

Disciplinary Power of Space in *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*

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Abstract

As Kazuo Ishiguro's two non-human centered novel, both *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun* depicts the miserable situation of "the others" who are depressed and controlled by human beings to serve their interests. One thing draws the readers' attention is that both of the victims choose not to run away, but leave their state as what required by human beings. This study, therefore, seeks to uncover the truth behind the scenes, that is, the disciplinary power imposed on the clones and the AFs.

Keywords

Disciplinary Power; Kazuo Ishiguro; *Never Let Me Go*; *Klara and the Sun*.

1. Introduction

Ishiguro's works have always delivering humanitarian care to the oppressed others. Similarly, such two works as *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun* have also witnessed Ishiguro's care to the clones and AFs. *Never Let Me Go*, the sixth novel of Ishiguro, potrarys the clones' whole life story of being prepared to fulfill their whole life mission--donating organs for human's transplanting needs. After its publication, this book has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize and nominated for the U.S National Book Criticized Circle Award in the same year. Ishiguro's another science fiction *Klara and the Sun* also tells how the non-human creature has been utilized and oppressed by human beings. As the latest book by Ishiguro, this book published in 2021. Narrated also in first-person perspective, the protagonist Klara is an AI, whose mission is to help human children pull through the lonely times. After Klara being bought by Josie from the shop, she spent a happy time with this family. However, as Josie grows sicker because of her illness, Josie's mother tries to ask Klara to imitate and even replace Josie after she dies. While Klara chooses to make a deal with the Sun that she will undermine the air-polluted Cootings machine, and in return, the Sun needs to give out his energy to save Josey's life. While after Josie recovered, Klara has been forgotten. At the end of the story, Klara is sent to the yard, alone and aged, stilly comb her memory and narrates the story to the readers.

Among all Ishiguro's masterpieces, only these two books are classified as the science fiction and both narrating the exploited and weak others being slaughtered by human beings, and to some extent, both of them have a lot in common, such as the genre, the two women and one men characters, the relationship among the three heroes, the shared miserable fate of being exploited, the greedy lust that human presented and so on. But the reason to choose these two books as the subject of this research lies in the question that why neither the clones nor the AFs have never thought about escaping from the chaos or fighting against the sovereign for their rights even knowing very clearly what ordeals are ahead of them. "One of the most puzzling aspects of the novel, and the one which makes its connotations socially relevant well beyond the imagined world, is that upon growing up and coming to understand their destiny, Hailsham graduates do not rebel or even try to flee". (Toker, Leona.; Chertoff, Daniel,166). Moreover, Pu lixin has also come up with the question "why don't they run away?" (2011: 109). Therefore, this study seeks to dig out the truth behind the scenes, the reason why clones and AFs accept

their unfair fate in such a docile and submissive way, and in this way, to bring the care to the exploited ones in every corners of the world, and to force human beings to rethink their relationship with technology as well.

2. Organization of the Text

Michel Foucault, the worldwide well-known French postmodernist philosopher, explores the characteristics and operation techniques of micro power by analyzing the phenomena of prison, barracks, school and madhouse in his book *Discipline and Punishment*. Foucault believes that, different from the monarchy power in ancient times, the power operation in modern society operates through standardized monitoring, inspection and management, featuring the light, delicate, rapid and effective power skill. "the power exercised on the body is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy, that its effects of domination are attributed not to 'appropriation', but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings." (Michel Foucault, 26). The theory of micro power reveals how the ruling class rules and disciplines the ruled in a secret and effective way, and what's worse, the system of discipline permeates all institutions of society, from the initial prison mode to the "prison islands" of the whole social body. What is beneath the seemingly ordinary life is the the practices of power discipline everywhere.

With the assistance of Foucault's micro power theory, this study seeks to discuss how AFs and clones are disciplined and controlled by human beings in all aspects of life from the following three aspects: power control in space, power control in discourse, and power control over body. In so doing, it explores how the AFs are cultivated the human-needed submissive character, giving up the opportunity to run away from the illusion built by human.

Space, as an area where various powers, subjects and ideologies conflict and compete, plays an important role in disciplining and shaping individuals' character that he disciplined individuals conduct self cognition and self discipline in the power network created by space. In this two works, the disciplinary influence of space on AF is mainly realized from two aspects: first, the sovereign creates a strict hierarchical order in the disciplinary space through the internal and external space isolation and spatial division; Second, the conduct of monitoring AF in real life and psychological changes are achieved through the central watchtower image of the circular prison.

