, until the end of [the] <this> year. That'll make it [just about] <[almost over] almost exactly> twelve years. [xxx] I know it doesn't always go [that] <this> way, [it doesn't be necessarily mean I've been a <the reason> <the reas>] <I know that my being a> carer [for so <for this>] <so> long [because they've been] isn't [x] necessarily [<to do with>] because [they think I'm] they think I'm so fantastic [carer] <at what I do>. [But I do know for a fact they've been pleased with my work [and, by and large, I have too].] [I know there are <I realise I've known myself some>] <There are some> really good carers, <I realise,> who've been told [told] to stop after just [a] <two or three> years. [or two. But And I know a] <I can [also] think of one> carer <at least,> who [went did it] <went on> for all of fourteen years, and [I never thought] she was [any <never any good at all>] a <complete waste of space>. [So] <So> I'm not trying to boast. But then I <do know for a> fact [is] they've > [have] been pleased with my work, and, by and large, I have too. [Almost all my] <So many of the> donors [have] I've [had] cared for have done <much> [bett] better than expected. Their recovery times have been impressive, and <hardly any of my donors> [they've never xxx they my donors] have [hardly ever] got classified as 'agitated', even before fourth donation. Okay, [this sounds like] <maybe> I'm boasting <now>, [and maybe it is. But I've learnt to do my work / But it means a lot me, [about to] <that I can> do my work well, well, and <But my work> it means a lot to me], <and [I'm glad] especially that <bit [I've]> about my donors staying 'calm'. I've developed a kind of instinct with donors. I know when to stay and comfort them, when to leave them to themselves; when to listen to everything they've got to say, and when just to shrug and tell them to snap out of it. ("First Neat Draft")

Handwritten revisions transform the texture of the narrative voice into something very close to the final version, with key phrases indicating the emphasis on contemporary vernacular: “so fantastic,” “I do know for a fact,” “really good,” “for all of fourteen years,” “a complete waste of space,” “Okay,” “that bit about.” When Ishiguro cleaned up this version, he retained all of these idiomatic phrases and added one more, replacing “stay” with “hang around” (“Second Neat Draft 1”). The result was the text that appeared in the published novel.

How do these alterations reshape Kathy’s voice and character? Incorporating more vernacular words and phrases, and loosening its ties to formal discourse, the prose seems more emphatically linked to actual speech than to reflective processes of composition. Kathy’s presence feels livelier as a result. Livelier, though, doesn’t necessarily mean more interesting or alluring; it doesn’t always imply arresting individuality. Intriguingly, the idiomatic phrases introduced during revision share a depressingly generic quality since almost anyone in late-twentieth-century England might have used them. The phrase “a complete waste of space” (“First Neat Draft”) is especially ugly: used for cheap laughs at another person’s expense, it’s a callow, dismissive phrase that tells us more about the speaker than the object of her scorn. Employed throughout the Anglophone world, but more commonly in Britain than elsewhere, it’s the language of adolescence, not maturity. Enlivening Kathy’s speech, then, the changes introduced in the first and second neat drafts also suggest a coarsening of emotional texture, one that is more likely to repel than entice and feels adopted from the general culture, instead of marking distinctive personhood. The French translation of Ishiguro’s novel declines to supply colloquial equivalents to such expressions. The phrase “qu’il ne valait rien” (*Auprès de moi toujours* 13), meaning simply that the object of Kathy’s aspersion is worthless, lacks the blunt adolescent force of her “complete waste of space” (*Never* 3). Lost in translation is the ethical equivocation activated in the reader by Kathy’s raw colloquialism. As Ishiguro wrestled his opening paragraph into shape, he developed language that helped bring into view the sorts of questions he posed in some notes dated 30 January 2001: “Joyce Carol Oates irony: ‘What’s the fear of clones? Most people don’t have individuality anyway.’ Is this a source of comedy/irony? That highly homogenized people fear clones because they (the clones) lack individuality?” (“Rough Papers 3”).³ Whether the “comedy/irony” would apply to the clones or the non-clones is a nice question, and the uncertainty here clarifies how Ishiguro sets out to trouble any lines of sympathetic identification between narrator and reader.

“Is She [She] Writing, or Is She Telling? Or Thinking?”

Ishiguro highlights these issues of readerly sympathy by raising to a formal principle the challenge posed by a style designed to feel as “flat” and “bare” as the novel’s fields, as “drab” as its streets (“Interview”). What is the context in which Kathy H. is writing? Or, is she speaking, the words on the page representing a silent author’s transcription of her spoken voice? Ishiguro’s “Readback” notes on the first rough draft show him considering a third possibility: “Is she [she] writing, or is she telling? Or thinking?” (“Clones 3” [18 June 2001]).⁴ Subsequent notes on “VOICE” discuss the idea of having Kathy address “a norm,” before deciding to keep the story between clones: “This would make the thing more interior: we’ll be ‘eavesdropping’ as non-clones” (“Rough Papers 1”). Ishiguro remained unsure, however, of what sort of clone. In his “Readback” notes, he refers to Part One as “The section when Kath tells the donor about Hailsham” (“Clones 3” [18 June 2001]); in the margin of another notebook, he asks, “Is she addressing a fellow carer?” (“Clones 6” [15 May 2003]). The published text doesn’t provide a definitive answer to this question, but it soon becomes clear that Kathy is addressing another clone, and it seems implicit that she is telling her story, not writing or thinking it. “I don’t know how it was where you were,” she says early in chapter 2, “but at Hailsham we had to have some form of medical almost every week” (*Never* 13). Or, two chapters later, “I don’t know if you had ‘collections’ where you were” (38). Such phrases recur throughout the novel; reflecting on the relationship between narrative voice and the novel’s overarching “metaphor of the human condition” (“Clones 1” [1 Dec. 2000]), Ishiguro thought that such verbal traits would have the “effect of strengthening the metaphor . . . because the norms are out there, and we’ll be less concerned about that world . . . Her perspective, in other words, will be very much narrowed. That would encourage us to make comparisons with our world, simply because our world isn’t in it much” (“Rough Papers 1”).⁵ At stake, in other words, is a double effect: comparing the clone’s experience with her own, the “eavesdropping” reader may feel some connection with Kathy (“Rough Papers 1”), but the narrowing of narrative perspective—combined with the deliberate flattening of voice—may have the opposite result of reinforcing a sense of separation, or even dissociation.

The novel clearly invites us to understand a narrative addressed to another clone in realist terms: Kathy’s social world consists almost entirely of other clones, and her experience suggests that only other clones have provided her with close friendship. Nearly all the non-

clones she has known have been her “guardians” (*Never* 5), and the divide between them has proved insuperable; the very term “guardian” suggests the presence of a barrier, along the lines of the bars of a prison cell, that teacher, for all its presumptive hierarchicalism, would not. The guardian who tries to talk candidly to Kathy and her classmates about their situation, Lucy Wainwright, gets the sack. Kathy and her friends are sure that their guardians recoil from them in horror, and Madame confirms this during her interview with Kathy and Tommy when they visit her and Miss Emily in Littlehampton near the end of the novel.

