

# "Shadowy objects in the test tubes": Biocitizenship, Disposable Bodies, and Wasted Lives in Hanif Kureishi's "The Body" and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

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## Abstract

The paper aims to explore Hanif Kureishi's (2002) "The Body" and Kazuo Ishiguro's (2005) *Never Let Me Go* in order to throw light on the bioethical issues related to ageing, biocitizenship, organ transplantation, wasted lives and disposable bodies by extending the discussion from a human to a dystopian posthuman world where affluent sections of society replenish their aged degenerating organic body by incorporating biomatter from non-citizens and clones. The paper draws on and extends Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas's concept of biocitizenship, Zygmunt Bauman's notion of wasted lives, Giorgio Agamben's explanation of bare life and Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection in the context of literary studies in order to analyze the socio-political status of the engineered lives who are classified as biomedical fodders.

**Keywords:** biocitizenship, organ transplantation, disposable bodies, *wasted lives*

## Introduction

In an article entitled "Biological Citizenship" Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas (2003) argue that although our notion of citizenship has long been informed by the knowledge of biology, a new form of citizenship has evolved in the age of biomedicine that they term as biological citizenship. Biological citizenship or biocitizenship may be defined as a form of citizenship that is constituted by narratives of health care, corporeal vulnerability, genetic risk and susceptibility, and the intercorporeal relationship shared and acknowledged by the consumers of biomedicine. Rose and Novas state that the dissemination of biomedical knowledge has empowered the citizens to participate in decision-making process of their health and vitality. However, they explain that not all are accorded equal citizenship in the current culture of biotechnology. Knowledge of biology and biomedicine has not merely shaped our understanding of citizenship but has also made distinctions between 'actual, potential, troublesome, and impossible citizenship' (Rose and Novas 2003, p. 2). Through its commercial collusion with capitalist biomedicine, biotechnology has amplified the existing inequalities in the social structure by creating a section of empowered and informed citizens who are classified as consumers of biomedical products and a section of non-citizens who are exploited for bioscientific experimentation and organ donation.

Hanif Kureishi's (2002) "The Body" and Kazuo Ishiguro's (2005) *Never Let Me Go* offer fictional representations of the intensification of the societal gap by dramatizing the non-agentic status of the bioengineered lives that are traded and consumed by white wealthy consumers anxious to repair and reengineer themselves through cosmetically constructed posthuman bodies. The literary texts examined in this essay engage with the bioethical issues related to ageing, biocitizenship, and organ transplantation by extending the discussion from a human to a dystopian posthuman world where affluent sections of society replenish their aged degenerating organic body by incorporating biomatter from non-citizens and clones. Drawing on Michael Mack (2002) it may be argued that in Kureishi and Ishiguro's literary works 'we encounter an economy of hope but it only applies to those who are the recipients of the organ donations rather than those who are excluded from full participation in such a society that focuses on the management of health' (Mack 2002, p. 49). Mack states that the engineered beings who are designed in the laboratories for various therapeutic purposes participate 'in rather one-sided way in such economy of hope' because in the current culture of biocapitalism the engineered beings are merely conceived as shadowy beings who are exploited for biotechnological experimentation and organ transplantation but whose physical presence in the society is not acknowledged by the manufacturers and consumers of biomedical products (p. 49).

This essay argues that Kureishi's "The Body" and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* may be interpreted as critiques of the neo-cannibalistic culture of capitalism that transforms human body into disposable commodities that are subsequently converted into biomedical trash. The literary works of Kureishi and Ishiguro pose problematic questions regarding issues such as agency, bioethics, and neoliberal biocapitalist consumption. Biocapitalism denotes the process of capitalization of life that is promoted by the technocratic biomedical industries. Capitalization of life indicates the process of fragmenting, harvesting, commodifying, and consumption of human body parts (living and cadaveric) in the form of medicine in an era of biotechnology. The first part of the essay will examine how in the capitalist consumerist society, human body is biomedically classified as a disposable commodity that is consumed as therapeutic products for rejuvenating ageing bodies. The section will analyze the concept of biocitizenship and wasted lives by examining the crisis of identity and agency among people inhabiting the margins of the society who are exploited for organ transplantation and bioscientific experimentation like cloning. The second part of the essay will discuss the socio-cultural and political status of the human clones who are not acknowledged as persons and hence, are not accorded citizenship rights. The section will discuss how the clones who are medico-legally conceived as store house of organs are classified as biomedical trash.