2.1. Isolation and Division of Discipline Space

"Discipline sometimes requires *enclosure*, the specification of a space heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon it self. It is the protected place of disciplinary monotony." (Michel Foucault, 141). The three most important places in her life: the store for selling AFs, Josie's house and the yard for recycling the old, abandoned AFs, from Klara's narration, among which, both Josie's house and the yard are remote and enclosed, far away from human activities. The window in Josie's house "facing a wide sky and an outdoors almost permanently empty of traffic and passers-by." (Ishiguro, 2021:50). Apart from that, this place is "so far away from the city and other buildings" (61). The first time when Klara comes to Josie's house, she found that this has completely separate her from other AFs and humans. "I found strange for a while not only the lack of traffic and passers-by, but also the absence of other AFs" (50). She would often "look at the highway going over the hill--or at the view across the fields from the bedroom rear window--and search with my gaze for the distant AF." (51), but then she would realized "how unlikely a prospect that was" (51). From the store to Josie's home, it's just another place to change and to monitor AF. Klara "have never been outside, not just outside here, but outside everywhere" (59), and if she can, it only happens under the permission or guidance of the owner. Similarly, the yard used to dispose of abandoned AFs also exists far away from the human world, where "visitors aren't frequent, and when I hear human voices, they are often

belong to the yardmen calling to each other”(298). In so doing, this kind of space arrangement place AFs to be isolated and enclosed psychologically on the one hand, and it can also cut off their contact with the human world or other AF fellows in the horizontal direction, thus only retaining the centripetality to the central watchtower, to avoid AFs' feeling of resistance when they are aware of the unfair treatment.

First of all, when Klara is in the store, she has always been under the control of the enclosed space power when the Manager allocate the position according to the elementary location or partitioning . Just as Wang Ming'an puts it “The distribution of space is also a kind of space power division in the end” (Wang Minan, 2006: 444) Everyone has his own position, and there will permanently be a person in every position. “It was a tactic of anti-desertion, anti-vagabondage, anti-concentration. Its aim was to establish presence and absence, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. ” (Foucault,1978:143). Every AF in the store has the opportunity to exhibit in the front alcove, which is the best location in the store for the reason that it advantages the AF to take in as much sunlight as they want and it can be the most prominent position for customers. While Klara, who had two chances being placed at that spot, failed to sell herself out when it is her turn, so the space she displayed was moved toward the back part of the store by the Manager. In such a sequence from the front alcove to the middle of the store, and then to the rear alcove, Klara's every move in the store represents the manager's judgment on her performance. It is also a kind of rating to all the AFs that the more backward it moves, the lower the value and ability they owns. Through this value-giving measure, the constraints of a conformity must be achieved. In this way, the different positions of AF show the gap lying between them, and also symbolize punishment and reward made by the manager, exerting pressure on them and thus encouraging AFs to work harder to sell themselves out. By doing this, all the AFs would grow to be subordinated, docile and to correct practice of duties and all the parts of discipline.

At the end of the story, when Josie recovered and no longer needed Klara's company, Klara's spatial position in the home also showed signs of power partition. In the past, intimately connected with Josie, Klara was allowed to freely moves to everywhere she wants, such as Josie's bedroom, the island of the kitchen, places in downstairs and upstairs, and so on. Josie even said to her mother, "I want it so Klara gets sole use of my room and she gets to come and go as she pleases " (Ishiguro, 239). This is the power of endowed by Josie, the sovereign. However, when Josie recovered and the number of Josie's guests climbs, there was not enough places for Klara, so she moved to the Utility Room. “naturally there was not enough space for me to remain in bedroom myself, and in any case, I understand my presence wasn't appropriate as it once.”(Ishiguro, 306). At last, when Josie went to university and leaves home, the spatial position for Klara has changed again in the way that Klara was sent to the yard to end her life. Therefore, different location symbolizes different degrees of power from the sovereign. The movement of Klara's location in home also represents the power attributed by Josie was taken back . During this process, Klara 's value as a living being can be embodied by the where she is. In *Never Let Me Go*, the disciplinary power in space also pervades in every corner of where the clones live. The three most important space that the clones has stayed are Hailsham for education, the village for transcendence and the recovery center in Dover for the final donation. What worth noting is that all of the three positions are located in the remote and desolate sites, far away from human activities. Just as the protagonist narrated: “ Hailsham stood in a smooth hollow with fields rising on all sides. That meant that from almost any of the classroom windows in the main house—and even from the pavilion”(Ishiguro,2005: 34). The Hailsham school is much like a jail while the highland around represents the central tower or the sight from the human world. Each of the classroom in Hailsham is the prison cell. Kath can only see