Both the substance and the tenor of that interview, especially once Miss Emily joins in, reinforce this sense of separation. It emerges soon enough that Miss Emily, an updated version of Dickens’s Mrs. Jellyby, has been motivated more strongly by the cause of the clones than by the clones themselves.⁶ In a ghastly irony, her do-gooding comes to feel tainted by the disability that has reduced her to a wheelchair: when she speaks of society’s reluctance to return to the “dark days” (*Never* 263) before donations, she betrays a personal motive for her interest in clones, to the point where her stated interest in ameliorating their living conditions reads like an attempt to assuage her own conscience.⁷ Miss Emily’s underlying desire to distance herself from the clones is emphasized by what may look like a minor revision that Ishiguro made to the second of three neat typed drafts of the novel. In early versions of this climactic scene, Miss Emily appears to speak in an inclusive voice, using the phrase “From our perspective,” as she describes the historical context of medical exigency and ethical debate from which the cloning program emerged (“Clones 6”). When Ishiguro revised the second neat draft sometime between September 2003 and February 2004, he changed the pronoun: “From your perspective” (“Second Neat Draft 3 (revised)”). Retained in all subsequent versions, this revision quarantines the clone from the non-clone perspective.⁸ Kathy would have good reason, then, to doubt the possibility of a wider audience for her story: her experience tells her that only another clone would want to listen. As well as dramatizing the apprehension that clones are separated from non-clones by psychological, emotional, and perhaps ontological barriers, Ishiguro tacitly acknowledges that his own readers may find it hard to enter into Kathy’s story, may find her wanting—may find the novel wanting.

But even as the narrative structure maintains this sense of alienation, of irremediable difference between clone and non-clone, Ishiguro complicates such distinctions on both sides. The first difficulty has to do with the language employed by the guardians. It’s

hardly exempt from the charge of derivativeness or cliché, as the scene in Littlehampton illustrates. When Miss Emily explains the historical circumstances and medical imperatives driving the cloning program, and the ethical debates raging in the background, she treats herself royally to several well-worn turns of phrase. “Even during the best of times, we always knew what a difficult battle we were engaged in,” she says (*Never* 262). If Kathy’s bemusement seems “reasonable,” a historical perspective shows how, “when the great breakthroughs in science followed one after the other so rapidly, there wasn’t time to take stock, to ask the sensible questions.” Now that cancer is curable, “how can you ask such a world to put away that cure, to go back to the dark days?” (263). After fighting their “battle” on behalf of the clones, Miss Emily and her “little movement” succeeded in securing many improvements, though only for “a select few.” But the scandal of the eugenicist James Morningdale and an “awful” (264) television series “contributed to the turning of the tide” against the reformers, who relied on favors from corporations or politicians “to keep afloat.” Now all that’s left for Miss Emily and Marie-Claude (“Madame”) is “a mountain of your work” and “a mountain of debt too” (265). Kathy and Tommy may feel they were “simply pawns in a game” (266), but they were “lucky pawns.” Many of Miss Emily’s clichés were already present in Ishiguro’s first rough draft, which includes some imagery of tides and climate change. But these features were amplified in later versions, especially through revisions undertaken in October 2003 and then February 2004. Now, for the first time, Miss Emily employs the phrases “great breakthroughs,” “a select few,” “the turning of the tide,” and “keep afloat” (“Second Neat Draft 3 (revised)”). Polished rhetorically, Miss Emily’s speech lacks originality or vitality in its verbal expression. This makes her seem representative, a type not an individual. Because her claim to uniqueness is compromised by the borrowed quality of her language, Miss Emily comes to seem less like an extraordinary individual than a general case, with her personality—like her language and her do-gooding—exposed as copied or cloned.

While Miss Emily’s dependence on clichés reveals tendencies toward homogenization even in the novel’s most eminent non-clones, Ishiguro erodes the division between clones and non-clones from the other side as well. As Kathy’s narration unfolds over time, her language undergoes occasional modulations, and this clearly implies that her character develops in some way. Kathy may be reading *Daniel Deronda* (1876) at the beginning of the account of her time at the Cottages (a sort of halfway house for clones between the end of their

schooling and the start of their donations), but evidence that reading George Eliot has any effect on the quality of her prose is slow in arriving.⁹ Although we hear that the students at the Cottages discuss Joyce, Kafka, and Proust, it's hard to tell what, if anything, rubs off on Kathy and her fellow clones. There is a brief sign of growing verbal self-consciousness—as well as developing awareness of the potential for manipulation intrinsic to human relationships—early in Part Two when Kathy employs a Gallicism to describe Tommy as “trying to sparkle with bonhomie” (*Never* 106). Perhaps gleaned from reading novels on the Victorian literature syllabus, Kathy's use of “bonhomie” signifies the learned rather than the assimilated; it's another sign of second-handedness that reminds us of her compromised status as a character.

“More ‘Poetically Beautiful’”

Gradually, however, Kathy's narrative takes on a more lyrical quality; it's at such moments that the novel achieves its greatest emotional intensity. In his compelling essay “Critical Solace,” David James writes beautifully about the lyrical qualities of the novel's ending, but Kathy's closing sentences (to which we will return) represent a less clear-cut departure from the “clichés of her foregoing recollections” (496) than he suggests: instances of understated lyricism accumulate slowly throughout the second half of the novel. There is, for example, a lovely touch near the end of Part Two, when Kathy describes Tommy's expression as one “almost of wonder, like I was a rare butterfly he'd come across on a fence-post” (*Never* 195). Capturing a delicate moment of poetic perception, the awkward construction of Kathy's sentence seems designed to guarantee its authenticity: instead of cemented in place with grammatical certitude, her simile wobbles a little, as if capturing the motion of the butterfly, or indicating that the fence-post is improperly secured, or possibly rotting.

Ishiguro's notes and revisions reveal him to be particularly attentive to this stylistic development in the “possibles” (*Never* 139) section of Part Two, when Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy join two of their senior fellow students at the Cottages, Rodney and Chrissie, on an excursion to Norfolk to seek out a woman who is rumored to be Ruth's “model”—that is, the person from whom she was cloned. In notes written after the first rough draft, Ishiguro declared the Norfolk trip a “big success”: “Of course it needs editing,” he added, “but there's a real intensity to the Tommy-Kathy scenes now” (“Clones 4” [26 Feb. 2002]). Work remained to be done, though, because there

was a “chance to make it much more ‘poetically beautiful’: the image of students looking at passing faces in cafes, passing cars . . . here, as in Proust’s *Ouverture*, there could be escaped metaphors flash forwards, so we sense Kathy is using images from her current life to illustrate this general point. There should be a poignant tinge to this section—not a kind of SF exposition feel.” The four chapters describing the Norfolk trip, which dominates the middle of the novel, are full of examples of Ishiguro’s efforts subtly to intensify the lyricism of Kathy’s narration.

Consider the end of chapter 13. In the first rough draft, Kathy says: “I’d been put in charge of the spending money, so I went up to pay, and while I waited for it to be sorted out, the others went out, not really talking, and stood about outside the [wi] big glass window, looking down at the sea” (“Clones 4”). In a hand-corrected typescript that is evidently a later rewriting, Kathy remarks: “I’d been put in charge of the spending money, so I went up to pay. The others filed out behind me, and while I was waiting for the change, I watched them through [one] <a> [>of the big] <one of the big misted> window[s]<s>, looking down at the sea” (“Rough Papers 5”). Split into two sentences, the second version is tighter syntactically, but also more elegant: the other clones “filed out,” instead of “went out.” The later version also introduces a sense of reflectiveness on Kathy’s part, and possibly self-reflection, as the window not only stands between her and her friends but is “misted,” suggesting blurred or distorted perception, as well as the world of feeling (which here may include sadness, distress, loss, isolation, nostalgia, and sentimentality). In the published version, Ishiguro takes us even further into the realm of lyrical beauty, in part by reuniting the two sentences so that they form one flowing unit of speech that ends with three paratactic phrases: “The others filed out behind me, and while I was waiting for the change, I watched them through one of the big misty windows, shuffling about in the sunshine, not talking, looking down at the sea” (*Never* 155).

