

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**

**Mouloud MAMMERI University of Tizi-Ouzou**



**Faculty of Letters and Languages**

**Department of English**

**Master of Literature and Interdisciplinary Approaches**

**Subject**

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**A course in Contemporary British Fiction for Master's Students of  
Literature and Interdisciplinary Approaches**

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**Semester 3**

**Designed by:**

**Dr. Sarah CHABANE CHAOUCH**

**2023/2024**

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## **Introduction**

Literature refers to an imaginative written literary text, especially poetry, drama and fiction. Writers can rely on different literary genres, such as realistic, romance, thriller, dystopian fiction, and speculative fiction. They also introduce contemporary themes including gender, history, multiculturalism, and nature. This course introduces some contemporary themes for Masters' students.

## **General Course Information**

**Institution:** Mouloud MAMMERI University of Tizi-Ouzou

**Faculty:** Letters and Languages

**Department:** English Language and Literature

**Course name:** Contemporary British Fiction

**Target audience:** Master's students

**Teaching Unit:**

**Coefficient:** 02

**Credit:** 04

**Semester:** 03

**Number of sessions per week:** Two sessions of one hour and a half

**Course delivery modality:** Lecture and TD

**Location:** Room 2.28

## **Information about the Instructor**

**Instructor's name and position:** Dr. Sarah CHABANE CHAOUCH, Senior Lecturer

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**Reply via email:** You can ask your question via the group email. I will reply within 48 hours.

**Availability:** Monday and Thursday at 12 p.m.

### **Course Content**

The course comprises three chapters designed for the third semester. It starts with an introduction to contemporary fiction, setting the stage for postmodernism and its main themes. The subsequent three chapters introduce contemporary themes, each accompanied by an explanation of pertinent literary theories. Moreover, each chapter includes an analysis of a notable contemporary British novel, offering students valuable insights into the intersection of literature and society. The students will be provided with learning activities. These chapters are as follows:

#### **Introduction**

The introduction delves into the complex realm of postmodernism, elucidating its fundamental tenets. This lecture focuses on Linda Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* because it is the main theoretical framework that explains postmodernism. The lecture introduces the interplay between modernism and postmodernism. It also probes the concepts of history and historiographic metafiction, which means blurring the line between literary genres. It also explains metanarrative. Moreover, the introduction navigates the main themes of contemporary novels, such as politics, class, gender, identity formation, and multiculturalism. To facilitate this exploration, it focuses on Nick Bentley's *Contemporary British Fiction*.

### **Multiculturalism in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990)**

The first chapter delves into multiculturalism in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. It defines multiculturalism and explains its main concepts, elucidating its core themes such as racism, hybridity, belonging, and integration within British society. In terms of theoretical framework, the chapter focuses on seminal works by leading figures, including Homi Bhabha's "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences" and *The Location of Culture*, Peter Jackson's "Geographies of Diversity and Difference" (2005), Richard Lewis's "Introduction: Reflections on Multiculturalism," and Stuart Hall's "New Ethnicities." More significantly, the chapter offers a synopsis of Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990). Furthermore, it conducts a thorough analysis of multiculturalism, the clash of generations, and elements of autobiography.

### **A Study of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) as a Dystopian Novel**

The second chapter deals with dystopian literature and science fiction, offering a compelling reflection of humanity's fear of advancing technology. It delves into writers' descriptions of the effects of technological progress within imaginative realms. A central focus of this lecture is the concept of the Panopticon, which displays how a specific institution wields its power to control individuals' minds and shape their behavior. Besides, this chapter examines Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) as a dystopian novel. It also investigates how Hailsham guardians exert control over clones, who in turn become passive and docile bodies.

### **A Study of Ian McEwan's *Solar* (2011) as a Climate Change Fiction**

The last chapter investigates ecocriticism in Ian McEwan's *Solar*. It tackles Cheryll Glotfelty's definition of ecocriticism. It also revolves around Axel Goodbody and Adeline Johns-

Putra's explanation of climate change fiction and its characteristics. Furthermore, this lecture scrutinizes McEwan's representation of climate change in the novel. It scrutinizes the writer's portrayal of the British government and researchers' failure to save the world from global warming. It also probes McEwan's adept use of satire and allegory to show the significance of literary devices in describing characters and themes. Through a comprehensive analysis of these elements, the chapter offers students a deeper understanding of McEwan's commentary on global warming and the inefficiency of international institutions to provide solutions.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the lecture, students are expected to:

- To understand contemporary literary techniques, theories, and concepts.
- To construct coherent arguments and defend them, relying on their critical and analytical thinking.
- To analyze contemporary literary texts in order to show their ability to apply literary theories and interpret literary texts.
- To examine and investigate specific themes within literary texts, showcasing their ability to delve into complex contemporary issues.
- To support their argument with examples from the literary text under scrutiny.

### **Recommended Reading**

In order to enhance their comprehension, students are recommended to read to the following:

- Acheson, James and Ross, S. (2006). *The Contemporary British Novel since 1980*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Andersen, Gregers. (2020). *Climate Fiction and Cultural Analysis: A New Perspective on Life in the Anthropocene*. Routledge.
- Marks, Peter et al. (2022). *The Palgrave Handbook of Utopian and Dystopian Literatures*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Osborne, Deirdre. (2016). *The Cambridge Companion to the British Black and Asian Literature (1945- 2010)*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rahbek, Ulla. (2019). *British Multicultural Literature and Superdiversity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Slovic, Scott. (2015). Ecocriticism 101: A Basic Introduction to Ecocriticism and Environmental Literature. *Petranika J.: Social Sciences and Humanities*, 23 (S), pp. 1-14.
- Tew, Philip. (2007). *The Contemporary British Novel*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Bloomsbury 3PL.
- Trexler, Adam. (2015). *Anthropocene Fiction: The Novel in a Time of Climate Fiction*. University of Virginia Press.
- Waugh, Patricia. (2010). *Modern British Culture*. Edited by Michael Higgins et al. Cambridge University Press.

### **Course Policies**

#### **Attendance Policies:**

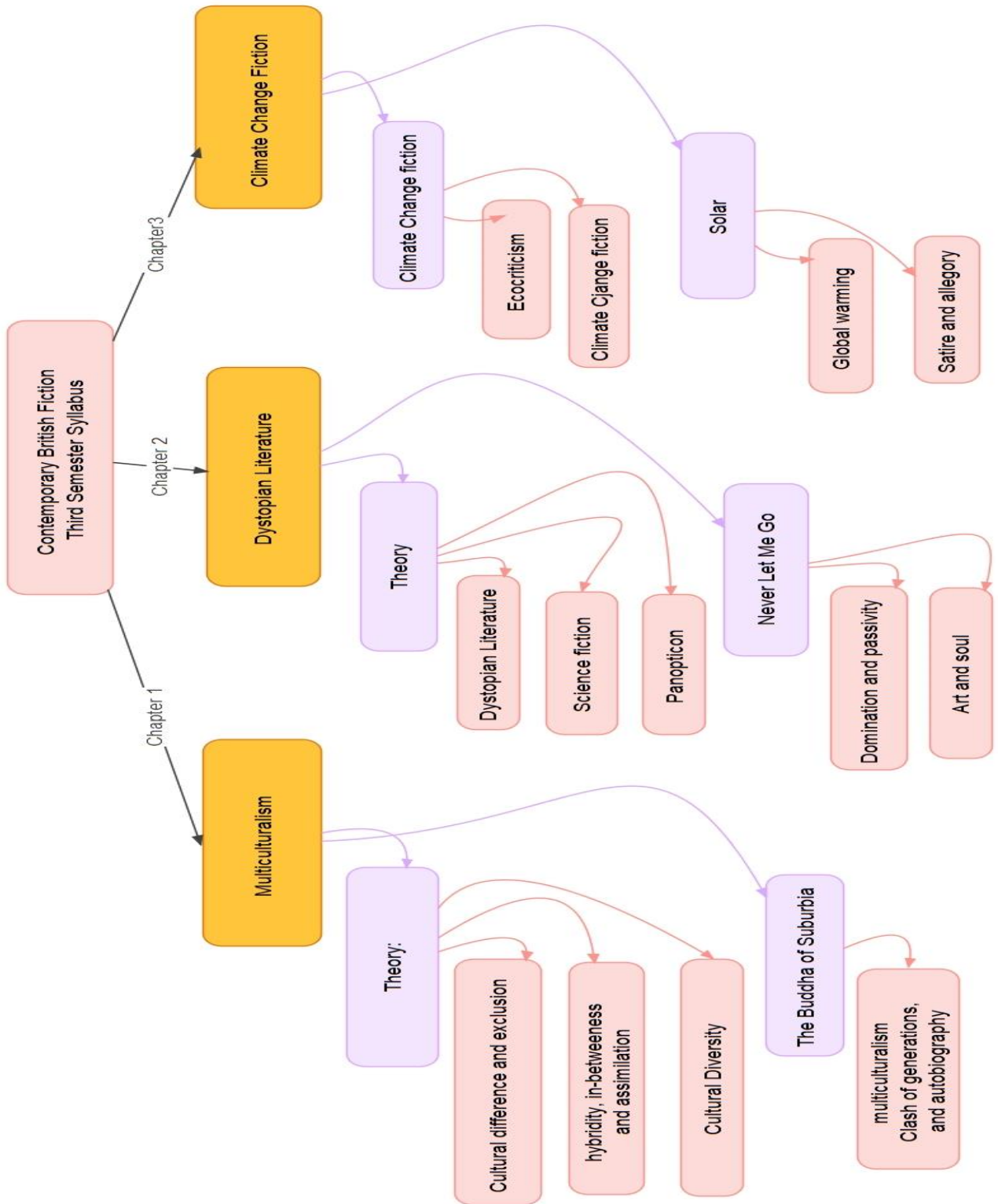
- Attending TD sessions is compulsory, as they play a pivotal role in the overall learning experience. With three consecutive hours per week allocated for these sessions, attendance ensures students have ample opportunity to engage deeply with the course material. Furthermore, they help the students better understand the theories and concepts discussed.

- Punctuality is essential. That is to say, students are expected to arrive on time for all sessions.

**Evaluation Policies:**

- Throughout the semester, students undergo continuous assessment. This includes a mid-term exam, accounting for 15 points of their overall grade. Additionally, active participation in TD sessions is also taken into consideration. Therefore, they have to share their ideas and analyze selected passages from the texts. Furthermore, students have to write an essay following each lecture, ensuring a thorough engagement with the course material.
- A final exam is administered at the culmination of the course, featuring questions that reflect the breadth of knowledge acquired throughout the term. In addition, students are required to produce a well-developed essay that demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the course content, emphasizing content, coherence, and unity in their writing.

# Third Semester Syllabus



## **An Introduction to Contemporary British Fiction**

### **Lecture objectives:**

- Introduce the era
- Define postmodernism and its main characteristics
- Explain its relationship with modernism
- Discover the main themes of contemporary fiction

### **Introduction:**

The debate surrounding the rise of contemporary fiction is marked by two opposing perspectives. One school of thought contends that it emerged after postmodernism, while an opposing view asserts that it is an integral part of postmodernism. In every country, contemporary fiction started in a specific decade after the second half of the twentieth century. For instance, German contemporary fiction emerged just after the Cold War in 1989 while American and British ones started in the early 1990s. To define postmodernism, this lecture relies on Linda Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. More importantly, it investigates the main themes and characteristics of contemporary British fiction relying on Nick Bentley's *Contemporary British Fiction* (2008).

### **I. Definition of Postmodernism and its Relationship with Modernism**

Postmodernism, a literary movement that emerged after 1940, maintains a complex relationship with its precursor, modernism. Most scholars have not agreed whether they were connected. Jean-Francois Lyotard and Linda Hutcheon are the prominent theorists who attempted to define postmodernism and its main characteristics. According to Linda Hutcheon (2003), there is a debate about the definition of postmodernism because there are theorists who consider it a

“discontinuity, disruption, dislocation, decentering” from modernism (p. 3). However, she believes that it is a discontinuity within continuity. Besides, she considers postmodernism as a contradictory phenomenon that “uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concept it challenges” (Hutcheon, 2003, p. 3). In other words, it establishes new ideas and concepts, then it challenges them. Hence, it cannot be considered a stable phenomenon that has fixed ideas. More significantly, postmodernism is a European and American phenomenon that can never be viewed as a cultural phenomenon (Hutcheon, 2003, p. 4).

In “Theorizing the Postmodernism: Toward a Poetics,” Hutcheon opens her definition of postmodernism with the notion of history. This notion is contradictory because it is both historical and political. In this context, Hutcheon (2003) writes,

these contradictions are certainly manifest in the important postmodern concept of presence of the past... This is not a nostalgic return; it is a critical revisiting, an ironic dialog with the past of both art and society... it is always critical reworking, never nostalgic “return” ... Because it is contradictory and works within the very systems it attempts to subvert. (p. 4)

From the above excerpt, unlike the previous literary movements, postmodernism goes back to the past to provide an evaluative reexamination and revision of the past. Hutcheon uses “critical revisiting” and “critical reworking” to uncover the necessity of reassessing past historical incidents (2003, p. 4). Consequently, the use of the past in postmodernism aims to challenge the current social or literary systems rather than being nostalgic. Furthermore, writers may rely on historiographic metafiction, which refers to the use of real historical incidents and personages. Historiographic metafiction incorporates history, literature and theory; in this sense, Hutcheon (2003) argues, “its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historiographic metafiction) is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms

and contents of the past” (p. 5). Simply put, postmodern writers depend on fiction to critically revisit past historical incidents; this permits the revision of the past.

In the second part of her chapter, Hutcheon focuses on other characteristics of postmodernism, especially literary genres. Crossing boundaries between literary genres is an influential characteristic. Writers can combine two literary genres in one work; thus, there is no distinction between a novel and a short story, a novel and a long poem, a novel and history, and a novel and autobiography. In this sense, Hutcheon (2003) argues, “The most radical boundaries crossed, however, have been those between fiction and non-fiction and- by extension- between art and life... it also works (and plays) with the conventions of both literary realism and journalistic facticity” (p. 10). In other words, postmodern writers write a fictional literary text that includes some aspects of non-fiction from real life. Jonathan Coe’s *What a Carve Up* and Ian McEwan’s *Atonement* are good examples since they blur the line between fiction and non-fiction using real historical and personages in their novels.

