Essays in Honour of Boris Berić's Sixty-Fifth Birthday

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"What's Past Is Prologue"

Edited by

Gabrijela Buljan, Ljubica Matek,
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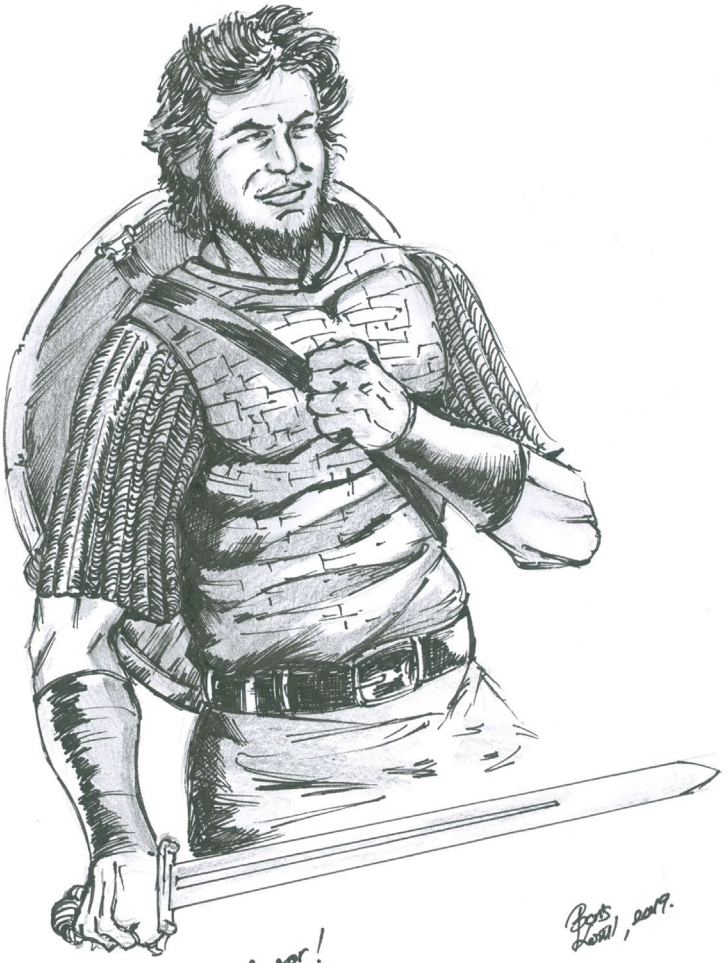
Thank you, professor!

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PREFACE:
IN HONOUR OF BORIS

LJUBICA MATEK

I can no other answer make but thanks;
And thanks
– William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*

It is not a difficult task to pay tribute to people who have, in various ways, helped and supported us in our personal or professional development. For that reason, I am grateful – as all the contributors to this collection are – to be able to honour my teacher, mentor, and dear colleague, professor Borislav Berić, on the occasion of both his sixty-fifth birthday and his upcoming retirement. A more difficult task is to try and sum up all his contributions and achievements in the number of words appropriate for the editorial of one such Festschrift.

Born in 1955 in Daruvar, Croatia (then Yugoslavia), where he grew up, Boris spent most of his youth abroad, developing his cosmopolitan outlook, which has influenced all of us immensely. He completed his primary and secondary education in Daruvar, after which he studied Music and Languages in England (1973 – 1976), and subsequently enrolled the Music Academy in Karlsruhe in 1977. Drafted for compulsory military service, he returns to Yugoslavia, where he serves in Niš (now Serbia). While serving, he enrols the Undergraduate Study Programme in English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, from which he graduates in 1982. He continues his graduate studies at the University of Reading in the United Kingdom, where, in 1984, he receives his Master's Degree in Literature and Literary Theory, with the focus on Contemporary English Literature, having defended his thesis titled *W. B. Yeats, "A Poet or the Golden Bough: A 'Spiritual Condition' behind Convertible Form,"* (supervisor: Christopher Salvesen). The following year, he enrolled the postgraduate programme in Literature and Literary Theory at Washington State University, USA, focusing on Medieval and Renaissance English Literature. During that time, from 1985 to 1990, that is, until

his graduation, he worked as a teaching assistant in the Department of English at Washington State University. He received his Doctoral Degree in 1990, after defending the thesis titled *Chronicling and Commemorative Icons: Emblematic Portraits in Shakespeare, Donne, and Herbert* (supervisor: Stanton Linden). For his outstanding dissertation, he received the 1990 Blackburn Fellowship, a one-year postdoctoral fellowship at Washington State University, which enabled him to continue teaching there until 1991, after which he returns to war-fraught Croatia. Since 1992, he has been teaching various courses in literature in the Department of English at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Osijek, Croatia, and has also served for a number of years as a visiting professor at several other universities; since 2003, Boris has been teaching literary courses in undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programmes of English Language and Literature in the Department of English at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina; from 2005 until 2012, he taught literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split; he also taught literature at the Universities in Tuzla and Zenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina, helping them institute and develop their English Studies.

