LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN NEVER LET ME GO

Ustoz: **Abduqodirova Nilufar**
O‘quvchi: **Azamjonova Mohlaroy**

Abstract: This article analyzes the role of language in the construction of identity in Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro. The study explores how narration, euphemistic expressions, silence, and communication shape the characters’ understanding of themselves and their place in society. The novel demonstrates that language functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a tool of social control and psychological conditioning.
Keywords: language, identity, narration, memory, dystopia, humanity, discourse.

Introduction

Language plays a significant role in shaping human identity, social relationships, and personal understanding. In literature, language often reflects the emotional and ideological systems that influence characters’ lives. Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel Never Let Me Go presents a dystopian society where cloned children are raised for organ donation.

The Role of Narration in Identity Construction One of the most striking features of the novel is Kathy H.’s first-person narration. Kathy tells the story through memories, reflections, and personal observations. Her narrative voice is soft, careful, and emotionally restrained. This style reflects the psychological condition of a person who has grown up in a controlled environment where questioning reality is discouraged.

Narration also becomes a form of resistance. By telling her story and remembering her experiences at Hailsham, Kathy preserves her individuality. Although society views clones as objects for donation,Kathy’s voice proves her emotional depth and humanity.

Euphemistic Language and Social Control

Another important aspect of the novel is the use of euphemistic language. Society avoids direct expressions related to death and exploitation. Instead of saying that clones die after organ extraction, the novel uses terms such as “completion” and “donation.”

These expressions soften the cruelty of reality and normalize the donation system. Since the students at Hailsham grow up hearing these terms from childhood, they begin to accept their destiny as natural and unavoidable.

Memory and the Formation of Self

Memory is central to identity formation in the novel. Kathy constantly revisits moments from her childhood and relationships with Ruth and Tommy. These memories help her understand herself and create emotional continuity in her life.

Silence and Emotional Limitation

Silence is another powerful element in the novel. Many characters avoid discussing painful truths directly because they fear emotional suffering. Ishiguro uses silence to show how oppression can exist not only through violence but also through emotional restriction and controlled communication.

Humanity and Self-Expression

A central question in the novel is what it means to be human. The students at Hailsham create art, build friendships, and experience love and jealousy. These human qualities contradict society's attempt to reduce them to biological functions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Never Let Me Go demonstrates that language plays a crucial role in the construction of identity and social reality. Through narration, memory, and silence, Kazuo Ishiguro explores how individuals are shaped by communication and institutional power.

References

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