### **Biocitizenship and Disposable Bodies**

Hanif Kureishi's "The Body" speculates on bioethical issues that have emerged with the practice of biocapitalisation of human life while also dramatizing how our knowledge of corporeality, human subjectivity, and citizenship is problematized and reconfigured by biotechnological practices like organ transplantation. "The Body" dramatizes the life of a writer named Adam in his mid-sixties who articulates his anxiety about his aged, degenerating, and ailing body. The narrator addresses his ageing body as a 'half-dead old carcass' and states that at this stage of life he despises his ailing body and is haunted by the fear of death which is approaching him with increasing imminence (p. 3). Adam looks in the mirror and states that with his 'rotund stomach, veiny, spindly legs and left-leaning posture' he is beginning to resemble his father just before his death thus dramatizing mortality as an intergenerational as well as an intersubjective experience (p. 17). In Kureishi's

novella ageing symbolizes an organic process of decay, degeneration, and death and "The Body" dramatizes how in the current biomedicalized consumerist society developments in anti-ageing therapies, replacement and regenerative medicine along with the evolution of concepts like body-maintenance and self-care have created persistent need on the aged population to become active consumers of biomedical products in order to take care of their health and vitality. In his fifties when Adam becomes aware of his first sign of ageing he immediately starts dyeing his hair and joins gym and he gradually realizes that the ageing population around him is increasingly subscribing to anti-ageing therapies, replacement medicine, body maintenance and health care policies for the purpose of slowing down the organic devolution of their body. Adam narrates:

I knew women, and not only actresses, who had squads of personal trainers, dieticians, nutritionists, yoga teachers, masseurs and beauticians laboring over their bodies daily, as if minds longing and anxieties could be cured via body. Who doesn't want to be more desired and therefore, loved? (p. 29)

Kureishi's fictional narration of the anxiety of the ageing population resonates with Neilson Brett's (2012) sociological study of the ageing population that throws light on how in the current consumerist society biogerontologists classify ageing as a disease that can be cured and slowed down by re-engineering the fundamental biomechanism of the human body. Neilson Brett states that replacement and regenerative medicines are restructuring the normative temporal homogenous model of the human body involving birth, growth, ageing, and death. Biotechnological intervention enabled by the developments in the domain of molecular biology has epistemologically and ontologically redefined our experientiality of ageing that we notionally conceive to be a biological and uniform phenomenon.

In Kureishi's "The Body" Adam states that we have entered a time where the notion of death itself is dying and 'we are making a society in which everyone would be of same age' (p. 37). He acknowledges the social value of a youthful appearance and accepts the proposition made by his friend Ralph who transplants his brain into a new young body. Like Ralph, Adam transplants his brain into a young and handsome body of a twenty-five year-old male in order to explore his unfulfilled pleasures and desires but he wishes to go back to his old body after the completion of the six-month vacation period. As the story unfolds it is revealed that Adam's old body is being disposed of by the agents of the hospital thereby making it impossible for him to return to his old organic original body. In Kureishi's novella, the commodified bodies that are consumed as therapeutic products by the ageing population are literally as well as metaphorically described as disposable entities. The human bodies that are used for transplantation are conceived to be equivalent to clothes that are purchased on the basis of 'race, gender, size and age' preferences enlisted by the purchasers of the body (p. 25). Body shopping is made available to a few wealthy people who can afford to buy new attractive young bodies thereby disposing of the old and withered one. The body transplant clinic in Kureishi's novella may be considered as a *bioemporium* where the bodies of different shapes, sizes, and colours are codified, systematically arranged and kept hanging like clothes in the fridge. Adam describes the bodies kept in the clinic thus:

Suspended in harnesses, there were rows, and rows of bodies: the pale, the dark, and the in-between; the mottled, the clear skinned, the hairy and the hairless, the bearded and the large-breasted; the tall, the broad and the squat. Each had a number in a plastic wallet above the head [...] I was reminded of the rows of suits in the tailors I'd visit as a boy with my father. Except these were not cloth coverings but human bodies [...]. (pp. 23-24)

In the novella, Adam's friend Matte states that soon a new era will begin when people will start exchanging bodies the way we exchange clothes. Matte says, "There'll be shops where you go to buy the body you want. I'll open one myself with real bodies rather than mannequins in the window", thus dramatizing the ontology of corporeality as an extension of commodity fetish and underlining the cannibalistic quality of bio-consumerism (p. 96). Matte says to Adam that he is planning to wear his body for another ten years after which he would prefer to shift "to something fitter" than the present one (p. 97). Kureishi's novella dramatize how in the current culture of bioconsumerism body is cognized as a disposable biochemical machine that is conceived to be ontologically opposite to the human mind which is considered to be least affected by the biotechnological intervention made for the purpose of re-engineering the biomechanism of the human body. The cognizance of the human body as spare part or a disposable entity by the characters in Kureishi's novella throws light on how our biomedical understanding of the human body continues to be shaped by the Cartesian mind-body dualism propounded by the French philosopher Rene Descartes.

Jogo Morrison (2015) argues that the body in Kureishi's novella is treated as a plaything or a costume that can be worn and taken off when its amusement value has been dissipated. The body is portrayed as a reified pleasurable object that is 'used, shown off, and ultimately disposed of' (p. 95). Throughout the novella Adam recurrently addresses his new body as a "vessel" that he consumes the same way he uses his other prized possession (p. 38). The plasticity and disposable quality of human bodies as dramatized in the novella foregrounds how in the consumerist culture human beings in the process of fulfilling their desire of replenishing their body by incorporating biomatter from anonymous sources are subsequently producing biomedical waste. Kureishi's novella dramatizes how in the hyperconsumerist culture the plastic and disposable features of commodities are extended to human bodies that are classified as biocommodities to be consumed for therapeutic as well as cosmetic purposes. Kureishi's fictional representation corroborate with Hamid Debashi's (2012) argument that plasticity and disposability are the integral features of a posthuman body. As a product of globalization and neoliberal economic structure the posthuman body corresponds to 'a contingent and contextual being and as such an object of disposable knowledge' (p. 4). Debashi argues that posthumanism as a concept embodies the process of transmutation from the Enlightenment-centric imagination of a body as a corporeally integral, autonomous, rational and indispensable to a notion of a bioengineered body that is disposable, dispensable and mutable. Drawing on current debates on bioengineering and biomedically produced plasticity, Debashi defines the body that 'can be genetically engineered, artificially inseminated, organically transplanted, plastically sculpted' as posthuman disposable body (p. 4).

During the transplantation surgery Adam contemplates on how in the era of bioengineering renewed knowledge of corporeality has created new vocabularies such as "newies, old bodies, facilities" that are restructuring our discourse of identity construction and citizenship (p. 96). Adam says to his doctor that words like new body and facility 'will eventually be part of most people's everyday vocabulary...' that will differentiate the new class of elite citizens from the old bodies who are reduced to mere body facilities that are purchased by the rich consumer clientele, thus pointing to a new hierarchical order of classification premised on body-commodity and its consumption (p. 22). Annette Buhler Dietrich (2006) states that the novella "The Body" offers an interesting fictional representation of how the pharmaceutical and biomedical industries operate. While the biomedical practitioners work, experiment, sell their expertise to the white wealthy consumers, the bodies of the Third World and underclass people who are labeled as the 'detritus' of the society are commodified and used for transplantation surgery (Parlati 2014, p. 77).

Bodies of the underclass people are conceived as "malleable facilities" that are biomedically processed and circulated within the maze of the global capitalist market (Parlati 2014, p. 78).