In the previous literary movements like Elizabethan literature, realism and modernism, English literature featured works authored by English writers such as William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Virginia Woolf. English literature is consequently regarded as the canon or master-narrative. These writers describe real incidents encompassing society, culture, or history from a distinctly European perspective. In this context, from a narrative lens, it is distinctly English-centric. Moreover, authors frequently draw upon Western discourse to represent other cultures from a Western perspective, reflecting the prevailing paradigm of Western traditions. By contrast, postmodernism questions these ideas; in this sense, Hutcheon argues, “Whatever narratives or systems that once allowed us to think we could unproblematically and universally define public agreement have now been questioned by the acknowledgment of differences— in

theory and in artistic practice” (p. 7). Postmodernism challenges previous Western discourse and calls for plurality, difference and multiplicity of voices. Instead of the canon, meta-narrative emerged to acknowledge differences in postmodernism. This helped form postcolonial and diasporic literature, which marked the rise of literature written in English. This kind of literature is called ‘englishes.’ In this sense, Hutcheon (2003) argues, “the centre no longer holds... Postmodernism is careful not to make the marginal in a new centre” (p. 12). Subsequently, the role of postmodernism is to ensure the presence of truth from different perspectives. Even though there is a multiplicity of voices, postmodernism shows that repairs “are both comforting and illusory” (Hutcheon, 2003, p. 8). Put differently, postmodern writers are given a voice to share their experiences; nonetheless, they are not provided with any solution to their daily struggles. Hence, they question certainties because they are disillusioned.

Parody is a new technique used by postmodern writers, but it is a contradictory technique. Parody refers to the intertextual connection to the previous “traditions and conventions” of literary genres (Hutcheon, 2003, p. 11). This suggests that writers depend on established traditions and conventions to craft humor or satire. This shows that postmodern writers remind the reader of the fictional nature of their works, characterized by an ironic discontinuity within continuity. In this regard, Hutcheon (2003) writes, “Parody is a perfect postmodern form, in some senses, for it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies” (p. 11). In other words, parody refers to the use of intertextuality to subvert previous traditions and conventions. Moreover, it encompasses the writers’ use of diverse narrators, including marginalized voices, to leave the reader disillusioned.

## **II. The Main Themes of Contemporary Literature**

In *Contemporary British Fiction*, Nick Bently (2008) focuses on the history and contextual landscape of Britain spanning from 1975 to 2005. She posits that this period is significant due to Margaret Thatcher's "election as the leader of the Conservative Party" (Bently, 2008, p. 2). Her election indicates various political, economic and social transformations. There exist notable contexts that have an influence on British fiction, especially politics, class, gender, and sexuality, postcolonialism, nationalism and national identity, youth and subcultures. Accordingly, Bently divides her introduction into different subsections to define contemporary themes.

### **1. Politics:**

From 1978 to the mid-1990s, numerous citizens suffered from low wages owing to the crises in industrial relations. Importantly, these citizens were not represented in the parliament, leading them to dub this period "the winter of discontent" (Bently, 2008, 4). Furthermore, Margaret Thatcher's government implemented several economic and social policies that profoundly changed the British system. In this context, Bently (2008) argues that "the development of Thatcherism rested fundamentally on policies that shifted responsibility for social welfare from the state to the individual. Thatcherism produced an ideology of individual success and the accumulation of wealth" (p. 4). Thatcher was against social welfare and social services like the National Health Service. Consequently, she championed capitalism, promoting the idea that individuals can become wealthy. Nationalized companies are sold to become private companies to make more profits.

The British Parliament's urge to change the country's economic system led to the rise of unemployment and the working class. According to Bently, resistance movements emerged such as the Miners' Strike. These protests concluded unfavorably due to the intervention of law

enforcement, who restored to violent means to suppress the demonstrators (Bently, 2008, p. 5). Significantly, some Unions were asked to put an end to citizens' activities since they demanded the rise of wages. Hence, the Labour Party, which was led by Tony Blair, introduced some changes in the mid-1990s (Bently, 2008, p. 5). More importantly, Bently refers to some contemporary British novels that examine political issues. Jonathan Coe's *What a Carve Up!* (1994) tackles the negative impact of Thatcherism while Ian McEwan's *Saturday* (2005) and J. G. Ballard's *Millenium People* (2003) discuss terrorism.

## **2. Class:**

During the 1980s and 1990s, the British Labour Party represented the working class whereas the Conservative Party defended the aristocracy. Thus, these two parties faced numerous challenges stemming from sharp differences in terms of social class division. Bently (2008) argues, "It is still useful, in certain terms, to identify social groups in terms of class, if only because it makes it easier to develop a sense of class consciousness from which political resistance movement may be formed" (p. 9). This suggests that class division was an obstacle because it did not promote class consciousness in Britain. Scholars such as Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart analyzed class dynamics since the 1950s. Conversely, Jonathan Coe, J. G. Ballard, Kazuo Ishiguro, Ian McEwan, Salman Rushdie, Kath Waterhouse and Zadi Smith explored class representation in Britain. In this regard, Bently (2008) claims, "There has been... a rise in the number of novels that are set in working-class locations or engage with working class issues" (p. 10). This unveils that fiction plays a crucial role in portraying the middle class and their daily struggles.

## **3. Gender and Sexuality:**

Gender and sexuality are significant themes in contemporary British fiction. Bently believes that Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* plays an important role in the contemporary world.

According to Beauvoir, masculinity and femininity are acquired because they are social products, thereby shaping men's and women's roles. However, these ideas encountered resistance, particularly from feminist writers and activists who advocated women's rights. The feminist movement developed, which developed in the 1970s, exerted a significant influence on female writers, inspiring them to write novels addressing various women's issues. Bently (2008) explains, "the influence of feminism on British fiction has been profound, to the extent that today, contemporary women novelists are just likely to gain literary awards and to be included on contemporary fiction syllabuses as men," exemplified by figures such as Doris Lessing and Emma Tennant (p. 12). Besides, female writers attempted to defend women by focusing on their experiences of gender and patriarchy. In this context, Bently considers Margaret Thatcher as the best example because she was called the Iron Woman. More significantly, feminism became a successful movement in the 1980s because it challenged some gender roles and the perception of gender issues. For Bently, the 1990s marks the development of feminism (2008, p. 14). In the same period, various theories and movements emerged to defend sexuality.

#### **4. Postcolonialism, Multiculturalism and National Identity:**

Postcolonialism emerged to examine contemporary issues. Numerous postcolonial theorists have elaborated theories and introduced key concepts to delve into the effect of decolonization on decolonized countries. Bently (2008) asserts, "Britain has continued to maintain links with many of the former colonies through the established of the Commonwealth, which is an association of many of the countries that is used to be ruled by Britain" (p. 17). After the second half of the twentieth century, a significant influx of individuals from formerly colonized countries, mainly Africa and Asia, migrated to Britain. Initially, their arrival was met with resistance, as they were perceived as posing threats to both British society and economy. Despite being a minority, they

were considered as dangerous (Bently, 2008, p. 17). However, political attitudes changed over time; the British government wanted to integrate these immigrants into British society. They attempted to assimilate them by adopting multiculturalism as the best solution to help immigrants create a feeling of Britishness. The rise of assimilation and multiculturalism are associated with other “issues such as class, gender and religion” (Bently, 2008, p. 18). Therefore, the emergence of different political parties aimed at protecting people and reducing tensions between communities.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, this module focuses on British fiction from 1990. Lind Hutcheon defines postmodernism as a contradictory phenomenon because its relationship with modernism is that of discontinuity within continuity. It disrupts some modern beliefs because it is a critical revision of history; it crosses boundaries in literary genres, rejects the canon and the notion of a single truth, and relies on parody. Contemporary novels emerged to discuss contemporary issues using postmodern techniques. This introduction introduced the main reasons that led to the emergence of some themes such as politics, class, gender and sexuality, and postcolonialism.

## **References:**

Bently, Nick. (2008). *Contemporary British Fiction*. Edinburg University Press.

Hutcheon, Linda. (2003). *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. Taylor and Francis e-Library.

**Further Reading:**

Lyotard, Jean- Francois. (1984). *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University of Minnesota Press.

## Chapter One:

### Multiculturalism in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*

#### Objectives:

- Define multiculturalism
- Explain hybridity, belonging and integration
- Analyze the concepts in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990)
- Analyze the clash of generation and elements of autobiography in the novel
- Analyze some quotes and defend their argument

#### Introduction

After decolonization, a significant number of individuals from Asian and African countries immigrated to Britain, seeking education and jobs. These immigrants were not accepted by both British people and politicians because they were considered as a threat. In that context, postcolonial theory emerged to examine the sufferings of colonized people and decolonized nations resulting from colonialism and Western discourse. During the 1980s and 1990s, postcolonial writers were influenced by these ideas, prompting them to address political issues such as race and ethnic identity, and to demand inclusion (Israel, 2006, p. 88). These authors explored various themes such as diasporas, hybridity, migrancy, mimicry, and identity. This lecture attempts to define multiculturalism and analyze contemporary British fiction. It also explains the main concepts that are related to multiculturalism, which are racism, hybridity, belonging, and integration within British culture. More significantly, this lecture provides both a synopsis and an analysis of Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990). The analysis focuses

on three main points, which are multiculturalism, the clash of generations, and elements of autobiography.

## **I. Theory**

Immigrants may encounter diverse experiences including cultural differences, cultural diversity, and hybridity. In “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences,” Homi Bhabha examines the difference between these two concepts. Cultural difference refers to different cultural statements about other cultures that assert difference because these cultures are considered as the ‘Other’ (Bhabha, 1995, p. 206). Bhabha (1995) considers this Western discourse discriminatory (p. 206). However, he also points out that cultural diversity compares “ethics, aesthetics or ethnology” and accepts a pre-given culture to help the emergence of multiculturalism, ‘cultural exchange,’ or cultural humanity (Bhabha, 1995, p. 206). Cultural diversity may appear as a result of an exchange between cultures or cultural signs.

Certain theorists, like Homi Bhabha and Peter Jackson, focus on the concept of hybridity. In “Geographies of Diversity and Difference,” Peter Jackson (2005) argues, “Hybridity is itself a contested term, implying the mingling of two formerly separate ‘stocks,’ and not all such forms of cultural mixing are inherently progressive” (p. 319). In other words, some people can be bearers of hybrid identity when they transcend adherence to one culture or when there is an exchange of cultures (Bhabha, 1995, 208). Hence, they fit in the ‘Third Space.’ The latter is defined as a discursive space where the main aspects and signs of culture defy ‘unity’ because it can be redefined depending on the context. A split- space may result in creating an international culture that is based on

the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity. To that end we should remember that it is the ‘inter’—the culting edge of translation of negotiation, the *inbetween*, the space of

the *entre* that Derrida has opened up in writing itself—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. (Bhabha, 1995, 209)

This means that a person believes that he is in-between two cultures because he does not know where he belongs.

Immigrants struggle with different experiences such as identity crisis, belonging, and assimilation. In this sense, Richard Lewis (2006) argues that immigrants originate from diverse parts of the world and cultural backgrounds (p. 7). Consequently, they might face opposition, violence, and discrimination from both local citizens and political factions. But in spite of being multicultural, it is not always an assurance to be accepted in the ‘melting-pot’ formula. As a result of immigration, people often experience feeling of disorientation and grapple with identity crises, particularly when the host country does not adapt (Lewis, 2006, p. 7). In Europe, immigrants are viewed as a problem owing to economic issues and identity crises. They struggle with belonging, which refers to the place where people feel safe, recognized, and understood (Lewis, 2006, p. 9). In the same context, Peter Jackson (2002) contends that multiculturalism implies a “sense of simultaneous belonging in several different cultural traditions that are not restricted to groups or individuals from particular ethnic groups or geographic origins” (p. 319). Furthermore, the host country aims to ensure that immigrants will not take undue advantage of societal benefits. In the meantime, they have to learn the language and get employed to contribute to the economy of the host country, which will help them to integrate (Lewis, 2006, p. 11). At times, immigrants may face pressure to integrate and assimilate.

While some theorists and scholars focused on the experiences of immigrants from different parts of the world, others, such as Stuart Hall, emphasized African experiences in the host country. In “New Ethnicities,” Hall underscores the Anglo-African experience of racism and exclusion, noting how British politicians and citizens employ the word ethnicity to exclude certain ethnic

groups. For instance, Africans are judged based on their skin color, and although being of different African origins, but they are viewed as one ethnic identity. This ethnic minority struggles for representation. Its members had first to question access to representation by black people; then, they offered a “contestation of marginality” to cast a positive image (Hall, 1995, p. 224). This helps Anglo-Africans express their subjectivity, identity, and politics. They strive for “diversity of subjective positions, social experiences and cultural identities” (Hall, 1995, p. 224). Furthermore, they also seek to engage in discussion regarding their ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality. More significantly, Anglo-Africans want to represent themselves and counter Western racist and imperialist discourse (Hall, 1995, p. 226). As a result, Hall (1995) argues, “That is to say, a recognition that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position as ‘ethnic artists’ or film-makers” (p. 227). Therefore, Hall calls for a diversity of voices and representations.

Bhabha, Lewis, and Hall have investigated different immigrants’ experiences from different standpoints. Indeed, some immigrant writers started producing literary texts in the 1970s and 1980s to reflect their experiences. The writing process is divided into two moments. In the first moment, writers started to represent their race positively, while in the second one, they focused on their experience (Protector, 2006, p. 03). James Protector (2006) argues that “the burden of representation was tangible in the late 1970s, when the state identified multiculturalism as a key initiative in educational reform; a potential solution to the growing racial tensions in Britain outlined above” (p. 104). In simpler terms, multicultural fiction plays a significant role in addressing multicultural issues, particularly those concerning society and minority groups.

Multiculturalism emerged to investigate “intergroup” relationships in the USA since ethnic minorities can no longer live with racism. It “acknowledges cultural diversity... it means renewed

demands for assimilation in disguise” (Gordon and Newfield, 1996, p. 1). Moreover, the turn of the 1980s marked the rejection of racism, or the discrimination of one culture at the expense of another. According to Avery F. Gordon and Christopher Newfield (1996), multiculturalism focuses on cultures and cultural diversity to avoid racism (p. 3). This means that multiculturalism opposes discrimination against an ethnic group because every minority deserves to be respected. Additionally, it avoids cultural antagonisms and calls for diversity to ensure democracy within the same country; hence, multiculturalism aims to include minority groups and acquaint the audience with acceptance of other cultures and traditions. In this vein, Gordon and Newfield claim that multiculturalism focuses on ethnic groups, race, and gender (p. 7).