The major part of Boris's career was dedicated to establishing and improving Literary Studies in the Department of English at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek and to teaching. Consequently, he has introduced and taught an impressive total of fourteen courses in the BA and MA programmes of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek: *Introduction to English and American Literature, Survey of English Literature I, Survey of English Literature II, Shakespeare and Literary Theory*, *Contemporary British Literature*, *Love, Sex, and Marriage in Milton's Paradise Lost*, *Changing Country: Irish Literature for the Twenty-First Century*, *Renaissance English Literature*, *American Civilization*, *Modern English Literature*, *Modern English and American Literature*, *Mythology*, *Survey of English and American Literature until the Mid-Eighteenth Century,* and *English Composition*. He has also developed study programmes and individual courses at the University of Mostar's English Department and has, therefore, directly influenced the education and development of many young teachers, interpreters, and scholars in the field of English language and literature, for which both institutions will always be deeply indebted.

Although the focus of Boris's career turned out to be teaching, a field in which he excels, his research is equally exemplary both in its scholarly rigour and in the innovative approaches to classical subjects. His research interests include Renaissance literature, iconography, John Milton's oeu-

vre, and, lately, virtual reality and eroticism in literature. He has published widely on these topics, and his papers testify to his academic precision and inspiring insightfulness as his readings offer relevant, contemporary perspectives on the literary works of (predominantly) sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers. In "Renaissance and the Virtual: The Back Parts of Satan," Boris discusses the phenomenon of the virtual, expounding that virtuality is neither a twenty-first century invention nor inevitably an undesirable one, although scholars typically take a negative point of view linking virtuality to the unreal, simulacra, copy, or false approximation (Berić 10). Boris persuasively argues that the virtual is a powerful impulse that becomes perceptible in transductions of sensible things from one medium into another, like sound into architectural structures or visible forms. More importantly, the mass production of books has led, just like digital technology nowadays, to transductional activities of translation, reading, and interpretation, creating new virtual spaces and communities outside of the existing monopolies of knowledge. In his captivating analysis, he proposes that John Milton's Satan, as initiator and explorer of virtual worlds, ceases to be a fixed entity himself.

Equally thought-provoking is his "The 'Swellings' of the Virtual in, and outside of, Milton's *Paradise Lost*," which tackles the narrative of the Garden of Eden and, in particular, the prelapsarian sexuality (139). According to Boris, the Edenic story has been a "testing ground" for various conceptions of the human world and, in particular, of human sexuality. More specifically, the absence of reference to sex in the biblical story has prompted various thinkers, poets, and theologians to attempt to virtualise Edenic sexuality, some by representing it as overly voluptuous, others by purging it. In his paper, Boris compares and contrasts St. Augustine's and John Milton's approaches to Adam and Eve's prelapsarian life from the point of view of narrative theory and phenomenology, bringing the persistent relevance of these authors to the foreground.

His "Windows XP i ikonografija duhovne poezije" ("Windows XP and the Iconography of Devotional Poetry") offers a timely and compelling association of the use of digital icons in the Windows XP operating system and icons used in spiritual poetry of the seventeenth-century poets. Basing his argumentation on the works of Francis Bacon and Thomas Browne, Boris argues that the seventeenth-century spiritual poetry represents the full arc of human history from creation and fall to redemption, in line with the iconographical practice of the time (9–34). In "Boccaccio's 'Il Filostrato' and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*," Boris focuses his attention on the process of adapting sources into new and original works of art (77–80). His other works are equally stimulating pieces of meticulous and

innovative academic research, and, as such, they contribute significantly to literary studies and philology in general.

As part of his professional engagement, Boris served as one of the editors of *RE:AL: The Journal of Liberal Arts* (published by the College of Liberal Arts, Stephen F. Austin State University, Texas, USA) from 2006 until 2011, and he is still a member of the Editorial Board of *HUM – Journal of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Mostar*, where he has been serving since 2006. He is a member of several scholarly associations and societies, namely, International Emblem Society, MLA, Renaissance Society, Renaissance Society of Southern California, CASE, and Inter-Disciplinary Net. Throughout his career, he has presented his research at various international conferences all over the world.