In the novella, when Adam enquires about the identity of the body he has purchased, it is revealed to him that in most cases bodies are imported from the Third World nations, thus underlining the politics of production axiomatically aligned to an economy of outsourced labor and privileged consumption. These social outcasts are stripped of their political rights as well as valuable biomatter in order to satisfy the consumer market that classify them as social garbage and consequently reduces them to biomedical trash. Hence, the novella is reflective of a culture of bio-capitalism where by Third World producers (the body facility in Kureishi's novella) are reified as well as alienated (in classic-Marxist term) from the first world consumer. Ralph says that the body Adam bought was that of a young man who lived a life of a discard and died of depression. Ralph informs Adam:

Your guy's going to have died in some grisly fashion [...] if he's young, it's not going to be pleasant. No young death is a relief. The whole world works on exploitation. We all know the clothes we wear, the food, it's packed by Third World peasants [...]. (pp. 46-47)

The issues of biocitizenship and wasted lives are further explored in Kazuo Ishiguro's dystopian novel *Never Let Me Go* where tissue procurement from clones for prolonging the life span of the normal humans is sanctioned by the state. Unlike Kureishi's "The Body" where ageing as a biological phenomenon is problematized through the process of bio-modification, in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, the concept of ageing is metaphorically explored by throwing light on the diminution of the biological experientiality of human clones. The novel portrays a complete separation between birth and ageing by foregrounding the scripted lives of the clones who are never allowed to grow old. The human clones exist for donating organs to the wealthy ageing population and are then cast off as wasted commodities, in a dystopian drama of the entanglement of human consumption and trash.

In his study of *Never Let Me Go*, Michael Mack (2002) argues that the human clones in Ishiguro's novel emerge as tragic figures because their life is 'static and lacks the unpredictability that comes with growth. Growth is another word for ageing and by being deprived of growth, the clones are already at their end points, close to death. They are fixed and indeed their life has been pre-arranged' (p. 52). As the story unfolds, the narrator narrates about her childhood days in Hailsham, a specialized private institute within the larger cloning programme where the clones are allowed to spend their childhood days in a cultivated and beautiful environment. In the novel, Ishiguro does not offer a complex character portrayal of the underclass people who are exploited for bioscientific experimentation like human cloning. Their presence is conveyed to the readers through the human clones like Kathy and Ruth who are curious to know about the humans from whom they are modelled. Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* is primarily interpreted as a novel that foregrounds the dehumanizing aspect of organ transplantation that is entwined with classic Marxist issues such as alienation and reification at the biological and political level, thus making the novel a fertile study of neoliberal biopolitics. This essay examines the socio-cultural and political status of the human clones and their progenitors for the purpose of discussing the concept of biomedical trash.

The spectral presence of the progenitors in Ishiguro's novel throws light on the working mechanism of biotechnological industries that exploit people who are metaphorically considered as wasted lives for bioscientific experimentation like cloning. It thus reveals the systematized and industrialized nature of neoliberal cannibalism which consumes human bodies for transhuman

perfection. In *Wasted Lives* Bauman discusses the supernumerary section of the population like immigrants, prostitutes, prisoners and the other social outcasts who are considered as the 'flawed consumers' because of their inability to contribute to the ever-growing structure of capitalism as wasted lives (p. 14). He argues that the production of human waste is the unavoidable side-effect of economic progress and quest for order which is the characteristic of modernity. In a similar vein, and in a different but related study, Bauman (2011) in *Collateral Damages* articulates the ambivalence at the level of location as he states that the, 'underclass may be in but it is clearly not of the society' (p. 3). He extends his argument by further stating that the underclass can be considered as 'an alien inside that does not count among the natural and indispensable part of the social organization' (p. 3). They are the rejects of the society who are metaphorically signified as the trash of the society. Bauman argues that these unwanted individuals are the collateral victims of man-made or natural catastrophe. In the second part of *Never Let Me Go*, the narrator Kathy recalls how Ruth, Tommy, and other clones at Hailsham and the cottages were curious to know about their origins. In fact, at Hailsham Kathy narrates that the idea of knowing about the humans from whom they are cloned has both intrigued and disturbed them. Kathy describes the clones' curiosity thus:

Since each of us was copied at some point from a normal person, there must be for each of us somewhere out there a model getting on with his or her life. This meant at least in theory, you'd be able to find the person you were modelled from. That's why, when you were out there yourself-in the town, shopping centers, transports cafes-you kept an eye out for "possible"- the people who might have been the models for you and your friends. (p. 137)