## **II. Materials:**

- **Biography of Hanif Kureishi**

During the late twentieth century, numerous authors directed their attention towards multiculturalism within Western countries. Hanif Kureishi is a British author born to a Pakistani father and an English mother. Born in England, he became a versatile author, working as a novelist, playwright, and screenwriter. In an interview, he states, “I came from two worlds... There was my Pakistani family, my uncles, aunts and so on. Then there was my English family, who were lower middle or working class” (Qtd. Ewence, 2013, p. 63). He wrote *The Buddha of Suburbia*, *My Son the Fanatic*, *Intimacy*, *Something to Tell You* and *The Last Word*. Several of his first novels explore immigrant experiences and multiculturalism, drawing from his experience as an Anglo-Pakistani for inspiration.

- **Synopsis of *The Buddha of Suburbia*:**

Karim Amir, an Anglo-Indian character, is the protagonist of the novel. He was born to an English mother and an Indian father. The events of the novel occur during the 1970s, a time when

individuals from non-English parents and origins faced challenges in being not accepted by British society. At the opening of the novel, he admits that he is almost an English character. Karim Amir opens his narrative as follows:

My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories... Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored. (Kureishi, 1990, p. 1)

From this excerpt, one can see that Karim's parents are from different origins, which result in his struggles with belonging.

Different incidents show Karim's harsh life in both the suburbs and the city of England. The incidents of the first part take place in the suburbs and they open with disputes between Karim's parents. The father, Haroon, befriends another English rich woman named Eva, who seems interested in India and Buddhism. She asks Haroon to teach Buddhism even though he is a Muslim character; the irony is that he accepts to give lessons. He says, "They've so kindly asked me to speak on one or two aspects of Oriental philosophy" (Kureishi, 1990, 4). Over time, Haroon falls in love with Eva and decides to take Karim to live with them. He also divorces his wife and leaves his child, Allie, with her. Moreover, according to Eva, Karim is an exotic character because of his skin colour. She says, "Karim Amir, you are so exotic, so original! It's such a contribution! It's so you" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 7). Additionally, at a party at Eva's house, a visitor complains about the presence of Indians; he asks whether they are going to be asked to leave and whether they have camels. As the novel develops, Haroon seems highly interested in Buddhism and Oriental philosophy and prepares this atmosphere for his guests. In Eva's house, Karim feels uncomfortable while being with purely British people because his family and friends live in the suburbs. He says, "No wonder I had an inferiority complex" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 37). This suggests that British people, such as Hairy Back, call Anglo-Indians 'Blackies'. Interestingly, Karim wants to adopt

British cultural beliefs because he wants to live like them. In this context, he writes, “I wanted to live always this intensely: mysticism, alcohol, sexual promise, clever people and drugs. I hadn’t come upon it all like this before, and now I wanted nothing else” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 13).

Characters either go by different names or are called other names. In the novel, Karim introduces his brother, Amar, who calls himself Allie. “My brother Amar, four years younger than me, called himself Allie to avoid racial trouble,” Karim writes (Kureishi, 1990, p. 18). Amar wants to look British. Consequently, his parents struggle to find money for his ballet sessions. Moreover, Jamila, Karim’s friend, is called Jeemy. Haroon is another character whose wife’s relatives do not call him by his name. Karim’s uncles, Ted and Jean, call him Harry.

Jamila is Karim’s best friend and has a PhD in physical appearance. She is the daughter of Anwar and Auntie Jeeta, Indian characters who live in the suburbs. She describes Miss Cutmore, her British teacher, as a colonizer because she wants to eradicate anything Indian in her. Because these characters are occasionally French or Black Americans, they are not always accepted. According to Jamila, “but to the English we were always wogs and nigs and Pakis and the rest of it” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 51). Additionally, Jamila’s family is in risk since their existence was pervaded by fear and violence” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 54). There is constant attacks from British people.

Kureishi represents the relationship between Indian parents and their offspring. Jamila’s father, Anwar, forces his daughter to marry Changez, an Indian man. However, Jamila opposes an arranged marriage. “Through these calls Anwar’s brother in Bombay had fixed up Jamila with a boy eager to come and live in London as Jamila’s husband,” Karim says (Kureishi, 1990, p. 55). Karim claims that since Anwar upholds to patriarchal authority, he acts like a Muslim for the first time. He also questions Anwar and Haroon’s adherence to their Indian values. To compel Jamila

to wed Changez, Anwar plans to go on a hunger strike. Even though she marries him and they share the same house, they do not live as a couple. She informs Karim that she sympathizes with the ‘oppressed people’ in their racist British country and not with Changez. The couple continues to have the same relationship.

Karim accompanies his father to London to reside with Eva. At the conclusion of the first part, he ponders whether he will have a promising future in a metropolis. He fantasizes, “There were thousands of black people everywhere, so I wouldn’t feel exposed” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 119). Furthermore, he knows that he will find magazines, drugs, and parties. He likes the city because of its wonderful people, who are different to his colour or origins. Karim loves the city mainly because he wants to abandon his studies and join London’s theatres. He believes he will have opportunities to pursue his career as an actor. However, his director, Shadwell, believes that Karim best fits the role of Mowgli, a character in *The Jungle Book*. Shadwell inquires about Karim’s native language and exotic stories due to his Indian origins, while he is delving into his inner problem of belongingness. Shadwell comments, “You’re just right for him... In fact, you are Mowgli. You’re dark-skinned, you’re small and wiry, and you’ll be sweet but wholesome in the costume” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 139). Karim’s Indian friends disapprove him for accepting the role because it is associated with the British colonizer. A few days later, Karim develops an imaginative Indian character inspired by his relatives to perform them on stage. As a result, he is criticised by other members for rejecting his Indian ethnicity. By the end of the novel, Karim grasps the importance of accepting his identity as an Anglo-Indian individual and integrating into British society.

### III. Analysis:

#### 1. The Representation of Multiculturalism in *The Buddha of Suburbia*: Racism, Hybridity, Integration and Multiculturalism

Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* is a contemporary novel that delves into the lives of an ethnic group in Britain. It centres on the characters' daily challenges with racism, hybridity, and integration. It also illustrates the fact that Britain was not a multicultural pot in the 1970s due to the lack of acceptance of ethnic minorities. This part therefore investigates the portrayal of these themes by focusing on the relationship between Anglo-Indian and English characters. It analyses the lives of two families, the Amirs and Anwars, within British society.

Karim Amir recounts his experiences in England since he is an English character from different origins. In the opening of the novel, he states that he is an 'almost' English character because of his two origins and a "mixture of continents" since his mother is British while his father is Indian (Kureishi, 1990, p. 1). He struggles with an identity crisis since he does not know where he belongs. He claims that his mixture means he is "here and there, of belonging and not" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 1). This entails he is questioning his identity since he is unable to determine whether he is British or Indian. In this context, Ryan Trimm (2015) argues,

Race certainly affects Karim's world. However, though numerous interlocutors assume old associations of racial difference and migrancy with regard to Karim, the novel disrupts those links: his only migration is from settled suburbs to central London. The novel thus rewrites expectations of home, indigeneity, and identity, offering a more provisional and contingent sense of self and settlement. (52)

Put simply, Karim questions his identity and belonging because his mother is English, and his father is Indian. What makes his life difficult is that he has never been to India and only hears stories of India through his father's lens.

The names of characters are meaningful in *The Buddha of Suburbia* since Indian characters and their children have Indian names. Indian names can be seen as indicators of belonging to India,

yet they pose a significant challenge for these characters. Amar is conscious of the British racism that he may face, not only owing to his features but also to his name. He regards an Indian name as problematic due to racism. He identifies himself as Allie. Significantly, he takes ballet classes like a Westerner to have a sense of belonging and assimilation into British society. By the end of the novel, he also learns how to prepare English food. Hence, he rejects his Indian origins and seeks to assimilate into English culture. Concerning Haroon, his wife's relatives shun his Indian name and prefer to call him Harry. Therefore, changing characters' names entails that British people exhibited a lack of acceptance towards ethnic minorities during the 1970s. This also reveals that Anglo-Indian characters are either afraid of racism or experience prejudice due to their origins.

In the first part of the novel, entitled 'The Suburbs,' the Amirs and Anwar's family face racism. Different incidents show British racism. Several incidents vividly depict British prejudice, such as the one at Eva's party where attendees refuse to accept Haroon and Karim because of their Indian heritage. Eva comments on Karim's identity, calling him 'exotic' and 'original' (Kureishi, 1990, p. 7). Eva's comment implies her superiority complex. This also entails British attitudes and Western stereotypical images of Indians. Karim feels inferior while being with British people because of their stereotypical images or gazes. For instance, Karim feels subordinate to Eva's son, Charlie. In this context, Karim writes, "I knew immediately from the look on Charlie's face that I'd been an animal, a philistine, a child. Charlie threw his shoulder-length hair back, looked at me tolerantly for some time, and then smiled" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 12). Simply put, Karim feels inadequate upon meeting Charlie because of his negative stereotypes. Hence, Karim uses different words, such as 'animal' and a child, to expose his inferiority complex.

At Eva's party, several British guests are invited to enjoy their time. Haroon is invited to deliver a lesson on Buddhism. Karim, therefore, accompanies his father to meet Eva. The British

guests perceive Haroon and Karim as strange due to their ethnic features. This explains why British people have difficulty accepting individuals from an ethnic minority, particularly Anglo-Indians. In this sense, one of Eva's guests says, "Why has our Eva brought this brown Indian here?... And has he got his camel parked outside?" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 10). This denotes British racism toward ethnic minorities. Furthermore, Jamila and her family face racism. She believes that Miss Cutmore is racist for not accepting her Indian roots.

Karim describes the suburbs as a dangerous place for immigrants because of the recurrent attacks. Indians are always called 'Blackies,' niggers, and blacks by British people. Karim says, "Sometimes we were French, Jammie and I, other times we went black American. The thing was, we were supposed to be English, but to the English we were always wogs and nigs and Pakis and the rest of it" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 51). These ethnic groups are discriminated against based on their skin colour and ethnicity; subsequently, they face racism. Kureishi also relies on racist diction such as 'black', 'wogs,' 'nigs,' and 'Pakis' to dramatize ethnic minorities' suffering during the 1970s. More significantly, Jamila's family has been attacked several times by white English groups in the suburbs. These English citizens can be seen as a threat due to their actions of assaulting Asians and setting fire to rags. They also hang around in these places to intimidate Asians. Karim writes, "The lives of Anwar and Jeeta and Jamila were pervaded by fear of violence... Many of Jamila's attitudes were inspired by the possibility that a white group might kill one of us one day" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 54). In other words, British people are incapable of embracing ethnic minorities in the suburbs. These minorities feel unsafe due to the absence of any laws that protect them. This denotes that Jamila and her parents are afraid that one day they will be killed.

Jamila is Karim's best friend, since they spend most of their time together. One evening, they discuss their childhood, parents, patriarchy, and racism. She tells him, "Karim, this world is full

of people needing sympathy and care, oppressed people, like our people in this racist country, who face violence every day” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 106). Jamila’s sentence underscores British racism towards other minorities. This denotes Kureishi’s choice of the 1970s reflects the experiences of these ethnic minorities. Racism makes it difficult for these people to live in the dominant white culture.

Anglo-Indians face an identity crisis due to the lack of acceptance. Karim admires and loves Charlie more than anyone else because he is a British teenager and wants to resemble him. Karim spends time with him whenever he is at Eva’s house. In this context, he says, “It was that I preferred him to me and wanted to be him” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 13). It seems that what interests Karim is Charlie’s identity. He adds, “I, who wanted to be like Charlie- as clever, as cool in every part of my soul- tattooed his words onto my brain” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 15). Karim’s lack of affiliation with India indicates his desire to appear British. Hence, he aspires to be regarded as an Englishman like Charlie because of his inferiority complex. Additionally, Karim feels happy whenever he Charlie is present. At the same time, he wants to integrate and assimilate into British culture. He wants to live Charlie’s life, which is full of alcohol, mysticism, and drugs. This reveals Karim’s wish to be part of British culture because he wants to adopt British culture.

In the last paragraph of the first part, Karim feels exhausted from the suburbs because of his feelings of inferiority and loss. His dream is to leave the suburbs and settle in London to find his goal. He fantasizes that this city belongs to him, and it is a fabulous city where people enjoy their life. He writes,

There were thousands of black people everywhere, so I wouldn’t feel exposed... there were all the drugs you could use. You see, I didn’t ask much of my life; this was the extent of my longing. But at least my goals were clear and I knew what I wanted. I was twenty. I was ready for anything. (Kureishi, 1990, p. 119)

The above excerpt shows Karim admiration for London, particularly drawn to its multicultural landscape, with the presence of diverse ethnic groups such as Anglo-Africans. The diversity of ethnic minorities in the city may reduce racism and his feelings of inferiority. Karim wants to be unnoticed because of his skin colour and simply enjoy his life in the city. He desires to experiment new experiences like alcohol, drugs, and shopping to integrate into British culture. Hence, he is eager to do anything to assimilate.

The second part is entitled “In the City,” and it is set in London, West Kensington. During his first days, Karim feels lost as he wanders the city in all directions without any aim. But he appreciates looking at people, shops, hotels, and restaurants around him. He also feels amused as he walks unnoticed; in this context, he claims, in “Kensington nobody looked at you. In Earls Court everybody did, wondering what they could wrench from you” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 123). Simply put, Karim despises the suburbs because of the citizens’ racism and the lack of opportunities. Since he was pointed out in the suburbs, Karim does not want to feel exposed due to his creamy skin colour. The city is the only place that provides him with a feeling of gratification and amusement.

Kureishi dramatizes the representation of British racism when Karim wants to become an actor in London. Eva reaches out a British producer who decides to allow Karim to perform in his theatre. He starts working with Shadwell, who is a racist character, who has selected Karim to perform *The Jungle Book*. He also assumes that Karim fits the part of his play and obliges him to perform Mowgli. Karim accepts the performance to assimilate into British culture. He believes that if he mocks his Indian roots, he will be accepted by the British people. Shadwell uses some Punjabi or Urdu words to humiliate Karim. In addition, Shadwell argues, “You’re just right for him... In fact, you are Mowgli. You’re dark-skinned, you’re small and wiry, and you’ll be sweet

but wholesome in the costume. Not too pornographic, I hope. Certain critics will go for you. Oh yes. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 139). In other words, Shadwell is a racist since he relies on white European discourse. He takes pride in having a dark-skinned Indian character. Despite the presence of several ethnic minorities, English citizens do not accept them. This entails that British people emphasize cultural differences and view ethnic minorities as the 'Other.'