In keeping his windows “misty,” Ishiguro risks the charge (against Kathy and himself) of sentimentality. Yet the addition of the simple phrase “shuffling about in the sunshine” makes this a moment of prose poetry: you can almost hear the phrase itself shuffling about with its irregular mixture of stressed and unstressed syllables. The even shorter phrase “not talking” gives this moment a distinctly Larkinesque texture: transposed from the first version, where Kathy uses the phrase “not really talking” (“Clones 4”), the simpler yet rhythmically more resonant “not talking” (*Never* 155), with its little rise and fall, evokes Larkin’s poem “Talking in Bed,” whose speaker

talks (or thinks) over awkward silence in the bedroom by reflecting on the apparent indifference of the outside world:

None of this cares for us. Nothing shows why
 At this unique distance from isolation
 It becomes still more difficult to find
 Words at once true and kind,
 Or not untrue and not unkind. (129)

Ishiguro is, of course, describing quite a different scenario, but the feeling of uncomfortable silence and separation is similar: Kathy has no more idea about what her friends, “looking down at the sea” (*Never* 155), are thinking than Larkin’s speaker has about what his partner is thinking. In the novel as in the poem, the power of the moment depends on “not talking.”

Revisions of a moment later in the Norfolk episode also sharpen the focus on first-person perception while increasing room for doubt about the extent to which the narrator’s feelings are shared. In the first rough draft, Kathy appears confident that she and Tommy shared the same feelings when they began their search for a cassette tape of the fictitious Judy Bridgewater’s *Songs After Dark*:

We both felt a kind of glee, and I think we [both] had to stop ourselves giggling stupidly, or jumping up and down on the pavement like little kids. Not long ago, when I was caring for Tommy, and I brought up [the time in] <[this] <our> Norfolk[,], <trips> Tommy told me he’d felt exactly the same. At that moment, when we decided we’d [spend the rest of our time] <go> searching for my lost tape, it was like suddenly every cloud had blown away, and we had nothing but fun and laughter in front of us. (“Clones 4”)

It’s a stunning moment of freedom and love, but in another manuscript Ishiguro cancels the third-person plural voice and replaces it with the first-person singular: “[We both felt <I felt> a kind of glee, and I think we had to] I had to really hold [ourselves] <myself> back from giggling stupidly, or jumping up and down on the pavement like <a> little kid[s]” (“Rough Papers 5”). In the published text, Ishiguro retains these changes:

I had to really hold myself back from giggling stupidly, or jumping up and down on the pavement like a little kid. Not long ago, when I was caring for Tommy, and I brought up our Norfolk trip, he told me he’d felt exactly the same. That moment when we decided to go searching for my lost tape, it was like suddenly every cloud had blown away, and we had nothing but fun and laughter before us. (*Never* 171)

The joyful simile of the vanishing cloud has been there all along, but after revision, the sense of shared experience depends entirely on what Kathy remembers Tommy saying later, not on what he says or does at the time. Knowing Tommy, those words will have been kind, but will they have been true?

“Oasis in Journey to Death”

Ishiguro’s clones don’t dream very often, though they do suffer from insomnia, which cuts off one route that novelists sometimes take to generate psychological or emotional intensity. But the simple lyricism that gradually infuses Kathy’s narrative provides an apt vehicle for following the drift of the sleepless mind. Early in Part Three—designated as “Adulthood” in one early manuscript (“Rough Papers 8”), “Oasis in journey to death” in another (“Clones 6” [19 May 2002])—Kathy describes how, unable to sleep one night, she thought about a clown she saw carrying a fistful of balloons during a recent visit to the seaside. When the clown got out of his van, Kathy recalls, he set off along the seafront just ahead of her, so that she felt “awkward” (*Never* 212), wondering if he was going to turn around and speak to her. Here, perhaps, is that sense of living in a parallel world, or in a world at a slight remove from that of the non-clone population, that occasionally makes itself felt in Kathy’s narrative. Another example comes later when Kathy describes her and Tommy’s car journey along “obscure back roads . . . these dark byways of the country [that] existed just for the likes of us, while the big glittering motorways with their huge signs and super cafés were for everyone else” (272–73).

Catching Kathy’s conscious attention now, though, is a parallel between the balloons, with the faces and shaped ears, and herself and her friends:

Every so often, I could see the man’s fist, where all the balloon strings converged, and I could see he had them securely twisted together and in a tight grip. Even so, I kept worrying that one of the strings would come unravelled and a single balloon would sail off up into that cloudy sky.

Lying awake that night . . . I kept seeing those balloons again. I thought about Hailsham closing, and how it was like someone coming along with a pair of shears and snipping the balloon strings just where they entwined above the man’s fist. Once that happened, there’d be no real sense in which those balloons belonged with each other any more. (*Never* 213)

Kathy interprets her worry about the wind carrying off the balloons as anxiety about losing her connection to her past and also about how time or fate may cause all of her friends to lose their connections with each other. In this sense, her response illustrates an idea that featured in Ishiguro's outline for this part of the novel: "The clown and his balloons / How Hailsham's like that" ("Rough Papers 7"). There's a subtle reference to the Cottages, too: Kathy's memory places the clown episode in North Wales, which Kathy had visited for work, and where she had seen Rodney, who seemed to be "sad" but "okay" after the death of Chrissie (*Never* 226).¹⁰

What Kathy doesn't explicate—probably because doing so would be too painful, too frank an expression of vulnerability—is the fear, not that all of the balloons may fly away, but that just "one of the strings would come unravell'd and a single balloon would sail off up into the cloudy sky" (*Never* 213). It's plain that Kathy fears that only she will be cut adrift, that only she will experience this utter sense of careless abandonment. Never let me go: here, precisely, is the darkest apprehension that the literary form of the lyric can express, the catastrophic insight that the solitude that is lyric's precondition and, perhaps, its most cherished prize may prove identical to an irreparable state of loneliness and isolation. Just as T. S. Eliot transformed Walter Pater's dream of perfect aesthetic solitude in the "Conclusion" of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) into the chilling involutions of "What the Thunder Said"—"We think of the key, each in his prison / Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison" (70)—Ishiguro has Kathy articulate her deepest fear; perhaps everyone's deepest fear.¹¹

At times, as we have seen, the artless lyricism of Kathy's language evokes the low-keyed personal verse of Larkin; at others, it suggests the impersonal generalized abstraction of landscapes in Thomas Hardy, a writer who features in the library at Hailsham. When Kathy narrates the episode in which she, Tommy, and Ruth go to see a boat that has been left stranded on a deserted beach, the scene takes on a large symbolic significance, transcending localized personal meanings. The setting of Ishiguro's boat scene evokes the weather and landscape of Hardy's early lyric "Neutral Tones":

We stood by a pond that winter day,
And the sun was white, as though chidden by God,
And a few leaves lay on the starving sod;
—They had fallen from an ash, and were gray. (1)

In Ishiguro's novel, as in Hardy's opening stanza, the effect of this setting feels powerfully allegorical. The stranded boat suggests the

shipwrecked lives of Kathy and her friends, as well as, more literally, the ruined bodies of Tommy, Ruth, and other donors, which will be abandoned once they have served their purpose. The boat also evokes a larger sense of a shipwrecked society, which has run aground after losing its moral bearings. None of these implications is explicated directly by Kathy; the boat is left to speak for itself.