The possibility of finding the person from whom Kathy is modelled makes her anxious. Subconsciously Kathy believes that she is modelled from a prostitute or a porn star and secretly searches for her progenitor in the piles of the porn magazines that are circulated in the cottages where the clones are temporarily sheltered before becoming carers or donors. Kathy's anxiety about the origin of the clones is voiced by Ruth when she bitterly admits that they are all modelled from trash. In one of the passages in the novel, Ruth, Tommy, and Kathy, along with Chrissie and Rodney go to a town named Cromer on the North Norfolk coast in search of the human from whom Ruth is cloned. Chrissie and Rodney claim to have seen Ruth's original working in an office but after waiting for an hour outside they meet with disappointment and an embittered Ruth reveals to her friends:

We're not modelled from that sort [...] We all know it. We're modelled from trash. Junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps, convicts, maybe, just so long they aren't psychos. That's what we come from. We all know it, so why don't we say it [...] if you want to look for possible, if you want to do it properly, then look in the gutter. You look in rubbish bins. Look down the toilet. That's where you will find where we all come from [sic]. (p. 164)

In an article entitled "Look into the Gutter" Kelly Rich (2015) argues that Ruth's revelation of human clones' origin from the people who are classified as noncitizens throws light on the socio-political status of the human clones that is enmeshed with the notion of trash. Rich states, 'not only has Ruth's vision of professionalism crumbled but also her sense of a viable personhood. Now she is able to see herself as what she's been all along, an object circulating in the networks of society's refuse' (p. 637). The covert explanation of the bioscientific experimentation and the social outcasts who are exploited in the biotechnological experiments throw light on how the notion of biocapitalism is entangled with the neo-cannibalistic culture of capitalism as discussed by Hughes' (2001) in an article entitled "Neo-Cannibalism". Hughes argues that "amidst the neo-

liberal adjustment of the neo global economy" and the advanced biomedical surgical procedure, the bodies of the underclass who are not included within the framework of citizenship are strictly classified biomedically as fodder for the rich consumer clientele (p. 79).

An analogy may be drawn between the social-cultural status of the underclass people as dramatized in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and Rachele Dini's (2016) concept of waste and recuperation. Dini argues that the binary between waste and commodity is always in a state of flux. She states that the concept of commodity and waste is 'dialectically inseparable from one another and that under capitalist exchange relations, each is revealed capable of being alchemized into another' (p. 4). In Ishiguro's novel, the reincorporation of underclass people as consumable biomedical commodities throws light on how the wasted lives are recuperated by connecting them to the global market of human organs where they are transformed into purchasable biomatter for wealthy clientele. The ambiguous nature of trash may be further explored by analyzing the socio-cultural status of human clones within broader narratives of neoliberal biocapitalist consumer culture that classifies them as biomedical trash.

### **Bioengineered Beings, Wasted Lives, and Biomedical Waste**

In *Ontology of Trash* Greg Kennedy (2007) argues that the concept of trash embodies semantic ambiguity. Trash as a concept does not merely indicate the physical act of disposing a commodity, rather the phenomenon should be examined as an act of withdrawal or deprivation that problematizes the normative order of human conceptual schema. Kennedy states that trash always dwells in the fringes of our conceptual schema and whenever consciousness discerns incomprehensible entities that threaten to problematize or contaminate our settled conceptual order, those objects or individuals are labelled as trash. Kennedy explains the phenomenon of trash thus:

The dehumanization of wasted things occurs at a deeper level than the mere aesthetic faculty that subjectively regards one thing as trash and another as treasure. True, the determination of waste does not involve a certain subjective imposition on the being in question [...] Anything valued can look like a junk from some vantage point. Despite this subjective relativity, it is still most instructive to understand this supervening projection as more profoundly privative. Rather than seeing waste as an expression of human activity projecting negative value- we might better regard it first as a matter of human withdrawal and deprivation. (pp. 5-6)