Moreover, Shadwell is aware of the difficulties immigrants face in England in the twentieth century. He comments about Karim's identity, saying that Karim is "a half-cast in England. That must be complicated for you to accept- belonging nowhere, wanted nowhere. Racism" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 138). Put differently, Shadwell confirms Karim's identity crisis when it comes to belonging. He is aware that Karim feels in-between because he belongs neither to England nor to India. Shadwell's use of "wanted nowhere" and "racism" implies that ethnic minorities face racism (p. 138). This also unveils Shadwell's discrimination since he focuses on his identity crisis.

Despite being conscious of racism, Karim aims to assimilate and integrate into Western culture by accepting the performance. He does not complain when Shadwell displays overly racist behaviour and believes he must control "whatever he said" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 136). In addition, he feels happy when he is accepted by Shadwell. In this sense, he admits, "I was just perfect. I'd done it. I'd got a job" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 139). He remains indifferent to racist attitudes and prejudice as long as they do not hinder his focus on achieving integration. Therefore, he compels to show that he is rejecting his origins. During the rehearsals, Shadwell does not only focus on the character's skin colour but also his language and clothes. He tells Karim, "A word about the accent, Karim. I think it should be an authentic accent... Karim, you have been cast for authenticity and not for experience... Try it until you feel comfortable as a Bangali" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 143). In other words, Shadwell's comments on authentic Indian accent entails his standpoint toward ethnic

minorities. Shadwell is an example of racist white people back in the 1970s reflecting a Western-centric perspective. He also provides Karim with attire to wear during the performance to convey a specific image of the Orient to the audience. The attitude of Shadwell is the embodiment of the Western Orientalist discourse that postulates that the Oriental is weak, savage, uneducated, and uncivilized. Moreover, once Karim discovers Western discourse, he decides to stay alone in the pub that night. In this sense, he argues, “I didn’t sit at the same table as the others but moved into the other bar with my pint and newspaper. I despised the other actors for not sticking up for me,” he writes (Kureishi, 1990, p. 144). At this point, Karim becomes aware of British racism as he is left alone. He exemplifies the struggle of Anglo-Indians who face rejection and alienation. Consequently, even in the city, he struggles with an inferiority complex and remains alone.

Karim has received compliments from his unnamed mother, Eva, and Shadwell. However, he is criticized by his father and Jamila. Haroon views Kipling as a racist author for presuming to know India. He also comments on Karim’s performance, saying that “an awful performance by my boy looking like a Black and White Minstrel” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 153). He does not like the performance because his son is half-Indian, which he believes reinforces Western stereotypes. Jamila finds his performance as ‘disgusting’ due to its use of Western stereotypes and ‘prejudices’ about Indians. She says, “And clichés about Indians. And the accent- my God, how could you do it? I expect you’re ashamed, aren’t you?” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 153). Jamila objects the British biased images about Indians, including the use of clichés and the accent. She also attempts to teach Karim that he is not obligated to express any negative remarks about his origins. As a result, Kureishi portrays two Anglo-Indian characters with contrasting perspectives on their heritage. While Karim despises his Indian roots and seeks assimilation, Jamila embraces her Indian roots and proudly defends her Indianness.

A few days later, a new director asks Karim to perform a monologue. He thinks of Anwar and his relationship with Jamila. Karim writes a monologue focusing on Anwar's patriarchy. Performing this monologue exhibits Karim's rejection of his Indian background and his quest for assimilation. After his rehearsal, Tracey, an actor, believes that this topic cannot be performed because it revolves around ethnic minorities. She is afraid that it will portray both Asians and Africans as "irrational, ridiculous, as being hysterical. And as being fanatical" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 173). Tracey is described as a rational character due to her critical views of Western perspectives and stereotypes. Unlike Karim, Tracey defends ethnic minorities as demonstrated by her disapproval of his performance. She adds, "Your picture is what white people already think of us. That we're funny, with strange habits and weird customs" (p. 173). Tracey thinks that Karim's performance is dangerous because it perpetuates Western stereotypes and cultural differences. She considers mocking one's race and origins to be dangerous. For Tracey, an individual should celebrate his origin and culture by providing a positive image to the West. She believes in the importance of ethnic minorities' voices.

In the novel, Kureishi depicts several characters who struggle to live. It is not only Jamila and Karim who face racism but also Changez. The latter is an Indian character who marries Jamila. There is one incident in the novel when he faces racism in the host country. Karim writes,

A few days later, after we'd started previewing the play in London, Jamila rang to tell me that Changez had been attacked under a railway bridge... this gang jumped out on Changez and called him Paki, not realizing he was Indian. They planted their feet all over him and started to carve the initials of the National Front into his stomach with a razor blade. (Kureishi, 1990, p. 221)

British people are represented as racists for attacking and beating Changez in South London. Hence, they do not accept ethnic minorities as members of their community because they care more about cultural differences. This incident angers Karim because it is not the first incident. He consequently asks Jamila if they can arrange an activity, such as a demonstration on the upcoming

Saturday. In this context, Karim argues, “we could only march and make our voice heard. I said I’d be there” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 222). For the first time Karim feels ready to defend an Anglo-Indian character and combat racism. He also realizes the importance of having a voice in the 1970s.

Unlike Karim, Haroon Amir celebrates his Indian origins in the novel. He has always felt superior, self-confident, and contemptuous because he thinks that British people do not have to see them as failures. Haroon explains, “I remain to all intents and purposes an Indian man. I will never be anything but an Indian” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 260). He accepts his Indianness and does not seek assimilation. Haroon celebrates his Indian origins to survive. Haroon’s standpoint has a positive impact on Karim as he learns how to accept his Anglo-Indian identity. In this context, he writes, “I could think about the past and what I’d been through as I’d struggled to locate myself and learn what the heart is... I thought of what a mess everything had been, but that it wouldn’t always be that way” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 281). Put differently, he has moved beyond struggling with identity crises as he embraces his Anglo-Indian heritage. Thus, he no longer yearns for assimilation. The novel can be viewed as Karim’s journey to accept his identity.

## **2. The Representation of the Clash of Generations in Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia***

Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia* depicts the relationship between Indian parents and their Anglo-Indian children. Because of their different upbringings, the parent-child connection becomes fraught with difficulties and tensions. Kureishi portrays the clash of generations between Haroon Amir and Karim Amir and between Anwar and Jamila since they do not share the same views concerning origins, identity, education, and marriage.

### **a. The Clash between Haroon and Karim**

The first clash arises from their divergent attitudes towards their Indian origins. In different incidents, Haroon proudly celebrates his Indian roots, while Karim expresses discomfort and resistance towards them. There are several examples where Haroon is proud of his Indian culture. To illustrate, he does not feel ashamed to give some lessons about Buddhism. However, Karim is unable to love and accept his Indian roots because he has never lived in India; consequently, Haroon and Karim do not have the same points of view. In many events, Karim mocks Indian characters and beliefs. He even mocks his father's teaching lessons. He also performs Mowgli from *The Jungle Book* and does not care about the origin of the character. Nonetheless, Haroon does not like the performance because it revolves around Indians. In this sense, he argues that this is "an awful performance by my boy looking like a Black and White Minstrel" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 153). Haroon is disappointed with his son's performance. This unveils the clash between the two owing to their conflicting beliefs and attitudes.

Concerning Indian identity, Haroon celebrates his Indian identity while living in the UK. However, Karim does not approve of his Anglo-Indian identity. In the opening of the novel, Karim defines himself as "an Englishman born and bred, almost" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 1). This shows that he rejects and eradicates his Indianness. He strives to assimilate and integrate into English culture by living in the city, adopting their lifestyle, and performing in theatres to achieve wealth and fame. By contrast, Karim does not reject his Indian identity. For example, he argues, "I will never be anything but an Indian" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 260). For Haroon, living in the host country for several decades does not necessarily mean forsaking his origin and identity. By celebrating his Indianness, he can live and survive in the host country. The clash arises between the two because of Indian identity.

Kureishi portrays Karim's representation of his father to emphasize his attitudes toward the first generation. For instance, Karim accompanies his father to Eva's house. Haroon, a Muslim man, teaches Buddhism to British women. Karim criticizes Haroon's performances at Eva's house; in this context, he says, "I left the hypnotized Buddhas and went through the house and into the kitchen" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 13). Karim reflects on his father's lack of adherence to Islamic principles despite identifying as Muslim, finding him dull and hypocritical. He does not care if he teaches some lessons about Buddhism. Moreover, Karim remembers his father crying in the suburbs and cursing like a Christian. He wonders, "Was I conceived like this, I wondered, in the suburban night air, to the wailing of Christian curses from the mouth of a renegade Muslim masquerading as a Buddhist?" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 14). Simply put, Karim despises the hypocrisy of his father who does not act like a Muslim. In different incidents, Karim confesses that Haroon eats pork, drinks alcohol and dates Eva.

Karim further expresses his aversion to Haroon's Buddha classes at Eva's house. He describes his father as 'exotic' and a 'magician' because of his Indian attire, including a waistcoat and pyjamas (Kureishi, 1990, p. 29). He adds, "a small carpet was put down for the Buddha of suburbia to fly on... God smiled at people recognized from last time" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 30). Karim mocks his father and provides a funny image. Haroon is depicted as a godlike figure with a flying carpet. Karim's Western upbringing and education influence his views on Indians. Karim attempts to highlight the failures of the first generation by employing Western discourse without being aware of it.

Karim does not appreciate his father's Indian upbringing. For example, he dislikes Haroon's patriarchal mindset because he believes that his wife should do everything at home. She prepares

food and tea and washes the dishes without the help of her male partner or children. In this context, Karim argues,

Dad had firm ideas about the division of labour between men and women. Both my parents worked: Mum had got a job in a shoe shop in the High Street to finance Allie, who had decided to become a ballet dancer and had to go to an expensive private school. But Mum did all the housework and the cooking. At lunchtime she shopped, and every evening she prepared the meal. (Kureishi, 1990, p. 18)

From the above quote, Karim despises his father's Indian patriarchal upbringing because his English mother has to work both in a shop and at home. Karim criticizes his father because he treats his wife as inferior and 'other'. He also sympathizes with his mother because she is alienated.

Karim blames his father for ruining the Amir family while dating Eva. He is a careless father who gives Buddha classes and returns home late. Haroon either spends his time in his bedroom or asks his children about school. Their mother, however, watches television. In this vein, Karim writes, "we sat with Mum and watched television, braving her constant irritation and sighs of self-pity... Whatever was happening at this time, we were all isolated from each other" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 85). As a teenager, Karim believes that his father is the main reason why the family is falling apart. He does not care about his wife's alienation or feelings; hence, she watches television as an escape from reality. Karim and Allie feel alienated because their parents lack communication. The second generation of immigrants does not have a strong connection with the first generation as they perceive their parents as a problem. After their parents' divorce, Allie lives with his mother while Karim lives with Haroon and Eva. Besides, another dispute arises between Karim and his father because of education. Haroon aspires for his son to be well-educated, whereas Karim wants to be an actor. This shows the intensity of the clash between the first and second generations.

## **b. The Clash between Anwar and Jamila**

Kureishi represents the critical relationship between Anwar and Jamila. Anwar and Jeeta were born in India and immigrated to the UK because of Anwar's education. Anwar is a patriarchal Muslim figure as he desires an arranged marriage for his daughter, Jamila. Her uncle in Bombay, India, finds the perfect typical Indian man, who is eager to live in London. Anwar does not want Jamila's opinion but consults Haroon, his friend. Hence, Karim shows that the first generation of immigrants has the same opinion. Once the decision is taken, Anwar informs Jamila. Karim writes, "Anwar had told Jamila what he'd decided: she was to marry the Indian and he would come over, slip on his overcoat and wife and live happily ever after in her muscly arms" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 55). Simply put, even though Anwar lives in the UK, he does not adapt to Western modern beliefs. He believes that Jamila does not have the right to marry the man of her choice.

Karim compares Anwar's current behavior to that of his father. While Anwar arranges a wedding for his daughter, Haroon gives Buddha classes. When they were young, they used to eat pork, drink alcohol, and attend parties. However, when they are middle-aged, they revert to their Indian customs. Karim, therefore, wonders why Anwar is acting like a Muslim. In this context, he writes, "It was certainly bizarre, Uncle Anwar behaving like a Muslim. I'd never known him believe in anything before, so it was an amazing novelty to find him literally staking his life on the principle of absolute patriarchal authority" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 62). In other words, Karim does not like the different changes that the first generation of immigrants is undergoing. The second generation of immigrants is questioning their parents' Indian beliefs. Besides, once Jamila rejects her father's arranged marriage, Anwar goes on a hunger strike for several months. This forces Jamila to marry Changez, but she marries him on paper and rejects him in the house. This unveils that the second generation of immigrants rebelled against their parents' Indian ideas and beliefs.

### 3. *The Buddha of Suburbia* as Hanif Kureishi's Autobiography

Hanif Kureishi is an Anglo-Pakistani writer, who includes some elements of his biography in his novel. *The Buddha of Suburbia* is a “semi-autobiographical coming-of-age story” (Ewence, 2013, p. 163). Kureishi was born in 1954 in Bromley, South England; he is the son of a Pakistani father and an English mother (Ewence, 2013, p. 163). In an interview, he states that “I came from two worlds ... There was my Pakistani family, my uncles, aunts and so on. Then there was my English family, who were lower middle or working class” (Qtd. Ewence, 2013, p. 163). In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the protagonist, Karim Amir, was born in England to an English mother and an Indian father, Haroon. His mother is from the middle class and works at a shoe shop to help her family. Jamila is another character who was born in England, but both her parents are Indians. Besides, like Kureishi, both Karim and Jamila were born in South London. Both Hanif Kureishi and Karim lived in the suburb during their childhood.

There are different similarities between Kureishi and Karim. Kureishi was the first son and had two siblings. He loves reading books and theatres (Kaleta, 1998, p. 1). Like Kureishi, Karim loves theatre and dreams of becoming a great actor. Moreover, Kureidshi's father immigrated to England in 1947 to study law. In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Haroon and Anwar went for the same purpose, but they failed in their studies. Karim states, “Dad was sent to England by his family to be educated” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 24). Besides, Kureishi had a difficult upbringing because of his parents' different backgrounds. In this context, Kenneth C. Kaleta (1998) comments, “While he experienced a typical English childhood, Kureishi's cultural background was uncommon. Although English, he did not grow up within the Church of England tradition; although Pakistani, he did not grow up within the Muslim tradition” (p. 1). Because of his parents' different cultures and religions, Kureishi is unable to follow one tradition. In the novel, Karim's parents are from

two cultural backgrounds: Christian and Muslim. Because of his loss, he does not mention which tradition he has followed.