Hardyesque in its way of evoking situation, Ishiguro's boat scene also strikes another Larkin note (one that will quietly resound at the end of the novel). On the approach to the beach through some woods, Ruth, still recovering from her first donation, needs Kathy and Tommy's help to negotiate a barbed-wire fence: "And almost as an instinct," Kathy recalls, "we both went to her. I took an arm, Tommy supported her elbow on the other side, and we began gently guiding her towards the fence" (*Never* 223). The word "instinct" appears on the first page of the novel, when Kathy says "I've developed a kind of instinct around donors" (3), a phrase introduced in typescripts composed after the handwritten first rough draft. The same chronology applies to revisions of the barbed-wire scene in Part Three: in the first rough draft, Ishiguro wrote, "We both went to her, instinctively" ("Clones 6"), but in later versions, and in the published text, he rerouted the syntax into the Larkinesque phrase, "almost as an instinct." The revised syntax captures the hesitancy about love, or expressions of love, that Larkin dramatized in "An Arundel Tomb," which describes a medieval effigy of an earl and his countess. In the final stanza, Larkin's speaker delivers this verdict:

Time has transfigured them into
Untruth. The stone fidelity
They hardly meant has come to be
Their final blazon, and to prove
Our almost-instinct almost true:
What will survive of us is love. (111)

Those lines are famously ambiguous, much depending on where the emphasis falls in the last line, as well as on the half-rhyme with which the poem ends: if love requires proof, there's a problem.

Such ambiguity makes itself felt in Ishiguro's scene, which conjures images of escape and entrapment, as well as doubtful love and friendship. Anticipating the novel's ending, the barbed wire also recalls Hailsham, with its "wire mesh" fences (*Never* 47), and "the moment the American jumps over the barbed wire on his bike in *The Great Escape*" (99), a favorite movie scene among Hailsham students.¹² Further, the little triptych of Ruth supported by Kathy

and Tommy forms a brief image of Calvary that shapes the climax of the boat scene, when Ruth sacrifices herself by telling her friends that it is they, and not she and Tommy, who really belong together. Based on false rumor, Kathy and Tommy's subsequent quest for a deferral leads to nothing, but it's at this point that they embark on their attempt to live out whatever kind of love story remains to them in their short time together. There's nothing straightforward about that story, however. Their love lacks heat and vitality, and while Kathy offers ample context (primarily Tommy's debilitated state between donations) to account for this, it's hard not to wonder if their relationship isn't a matter of "almost-instinct" (Larkin 111). In which case, perhaps Ruth is the novel's true (though nonetheless deluded) romantic, realizing that things aren't quite right between herself and Tommy and hoping that her friends may find real love together, and presenting all this as a confession—"That was the worst thing I did" (*Never* 232)—before losing her own will to live: Ruth dies after her second donation.

"That Night in the Wind-Swept Field"

We may wonder how far Kathy is privy to such undertones and insinuations. Are both author and narrator speaking to us through the symbols of the stranded boat, the barbed wire, and the image of Calvary, or does the author speak alone? The accumulating evidence of Kathy's growing poetic consciousness suggests that she may well be speaking to us here. The implication may be that the reader is deaf who does not hear her voice. But how can we be sure? There are several moments, even late in the novel, when Kathy's language seems unable to rise to the occasion. When, for instance, Kathy reminisces about a clear evening "with a nice pink sunset" (*Never* 199), Ishiguro seems to want to test our patience and even our tolerance.¹³

An especially notable moment occurs during the drive back to the Kingsfield center after the interview with Miss Emily and Madame.¹⁴ When Tommy gets out of the car and screams, Kathy has little to say here other than that he screamed. We are invited to see Tommy's figure, partially lit by a not quite full moon, "raging, shouting, flinging his fists and kicking out" (*Never* 274), but Kathy seems unwilling or unable to summon the verbal resources required to breathe life into the sound he makes. This passage is signally lacking in vividness, especially in comparison with Andrew Garfield's searing rendition in the 2010 adaptation directed by Mark Romanek. When Kathy says that the sound made her think it might be "some maniac

who'd been lurking in the bushes" (273), she comes close to trivializing it. On such occasions, Kathy seems close to the realm of the banal and worryingly low in empathy or understanding.

And yet the barebones report of Tommy's scream is immediately followed by a brief passage of remarkable narrative grace:

He tried to shake me off, but I kept holding on, until he stopped shouting and I felt the fight go out of him. Then I realised he too had his arms around me. And so we stood together like that, at the top of that field, for what seemed like ages, not saying anything, just holding each other, while the wind kept blowing and blowing at us, tugging our clothes, and for a moment, it seemed like we were holding onto each other because that was the only way to stop us being swept away into the night. (*Never* 274)

As well as the intense personal pain of two people facing compulsory early deaths and the violent termination of a love affair that has barely begun, what is felt here is the existential pain of general humanity: in the larger scheme of the universe, all of our lives and loves will prove to be short-lived—and we know it. It's an image of human life seen, as in Hardy's poems, as unremittingly cruel.¹⁵

At the same time, this moment recasts the anonymous fragment "Western Wind," one of the oldest love lyrics in the English language:

Westron winde, when will thou blow,
The smalle raine downe can raine?
Christ if my love were in my armes,
And I in my bed again. (Davies 291)

Set to music by English composers at least since the early sixteenth century, according to John Stevens, and circulating repeatedly through the English poetic tradition (notably in Shelley and Yeats), these lines suggest the sense of love and loss conjured also by this crucial moment in Ishiguro's novel. While most of the elements of this scene were already in place in the first rough draft ("Clones 6"), the crucial element of the wind wasn't there until the second complete rough draft. Once included, it became central to Ishiguro's conception of the scene, loosening and expanding the syntax of the first draft as if to suggest that Kathy feels infused with the spirit of lyric poetry itself.¹⁶ The importance of this moment in its revised form is such that Kathy echoes it twice before her narrative closes: first when she recalls what Ishiguro termed "Tommy's river metaphor" ("Rough Papers 8"), and again in her final vision of "acres of ploughed earth" (*Never* 287).

There are complications, as may be observed in another aspect of the narrative: the double story of Kathy's own character and her relationship to her friend and rival, Ruth. According to Kathy's presentation of events, Ruth is the girl who gets in the way of her own love affair with Tommy, and Ruth (as we have seen) admits as much at the end of the boat scene. This view of Ruth seems consistent with other evidence of a manipulative, capricious character—traits reminiscent of Gwendolen Harleth in *Daniel Deronda*. It isn't clear, though, whether this presentation of Ruth is entirely fair. Is it the whole story? If Kathy and Tommy were always meant to be together, why weren't they? The Romanek film cinches the love triangle by adopting Kathy's overt account, but in the novel itself there's some ambiguity—including ambiguity about the possibility that Kathy is artfully manipulating events, revising history for her own purposes—as well as uncertainty over what “kind of instinct” (*Never* 3) links her with Tommy. Kathy, too, may share aspects of Gwendolen's personality. It remains unclear, however, whether Kathy has intentionally designed a narrative to communicate these alternative possibilities between the lines of her own overt version, or whether it is the author alone who allows the reader to infer this more complex version of his narrator's character.