Trash is explained as a liminal phenomenon because it occupies a state of in-between-ness that resists any form of classification and ascription of meaning. Trash is cognized as a homogenous entity that is always in a state of flux because the phenomenon oscillates between the state of being functional and non-functional, valuable and waste. Kennedy states that trash is a material phenomenon that occupies the periphery of urban spaces and is also a conceptual order because like 'beauty it appears that the phenomenon of waste belongs to the eye of the beholder' (2007, p. 1). An analogy may be drawn between Kennedy's explanation of trash as a conceptual order and the unclassifiable and ambiguous position of the bioengineered beings in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* who threaten to problematize our shared normative concept of humanness. The clones in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* may be conceived as liminal beings who problematize the binary between subject and object, human and non-human and hence they unsettle the normative conceptual order of the humans observing them thereby evoking a feeling of uncanniness.

In Ishiguro's novel, Miss Emily acknowledges the fact that the guardians of Hailsham have always dreaded the sight of the human clones and have looked at them with revulsion. The act of revulsion as portrayed in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* corresponds with Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection that denotes the act of creating conceptual boundary for classifying the unclassifiable. In *Power of Horror* Kristeva (1983) argues that the liminal and unaccommodated beings trigger a feeling of horror and disgust because they foreground the fragility of binaries and epistemic purity of the symbolic order that inform our normative and dichotomous way of constructing meaning of the socio-cultural phenomena with which we interact and are engaged in our everyday life. Liminality as a concept inhabits a space outside our shared understanding of the symbolic order thereby resisting any possibilities for meaning making. Hence, abjection may be interpreted as an emotional state that is strategically employed by humans in order to guard themselves of the entities that are conceived to be ambiguous and unclassifiable. Kristeva argues that the feeling of abjection is essentially triggered by ambiguous entity that cannot be assimilated with the normative conceptual order and hence, such 'lives are categorized as excluded, they are articulated by negation and its modalities, transgression, denial and repudiation. Their dynamic challenges the theory of unconsciousness, seeing that the latter is dependent on the dialectic of negativity' (1983, pp. 6-7).

In the novel *Never Let Me Go*, Miss Emily says to Kathy and Tommy, 'We're all afraid of you. I myself had to fight back my dread for you almost every day I was at Hailsham' (p. 264). During her conversation with Miss Emily, Kathy recalls the incident when the headmistress came to a halt when a group of students at Hailsham tried to block her path. The classification of clones as nonhumans and the feeling of uncanniness that is stimulated by their sight correlate to Kennedy's explanation of how the inadequacy of the phallogocentric medium to decipher the incomprehensibility and elusiveness of any entity relegates it to the negative classification of dirt and pollution. Notionally human's conceptual schema is governed by logic and rationality and whenever reason fails to categorize entities that transgress the normative conceptual order, 'it employs 'dirt' as the default category that appears in the absence of rational comprehensibility' (Kennedy 2007, p. 6). The clones are stripped of their socio-political rights and are conceived as reptilian creatures whose presence is abhorred by the guardians of Hailsham boarding school. In *On Garbage* John Scanlan (2005) states that garbage symbolizes the cut-off and detached remainder of living beings. The term metaphorically indicates the people, things, and activities that are separated, removed, and devalued. In other words, garbage replicates the shadowy part of the life that we tend to overlook. Drawing on John Scanlan's explanation of trash, it may be argued that the human clones in Ishiguro's novel may be classified as social garbage who are not acknowledged as the proprietors of their own body and are conceived as state's property. Sara Wasson (2015) argues that Ishiguro's novel offers an ontological affinity between the life of the clones and the discarded rubbish. Throughout the novel, the clones are constantly reminded of the fact that they are categorized as social outcasts who are not acknowledged as members of a politically agentic community.