Through his narrative, Kureishi tackles his memories of the suburbs as he delves into the experiences of commonwealth immigrants. Through his protagonist, Kureishi provides a thorough representation of British racism towards immigrants during the 1970s. Kureishi gives voice to ethnic minorities who face racism. Hannah Ewence (1998) argues,

It is little stretch to imagine that this episode might wholly or partially reflect an experience from Kureishi's own youth. The novel as a writing mode and a memory space... In this sense, the novel acts as a distinctly personal background journey, a repository but also a workshop for one's own memories. (p. 166)

In this excerpt, Kureishi describes his childhood and teenagehood experiences in the UK through Karim. To illustrate, Aunt Jeeta informs Karim that white people attacked their shop; she says, "Karim, some thugs came here one day. They threw a pig's head through the shop window as I sat here" (Kureishi, 1990, p. 171). Karim reveals acts of violence and racism by the British citizens.

## **Conclusion**

Hanif Kureishi is a contemporary Anglo-Pakistani writer who tackles contemporary issues in his fiction. In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Kureishi addresses the themes of race, identity, and belonging. In his narratives, he gives voice to ethnic minorities, especially Anglo-Indians, to expose their sufferings in the host country. He sets his novel in the 1970s to expose how Karim's and Jamila's families struggle in England. Besides, Kureishi scrutinizes the intergenerational clash between the first and second generations. Karim and Haroon do not have the same traditions and attitudes; thus, they cannot agree on basic issues. Kureishi also represents the complex relationship between Jamila and Anwar, portraying the father as a patriarchal Muslim figure who forces his daughter to marry Changez. Moreover, *The Buddha of Suburbia* is an autobiographical novel, in

which Kureishi includes some incidents from his real life in the novel, such as immigration, racism, and the dynamics between several generations.

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#### **Further Reading:**

Ellingsen, Lill Helen. "“An Englishman born and bred, almost” Identity and Belonging in Hanif Kureishi`s The Buddha of Suburbia". University of Oslo, <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/34757/AnxEnglishmanbornxandxbDMA1.pdf?sequence=1>

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## **Glossary:**

- **An Ethnic minority** refers to a small group of people who live within a dominant group. It shares the same language, traditions, beliefs, race, and history.
- **An immigrant** is a person who moves abroad to live there permanently.
- **Western discourse** refers to the language used by Westerners to describe other countries, locations, or people from their point of view, either written or orally.
- **Racism** is the discrimination against a person or an ethnic group on the basis of their race.
- **Identity** is the set of essential qualities, attributes, or features that characterize a person or a small group of people.

## **Tutorial Activities:**

The students will participate in six hours of tutorials to examine Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. Students are presented with numerous passages and pages to read during the tutorials. They are required to analyze and discuss various themes that are related to multiculturalism.

### **First Tutorial**

**Activity One:** Read the first excerpt from the opening of the first chapter. Who is Karim Amir? How does Karim describe his identity crisis and belonging? Discuss this theme with reference to the passage.

**Activity Two:** Haroon Amir receives an invitation from Eva, a British woman, to teach Buddha doctrines to British wealthy citizens. Karim accompanies his father to Eva's celebration. Read page ten and examine British racism against Anglo-Indian characters, adopting Homi Bhabha's concept of cultural difference. Illustrate from the novel to support your argument.

**Activity Three:** Read the material spanning from page eleven to page fourteen. Explore Karim Amir's representation of Haroon's Buddha lessons. In your opinion, why does Karim refuse to attend his father's lessons. With your classmate, discuss with reference to the passage.

**Activity Four:** Read the text spanning from page eleven to page fourteen carefully. Karim Amir portrays his relationship with Charlie, Eva's son, in the party. Examine the following points and engage in a discussion with your classmates.

- How does Charlie see Karim Amir? Explain with reference to the novel.
- Why does Karim love Charlie and his way of life? Analyze with illustration from the text.
- How does Karim Amir seek assimilation to the British culture? Examine and illustrate from the text to support your argument.

### **Assignment**

Hanif Kureishi describes the manifestation of British racism in the 1970s as a means to reveal British minorities' different challenges and obstacles. Read the content of the material spanning from forty-five to sixty-one. Investigate the lack of acceptance of English minorities, concentrating especially on Karim and Jamila. Provide examples from the given passages.

### **Second Tutorial**

**Activity One:** read the last passage of the first part on page one hundred nineteen. Examine Karim's struggle with identity crisis in the suburbs. Discuss the degree to which London can play a crucial role in Karim's assimilation to the British culture. Illustrate from the passage to support your argument.

**Activity Two:** Shadwell, a British theatrical director, invites Karim to perform the character of Mowgli in the stage adaptation of *The Jungle Book*. Shadwell preferred Karim based on his Indian origin. Read the content spanning from page one hundred thirty-six to one hundred thirty-nine. With your classmate, analyze the following points.

- Examine Shadwell's racism and use of stereotypical images.
- How does Shadwell trigger Karim's sense of belonging and identity? Discuss with reference to the material.
- In your opinion, why does not Karim respond to Shadwell's racism? And, why does he accept the performance?

**Activity Three:** Read page 143 and 144. In your opinion, why did Karim choose to maintain his silence throughout the story? Why does not he respond to Shadwell's racism? Is assimilation more important than one's dignity?

### **Third Tutorial**

**Activity One:** Read the selected excerpts. Haroon and Anwar are Indian characters who live in the United Kingdom. As their children were born in the UK, they adhere to British beliefs and values. Investigate the relationship between the first and second generation. Support your argument with reference to the selected passages.

**Activity Two:** Why is *The Buddha of Suburbia* considered a multicultural text? Explain with reference to the context and content of the novel.

## Fourth Tutorial

**Activity One:** Define an autobiographical novel? What are its main characteristics?

**Activity Two:** Do you consider *The Buddha of Suburbia* as an autobiographical novel?

Explain with reference to the novel?

### Activity:

Write a well-developed essay on the following topic:

From the mid-twentieth century, people migrated from Asia and Africa to Britain. According to Nick Bentley, they were not accepted because they were considered as a threat to British society and economy. Later on, Britain became a *multicultural country because they saw that “assimilation into a sense of Britishness is the preferred outcome.”* From *Contemporary British Fiction*

Discuss this theme with reference to Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia*.

## Chapter Two:

### A Study of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) as a Dystopian Novel

#### Objectives:

- Define science fiction
- Explain dystopias and dystopian literature, Panopticon and Surveillance
- Biography of Kazuo Ishiguro and the Summary *Never Let Me Go*
- Analyze Dystopia in the novel
- Discuss Panopticon, identity and art

#### Introduction:

Literature refers to written artistic works that can be either imaginative or realistic. Writers may rely on different genres, including fiction, science fiction, fantasy, romance, non-fiction, and historical fiction. In an imaginative novel, the writer produces a fictional story to explore a certain topic of his era. To illustrate, in Dystopian fiction, a contemporary writer uses science fiction to comment on the risks of technological transformations. This lecture attempts to define science fiction, Utopian literature, and dystopian literature. It also investigates the main elements of dystopian fiction and science fiction in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005).

#### I. Introduction to Science Fiction

In the twentieth century, science fiction has represented the diverse technological advancements in many fields. It depicts the progress of science, particularly the emergence of modern technology and its impact on humans. It alludes to the use of technological speculation, prophecy, or interplanetary adventure. In the beginning, science fiction had a positive impact on society, but its meaning changed after WWII. In "An Introduction to the Special Issue on Science

Fiction,” Andrew Millner and Sean Redmond (2015) argue, “SF... has more often been dystopian... Most SF works with social worlds almost identical to the author’s own, but altered slightly by the presence of counter-factual scientific or technological innovations” (p. 6). Simply put, science fiction offers readers a dystopian vision due to adverse technological advancement.

Numerous scholars defined science fiction. According to Susan Schneider (2016), it is a philosophy because “science fiction tales are in fact long versions of philosophical thought experiments” (p. 2). It focuses on smart robots, artificial intelligence, travel through time and space, the functioning of the mind, and the reality of the world. Hence, a literary text describes a dreamlike world where people encounter challenges because of technological progress. Furthermore, science fiction cautions people about the perils of consumerism and technology, particularly when used by dictators. More significantly, transhumanism can be part of science fiction settings where characters want to achieve mortality or enhance their understanding of existing scientific knowledge. In this context, Schneider (2016) explains,

a common point of agreement between transhumanists and bio conservatives who oppose enhancement is a concern that development of artificial intelligence, biological, weapons, advanced nanotechnology and other technologies being forth global catastrophic risks, that is, risks that carry the potential to the inflict serious damage to human well-being across the planet. (p. 10)

This excerpt implies that a number of scholars oppose technology since it can pose a threat to humankind and has the potential to cause significant damage to the world.

Science fiction envisions an unrealistic world where characters face different changes. A writer pictures the present or future state of the world and its impact on individuals. Millner and Redmond (2016) argue,

We choose the word ‘imagining’ not simply as a gesture towards the future-present world-building that takes place in SF, but also as a way of drawing attention to the centrality of

the imagination in bare political life and the power struggles that take place when one dares to think – imagine – the world differently. (p. 6)

A writer may describe disasters, the obliteration of cities, and the extinction of humanity. He also may portray a socio-political change toward an unforeseen outcome (Kilgore, 2010, p. 17). Therefore, some science fiction texts imagine danger and catastrophic futures.

## **II. Introduction to Dystopian Literature**

### **1. Definition of Utopia**

During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, people embraced the concept of utopia because of their religious beliefs. Utopia is a term that refers to an ideal world where everything is flawless, including law, politics, and living conditions (Baldwin). People can “experience the ideal and most perfect life” (Madhusudana, 2018, p. 88). In other words, without laws restricting them, people are free to enjoy positive experiences. Thomas More is an influential figure who was influenced by religious and philosophical books. He introduced a new genre of writing by depicting a utopian state. In *Utopia* (1516), he investigates optimal solutions for his society and describes a world devoid of private property because equality and free education are present. People adhere to a standard dress code, occupy a specific role, and lack distinctive characteristics (Madhusudana, 2018, p. 90). In addition, Thomas Campanella’s *The City of the Sun* (1602), Sir Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1624), and Margaret Cavendish’s *The Blazing World* (1666) are significant 17<sup>th</sup> century works that explore Utopia.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, people expressed their belief in utopia through the age of enlightenment, perfection, and reason. An author celebrates the ideas of progress and individualism as means to attain utopia. Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) and Voltaire’s *Candide* (1759) are influenced by More’s *Utopia*. Hence, they represent the ideal world. The 19<sup>th</sup> century marked a

constant expansion of utopian traditions due to the rise of the Industrial Revolution (Madhusudana, 2018, p. 91). Writers like Jack London emphasized themes of human rights, equality, and democracy. Various historical incidents have caused significant changes in people's views and styles of writing.

## **2. Definition of Dystopian Literature**

The twentieth century is marked by the mechanization of food production, manufacturing, communication, and transportation. The period is also characterized by political and economic turmoil in both Europe and the USA, including two World Wars, economic depression, and the Cold War. In fact, the word dystopia was coined in 1747 and gained popularity in the twentieth century. Hence, historical events shattered the utopian vision that people had held for centuries. In this context, Lyman Tower Sargent (2016) writes, "The twentieth century has quite correctly been called the dystopian century, and the twenty-first does not look much better" (p. 10). A dystopian future is viewed as the primary result of human actions.

Dystopian literature is viewed as anti-utopian since it presents an anti-thesis of utopian fiction. It tries to mirror society's perspective on 'utopianism' (Baldwin). Additionally, it tackles societal concerns including inequality, financial crises and corrupt leadership. It also portrays life as a "collective nightmare" and explores people's uneasiness with development and technology (Demerjian, 2016, pp. 1-2). Modern writers consider progress as a nightmare in fiction. In this regard, Madhusudana (2018) argues, "technical development worsens the conditions of life is a central theme of the growing genre of dystopia" (p. 91). Any progress adversely affects society and individuals' well-being.

Dystopian literature deals with the negative societal conditions and environments. In a dystopia, people have poor working conditions and most or all societal and political structures are

seen to be negative (Madhusudana, 2018, p. 88). Therefore, individuals are dehumanized in a dystopian society. In this context, Mary Baldwin claims, “Human beings were seen as barbaric, selfish creatures and society was destined to destroy itself. People were no longer hopeful for the future... and literature began to reflect these negative feelings”. Moreover, dystopian fiction serves as a commentary of contemporary society. It can also warn the reader of the recurrence of the same historical punishments in different contexts. It is more focused on the real threats that contemporary civilization might generate in the future (Barton, 2016, p. 7).

The earliest dystopian fictional works are George Orwell’s *1984*, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* and Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We*. These novels provide a critical analysis of modern technology and inventions. Anita Mason’s *The War Against Chaos* (1988), Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* (2005), and Lauren Oliver’s *Delirium* (2011) are notable contemporary texts that examine the same issue. They represent the absence of an ideal world in the twenty-first century. They also examine themes such as “individuality, freedom, class distinction, repression, religion and advanced technology” (Madhusudana, 2018, p. 93).

- **The Meaning of Totalitarianism**

Dystopia refers to a speculative future society where people are discriminated against and controlled by a bureaucratic, technological, or totalitarian regime. A totalitarian government employs monopoly, propaganda and technology to covertly manipulate people’s thoughts. Therefore, it has complete authority and command over its citizens. The government is portrayed as a dictatorial system that relies on invisible power to enforce its fundamental principles. Citizens primarily accept the government’s rule due to indoctrination in different institutions including schools, universities, colleges, and hospitals.

- **Dystopian Literature and Identity**

Modern authors have investigated the theme of identity in their dystopian novels due to fears over its loss as a result of anxiety, modernization, and mechanization. Because of his emotions, an individual will not pursue his sense of identity and subjectivity. Furthermore, he may potentially lose his family and “personal history” (Barton, 2016, p. 10). Subsequently, the “Self” is lost. Riven Barton (2016) writes, “The “I” suddenly found itself at odds with the One, the whole, and collective” (p. 8). An individual cannot define his identity based on his society because of its loss. Postmodern literature questions the origins of the loss of identity and reference to the Self. From the 1970s to the 1990s, a protagonist questions elements of his reality such as identity, family, and restrictions (Barton, 2016, p. 11). For example, some contemporary novelists focus on a female protagonist who is both lost and marginalized, yet possesses self-awareness and is on a quest for her identity and purpose (Barton, 2016, p. 13).