His extensive engagement in teaching, his professionalism, helpfulness, and his hard work have made him a beloved professor and colleague. This is not only confirmed by admirable student survey results but also by the fact that he supervised or co-supervised over two hundred BA and MA theses and four PhD dissertations, one of which was mine. As a former student and mentee, I was inspired both by Boris's broad knowledge and by his open-minded attitude toward his students and colleagues. Rather than watching our every move with the aim to pore over our failings, Boris gave us freedom to learn and improve on our own, while making it clear that he is there to help if the need should arise. This empowered me, and all his other students and colleagues, for the tasks at hand; his confidence in us made us feel competent for the job and motivated us to do better every time. Even now, rather than demanding from us to teach and write in a specific way or on specific topics, and at a certain pace, Boris happily fosters a benevolent laissez-faire approach in which he appreciates and accepts our own thoughts and ideas related to managing our careers, research, and teaching. However, there is one issue concerning which he is adamant; he tirelessly insists on everyone's academic integrity and honesty, and I do not believe that there is a single student or colleague of his who did not learn and remember that "plagiarism is a deadly sin." For this, we are all grateful.

Outside of the classroom, we know him to be a caring and gentle son, nephew, and father. As a friend, Boris likes to tell jokes and make us laugh, but he is also willing to lend a sympathetic ear and provide advice when we need it. In this way, he contributes to a pleasant working atmosphere and strong team spirit among the staff in the Department of English, and among our students too.

Boris's retirement will leave a void in our Department but, in particular, in our Subdepartment for Literary Studies as it can hardly be imagined

without him. But, keeping in mind his bright attitude and generosity, his honesty and academic excellence, and his love of life's pleasures, we will persist in the discipline that he taught so many of us to love.

***

The diverse papers collected in this Festschrift represent an homage to our teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend in that they serve as a blend and a continuation of his and our research interests, signalling his influence on our work and confirming his legacy of educating and inspiring several generations of researchers and teachers.

The first part of the collection is titled *(Re)Creating the Real through Imagination* and contains eight chapters that, more or less directly, address literature's mutually dependent relationship with the material world. In the first chapter, titled "Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* as a Posthumanist Dystopia," Ljubica Matek and Jelena Pataki explore Ishiguro's dystopian novel in light of trans- and posthumanism, both of which ultimately call for a reconsideration of the traditional notion of what it means to be "human."

Turning to poetry, the second chapter is Ivana Čuljak's "*Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* and Their Complementarity." Čuljak describes how William Blake's two canonical collections of poems illustrate that innocence and experience represent two inseparable states of the human soul. In "World Gone Mad: A New Historicist Approach to Bastardy in Shakespeare's *King Lear*" Željka Flegar and Ksenija Švarc rely on the new historicist approach to argue that *King Lear* is a document of its time as they examine the issue of bastardy in the late Elizabethan England as well as the themes of property, territory, and power during the rule of King James I.

The next chapter is Tihana Najdert and Biljana Oklopčić's "Fantasy, Fairy Tale, or Both, That Is the Question: A Case Study of Diana Wynne Jones's *Howl's Moving Castle*." The chapter inspects the hybridity of genres in *Howl's Moving Castle*, arguing that it represents a blend of fairy tale and fantasy. On the one hand, they show that the novel contains the functions of dramatis personae and other fairy tale elements as described in Vladimir Propp's Morphology of the Folktale. On the other hand, the exploration of the novel's fantasy elements has showed that the novel's protagonists challenge, through their atypical transformation, both the modern social context and their expected fairy tale destiny. It is followed by Tea Mihaljević and Sanja Runtić's "Native American Fiction as a 'Contact Zone' – Textualising Orality in James Welch's *Fools Crow*," where they

examine strategies of cultural and historical revisionism as the novel suppresses the conventions of the Western tradition of the identity narrative through a number of conceptual turns. Thereby, the oral matrix serves as an effective tool of both conceptual and anti-imperial translation.