But when Kathy returns to her memory of the “night in the wind-swept field” (*Never* 282), her lyric self is restored and embraces Tommy in the process. Kathy's memory of that night is triggered, first of all, when Tommy tells her about a different thought entirely:

I keep thinking about this river somewhere, with the water moving really fast. And these two people in the water, trying to hold onto each other, holding on as hard as they can, but in the end it's just too much. The current's too strong. They've got to let go, drift apart. That's how I think it is with us. It's a shame, Kath, because we've loved each other all our lives. But in the end, we can't stay together forever.

Echoing the tragic finale of *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), these sentences suggest how the relationship between Kathy and Tommy more nearly resembles the filial bond uniting George Eliot's Maggie and Tom Tulliver than, say, the ecstatic passion of Emily Brontë's Heathcliff and Cathy (and, of course, when Ishiguro makes Kathy and Tommy look like brother and sister, he is commenting indirectly on Maggie and Tom).¹⁷ In Kathy, however, Tommy's words prompt a return to “that night in the wind-swept field,” and although she doesn't “know if he was thinking about that too, or if he was still thinking about his rivers and strong currents,” in her account, at least, they share the same

romantic, lyrical imagination, thus illustrating Tommy's romantic theory of art as what "reveal[s] your soul" (175).

"Acres of Ploughed Earth"

The current of meditative lyricism in motion here culminates in the novel's final paragraph, which describes an epiphany shortly after Tommy's death. Deploying the technical resources of symbolic realism, these sentences combine images of field and wind with wire and rubbish to generate a distinctly moralized landscape:

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 shoreline 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. (*Never* 287–88)

Here we find Kathy coming to terms with her loss and her fate. While it is ultimately the fate that faces all of us, confronting it requires a particularly strong effort on her part because the terms on which it is encountered are unusually cruel, inhuman even, and because, as James argues, Kathy exhibits a moving "self-consciousness" as she "tests her own capacity to be consoled" ("Critical Solace" 496). Ishiguro emphasizes the cruelty of Kathy's situation by having her

resort to the imagery of “rubbish” (*Never* 287) that Ruth had used earlier to explain where clones came from: “We’re modelled from *trash*. Junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps. Convicts, maybe, just so long as they aren’t psychos. That’s what we come from” (166). In this grim myth of origins, clones are society’s recycled garbage, bits of rubbish “floating” on a “giant lake” (225), as Ruth dreams shortly before her death, or strewn and blown about until fetching up on barbed wire reminiscent of Hailsham and of the wire in the woods near the stranded boat. The image of open field contracts into school campus and prison yard: once again, we feel “squeeze[d]” by the “walls of Ishiguro’s prison,” by his “powerfully relentless” pessimism (Wood 25).

Now, though, squeezing only heightens the sense of release brought by a more generous apprehension of the plight, not of Ishiguro’s clones solely, but of general humanity as well. The nod to Calvary in the “cluster of three or four trees” (*Never* 287), with its poignant echo of the woodland triptych of Ruth flanked by Kathy and Tommy, offers one hint. The expansiveness of the syntax as these long sentences unfold, with what James calls their “euphonic elevation” and “clausal flow” (498), provides another sign of widening horizons. That Kathy finds herself “before acres of ploughed earth,” instead of simply “by a big empty field” (“Clones 7”) as in the first rough draft, suggests intimations of fertility, even while pointedly reminding us of what isn’t possible for Kathy herself: clones, as she knows very well, can’t have children of their own.¹⁸ It would be too much to say that Kathy experiences transcendence; the term she uses is “fantasy” (*Never* 287), and she insists that it has its limits. But we are much closer to transcendence here than the first half of the book allows us to imagine, which perhaps makes this moment all the more powerful.

Perhaps. Yet Kathy’s final epiphany presents the sort of moralized landscape that two centuries of post-Romantic writing have made quite familiar. In a well-known essay published three years after *Never Let Me Go*, Zadie Smith characterizes such “lyrical realism” (74) as the mode of a commercially licensed literary mainstream. Taking Joseph O’Neill’s novel *Netherland* (2008) as her chief exhibit of what is essentially (although she doesn’t say it outright) John Updike’s influence on the contemporary British novel, Smith describes such fiction as steeped in conventional post-Cartesian assumptions about self, world, and language. In this kind of writing, Smith argues, the “world is covered in language” (79), its contents “relentlessly aestheticised,” as novelists deploy the stock tropes of modern symbolic

realism to signify the “importance” and “depth” of a self that seeks to alleviate doubts of its own authenticity. For resistance to this lyrical mainstream, Smith looks to the “constructive deconstruction” (94) of Tom McCarthy’s *Remainder* (2005). Authenticity, Smith contends, is precisely what McCarthy refuses, as his anonymous narrator develops a bizarre curriculum of “re-enactments” (134) that mocks the Romantic myth of therapeutic visionary imagination and subverts the coherence of self or world. But the lyrical-realist tradition, which depends on that myth, seeks instead to prop up a sense of personal significance, by conjuring scenes of a poetic intensity that reassures the self both of its place in the world and of its transcendent aspirations. Smith points to the symbols of sun, sky, and skyscraper as examples of this lyrical-realist strain in O’Neill’s novel; the elemental imagery of earth, wind, and horizon in Kathy’s epiphany at the end of *Never Let Me Go* would serve equally well.

Ishiguro typically abjures such writing, and it may be that without going down the same openly experimental road as McCarthy he is carrying out his own assault on what Smith rightly characterizes as the dominant form of the contemporary literary novel. When McCarthy parodies the visionary, transcendent moment of the lyrical-realist epiphany—when, for example, his narrator, with eyes closed and palms open at his sides, experiences a “tingling” sensation (9)—the ironic intent is clear: authenticity is a bad joke. Ishiguro’s subversion of lyrical-realist convention may be subtler. It’s possible that instead of lapsing into a mode of writing that he doesn’t usually employ, or holding it out as a prize to signify the quasi-transcendent reward of his narrator’s pursuit of authenticity, Ishiguro turns to lyrical realism in order to trade on its belatedness and second-handedness. As in McCarthy, though in a less noisily ironic key, lyrical realism may serve here as the index of inauthenticity—a conjecture that may have significant consequences, not only for the aesthetic question of how to assess the lyrical modulations of Ishiguro’s plain style, but also for the ethical question of how to respond to the clones who populate his novel and to the particular clone, Kathy H., who narrates it.

Earlier, I suggested that, to the degree that Kathy’s language changes, her character changes, and also that, if we accept this development on its own terms, Ishiguro may be trying to assuage anxieties articulated by such readers as Rose about a clone’s qualifications for character status or (in Nancy Armstrong’s formulation) personhood. On this reading, Kathy’s ascent to the kind of far-reaching lyricism, teeming with moral insight, that we see at the end of her narrative ensures her success in providing “proof of her soul” (Rose 26). That

such transcendental heights seemed to lie beyond Kathy's horizons earlier in the novel may then confirm this ascent as heroic. But what if our reading of such language is dogged by the sense that we've heard it before? What if we feel that rather than joining (or having Kathy join) the ranks of the lyrical-realist mainstream as a sign of authentic humanity, Ishiguro is intentionally imitating lyrical realism—cloning it? The implications for Kathy (and for readers who learn to love her) are distressing, partly because her seeming escape from what Wood calls Ishiguro's relentless pessimism might then be felt to be illusory, the function of a learned style that does nothing to guarantee the individuality of a character acutely aware of her legal status as copy. Just when Kathy seems to attain full-fledged humanity, it is brought into question once again. And now the claims to represent general humanity may lose their consoling power. As Kathy's access of symbolic realism yields once more to her "flat as paper" style (Wood 25), Ishiguro's pessimism grips us more tightly than ever.