### **III. Panopticon**

Jeremy Bentham coined the term Panopticon to mean an architectural design utilized by institutions to cover different areas. It refers to a prison where a single guard, known as an inspector, can oversee all prisoners from his tower. In *The Panopticon Writings*, Bentham (2010) explains how the inspector observes prisoners’ acts and behaviors from a tower without being visible to them (pp. 34-5). Furthermore, the existence of an institution is crucial since it enables a powerful person to enforce surveillance for the purpose of maintaining discipline and inflicting punishment (Bentham, 2010, p. 34). The inspector holds an important position in this institution by compelling convicts to change their behavior during imprisonment through punishment.

In the 1970s, theorists introduced the concept of surveillance to allude to a dominant individual or institution capable of manipulating and regulating individuals. Panopticon does not require an

actual prison; rather, a powerful person employs different techniques such as technology to exert control over others. Michel Foucault is a theorist who developed the notion of Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish*. He states that the panopticon requires the use of power “in its ideal form” through modern technology without any resistance from the oppressed citizens (Foucault, 1977, p. 205). Therefore, power is essential for controlling citizens. Moreover, discipline is imposed on people through surveillance. In this context, Foucault argues,

Disciplinary power... is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is the of being constantly seen, of being always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection. (p. 187)

The above excerpt shows that power is necessary for raising disciplined individuals because they are constantly under careful surveillance. Individuals are conscious of being under surveillance, but choose not to express complaints and instead adhere to the existing rules. Thus, there is no need to be present in a physical form as they are psychologically manipulated. For Foucault, Panopticon might be carried out in several institutions, including schools, hospitals and universities. Besides, the presence of professionals in these institutions is paramount as their main goal is to impose laws. In this regard, Foucault (1977) explains, “The judges of normality are present everywhere” to ensure that people are going to be unconsciously transformed into self-disciplined because they follow the rules without questioning them (p. 304). Surveillance is a crucial means for creating a self-disciplined society.

#### **IV. Materials**

- **Biography of Kazuo Ishiguro**

Kazuo Ishiguro is an Anglo-Japanese writer, short-story writer, novelist and musician. He was born in Japan and moved to Britain with his parents. He pursued studies in philosophy and creative

writing. He gained recognition as a prominent contemporary British author and was awarded the Nobel Prize. His notable novels include *Remains of the Day*, *A Pale View of Hills*, *An Artist of the Floating World*, *Never Let Me Go* and *The Buried Giant*. Some of these novels have been adapted to films leading to his nomination for the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. He tackles memory, identity and loss in his literary writings.

- **Synopsis of *Never Let Me Go***

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* revolves around clones' lives from childhood to death. They resided at Hailsham School during their early years. As they mature, they are expected to transition to caregivers and subsequently to donors. The clones are created for the purpose of donating their organs to regular human patients. After donating their fourth organ, they die. Kathy H. is the novel's protagonist and is thirty-one years old. She has been working in a hospital for eleven and a half years. She decides to continue working for an additional six months before starting her donations due to her deep appreciation for caregiving. In this sense, she writes, "My donors have always tended to do much better than expected. Their recovery times have been impressive, and hardly any of them have been classified as "agitated," even before donation... But it means a lot to me, being able to do my work well" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 3). Kathy succeeds at donor care because of her adept listening skills and empathetic nature.

Kathy reminisces about her past, recalling her experiences with her friends, Tommy D. and Ruth. They loved their designated pavilion in Hailsham. She says, "I can remember us back in the Junior pleading with our guardians to hold the next lesson in the pavilion" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 6). She remembers Tommy's bad temper when he was a child. Tommy adored his polo shirt, but his classmates threw a dirt-filled balloon and ruined it. Tommy is ridiculed as he fails to learn from his mistakes, causing him to feel nervous. He is unable to handle his outbursts of anger, and nobody

shows interest in his situation. Kathy argues, “No one said anything” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 15). More significantly, students must present their creative art at The Gallery, set up by the school guardians. Tommy gets ridiculed for lacking creativity. His classmates criticize his drawing skills or sculpture creativity compared to the other pupils. When he drew a strange elephant and could not explain it to his classmates, he faced mockery for the first time. Kathy states, “his reputation for “creativity” was as low as ever” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 22). He finds peace within himself after Miss Emily reassures him that it is not his fault if he lacks creativity.

At the beginning, Hailsham students had limited knowledge about their identity. In this context, Kathy writes, “Thinking back now, I can see we were just at that age when we knew a few things about ourselves- about who we were, how we were different from our guardians, from the people outside” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 36). They know that they are different from ordinary people. They are called special students because they are expected to behave in a particular way. Since they are not allowed to go out of school, the outside world remains a fantasy to them. Furthermore, at the age of nine or ten, Miss Lucy explains the importance of prioritizing their health because they are special students. These students are aware of their differences from their teachers because of their duty to donate their organs. They do not ask questions about their identity to avoid feeling embarrassed. By the age of thirteen, they start to understand their identity and rights. They will not have a promising future because they cannot make decisions properly. Miss Lucy explains, “You’ll become adults, then before you’re old, before you’re middle-aged, you’ll start to donate your vital organs. That’s what each of you was created to do” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 81). The guardians instruct their students to maintain their physical well-being by attending medical appointments, abstaining from smoking, and engaging in sexual activity to prevent diseases. Even though teachers prohibit any relationship between teenagers, Ruth and Tommy become close friends.

Students leave Hailsham at the age of seventeen to live in the Cottages temporarily. They are instructed to care about each other's well-being. Kathy feels positive since there is no trace of gossip. They are free to act without fear of judgment. Kathy struggles to agree with Ruth on several fundamental matters. Ruth believes it is significant to find a possible model to shape their future, whereas Kathy objects because they cannot replicate their models' lives. Furthermore, Kathy and her friends learn from the other veterans about deferrals, a rumour that suggests that two lovers can defer to avoid donations. Tommy believes that one's identity and soul can be expressed through their drawings and pictures, allowing teachers to decide on deferrals based on their art. He becomes worried because of Ruth's obsession with deferrals, as he does not have items in the gallery. Hence, he draws "imaginary animals" that captivate Kathy's attention (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 188). Ruth ridicules him once she finds his pictures, claiming that she and Kathy found them funny. For this reason, Tommy and Kathy are no longer good friends. Kathy feels guilty and decides to depart from the Cottages to pursue her career as a caregiver.

Kathy enjoys working as a caregiver and medical assistant because the majority of her patients complete their fourth donation. She feels happy at work and values her loneliness and solitude. When Ruth becomes a donor, she specifically selects Kathy as her caregiver. Kathy explains, "I said nice things about her too, and for the next the next half hour or so, I think we were genuinely delighted to be with each other" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 214). Kathy drives Ruth to a new place to meet Tommy, where they talk about topics like caring and donations. Ruth apologizes to her two friends and requests that they seek deferrals because they have the potential to become an amazing couple. Tommy and Kathy enjoy each other's company. Kathy is reading while Tommy is drawing different creatures. One day, they visit Madame and Miss Emily to request deferrals. These teachers confirm that deferrals are only rumours invented by Hailsham students. Miss Emily

argues, “There’s no truth in the rumour” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 259). She further clarifies that she originally collected her students’ artwork to show that these clones possess genuine identities and souls. Moreover, Miss Emily used their artwork as a means to display their humanity. In this sense, she argues, “Look at this art! How dare you claim these children are anything less than fully human?” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 262). Put differently, she explains that they tried all possible attempts to ensure a good life for their students.

Despite denying their deferral, these clones return home. Before making his final donation, Tommy draws his enchanted creatures and socializes with other donors. They also express their different viewpoints on the fourth donation. Kathy adds, “Tommy and I, we talked about all of this, sometimes jokingly, other times seriously and carefully” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 278). At the end of the novel, several donations are made while donors encounter difficulties due to the shortage of recovery clinics and friends. The last donors start their donations and remain until their last donation and their death. Tommy prefers a different caregiver for his last donation because he is concerned about its complications. He does not want Kathy to see him in a bad situation. Tommy and Kathy understood Ruth’s desire for their own happiness. Kathy does not accept Tommy’s death; she inspects the house they previously resided in for the last time. She cries before leaving. Subsequently, she writes, “The memories I value most, I don’t see them ever fading. I lost Ruth, then I lost Tommy, but I won’t lose my memory of them” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 286). After her friends’ deaths, she attempts to remember all their lives before becoming an organ donor to ensure she retains every memory.

## **V. Analysis of the Novel**

### **1. An Analysis of Memories**

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* revolves around Kathy H.'s different memories since her childhood to illustrate the impact of technological progress on clones. Hailsham students are clones who are created to donate their organs to normal humans in the future. Therefore, humans can survive for a long time by using clones' vital organs in case of sickness. Clones perish either before or after their fourth donation. This gives the reader a brief insight into the discrimination experienced by these clones. Kathy H. has been working as a caregiver at a hospital for eleven and a half years. She is referred to as a "carer" in the novel. Kathy's primary role is to maintain the tranquility of the clones she cares for (Black, 2009, p. 791).

Kathy relies on flashbacks to recount her memories from Hailsham School, the Cottages, and the hospital. Before becoming a donor, she wants to recollect her experiences with her close friends, Tommy and Ruth. She says, "We knew and remembered things no one else did" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 5). Hailsham students undergo distinctive experiences. The novel is Kathy's "rereading of her past," as her memories gain significance when she remembers them (Black, 2009, p. 799). Thus, Ishiguro's novel is a recollection of Kathy's memories, including both her greatest and worst experiences. Additionally, one of Kathy's patients wants to learn about Hailsham in order to "remember" the institution (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 5). This means that students from other schools strive to recollect memories of Hailsham School.

Kathy describes herself as hardworking. In this sense, she writes, "It means a lot to me, being able to do my work well" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 3). Clones are created to study and care for donors before eventually becoming donors themselves. It also reveals that these clones are assessed based on their diligence in hospitals. Kathy selects Hailsham students to care for them because of her

spiritual connection to them. Kathy, at thirty-one, is tired of her role as a caregiver. She claims, “Carers aren’t machines” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 4). These clones exhibit feelings because they are unable to tolerate working at a hospital where several clone donors get sick and pass away. Kathy displays the pressure and discrimination she faces at work due to her tiredness. Therefore, normal humans prioritize safeguarding their lives over caring about clones’ feelings. They value the ability to find clones who can donate their organs without any cost or criticism.

## **2. The Representation of Control and Domination of Clones in *Never Let Me Go***

*Never Let Me Go* is a dystopian novel that exposes the guardians’ control and dominance over clones. Institutions are established to regulate the students’ actions and feelings to ensure complete dominance. Guardians employ different techniques to intimidate Hailsham students, including compartmentalizing knowledge, using art, and spreading rumours. This subsection attempts to examine Kazuo Ishiguro’s representation of oppression at Hailsham School. It also analyzes the characters’ passivity and inability to challenge their destiny.

The identities of Hailsham students are unknown at the beginning of the novel. The characters are clones who were created for the purpose of donating their organs to normal humans. These clones do not have last names that determine their identity, social status, or ethnic background. In this respect, Shameem Black (2009) argues,

But these names tell us nothing, because these students have no parents to name them. They could be modeled on people from any race, but since they are products of institutions, they lose any possible connection to groups outside boarding schools that shape their youth. (p. 797)

This excerpt explains that the reader cannot discern the students’ true identity because of their names. The characters are named Kathy H., Tommy D. and Ruth. They can refer to any

marginalized group, especially ethnic groups or middle-class citizens. Since clones do not have parental protection, they must live in an institution where they are controlled.

Hailsham guardians exerted control over their students from a young age. At Hailsham schools, students are prohibited from venturing into the outside world, so they have little knowledge about it. The guardians ensure total control by keeping Hailsham students apart from the normal world. The guardians establish unambiguous boundaries to separate students from the outside world. In this sense, Safia Benia (2019) explains that the institution is located at a considerable distance from the outside world to keep students isolated (p. 37). Additionally, senior students spread rumours to frighten students and prevent them from leaving the institution. They have heard dreadful stories about forests and woods. In this context, Kathy writes, “The woods were at the top of the hill that rose behind Hailsham House. All we could see was a dark fringe of trees, but I certainly wasn’t the only one of my age to feel their presence day and night” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 50). Simply put, students are kept in the institution by their guardians because they are afraid of the woods.

Hailsham students heard stories of a dead boy and the ghost of a girl. The boy was found dead in the forest for his escape from Hailsham. Kathy writes, “His body had been found two days later, up in those woods, tied to a tree with the hands and feet chopped off” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 50). The myth about his body instill fear in the students, preventing them from inquiring about the outside world. They also do not ask their guardians if they have the right to go outside. Therefore, the outside world is a mystery for them. Relying on stories is influential because they have an impact on students’ minds and imaginations. Moreover, these students are unable to gaze out of their windows at night because they are afraid. In this regard, Kathy argues, “The woods played on our imaginations the most after dark, in our dorms as we were trying to fall asleep” (Ishiguro, 2005,

p. 50). Fear consumes students, as they do not think about the outside world. Hence, guardians exercise dominance over their students by silencing them and preventing them from escaping. The guardians make them believe that Hailsham Institution provides safety. According to Benia (2019), rumours compel students to be submissive and passive, decreasing their ability to take action (p. 39).

Miss Emily teaches her students about different places in England. Kathy enjoys listening to her and acquiring knowledge about new places. Miss Emily mentions Norflok, but she does not supply them with pictures. Kathy believes that it is a “lost corner” that can never be found and that it is a mysterious place (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 65). Kathy writes, “This might all sound daft, but you have to remember that to us, at that stage in our lives, any place beyond Hailsham was like a *fantasy land*; we had only the *haziest notions of the world outside and about what and wasn't possible there*” (Ishiguro, 2005, emphasis added, p. 66). In other words, these students do not know the outside world because they are not allowed to leave Hailsham. Therefore, they rely on guardians’ stories and their imaginations about the outside world. The portrayal of Hailsham School as a prison stems from its primary function of segregating its students (Benia, 2019, p. 38). This means that guardians rely on an institution to impose certain ideas and beliefs on its students. The fact that students follow the rules without questioning them shows clearly that the institution has total control over them.