Turning once more to the genre of play, Sonja Novak and Iris Spajić discuss Harold Pinter's play *The Dumb Waiter* through the perspective of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's theory of (tragic) comedy as explained in his *Problems of the Theatre* (*Theaterprobleme,* 1954). Stephanie Jug dedicates her research to regional Slavonian literature, more specifically, to Victor von Reisner's short stories. The chapter titled "Der Dorfgeistliche in den Erzählungen Victor von Reisners" examines the motif of the cleric in three of his stories, showing that the representation of priests is influenced by Southern-European, specifically Serbian, literary traditions which tend to exploit this character to achieve a comic note. The last chapter in this section is Branko Marijanović's "Why Reading Matters: The Position and Role of Literature in the Modern World," in which he takes a general approach to reading, aiming to affirm it as one of the most rewarding human activities.

Part Two of the Festschrift deals with "Literary Questing and Journeying," a topic that is tackled in seven chapters that focus on literal or symbolic journeys. In "The Double Destination(s) in *Heart of Darkness*: A Lacanian Reading," Robert Sullivan uncovers the psychological dimension of the modernist classic, suggesting that as much as the story is about the historical and anthropological circumstances related to colonialism, it is also about a symbolic journey into self. Jasna Poljak Rehlicki and Valentina Markasović read John Cheever's short story "The Swimmer" through the lens of Joseph Campbell's monomyth theory. More specifically, they describe Neddy's journey through the stages of his initiation, trials, and return to showcase the level to which the modern man is (un)able to meet the expectations of being a hero and how the society (or the hero himself) may impede the quest.

The third chapter in this section, Matea Džaja's "'Thy Valiantness Was Mine, Thou Suck'st It from Me': Coriolanus as a Kristevan Everyman," reads Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* as a departure from his other plays in that it emphasises the role of the mother. Džaja argues that, in Kristevan terms, she can be seen as a phallic, devouring mother whose power prevents Coriolanus from committing symbolic matricide and establishing himself as a subject. Jadranka Zlomislić and Myrl Jones's "The Golden Years: Myth vs. Reality" focuses on representations of age and ageing in the youth-oriented and death-denying American society. The paper highlights American culture's expectations and assumptions about ageing academics by

juxtaposing the fictional academic community portrayed in John Williams's *Stoner* and Philip Roth's *The Dying Animal* to the current reality of retired academics in America.

The next chapter, Anđelka Raguž's "Margery Kempe and the Curse of Eve," also deals with the issue of the biological clock, albeit in the context of medieval England. The chapter examines one of the most contentious characters in the history of English literature by applying the recently developed "oestrogen hypothesis" to Kempe's character. Raguž argues that Kempe's spiritual development and visions are possibly influenced by physiological reasons, that is, the age-related fluctuation of hormones. In the penultimate chapter of this part, Sanja Matković analyses the relationships among the members of the Hamilton family in Hugo Hamilton's autobiographical novel *The Speckled People* (2003), employing psychosocial, psychoanalytic, and sociocultural theories and suggesting that the act of writing the novel helped Hamilton reach some kind of catharsis and overcome his traumatic childhood. Similarly, Maja Džolan's "Escapism in Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*" investigates Williams's memory play as both an escape strategy and a coping mechanism that helped the playwright deal with his own family trauma.

The third part of the collection, titled *Social, Cognitive, and Individual Aspects of Language Use and Learning*, contains four chapters on linguistics and applied linguistics. The section opens with "Now You See Me, Now You Don't: Metonymic Mirages and Myopia" by Mario Brdar, which is a sobering plea for more judiciousness in cognitive linguistic research on metonymy. Through a critical re-examination of supposedly metonymic data, Brdar dismantles claims about their metonymic nature. The chapter also explores cases of overlooked metonymy, some of which have implications for a general typology of metonymy. In the chapter titled "Accessible World: A Cognitive-Linguistic Analysis," Adisa Imamović explores how metaphor and metonymy structure aspects of disability-related language. By discussing the metonymic and metaphorical sources of variation in constructions involving the lexeme *accessible*, Imamović goes on to claim that metonymy-induced variation in the realisation of such constructions ensures a more positive media representation of persons with disability.

Next, the idea of agency as a discourse-based and discourse-constructed phenomenon is advocated in Martina Podboj's "Expressing Agency in Narrative Discourse." The chapter delivers a qualitative analysis of narratives of personal experience of migration, where agency is argued to emerge through an interplay of layers of narrative context and by deployment of linguistic devices like pronominal shifts and constructed

dialogue. Finally, in "Aesthetics and Vocabulary Learning: An Experiment," Marina Lukačević and Višnja Pavičić Takač propose to complement vocabulary learning strategies with the so-called "aesthetic strategy." Preliminary experimental results show that, as an active strategy based on free imagination, the aesthetic strategy may have advantages over the reproductive "imagery strategy" in fostering the development of form-meaning associations in FL learners.