the black, freakish trees in the village though, she can still feel the outside power from the human world to discipline herself to behave as a qualified clone. In this case, it clearly signifies the automatic model of power. That is to say, the clones would never tell if there is any traces of human in the mountain, and therefore they would keep disciplining themselves to become docile and submissive. Just as Kath put it, "I certainly wasn't the only one of my age to feel their presence day and night...even so, you never really got away from them." (Ishiguro, 2005:50). This kind of power from the central tower is visible but unknown. By "visible", it means that the clones can discern the giant outline of the building, while by "unknown", it refers to the ambiguous state of how clones' being surveilled. The physical body of the clones are put into the brutal and extricate power cage with numerous eye surrounding around, the clones need to keep alarm all the times to make sure themselves being discipline.

2.2. Surveillance from the Panopticon and Self-discipline

Bentham's Panopticon describes such an architectural figure that "at the periphery, an annular building; at the center, a tower. This tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the periphery building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building...all that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy." (Foucault, 1978:200). In this case, whatever the individual has done in the cell will be capture by the supervisor, easily and effectively. "He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication." (Foucault, 1978: 200). By such a ingenious design, the trapped individual will be imposed on a lateral invisibility as they have been separated by the cell, while the axial visibility continues to persist as the gaze from the supervisor will never end. Even when the center power is absent, the subject will continue to discipline themselves because of the inmates state of consciousness.

As the life source of AF, the Sun always appears as a positive and bright role, giving out his nourishment to all the AFs and makes them live healthily, which is similar to the relationship between God and his followers. Nietzsche believes that God establishes a contractual relationship with human beings and makes human beings owe to him, that is, a relationship of debt and debt repayment. Human beings, therefore, should not only be as humble and submissive as sheep in front of God, but need to repay such kindness. "It will morally demand taming, incompetence, weakness, paleness and poverty" (Wang Min'an, 2005:59). In *Klara and the Sun*, the Sun is just a God like existence. It is omnipotent, perfect and powerful on the one hand, but he is also constantly monitoring the AF group on the other. As mentioned at the beginning of the novel, "The Sun had ways of reaching us where we were" (Ishiguro, 2021:4). Talking about surveillance, the Sun is just like a supervisor from the central watchtower, the visible and uncertain power has always be around Klara. For example, what mentioned in most times is definitely the "Sun patterns" whenever and wherever Klara is. This sustainable and automatic monitoring, by the way of psychological suggestion, has transformed into the surveillance to the subject itself, so Klara supervises herself and other AFs in case that they go beyond the routine. As Klara has witnessed how the begger and the dog who are on the edge of death come back life and are full of vigor after receiving nourishment from the Sun, the idea that the sunlight can be served as the panacea to save people's life has been deeply rooted in her mind. So Klara after establishes contractual relationship with the Sun that she worships and begs the Sun's nourishment to rescue Josie's life at the cost of destroying the Cootings machine who emits terrible pollution to the air. But she failed. What's worse, Klara has been reduced to the constant self disciplinary situation. She thinks that she doesn't deserve the nourishment from the sun because she doesn't perform well enough to seize the opportunity to destroy the Cootings machine. "The Sun sometimes shone brightly through the gaps between buildings, and I wondered if he was wishing to encourage me, or simply watching and monitoring my progress."

(Ishiguro, 2021:218). So under such a psychological hint, Klara risks in hurting herself to take out the precious P-E-G9 solution which is of vital importance to Klara's operation system, for the mere purpose of destroying the Cootings machine and complete the contract with Sun.

While no matter in which place, what has been mentioned from the start to the end of the story is the mechanical birds, the name for the drones, which boasts "high surveillance capabilities" and can be used for "data-gathering" and "privacy-invasive activity"(Ishiguro, 2021: 244). In essence, it is the tool being used by human to keep an eye on the AFs and avoid any potential threats or dangers. Its figure can be easily found wherever Klara is. For instance, when she is in the store Klara could decipher the dark edge of a bird's outline perched upon the high traffic signals(Ishiguro, 2021: 29). When Josie' mother comes to the store, Klara thinks she looks like "one of the high-perched birds in the wind"(Ishiguro, 2021: 40); When Klara moved to Josie's house, she also noticed that Rick would manipulate these birds. " He had in his hands a circular device, and was looking at the sky between the two houses where a group of birds was flying in formation, and I quickly realized these were machine birds. He kept his gaze on them and when he touched his control, the birds responded by changing their pattern."(Ishiguro, 2021: 61); Later on , when Klara is sent to the yard, she can also find the traces of the birds. "Not long ago a group of dark birds descended in elegant formation to perch on some machinery not far in front of me, and I thought for a moment they might be Rick's birds sent to observe me."(Ishiguro, 2021: 298). These birds are like the cameras functions as the central observation tower to monitor AFs wherever they are.