Kathy recounts her childhood experiences to shed light on the discrimination students faced. At a young age, they possess little understanding of their different identity from the outside world. In this context, Kathy argues, “Thinking back now, I can see we were just at that age when we knew a few things about ourselves- about how we were different from our guardians, from the people outside” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 36). They are aware of differences because their guardians

focus on them. Besides, Miss Emily informs students that they are “very special” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 43). At the age of five or seven, they become aware that they are different and special, but they are unaware of their true identity. Highlighting the difference is significant because these students are aware of their divergence from normal humans. These clones move from one stage to another without realizing the horrors of their lives (Black, 2009, p. 788). They live at a school that deprives them of “any forms of political identity,” prompting readers to consider the true nature of a human being (Black, 2009, p. 789).

Hailsham guardians forbid students from smoking because of the health risks associated with it. This implies that they are not free humans. Kathy explains, “At Hailsham the guardians were really strict about smoking. I’m sure they’d have preferred it if we were found out smoking even existed” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 67). The guardians teach them about the adverse impact of smoking on the body. They also prohibit the presence of some classics in the library because the main protagonist smokes, like Sherlock Holmes. The guardians deliver many lectures on smoking, despite being smokers themselves. This implies that the guardians rely on Hailsham School as an institution where they can manipulate students at an early age, primarily when their identity is unknown. The guardians frighten their students by presenting several pictures that demonstrate the negative impact of smoking.

Miss Lucy, a former smoker, asserts that smoking is not encouraged for Hailsham students. She highlights their differences to instill in them a fear of smoking. This reveals that the guardians can control and manipulate these students by imposing their rules within the school. The school’s presence is significant because it ensures surveillance by powerful guardians. To illustrate, Miss Lucy says, “You’re students. You’re... *special*. So keeping yourselves well, keeping yourselves very healthy inside, that’s much more important” (emphasis original, Ishiguro, 2005, p. 69).

Simply put, Miss Lucy uses specific vocabulary to capture students' attention to her information. She employs "special" and "complete" to set forth the regulations of Hailsham School and enlighten the students about their destiny. Her authoritative presence requires respect and ensures that students are attentive listeners. As Hailsham students feel afraid, they adhere to the instructions and refrain from smoking. They meet their guardians' expectation of ensuring their body is in an optimal state for donations before middle age. At this point, these students are "unaware of their inhumanity" and are prepared to be exploited by their guardians (Black, 2009, p. 799). Ishiguro uses this example to capture the reader's attention and evoke empathy for these students.

Young Hailsham students do not dare question Miss Lucy their right to smoke. Even if Miss Lucy waits for questions, "no one" asks her (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 69). Besides, they "stayed silent that day" because they were afraid to inquire (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 69). The control over these students stems from their passive and docile nature. It also stems from their inability to question their current circumstances. Though they have suspicions about their identity, they remain silent. Kathy writes that we "were different from our guardians, and also from the normal people outside" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 69). Hailsham students obediently accept their destiny and refrain from challenging their guardians' repression (Black, 2009, p. 793). Surveillance instills fear in students, hindering them from seeking clarification. They believe that their guardians possess the ultimate authority and truth.

At a very young age, they do not know that they are clones. Due to the guardians' lectures, the students doubt their true identity. In this context, Kathy writes, "the days during which- as I see it- we started off our whole thing of wondering and asking questions about ourselves that we kept going between us through the years" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 72). Clones are created to donate

their organs to normal people. This reveals that their world is unfair since normal people put clones inside schooling programs for their own benefit. From Kathy's sentence, these students doubt their real identity. It remains ambiguous for a few years because Hailsham students cannot ask questions.

Miss Lucy is the main guardian who dictates and imposes the rules on students. She denies them their basic rights because she believes that they share the same destiny. At the age of fourteen, the guardians inform Hailsham students that they cannot leave Hailsham or chase their dreams. Therefore, the guardians force their students to donate their organs to ordinary people who are striving for immortality. In this sense, she claims,

It's not right... 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 one day. *Your lives are set out for you.* You'll become adults, then before you're old, before you're even middle-aged, *you'll start to donate your vital organs.* (emphasis added, Ishiguro, 2005, p. 81)

Hailsham students lack the ability to change their fate, as they are destined to donate their organs to normal human beings. Because of their failure to question the concept of donations, these students have accepted their destiny. This entails that Miss Lucy dictates the regulations of Hailsham School to her students due to her authority. Her statement is unsurprising to these students because they are already acquainted with the notion of donations (Benia, 2019, p. 36). Furthermore, Miss Lucy gradually introduces some segments of their existence and identity to avoid any kind of resistance or rebellion (Benia, 2019, p. 37). Students are unable to have an in-depth awareness of their identity in a single day. However, guardians provide a segment of their existence during a specific stage. In the meantime, these clones undergo surveillance inside the institution to prevent their revolt.

At the age of thirteen, guardians start to define their students' identities. Once Miss Lucy realizes that Hailsham's students are perplexed, she abruptly ends her lesson and does not provide them with the information about their identity and destiny. Hence, these students still doubt their identity and are unable to receive an answer from their guardians. In addition, they receive instructions from their guardians to take care of their bodies without being informed of the main reasons. In this sense, Kathy writes, "We'd have to be very careful to avoid diseases" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 83). To benefit normal people, they must steer clear of contagious diseases. This implies that the guardians enforce Hailsham School's regulations without disclosing the justifications to the students. Hence, students' fear leads to their discipline.

Upon becoming teenagers, they quit their school to reside in the cottages. The Cottages are the remains of abandoned farms. These students learn to care about each other before departing from the school. In this regard, Kathy says, "We'd been told over and over... to look after each other: that after Hailsham there'd be no more guardians" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 117). Within Hailsham School, the guardians implement their ideas on the students by exerting their power. Guardians use surveillance to emphasize the importance of expressing care for one another. Students obey their guardians' rules and instructions. At the Cottages, the guardians do not have any control over their students because they are confident of the students' self-discipline. The students behave like adults as they embrace new experiences, despite having a weird friendship at the beginning.

The clones experience freedom at the Cottages because they are independent from their guardians. They own their rooms and have money to travel and explore various places. Although they are free, they do not leave the Cottages owing to their fear of the unknown (Benia, 2019, p. 41). Once they are employed as caregivers or organ donors, these clones lose interest in the ordinary world. In this regard, Safia Benia (2019) claims, "Their sense of kinship grows even

stronger when carers start to look after fellow clones who have started donating” (p. 41). They value and care about each other. Moreover, none of the caregivers attempt to abandon their job and flee from the unnamed hospitals. It seems that they have accepted their destiny since childhood. This emphasizes their passivity and docility, as they do not complain about their current situation.

### **3. The Relationship between Art and Clones’ Souls**

Kathy H. reminisces about her time in Hailsham with Ruth and Tommy D. at the Gallery. Hailsham School hosts different exhibitions where students showcase their sculptures, poems, and art creations. In this sense, Kathy argues, “Four times a year- spring, summer, autumn, winter- we had a kind of big exhibition-cum-sale of all the things we’d been creating in the three months” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 16). The school guardians honor and value students’ creativity. These students are eligible to receive tokens when they sell artwork. Madame selects the best pieces for her gallery while the students are unaware of their intended purpose (Black, 2009, p. 794). Tommy has struggled with anger issues since his early childhood. His classmates tease him for his inability to learn from his mistakes. For instance, Laura teases him with a balloon; hence, “Tommy burst into thunderous bellowing, and the boys, now laughing openly, started to run off towards the South Playing Field” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 9). Since he cannot sell his art in these galleries, Tommy faces criticism for his lack of creativity. Most Hailsham students have a strong sense of self-worth because they are creative, unlike Tommy. Kathy describes Tommy as a victim because teachers have imposed stringent standards on students. According to Safia Benia (2019), the role of art is to keep students “preoccupied” and “calm” (p. 41). Therefore, they can never complain or question their recent position.

Tommy's feelings are disregarded when he is bullied. As a result, he throws a temper tantrum, spilling contents on the floor, attacking a classmate, running away alone, and facing ridicule. In this regard, Kathy writes, "I thought sooner or later someone would start saying it had gone too far, but it just kept on, and no one said anything" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 15). Kathy emphasizes Tommy's ongoing problems with tantrums and creativity, which originated from his drawing in one of Miss Geraldine's classes. This drawing has an unfavorable effect on his reputation because his classmates do not appreciate it. This shows that Hailsham teachers do not care about Tommy's mental health or temperament because they are more concerned with their physical well-being. Tommy is discriminated against at Hailsham School.

Tommy feels happy after discussing his creativity problem with Miss Lucy. He accepts that being a non-creative person is normal. Tommy argues, "She said I shouldn't worry. Not mind what other people were saying" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 27). She also mentions that several students struggle with being creative. Tommy now celebrates his non-creativity and believes that it is not his fault. Hence, he tries to live a conventional life akin to that of his classmates. Nonetheless, this happiness is short-lived. Once he remembers Miss Lucy's conversation, he thinks that she said it was "rubbish" or "negligible" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 108). Miss Lucy's expressions significantly influence his thoughts and relationship with Ruth, his girlfriend. These students are negatively impacted by school competition.

Tommy informs Kathy about a rumor he heard from the veterans regarding deferral. It refers to a couple's wish and possibility to spend a few years living a romantic relationship outside of a hospital. But they need approval from their guardians. According to Tommy, they must display their earlier artwork from their childhood gallery. He states that their artistic creations "*revealed what you were like inside*. She said *they revealed your soul*" (emphasis original, Ishiguro, 2005, p.

175). These clones consider art important to get deferral because it reveals their emotions and feelings for one another. This uncovers their hope for a better life for a short period before finalizing their donations. Tommy's primary issue is his fear of lack of creativity since Ruth is considering deferral.

Tommy began drawing imaginary animals, which led Ruth to bully him. She says, "It's not just me, sweetie. Kathy here finds your animals a complete hoot" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 194). Tommy feels offended because he believes Kathy makes fun of his drawing. Tommy's embarrassment shatters their friendship. More importantly, these clones face different types of discrimination within the institution. Ruth humiliates Kathy by telling her that Tommy is not fascinated by girls who already have boyfriends. Therefore, Tommy and Kathy feel ridiculed by Ruth. When her friend's relationship with Tommy is ruined, Kathy decides to become a caregiver. The protagonist has to struggle with loneliness and solitude at the hospital.

When Tommy and Ruth start their donations, Ruth apologizes for her impolite behavior. She admits, "I kept you apart" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 232). She feels guilty about separating Tommy and Kathy because of her jealousy and encourages them to request a deferral because they have a "real chance" (p. 233). Due to their strained relationship, Kathy avoids discussing her relationship with Tommy and the idea of deferral. This shows Kathy's worries and feelings. Tommy and Kathy quickly develop a close relationship, motivating Tommy to create paintings to convince Miss Emily to grant them a deferral. These clones desire to experience happiness and enjoy their lives.

Tommy and Kathy visit Madame and Miss Emily to request a deferral, bringing along some of Tommy's drawings. These clones do not assert their basic rights and, hence, feel frightened. Ishiguro describes clones' emotions when they visit their guardians. In this context, Kathy writes, "I'd memorized word for word a few lines" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 252). However, when meeting her

former guardians, she does not remember anything. Clearly, their childhood experiences have an impact on how they express themselves or ask for something.

Madame and Miss Emily are skeptical of the clones' feelings for one another. Madame inquires, "How can you know?" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 252). Madame thinks their claim is inadequate because of their status as clones. She considers them "poor creatures" since she thinks clones imagine that love exists (p. 254). Besides, Miss Emily states that the guardians attempted to advocate for clones' fundamental rights at school by showcasing their artwork. The guardians aimed to ensure that clones had access to education, good health, and food. The guardians' role is to demonstrate that clones resemble real humans. Therefore, they merit good living conditions. She mentions that deferral is "something for them to dream about, a little fantasy" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 258). Miss Emily refutes their suggestion and admits that deferral is merely a "rumour" (p. 259). Clones are unable to accomplish their dreams because their guardians prohibit deferrals or better living conditions. These clones do not have rights because they have to give their organs before reaching middle age and are unable to ask for a break to enjoy their lives.

The guardians claim that their aim at Hailsham was to guarantee a high quality of life for their students. Therefore, they established multiple galleries to demonstrate that clones are ordinary humans. Shameem Black (2009) asserts that the guardians want to inform the outside world that these donors are human beings (p. 794). Miss Emily explains, "Let's answer the simplest one, and perhaps answer all the rest... You said it was because your art would reveal what you were like... What you were like inside... we did it to *prove you had souls at all*" (emphasis original, Ishiguro, 2005, p. 260). Their inability to reveal that these clones are humans is problematic because they are denied any rights. This exacerbates humans' discrimination and dehumanization of clones because of their need for their organs to become immortal. Ordinary people cannot go back to the

dark days when they could not find organs to save their lives. More importantly, normal humans consider them “less than human, so it didn’t matter” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 263). Clones are viewed as inferior because they were created to serve a normal human. Clones are considered inhuman; hence, their guardians do not approve their request for deferral. By the end of the novel, the clones share the same death destiny by donating their organs. Due to their school-taught discipline, they lack the ability to question or voice their concerns. This reveals the overwhelming influence of the Panopticon and surveillance on clones.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* (2005) is science fiction that presents a dystopian vision of the twentieth century. It portrays the negative effect of technological advancement on the contemporary world. Humans have created clones to live until their twenties and then donate their organs. These clones do not have an identity and cannot define themselves because they do not have a last name. Hailsham’s guardians are dictators since Miss Lucy, Miss Emily, and Madame establish the main rules of the school. The school restricts Hailsham students to ensure surveillance and enforce regulations. The dehumanized clones are unable to challenge their guardians’ rules because of their fear. Despite having a gallery to showcase their art and creativity, clones face discrimination and dehumanization. Thus, they are not given rights by ordinary humans because they want to become immortal. The exploited clones can refer to any marginalized group in Britain, especially ethnic groups and the middle working class.

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### **Further Reading:**

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## **Tutorial Activities**

The students will participate in six hours of tutorials to analyze Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. Students are presented with numerous passages and pages to read during the tutorials. They are required to analyze and discuss various themes that are related to dystopian fiction and Panopticon.

### **First Tutorial**

**Activity One:** Read the first two pages of the novel and discuss the following points with your classmates. Who is the protagonist of the novel? where does she live? What is her profession? Can you grasp her identity and role in the novel?

**Activity Two:** Read the content of the material found on pages sixteen and seventeen. Read also page thirty-seven. Examine the following points and provide evidence from the text to support your argument.

- How does Kathy define the Exchanges? What is the significance of the Exchanges for Hailsham school? From page thirty-seven, what is the significance of art?
- Why do Hailsham guardians rely on the Exchanges throughout the year? Analyze this applying the theory of Panopticon.