Ultimately, the collection aims to show that what is past is really only a prologue for what comes next (indeed, the Bard is seldom wrong). The authors represented in this Festschrift testify to the continuity of Boris's influence among several generations of teachers and scholars, be it in the themes we continue to research or in the approach to our work. In this way, his legacy endures. Happy Birthday, Boris, and thank you for everything!

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PART ONE
(Re)Creating the Real through Imagination

I

KAZUO ISHIGURO'S *NEVER LET ME GO* AS A POSTHUMANIST DYSTOPIA

LJUBICA MATEK
JELENA PATAKI

Abstract

The paper deals with Kazuo Ishiguro's dystopian novel *Never Let Me Go* (2005), which explores the future of humanity by considering the trans- and posthumanist aspects of the story. The rapid changes in Europe's cultural sensibilities and the strong push toward scientific and technical thought at the expense of arts and humanities call for a rereading of the novel in light of these new paradigms. Delving into the field of transhumanism, an all-encompassing improvement of intellectual, emotional, and physical capabilities of humans, and posthumanism as the critique of humanism, the novel explores the complexity of human life in a technologically advanced society that creates a new inferior cast or class of human clones for the sole purpose of harvesting organs. The ethical complexity of such a practice turns out to be too overwhelming as the society both supports it and treats it as taboo. Ultimately, the novel calls for a reconsideration of the traditional notion of what it means to be "human."

Keywords: Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, dystopia, posthumanism, transhumanism

1. Introduction: Psychological Novel or Dystopia?

Since it was published, Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go* (2005) has instigated strong ambivalence in readers and critics alike regarding its generic determination. Although it is seen as a dystopian novel due to its ethical considerations of human cloning, its blatant "dearth of science"

(Shaddox 449)[1] and focus on sympathy and empathy has caused certain interpretations to sway in favour of sentimental and abolitionist literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[2] After all, the author himself stated at one point that his preoccupations were not based on science fiction or dystopias but on the portrayal of human mortality and inescapability of death.[3] And indeed, like several of his other novels, *Never Let Me Go* is a finely woven story about memories of days gone by and the implications the past has on the current life of the protagonists, their self-perception, and the significance of their existence. Furthermore, on several occasions, Ishiguro has claimed that he is not particularly interested in the realist aspect of writing, which entails paying minute attention to the contextual circumstances, but rather in the emotional aspect of the story he chooses to tell (Kelman 45; Mason and Ishiguro 341–43).

However, his purported lack of direct interest in social implications and context and his usual focus on "the interior context of his character's world" (Matek 126) does not mean that the novel can or should only be read as a psychological one. In fact, by reviewing the discussion on the dystopian nature of the novel, it is possible to demonstrate that the text uses dystopian discourse and that the circumstances of the cloned protagonists' lives, that is, their purpose in the imagined society, represents one of the crucial aspects of the story. Thus, the paper aims to show that *Never Let Me Go* is a dystopian novel that focuses on the complex issue of the "nature" of being human by suggesting that a narrow view of humanity is detrimental to the human society and should be expanded in such a way as to include those labelled or seen as posthuman, too.

Although the genre of dystopia "has found fruitful ground to blossom in the copious expanses of science fiction" (Gordin et al. 1), and in line with Andrea Kowalski's reading of the novel through the prism of social denial and biopolitical racism (9–10), there are numerous instances of both

[1] "[T]he novel is narrated by a human clone and the major characters are clones, no scientists or doctors appear; there is no theory or explanation of genetic replication and we see nothing of its mechanics and implementation. Indeed, the most technologically advanced item to appear in the novel is the automobile" (Shaddox 449).

[2] Cf. Shaddox, "Generic Considerations in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*," 450–52. "Like abolitionist literature, *NLMG* demonstrates that while humanness can be recognized by legislative bodies, genuine social recognition comes only through the awareness of individual feeling in common, that is, through empathic resonance" (451–52).