Wasson argues that apart from the clones' own realization that they are conceived as social outcasts, there are other incidents in the novel that subtly throw light on the clones' resemblance with trash. The last section in the novel that portrays Kathy standing outside a fenced ploughed land in Norfolk staring at the rubbish that are caught along the fencing offers a poignant example of the human clones' status as a social outcast and their liminal location. The fenced ploughed land symbolizes the civilized and cultivated human community from which the clone Kathy is isolated. Kathy narrates:

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 [...] All along the fence, especially along the lower lines of wire, all sorts of rubbish had caught and tangled. It was like the debris you get on a sea-shore. (p. 282)

In Ishiguro's novel, the human clones metaphorically as well as literally inhabit the fringes of the social structure and the normative human conceptual order. The physical existence of the human clones is not recognized by the members of the human community and the clones are conceived as shadowy creature with whom they do not want to establish a mutual humane relationship. In Ishiguro's novel like the underclass people whose biomatter is used to design the clones, the human clones are conceived as spectral beings whose socio-cultural and political status is not acknowledged by the members of the human community. Miss Emily says to Kathy and Tommy, 'so for long time you were kept in shadows, and people did their best not to think about you. And if they did, they tried to convince themselves you weren't really like us. That you were less than human, so didn't matter' (p. 258). She states to Tommy and Kathy that the indifference attitude of the normal humans towards the newly evolving life forms that are engineered in the laboratories for medical purposes has led to the classification of the clones as nonhumans. Miss Emily mourns the failure of the bioethicists to cope with the bioscientific experiments that has reconfigured the normative understanding of humans and humanness. In *Ontology of Trash* Kennedy argues that 'ontological violence is the progenitor of trash' and the act of not acknowledging the physical presence of a being is in itself an act of ontological violence (2007, p. 144).

An analogy may be drawn between the shadowy, liminal, and disposable status of the clones whose life is terminated post-organ extraction when they reach adulthood and Greg Kennedy's explanation of ontological hollowness of disposable commodities that are designed for a stipulated time frame after the expiry of which objects are classified as trash. Kennedy states, 'ontological hollowness of disposable commodities evacuates their phenomenal being of physicality [...] Disposable commodities appear as always already disposed of. Their revelation presupposes their disappearances in the commodified order of technology' (pp. 143-144). Similar to disposable entities, human clones in Ishiguro's novel are designed to be exploited for therapeutic purposes and are then disposed of. Drawing on Kennedy it may be argued that the clones are like 'carefree commodities' that are created, reared, and supplied to the normal humans who are not obliged to take care of the bioengineered lives that are exploited for healing and rejuvenating their health and vitality (p. 122). Kennedy argues that carefreeness is the real promise of technology. Technology promises to liberate and disburden human beings from physically engaging with commodities through perpetual production of disposable items but this disposable feature of the consumerist culture is intertwined with the act of carefreeness that facilitates discarding of commodities inconsiderately thereby transforming those into trash.

An analogy may be drawn between the bioengineered lives who are stripped of their political rights and are exploited for different therapeutic purposes and Giorgio Agamben's concept of *bare life* discussed in *Homo Sacer* (1998). Agamben argues that the dominant Western political narratives operate on a binaristic understanding between *bare life* and political existence, *zoe* and *bios*, and exclusion and inclusion. While discussing the issues of biopolitics in the context of modern democracy, Agamben draws readers' attention to the enigmatic figure of *Homo Sacer* in order to explain the political scenario of modern society. Agamben states that the people who are incorporated within the zones of bare life are considered as the remainder of the destroyed political bios.

It may be argued that the human clones' status as trash or abandoned being as dramatized in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* is symbolically mediated through Hailsham School and the gallery that are now conceived as lost and abandoned projects. Hailsham boarding school was once designated as a "shining beacon, an example of how we might move to a more humane and better way of doing things" and the guardian of Hailsham Miss Emily reveals to Tommy and Kathy that the school was a social experiment that was started with an aim to prove to the world that the clones too are human and should be accorded human rights (p. 253). At present, Hailsham is associated with the ruined, abandoned, discarded and nondescript infrastructures that Kathy, Tommy, and Ruth come across. Kathy narrates how the bleak, ruined, and empty infrastructure that she crosses while driving stimulates her memory of Hailsham:

Driving around the country now, I still see things that will remind me of Hailsham. I might pass the corner of a misty field, or see part of a large house in a distance as I come down the side of the valley, even a particular arrangement of popular trees up on a hill side, and I think: Maybe that's it! I've found it! This actually is Hailsham!' Then I see it is impossible and I go on driving, my thoughts drifting on elsewhere. (p. 6)