The possibility that *Never Let Me Go* is cloning the lyrical realism of the post-Updike British novel—a mode mastered not only by O'Neill and Smith herself but preeminently by Ian McEwan—has some provocative implications for Ishiguro's readers. We may be "eavesdropping" on Kathy H. ("Rough Papers 1"), but are we also the mainstream novel's gullible consumers? Have we allowed ourselves to be trained too easily to assimilate narratives in which a transition from flat style to the epiphanic mode of lyrical realism is taken to signify the growth of a soul? Insofar as we take Kathy's moments of insight and reflection to indicate that she is, at heart, a kind of poet, aren't we simply exposing ourselves as desperate to find consolation even where none should be possible? Aren't we ourselves, then, a kind of "strange rubbish" (*Never* 287): not imaginative, critically engaged readers, but mere clones of readers who have read this kind of story many times before? Ishiguro himself, as we have noted, saw in such episodes as the search for Ruth's "possible" opportunities to write in a "more 'poetically beautiful'" manner that would heighten their "intensity" ("Clones 4"). The author's own use of inverted commas suggests some self-consciousness here, a sense that the poetic will register as the poetical—that is, as manufactured, or manipulated; as archaic, not quite authentic.

To put the matter this way is to exert pressure on James's penetrating analysis of "Critical Solace" in contemporary fiction, which focuses on key passages in Cormac McCarthy and W. G. Sebald together with the ending of *Never Let Me Go*. It's hard to disagree with James's assessment that Kathy's closing epiphany leaves readers

“caught between . . . compassion and critique” (492), as we “oscillate between . . . circumspect and consolatory readings” (498). Similar points have been made by Anne Whitehead, who feels a “tension between engagement and disengagement” (81), and Armstrong, for whom dissatisfaction with the interpretative choices offered by the ending forces us “to feel beyond the present limits of personhood” (464). James pushes further, though, to suggest that Ishiguro ultimately engenders heightened awareness of “how it feels to be an implicated reader,” teaching us that “it can be rewarding to admit—to probe, even perpetuate—our own collusions, in ways that help us to grasp unpredictable responses to literary affects” (498–99). James avoids the utopianism of Armstrong’s speculation that *Never Let Me Go* (along with books by Coetzee and Sebald) “may be developing a generation of readers with an emotional repertoire more attuned to the demands of our time” (464). But James’s defense of solace is uncompromising in its indictment of the “will-to-expose” that motivates the “suspicious reader bent on associating solace with sentimentalism or self-delusion” (495). “Looming in [Ishiguro’s] novel’s crosshairs is the critical appetite for verifying complicity,” a tendency that, James argues, “runs the risk of becoming a self-satisfying convention in its own right” (500). In James’s view, “accounting for the dynamism of one’s very own complicity could be more important than the comfort-zone of critical distance for understanding what novelistic solace actually does” (499).

This is an important argument, and one that James reiterates with occasional references to the Ishiguro archive in his new book, *Discrepant Solace* (2019). But the literary context evoked by the language of Ishiguro’s ending represents a significant complication. In summoning the technical resources of lyrical realism in a manner that invites readers versed in contemporary fiction to register its familiarity, Ishiguro’s novel itself creates, possibly demands, critical distance on the part of the reader. In one very simple sense, this means permitting readers to distinguish between what Ishiguro is writing and what Kathy is saying. Reinstalling this separation between author and narrator also means making room for an implied author, who is often effaced in critical accounts of Ishiguro’s novel but should be acknowledged, in part because this figure allows for the opacity of authorial intention. Insisting on such forms of distance doesn’t have to mean returning to the easy skepticisms and evasions of the critical “comfort-zone” that James understandably deplores (“Critical Solace” 499). Rather, Ishiguro implicates his readers in the very sense of baleful repetition in which his characters are entangled: an

apprehension of perpetual sameness. With its often-noted echoes of his earlier novel *The Remains of the Day* (1989), of which it is in certain respects a clone, *Never Let Me Go* involves Ishiguro himself in the same dynamics of repetition and potential redundancy.

The sense of stylistic repetition evoked by Kathy's ending—repetition premised less on the foregoing narration than on the literary context in which Ishiguro is writing—raises the stakes of arguments about critical solace and distance because it reactivates the affective and ethical challenges posed by the flatness of much of Kathy's narrative. Despite its apparent departure from what had earlier threatened to become a debilitating norm, the ending may reactivate in Ishiguro's reader feelings that Kathy's narrative has sought strenuously to discredit: in particular, the desire for disidentification. The familiarity, or possibly arch-over-familiarity, of the lyrical-realist mode employed in Kathy's final epiphany reminds us that we may not share her point of view, that even while learning her consoling insight, the reader may remain aligned with a figure descended from another of Ishiguro's previous books: the unconsolated. There's more than one way to explain why such a separation between narrator and reader may still obtain at the end of the novel. One reason may be that Ishiguro's prose makes available feelings to which Kathy doesn't necessarily have access; that the author is writing over or around his character, in other words, so as to address the reader, who may respond in kind by using language that Kathy herself would never use—a possibility registered indirectly by James when he speaks of "euphonic elevation" (498). Another reason may be that, even if the words match the narrator's feelings precisely, they may not match our feelings. We may fall short of them, or differ from them (to the point where we supply alternative language), or we may feel that what's important is that we acknowledge Kathy's feelings are her feelings, and that we resist the temptation (or self-congratulatory tendency) to assimilate Kathy to our own affective and ethical sphere, and grant her instead the status of a distinct, integral soul.

There's another possibility. What if we don't want to share Kathy's feelings? What if we can't dislodge a nagging desire for disidentification or at least the feeling that such a possibility remains? That, of course, is the kind of response that the novel discredits when Kathy describes how the guardians shudder when brought into close physical proximity to a clone. It's a dreadful thought. It's also a cloned thought, insofar as it replicates what Madame and Miss Emily think. The difficulty here isn't easily explained away by reading Ishiguro's novel as rendering the clones as more authentically human than the

non-clones—a simple reversal of the social hierarchy in Ishiguro’s alternative England. But the sustained possibility of readerly self-distancing underlines how the novel’s use of the clone as a figure for general humanity raises questions without necessarily foreclosing them. What if acknowledgment of shared experience is dogged by a sense of debilitating sameness, which produces in turn a counter-desire to establish difference and distance? What if the sense of unity is shadowed by the urge to separate? Even as the novel reaches what seems to be its highest point of emotional sympathy, where the logic of self-differentiation or distinction separating clone from non-clone meets its stiffest challenge, that logic insinuates itself persistently into the texture of Ishiguro’s prose.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Kazuo Ishiguro (c/o Coleridge, Rogers & White Ltd., 20 Powis Mews, London W11 1JN) for permission to reproduce material from his manuscript and typescript drafts of *Never Let Me Go* (© Kazuo Ishiguro), housed at the Harry Ransom Center.