[3] "I wanted to write a book about how people accept that we are mortal and we can't get away from this, and that after a certain point we are all going to die, we won't live forever" (Ishiguro qtd. in Matthews 124).

social and psychological conditioning present in the novel that restrains the clones from challenging or escaping their fatal predicament, which represents the main token of dystopian fiction. Generally, the prominent dystopian topoi are alternate setting, social conditioning, and evasive language, all employed to prevent rebellion and ensure submission among the subjects of the system that exploits them and, in this particular case, literally takes their life. *Never Let Me Go* establishes these elements from its very first page, on which Kathy H., the narrator of the story and one among the trio of protagonists (together with Ruth and Tommy), presents herself as a "carer" (Ishiguro 3) doing a commendable job of guiding her "donors" through as many as four "donations" in "recovery centre[s]" (Ishiguro 4). This dubious language, or "euphemistic neologisms" (Toker and Chertoff 164), serves not only to detract from the ominous meaning behind the words that are being used but also to provide "an illusion of positivity" (Kowalski 14). The terms "donor" and "donation," falsely alluding to the process being conscious and entirely voluntary, in truth signify the artificially produced clones who, without exception and before reaching middle age, undergo a number of surgeries in which their vital organs are taken from their bodies for the benefit of the people they were modelled from, labelled as the "possibles" (Ishiguro 136). This so-called donating process is alleviated by "carers," once again the clones, whose job – and the only available career path before ultimately becoming donors themselves – is to placate the dying organ givers, reinforcing submission to the donating system until the clones in question "complet[e]" (Ishiguro 4), that is, die.

Next, the setting in which all this takes place – unlike the usual futuristic settings overtly dominated by highly advanced technology – is a "retrodystopian" (Marks de Marques 6) late 1990s England, and, more specifically, Hailsham, a sort of boarding school in which "guardians" (Ishiguro 5) take care of "students" (Ishiguro 14) by raising and "sheltering" (Ishiguro 263) them. Alluding to the hypocrisy of the system, Toker and Chertoff make an excellent point regarding the name of the school; "the name suggests its own ambiguity: Hailsham is a 'sham' which people 'hail,' i.e., hold in high regard" (165). What is in fact happening is that the adults are deliberately misleading the young clones in learning the distinctive purpose of their existence; this practice is gradually revealed as the equivocal instrument of the system intent on influencing the clones from an early age and subduing them into unrelenting obedience throughout their lives, even after they leave the school premises. Miss Emily, the former headmistress of Hailsham, although adamant that they have given the clones a happy childhood, admits as much at the novel's end: "Very well,

sometimes that meant we kept things from you, lied to you. Yes, in many ways we *fooled* you. I suppose you could even call it that" (Ishiguro 263). Despite the fact that the clones are encouraged to believe in their noble purpose, which is creating a disease-free society thanks to the organs they provide at the peak of their health, the moral questionability and outright cruelty of the cloning practice become obvious through persistent masking of the stages of the process. The donations, at one point called "butchering" by Ishiguro himself (Matthews 124), are kept abstract among the students because the cunning system imparts to the youngsters only partial knowledge on what will happen to them once they reach a certain age, making the discussions among the school-aged clones on this topic a sort of taboo.

In connection to their obscure future, their identities seem obscure as well; the clones' names do not signify a connection to a particular family but are symbolic in nature. More specifically, even though their first names indeed bear some personal significance, the clones' last names – reduced to a single letter, thus simultaneously signifying and non-signifying – correspond soundly with the classic dystopian framework in the sense that within such exploitative societies an individual is easily replaceable, a mere number among many others.[4] The "unfinished" nature of their names alludes to the lack of the clones' distinguishedness as true human beings with all their pertaining rights. On the one hand, they do have a name that makes them stand out in relation to other clones but, on the other, they are rendered incomplete and insubstantial, pure allusions of the "normals," who the clones will never be.

In the second phase of their lives, after abandoning the "school," adolescent clones move over to the Cottages, where they take care of themselves, socialise with other clones, and engage in frequent sexual relations while waiting for donations to start. Rather than being seen as the period of their carefree youth, this is just a way of "filling in [the clones'] time before they are ripe for the transplants" (Toker and Chertoff 170). In fact, when considered together with the previous brainwashing as well as with the last stage of their lives, which includes caring (and driving from one caring centre to another to support the donors) and donating, it can be easily recognised as one of the methods of the prevention of thought. Also, one might claim that, under the guise of propriety, the clones are discouraged from engaging in sexual relations while in boarding schools but are free to indulge in them upon leaving, thereby allotting a large amount of

[4] Albeit less severe in their reduction, it is possible to compare the impersonal surnames (Kathy H., Tommy D., Moira B. etc.) to names of the characters D-503, O-90, and I-330 in one of the paragons of the dystopian genre, Zamyatin's *We*.