Kelly Rich argues that the association of Hailsham with ruined and degraded entities symbolizes the acceptance of the institute's 'status as a ruined experiment, an abandoned structure, or in Ruth's dream, a giant lake of trash' (2015, p. 642). The ruinous and abandoned image of Hailsham may be considered as symbolic extension of socio-political status of the clones who are engineered, used, and eventually discarded. Built at the fringes of the society, fenced and excluded from the human community Hailsham boarding school may be metaphorically denoted as a dump yard where all the discarded objects collected from the city are brought once in every month and are put to sale for the students. The episode where the students merrily exchange their hard-won token for the discarded objects symbolizes the exploitative and cannibalistic feature of the capitalist consumer society that transforms the human clones into biomedical trash by exploiting them for organ donation. The gallery in Hailsham that was used to archive the artworks of the students is another moving instance in the novel that symbolizes the clones' close affinity with the notion of waste. The artworks of the students that were conceived to be the extension and projection of the clones' inner selves, now occupy the dark chamber of an anonymous house where they have lost their purpose. The guardians painstakingly collected the arts to demonstrate to the world that the clones like normal humans have souls but with the failure of Hailsham as a social experiment, artworks too are now classified as wastes that are pruned and locked up in a house where Miss Emily is residing now.

In Ishiguro's novel the human clones socio-politically, linguistically, and conceptually inhabit an extraneous position. Their lack of main stream education, property rights, and ownership over their body places them outside the range of intersubjective relationship that is considered to be the criterion for accepting an individual as a person. The cognizance of the clones as nonhumans and their biomedical classification as organ donors throw light on the restricted notion of personhood that has led to the conversion of the genetically engineered being as biomedical trash. The clones experience agentic crisis as they are deprived of, on the one hand, the citizenship rights that are accorded to the normal humans and on the other hand, ownership over their own body. Kelley Rich argues that the human clones in Ishiguro's novel share an ambivalent relationship with their physical body that does not belong to them, thus dramatizing the issue of existential as well as biological ownership and agency in a dystopian biopolitical regime. The clones create their own form of jokes, imaginative play, and figurative languages in

order to cognize the ambivalent relationship with their body and the plasticity of their being. Similar to Kureishi's novella "The Body" in *Never Let Me Go* the clones in a jocular manner denote their body as a costume or a bag that can be unzipped when they are required to donate organs. Kathy recalls, "the idea was that when the time comes, you'd be able just to unzip a bit of yourself, a kidney or something would slide out, and you'd hand it over [...] You unzipped your liver, say, and dumped it on someone's plate, that sort of things" (p. 86).

The clones in Ishiguro's novel are doubly marginalized because of their possibilities of being modeled from people who are classified as wasted lives and their scripted bioengineered existence that label them as non-humans. The agentic crisis of the clones is aptly explained by Miss Lucy when she declares to the Hailsham students, 'None of you will go to America, none of you will be film stars. And none of you will be working in supermarkets as I heard some of you planning the other day. Your lives are set for you' (p. 80). Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* thus foregrounds and dramatizes the dystopian situation of human clones who dream of liberating themselves and achieving a more human status by aspiring an alternative, albeit more human commodified space of supermarket employees, thus dramatizing different orders of reification and alienation.

## Conclusion

This essay concludes by stating that the dramatization of the underclass people and bioengineered lives in Kureishi's "The Body" and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* enables us to gain rich insight into the role of literature in unveiling the reification and alienation emerging out of neoliberal biocapitalism that converts bodies into purchasable commodities and reduces sections of humans into consumable entities. The literary works of Kureishi and Ishiguro offer fictional representations of how in the current capitalist consumerist society human body is classified as carefree disposable entities that are used for therapeutic and cosmetic purposes and then are cast off as biomedical waste. The fictional representations of the dehumanized status of the underclass people and bioengineered lives offer us scope to speculate on issues such as bioethics, agency, and humanness that have emerged with bioscientific developments in the domain of cloning and organ transplantation. Kureishi's "The Body" and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* offer a complex commentary and critique of the current culture of bioengineering and biocapitalism that we internalize and consume today.

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