Notes

The author wishes to express his gratitude to the Willson Center for Humanities and Arts at the University of Georgia, and especially its director, Professor Nicholas Allen, for providing a subvention to support the publication of this essay. He is indebted, too, to three more friends and colleagues in Georgia for their generous and insightful readings of different drafts: Jamie McClung, Chris Pizzino, and Mark Rollins.

1. See, for example, Whitehead, who argues that Ishiguro “deliberately destabilizes our identification with Kathy and the other clones and raises uncomfortable questions regarding our proximity to those who benefit from the donation system” (58). Ishiguro’s aim, Whitehead contends, is “to open up, *and to hold open*, central ethical questions of responsiveness, interpretation, responsibility, complicity, and care” (59). See also Armstrong, who echoes Whitehead when discussing *Never Let Me Go* in the context of what she calls the “affective turn” in contemporary fiction that revolts against the “principle of normativity” (443); and Walkowitz, who describes Ishiguro’s novel as “a book about the value of unoriginal expression” (101) that challenges not only the “logic of individuality” (95) but even “anthrocentrism, the idea that it is ethical or acceptable to sacrifice nonhuman animals to the needs and desires of human life” (103).

2. In order to differentiate between the changes made to the archived materials, I will use the following code: Angled brackets (<... >) indicate Ishiguro's additions to the text. Square brackets ([...]) indicate his deletions. Square brackets in bold face ([...]) indicate that square brackets are used in the manuscript or typescript. The lowercase x (xxx) indicates illegible deletions. All ellipses, emphases, and underlinings appear as in the original, unless noted otherwise.
3. Probably a reference to *Lives of the Twins* (1987), a novel about identical twins published under the pseudonym Rosamond Smith.
4. Ishiguro also wonders here about the year in which Kathy is supposed to be narrating her tale. In "Notes for Jon Riley," Ishiguro designates 1999 as the year of narration, adding that Kathy leaves Hailsham at sixteen in 1984 with Ruth dying in 1994 and Tommy in 1997. In the published novel, however, we learn only that the setting is England in the late 1990s.
5. In handwritten notes, Ishiguro insists that the novel is to be structured around a metaphor for general humanity: "It's essentially not about ethics & genetics," he writes on 6 March 2000, "it's about the human condition & love" ("Clones 1"). On 20 March 2000, he ponders the "question of what is a good way to spend one's life." And on 13 February 2001, Ishiguro writes at greater length: "There are a lot of 'issues' around cloning that could get us bogged down in things. We don't want to write a book about 'cloning'. It's a metaphor for a clear, single theme: we get older, get sick, and die. This is our fate." The emphasis on fate, however, conflicts with other themes of education and love, so that ultimately "there are three attitudes (1) focus on culture, not on fate (2) focus on fate and see it as purpose in life (3) focus on love, and try everything to make love work [befo] in face of fate." A fourth possibility, "rebel," is rejected as "an obvious way out of the metaphor," one that would dissolve it: "Fate, Culture, Love . . . these things as offering different options to our lives . . . The storylines (and characters) must somehow arise out of these."
6. The echo may well be deliberate. In an early draft, *Bleak House* (1852–1853) features in the students' reading list at the Cottages, although it was gone by the time of the first rough draft of 2001–2003.
7. This is the only way to make sense of a remark Miss Emily makes earlier in the scene: "I've not been well recently, but I'm hoping this contraption isn't a permanent fixture" (*Never* 257). In expressing the hope that her confinement to a wheelchair will be temporary, she confesses that she expects to benefit from the cloning program.
8. The modified phrase "From your perspective" appears in Ishiguro's "Third Draft" and in the published text (*Never* 262).

9. In a note dated 13 February 2001, Ishiguro observes: “The Cottages era is like a student idyll” (“Clones 1”). This confirms Rollins’s comic (or tragicomic) reading of Part Two of the novel “as almost a parody of college”: “Students are pampered at Hailsham, encouraged to be creative, do art, etc. They imagine exciting futures and careers for themselves. Then, they go off to the cottages, where they’re fed the deception that the essays they are supposed to be writing matter. They read 19C novels, but no one really cares about the work they do. It’s all just killing time until they begin their horrible and horrifying real lives. You describe the Cottages as ‘a sort of halfway house’ between schooling and donations. Between childhood fantasies of fabulous careers and the brutal reality of terrible work and approaching death lies college, where there’s lots of sex, plenty of drama, shabby living conditions, greater freedom, and some sham study.”
10. Ruth challenges Kathy’s interpretation of this encounter by asking, “Why would he know? . . . How could he possibly know what Chrissie would have felt? What she would have wanted? It wasn’t him on that table, trying to cling onto life. How would he know?” (*Never* 226). Here, Ruth angrily articulates the fear of isolation that Kathy tries to avoid but that her clown memory has already expressed.
11. Ishiguro sharpened the psychological and emotional focus of this passage in revision. The relevant passage in the draft dated 15 March 2002 includes some details that were omitted from the draft dated 15 May 2003, notably Kathy’s speculation that the clown is going to a “normal” (“Clones 6”) family’s children’s birthday party. Kathy also says that she has to go the same way as the clown because she’s “going to a particular shop to buy these particular biscuits Ruth liked.” Removing such details from this episode weakens the grip of everyday realism and clarifies its emotional core. This specific example serves Ishiguro’s larger aim in this section, which was, he noted on 12 May 2003, to “focus on Kathy’s fear that it’s too late,” that her and Tommy’s “love has passed the peak time, & it’ll fail to meet the test when they apply to defer” (“Clones 6”).
12. “Clones 3” also features allusions to the broken-bridge scene in *Speed* (1994) and the thunderstorm episode in *The Sound of Music* (1965), as well as a more specific reference to Steve McQueen, later rendered more generically as “the American” (*Never* 99), perhaps in order to indicate the limitations of cultural literacy at Hailsham.
13. The phrase “nice pink sunset” was added relatively late in the drafting process (“Draft 2 (2)”), first appearing in a typescript dated 28 March 2003, and so perhaps indicating some such intention on Ishiguro’s part. The same language occurs in a manuscript and also in a typescript in Ishiguro’s “Rough Papers,” in a folder dated February 2001–July 2003, but is absent from the equivalent section of “Clones 4.”