When it comes Klara's interpersonal relationship with human beings, Klara's being watched situation never gets better. When Klara is at the store for sell, she is not only under surveillance not only of Manger , but also of her fellows. Once she doesn't treat the guests in the way directed by the manager, she will be warned by the manager and receive the surprising looks from her best friend Rosa; in the early days at Josie's home, "there always remained the possibility that Melania Housekeeper would appear suddenly behind me"(Ishiguro, 2021: 51), Klara narrated. In this home, there is a chain like hierarchical monitoring system existing, which consists of mother, Melania Housekeeper, Josie and Klara, decreasing from the upper to the lower end of the power. Therefore, Such a hierarchical, continuous and practical network of supervision power relations completely covers and controls Klara, and the mother is the "head" of the power pyramid and Klara is the opposite. When Mother sees Klara for the first time, she scrutinized and gazed her in the way that " her eyes narrowed like people on the sidewalk when they 're trying to see if a taxi is free ot already taken"(Ishiguro, 2021: 42). Likewise, Klara's first meeting with Josie's father is not so friendly, "Father turned towards me, but continued speaking to Josie even as his eyes examined me"(Ishiguro, 2021: 188). Klara usually receives various eyesight from human beings , during the process which she turns into the "he self-image in the mirror", as Cooley puts it in his book ,*Human Nature and the Social Order*, that people tends to shape their self-concept according to their own understanding of how others see themselves, which is similar to Lacan's "the Mirror Stage" Theory. So, living under such gazes, Klara is always Self-disciplined and tries to behave the way that human imposed on her, "I know my best course was to work harder than ever to be a good AF to Josie until the shadows receded " (Ishiguro, 2021: 114).

In *Never Let Me Go*, in the enclosed space of Hailsham, one's space would also be divided according to unit position. That is to say, everyone in the space owns his position, while every position is occupied by one person. For example, in Hailsham, students' dormitory is cut into six parts and everyone here is fixed on his own position. It also strictly regulated that in the daily times, one can only close the door when they go to sleep. In this way, the clones are completely exposed under the human's eyes with no private space at all.

Even when the clones have left Hailsham to the village, they still cannot get rid of the shadows of the central power. From the surrounding hill structure of the village, it still looks the same as

Hailsham. People in the mountain can see every behavior of the clones clearly, while the clones would never obtain the chance to watch back. They would only be left in the isolated and lonely state.

Apart from that, the buildings in the recovery center are also unique. When Kath came to look after Ruth as a nursery in the center, she noticed that this is a place full of mirrors. " everything—the walls, the floor—has been done in gleaming white tiles, which the centre keeps so clean when you first go in it's almost like entering a hall of mirrors. Of course, you don't exactly see yourself reflected back loads of times, but you almost think you do. When you lift an arm, or when someone sits up in bed, you can feel this pale shadowing moment all around you in the tiles." (Ishiguro, 2005:17,18). As Foucault pointed out, the walls and floors have been deemed as the representative punishment ways to confine prisoners. During the past decades' training, the clones have been accustomed to self -discipline. In such a suffocating, oppressive space, the shadow reflected by the floor or window is the way how the clone see themselves. By the gaze from themselves, they try to correct their behaviors and make their body tame.

3. Conclusion

By analyzing the space control situation in these two similar books, it may in part answer the question that why the oppressed side , the clones and the AFs never try to escape from their preset life track and unfair treatment. It is partly because human have distant them from the human world on the one hand, but also put their bodies under the prison of surveillance as they were watched by the central tower all the time. In this case, they would automatically produce the disciplined bodies of themselves and therefore, follow what human asks them to do. The whole living situation of the clones and the AFs is the state of the exception and they are reduced to the bare lifes. The ultimate concern for the bare life's survival situation, life dignity and life value can never stop and must not stop. What lies in Kazuo Ishiguro's light and soothing words is a long-lasting warning, which also rings an alarm for the relationship between human beings and modern technology.

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