14. In early drafts, Kingsfield is called St. Stephen's. Presumably, Ishiguro wanted to replace the reference to religious (and, after Joyce, artistic) martyrdom with an ironic allusion to personal and national sovereignty.
15. In his stimulating discussion of *Never Let Me Go* as a novel about the welfare state, Robbins interprets Tommy's scream as an expression not of general existential pain, but of specific forms of anger: anger at his situation, anger at the system that enforces it. Whether or not Kathy shares that feeling in this scene is not clear. In Robbins's account, Kathy and Tommy are opposites in many ways, she accepts and even promotes the system in which they live while he resists and protests against it. But it's possible that Kathy, too, is capable of expressing anger, as Robbins notes in his commentary on the episode in which Kathy seems to collude in cruelty at Tommy's expense by staying silent when Ruth falsely asserts that they both consider his art laughable: in letting Tommy "think the absolute worst" (209)—about her, about himself, about his situation—Kathy may be giving oblique form to her own anger.
16. In the first rough draft Kathy recalls: "I made my way across the mud, and got to him just as he was climbing to his feet again. I got a glimpse of him in the moonlight, caked with mud, his face distorted with fury, then I reached out at his flailing arms and held on tight. He tried to shake me off, but I kept holding on, until he stopped shouting, and I could feel the fight go out of him. Then I kept holding him, and I [could feel] realised he, too, had his arms around me. And so we stood together like that, on top of that field, for what seemed like ages, not saying anything, just holding each other" ("Clones 6"). The language here is simple, flat, uninspired. In the second complete draft of October 2003-August 2003, Kathy's language is virtually identical to that of the published text.
17. In the early stages of composition, though, Ishiguro did consider Kathy's relationship with Tommy as "like Heathcliff and Cathy," as indicated in notes dated 13 February 2001 ("Clones 1").
18. The image of "ploughed earth" (*Never* 287) also recalls the "furrowed fields" (115) that Kathy describes at the start of Part Two; in an early manuscript ("Rough Papers 15 (1)") and in one typescript ("Rough Papers 15 (2)"), as we've noted, Ishiguro considered describing those fields as "ploughed." Remarkably, Ishiguro arrived at an ending, including the very last words, quite close to the published version even as he completed the first rough draft: after beginning a new sentence, "But as I was driving off, it occurred to me," he deleted it and wrote, "END / 1st draft completed / 4th July 2002" ("Clones 7"). Lots of details are already there, such as the rubbish caught on the barbed wire fence, which he amended by inserting the adjective "strange." An intermediate manuscript version includes the phrase "acres of ploughed earth" ("Rough Papers 9") and other new details—the earlier version's "row

of five or six trees” (“Clones 7”), for example, gives way to a “cluster of [the] three or four trees” (“Rough Papers 9”). By the time Ishiguro finished the second complete draft, on “2nd Aug. 2003” according to a penciled note (“Draft 2 (3)”), the language that went into print was already in place.

Works Cited

- Armstrong, Nancy. “The Affective Turn in Contemporary Fiction.” *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 55, no. 3, 2014, pp. 441–65.
- Davies, R.T., editor. *Medieval English Lyrics: A Critical Anthology*. Northwestern UP, 1964.
- Eliot, T. S. *The Poems of T. S. Eliot. Vol. 1: Collected and Uncollected Poems*, edited by Christopher Ricks and Jim McCue. Johns Hopkins UP, 2015.
- Hardy, Thomas. *Selected Poetry*, edited by Samuel Hynes, Oxford UP, 2009.
- Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Auprès de moi toujours*. Translated by Anne Rabinovitch, Editions des Deux Terres, 2006.
- . “Draft 2 (Complete): ‘The Students of Hailsham Grange, or NEVER LET ME GO’ (1).” Oct. 2002-Aug. 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 7, folder 1. Typescript.
- . “Draft 2 (Complete): ‘The Students of Hailsham Grange, or NEVER LET ME GO’ (2).” Oct. 2002-Aug. 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 7, folder 2. Typescript.
- . “Draft 2 (Complete): ‘The Students of Hailsham Grange, or NEVER LET ME GO’ (3).” Oct. 2002-Aug. 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 7, folder 3. Typescript.
- . “First Neat Draft.” 17 Sept. 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 7, folder 9. Typescript.
- . “First Rough Draft–Notebook ‘Clones 1.’” 2000–2001. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 5, folder 6. Manuscript.
- . “First Rough Draft–Notebook ‘Clones 2.’” Mar. 2001, undated. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 5, folder 7. Manuscript.
- . “First Rough Draft–Notebook ‘Clones 3.’” June 2001-Sept. 2002. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 6, folder 1. Manuscript.
- . “First Rough Draft–Notebook ‘Clones 4–Section 2 Cottages.’” Oct. 2001-Feb. 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 6, folder 2. Manuscript.

- . “First Rough Draft–Notebook ‘Clones 6–Section 3 Centre.’” Mar. 2002–Mar. 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 6, folder 4. Manuscript.
- . “First Rough Draft–Notebook ‘Clones 7–Section 3 Centre.’” Dec. 2002–July 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 6, folder 5. Manuscript.
- . “For Me, England Is a Mythical Place.” Interview with Tim Adams. *The Guardian*, 20 Feb. 2005. Web.
- . “Interview.” Feb. 2004. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 10, folder 1. Typescript.
- . *Never Let Me Go*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.
- . “Notes for Jon Riley.” Sept. 2003–Feb. 2004. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 8, folder 10. Typescript.
- . “Rough Papers 1.” Feb. 2001–July 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 3, folder 1. Manuscript.
- . “Rough Papers 3.” Feb. 2001–July 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 3, folder 3. Manuscript.
- . “Rough Papers 5.” Feb. 2001–July 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 3, folder 5. Typescript.
- . “Rough Papers 7.” Feb. 2001–July 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 4, folder 1. Manuscript.
- . “Rough Papers 8.” Feb. 2001–July 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 4, folder 2. Manuscript.
- . “Rough Papers 9.” Feb. 2001–July 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 4, folder 3. Manuscript.
- . “Rough Papers 15 (1).” Feb. 2001–July 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 5, folder 3. Manuscript.
- . “Rough Papers 15 (2).” Feb. 2001–July 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 5, folder 3. Typescript.
- . “Rough Papers 15 (3).” Feb. 2001–July 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 5, folder 3. Typescript.
- . “Rough Papers 15 (4).” Feb. 2001–July 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 5, folder 3. Typescript.
- . “Second Neat Draft 1.” Sept.–Oct. 2003. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 8, folder 1. Typescript.

- . “Second Neat Draft 3 (revised).” Sept. 2003-Feb. 2004. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 8, folder 6. Typescript.
- . “Third Draft.” Mar. 2004. The Kazuo Ishiguro Papers, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, container 9, folder 3. Typescript.
- James, David. “Critical Solace.” *New Literary History*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2016, pp. 481–504.
- Kermode, Frank. “Outrageous Game.” Review of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *London Review of Books*, vol. 27, no. 8, 2005, pp. 21–22.
- Larkin, Philip. *Collected Poems*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.
- McCarthy, Tom. *Remainder*. Vintage, 2007.
- Ricks, Christopher. *The Force of Poetry*. Clarendon P, 1995.
- Robbins, Bruce. *Upward Mobility and the Common Good: Toward a Literary History of the Welfare State*. Princeton UP, 2009.
- Rollins, Mark. “My Interpretation of the Cottages.” Email to the author. 1 Jan. 2018.
- Romanek, Mark, director. *Never Let Me Go*. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2010.
- Rose, Jacqueline. “Entryism.” Review of *Specimen Days*, by Michael Cunningham. *London Review of Books*, vol. 27, no. 18, 2005, pp. 25–26.
- Smith, Zadie. *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays*. Penguin, 2010.
- Stevens, John. *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court*. Cambridge UP, 1979.
- Walkowitz, Rebecca L. *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*. Columbia UP, 2017.
- Whitehead, Anne. “Writing with Care: Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*.” *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2011, pp. 54–83.
- Wilde, Oscar. *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays*, edited by Peter Raby. Oxford UP, 1998.
- Wood, James. “Nothing in a Really Big Way.” Review of *Pilcrow*, by Adam Mars-Jones. *London Review of Books*, vol. 30, no. 8, 2008, pp. 24–25.