- How does Kathy represent her friend Tommy? Why does not he like the notion of art?

**Activity Three:** Read the last passage of page thirty-six and discuss the following questions with your classmates. Why did not Hailsham students know their identity since their early childhood? Why did Hailsham guardians hide reality? How can you analyze Michelle Foucault's Panopticon and surveillance in this passage? How did Kathy feel when she was a child? Support your argument with reference to the passage.

**Assignment:** At Hailsham school, the clones were exposed to various rumors since their early childhood. Who circulates these rumors? What is the impact of these rumors on Hailsham students? Write a well-developed essay where you explain these points. Support your argument with reference to Never *Let Me Go*.

## Second Tutorial

**Activity One:** Read the content of the material extending from page sixty-seven to sixty-nine. Explore the following points and discuss them with your classmates, supporting your argument from the text.

- Who imposes the restrictions on Hailsham students?
- Why are not the students allowed to smoke?
- How do Hailsham gaurdians control the clones?
- Why do Hailsham guardians provide segments of information about the students' identity?
- How do you analyze both Hailsham guardians and students?
- Do you see elements of Panopticon and surveillance? Explain with reference to the passages.

**Activity Two:** Read the pages between eighty-one and eighty-four. Analyze Hailsham guardians' control over the students, applying the concepts of Panopticon and surveillance. Explain the method employed inside the institution in the passage. How would do you describe Hailsham school? How are the students described? Engage in a discussion with your classmates.

**Activity Three:** Examine the content on pages one hundred six to one hundred eight and discuss the following points. What is the reason behind Tommy's preoccupation with art during his adolescence? What is the importance of art in *Never Let Me Go*?

### **Third Tutorial**

**Activity One:** Read the provided material from pages one hundred sixty-nine to one hundred seventy-one. Examine the following points and participate in a classroom discussion. According to Hailsham students, what is the purpose of the art gallery? Why did Tommy choose not to participate in the art gallery? Why does Mary-Claude consider Hailsham students as poor creatures? Support your argument with reference to the novel.

**Activity Two:** Read the content of the pages from one hundred seventy-two to one hundred seventy-four. Engage in a discussion with your classmates on the following ideas. What is the reason behind Hailsham students' disillusionment? According to Marie-Claude and Miss Emily, what is the importance of the art gallery? Could they save Hailsham students from their destiny? If not, how are Hailsham students described in the novel under scrutiny?

**Activity:**

Dystopian literature provides readers with speculative futures, offering cautionary tales that contrast sharply with utopian ideals. Within these narratives, societal progress and technological advancements often evoke deep-seated anxieties, resulting in the subjugation and manipulation of individuals by authoritarian regimes or omnipotent technological entities. Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* masterfully delves into this thematic territory, presenting a haunting portrayal of a world where human lives are commodified and controlled by a sinister combination of bureaucratic machinery and scientific manipulation.

Discuss this topic in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

## Chapter Three:

### A Study of Ian McEwan's *Solar* as a Climate Change Fiction

#### Objectives:

- Define ecocriticism
- Introduce the emergence of climate change fiction
- Define climate change fiction
- Explain its main characteristics: genre, setting and use of literary techniques
- Introduce biography of Ian McEwan and the summary of *Solar*
- Analyze the main characteristics of cli-fi in *Solar*

#### Introduction

The late twentieth century marked the emergence of Ecocriticism as a new literary theory that examines literature from an earth-centered perspective. In the twenty-first century, climate change fiction became a subfield of ecocriticism, which is a new literary genre that addresses global warming in either a present or futuristic context. Novelists may use different genres to explore this theme, including realistic, dystopian, or post-apocalyptic genres. They may also utilize various literary styles. This lecture attempts to define ecocriticism and climate change fiction. It also investigates the government's concerns and its failure to find a solution in Ian McEwan's *Solar* (2011).

#### I. Theory

##### 1. Definition of Ecocriticism

Due to the scarcity of scholarly research on environmental studies, Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm have introduced a new literary theory named ecocriticism in *The Ecocriticism*

*Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. In “Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis,” Cheryll Glotfelty (1996) argues that environmental studies emerged in the late twentieth century (p. xv). Scholars have focused on several topics, such as race, gender, and class; nonetheless, they have overlooked the existence of our planet. Several developments have drawn the attention of scholars to the issues regarding our planet. These include nuclear war, wildlife extinction, pollution, climate change, and global warming.

Prior to the 1970s, no academic institution dealing with literary studies addressed environmental issues. Since the 1970s, an environmental movement has emerged. But an absence of collaboration among scholars has limited its influence. Every scholar independently focused on his topics. In this sense, Glotfelty (1996) argues, “Individual studies appeared in a wide variety of places and were categorized under a miscellany of subject heading” (p. xvii). Simply put, individual work hinders scholarly research because scholars failed to create a literary theory for environmental studies. Environmental criticism evolved in the 1980s and gained recognition because of collaborative efforts among scholars. The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) came into existence in 1992, and its goal was to facilitate the exchange of ideas and inspire individuals to write about nature (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xviii). Moreover, Patrick Murphy founded Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE) in 1993, which is a literary school that analyzes literary works from an ecological prism.

Glotfelty is a prominent figure in ecocriticism. He (1996) defines ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment ... Ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies” (p. xviii). In other words, it attempts to investigate the interplay among man, culture, and nature as represented in literature. Furthermore, it explores “how nature is represented in literature” (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xxiii). Put differently, this theory

emphasizes the whole ecosystem and analyzes the relationship between culture, literature, and the physical world. More significantly, this literary theory encompasses various key concepts, such as critique of both dualism and the exploitation of nature, ecofeminism, climate change fiction, and the agency of nature.

Ecocriticism focuses on Man's discourse that shapes the representation of species and nature and their place in literature. Society relies on language to describe nature as a subordinate and passive entity. In this sense, Glotfelty (1996) argues, "How has literary discourse defined the human? Such a critique questions the dualisms prevalent in Western thoughts, dualisms that separate meaning from matter, sever mind from body, divide men from women, and wrench humanity from nature" (p. xxiv). Simply put, society accentuates dualism, focusing on binary oppositions such as man/woman, man/nature, and culture/nature. Society uses dualism to demonstrate his sentience, while nature remains silent. Nature is considered a silent entity because it lacks the ability to express and communicate ideas (Manes, 1996, 15). Furthermore, logocentrism refers to the "metaphysics of presence" because society emphasizes the difference between presence and absence. People perceive man as present because of his ability to communicate, whereas they view nature as absent because it remains silent and passive. Therefore, logocentrism poses a threat to the natural environment. Manes (1996) explains, "Logocentrism marginalizes nature, mutes it, pushes it into a hazy backdrop against which the rational human subject struts upon the epistemological stage" (p. 16). Because of logocentrism, humans marginalize nature and regard it as a silent object. As a result, contemporary scholars have created ecocriticism to challenge societal beliefs and attitudes and to raise readers' awareness. In this regard, Glotfelty (1996) explains, "Most ecocritical work shares a common motivation: the

troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits” (p. xx). In other words, this literary theory raises people’s consciousness about their actions.

## **2. Climate Change Fiction**

Several scholars attempted to define climate change fiction. Adam Trexler’s *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in Time of Climate Change* is the first publication on climate change narrative. In addition, Adeline Johns-Putra is a Doctor of Philosophy at Monash University, Malaysia. She is a literary scholar who specializes in ecocriticism, particularly climate change fiction. She has authored numerous articles and book chapters on this subject. She authored “Climate Change in Literature and Literary Studies: from Cli-fi, Climate Change Theater and Eco-poetry to Ecocriticism and Climate Change Criticism,” “The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Climate,” “The Rise of the Climate Change Novel,” and “Climate and History in the Anthropocene: Realist Narrative and the Framing of Time.” Other scholars include Antonia Menhert and Gregers Andersen.

Climate change is a prominent topic in twenty-first century literature. In 2011, ecocritics focused on this theme and introduced it as a new concept. They believed it was necessary to investigate the connection between climate change and literature. It became known as climate change fiction by mid-2013. In this context, Johns-Putra (2016) writes, “We suggested that it was the time when ecocriticism took seriously the relationship between climate change and literature as a worthwhile topic of study” (p. 267). She adds that climate change fiction, known as cli-fi, has become “a subfield” of ecocriticism (Johns-Putra, 2016, p. 266). Put differently, climate change fiction is a contemporary mode of narrative that represents the phenomenon of climate change. Consequently, scholars introduced a new branch of ecocriticism that deals with both climate

change fiction and climate change criticism. Additionally, this new trend came to light due to the presence of this theme in several literary pieces.

Climate change fiction is a new genre of literature that can also be found in various literary genres, such as dystopian fiction, science fiction, thrillers, fantasy, and romance. Johns-Putra explains, “I would prefer to define climate change fiction as fiction concerned with anthropogenic climate change or global warming as we now understand it” (Johns-Putra, 2016, p. 267). In simple words, this genre of fiction focuses on contemporary weather or climatic changes. It also exposes this phenomenon to the reader and focuses on neglected perspectives (Johns-Putra, 2016, p. 273). Furthermore, writers may expose humanity’s detrimental impact on the planet explicitly or implicitly, including climate change. They also delve into contemporary responses to the current situation in order to showcase society’s attitude toward climate change.

Climate change literature serves several functions and is divided into two categories. On the one hand, it attempts to offer the reader “lessons” and raise his awareness (Johns-Putra, 2016, p. 274). Simply put, its aim is to inform individuals about the risks of climate change and advocate for action. On the other hand, literary studies examine how texts use literary traditions to represent this phenomenon. Therefore, scholars and critics examine the relationship between humans, climate change, and literature. They also investigate the literary genre and literary techniques used in climate change fiction.

Novelists were the first to depict climate change in their novels. Playwrights and poets later explored the same theme in their literary works. Therefore, the three main literary genres are “climate fiction,” “ecotheater,” and “ecopoetry”. The first novels that dealt with climate change include George Turner’s *The Sea and the Summer* (1987), Doris Lessing’s *Mara and Dann* (1999), and Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* (2003). Since 2011, numerous novels have tackled

climate change, including Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2011) and Ian McEwan's *Solar* (2011). McEwan's novel has significantly influenced cli-fi narratives, inspiring over twenty novels to be published following the publication of *Solar*.

### **3. The Main Characteristics of Climate Change Fiction**

- **The Setting:**

Several authors may depict this phenomenon in diverse situations. They choose between near-futuristic or futuristic settings. Novelists can represent realistic, current, or near-futuristic circumstances. They tackle climate change as a multifaceted issue that requires a solution from scientists (Johns-Putra, 2016, p. 269). They describe it as a threat on an individual, economic, or political level. This narrative aims to evoke the reader's empathy (Goodbody and Johns-Putra, 2019, p. 237). Besides, Johns-Putra (2016) argues, "in many of these novels, the problem of how we deal with future generations is a prominent theme, figured by parental concerns of many protagonists" (p. 269). Novelists represent climate change as a problem and emphasize the need for a solution, yet characters fail to offer a resolution by the end of the literary text.

In a futuristic context, writers may deal with climate change by portraying either dystopian or post-apocalyptic fiction. Novelists may focus on science fiction and its characteristics. In these genres, a catastrophic event or natural disaster is set in the future. Dystopian fiction presents an unwanted future, while post-apocalyptic narrative attributes apocalyptic incidents to climate change, such as a natural disaster (Johns-Putra, 2016, p. 268). The setting describes the external consequences of climate change. Furthermore, writers highlight the collapse of technology, "economic instability," and heightened social conflict (Johns-Putra, 2016, p. 269). Aside from that, they represent the struggle for survival and the parent-child relationship. Notable post-apocalyptic

novels include Nathaniel Rich's *Odds Against Tomorrow* (2013), Jane Rawson's *A Wrong Turn of the Office of Unnamed List* (2013) and Eric Barnes's *The City Where We Once Lived* (2018).

- **Style of Writing:**

Several novels capture the events realistically. In this regard, Axel Goodbody and Adeline Johns-Putra (2019) write,

Realist fiction possesses authenticity and cogency deriving, on the one hand, from vivid observational detail and, on the other, from personalization, dramatization, and emotional focalization. This enables it to contribute to climate discourse, by exploring readers to the experiences of others, and disturbing their empathy. (p. 238)

In the above excerpt, novelists use realism to depict genuine events. They can dramatize to illustrate the effects of climate change on citizens, notably government inaction, collapse, and people's suffering. Realism can help these novelists capture readers' attention and elicit their empathy. Novelists can portray climate change as either the culmination or the starting point of the narrative. In the latter, novelists focus on the impact of natural disasters on individuals or society.

Additional styles of writing include allegory, symbolism, and imagery. Allegory is defined as "a story, play, poem, picture, or other work in which the characters and events represent particular qualities or ideas that relate to morals, religion, or politics" (Cambridge Dictionary). Simply put, allegory is a literary device where the characters and events symbolize deeper concepts, often pertaining to morality, religion, or politics. Furthermore, symbolism refers to "the use of symbols to represent a thing, idea or quality" (Macmillan English Dictionary, 2002, p. 1456). Additionally, writers might use poetic imagery, which involves figurative language, and reporting forms like letters to construct an "assemblage of personal narrative" (Goodbody and Johns-Putra, 2019, p. 243). Writers may use a variety of styles to expose climate change in their narratives.

## II. Materials:

- **Biography of Ian McEwan**

Ian McEwan was born in 1948. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Sussex and a Master of Arts degree from the University of East Anglia. He is a British novelist, screenwriter, and short story writer. He won several awards, such as the Somerset Maugham Award, the Whitbread Novel Award, and the Shakespeare Prize. His novels tackle several themes, like family dynamics, incest, and love affairs. He wrote several novels, such as *Atonement*, *Nutshell*, *Saturday*, *The Children Act*, and *Enduring Love*. *Solar* is his famous novel that delves into climate change and is considered climate change fiction.

- **Synopsis of *Solar***

Ian McEwan's *Solar* (2011) revolves around Michael Beard's family life and career. It is divided into three parts, each set in a different time period. In 2000, Beard was described as an intelligent and appealing intellectual and an attractive man. Nonetheless, his fifth marriage with Patrice is deteriorating. McEwan writes, "None of his marriages had lasted more than six years" (McEwan, 2011, p. 4). He struggles to maintain an enjoyable relationship due to her love affair with Rodney Tarpin. Besides, Michael Beard, a physics professor, won a Nobel Prize at a young age for his research on Einstein's theory of Conflation. He currently serves as the head of The Centre. He is unable to focus on work due to a lack of new ideas. He seems disinterested in climate change at this time. McEwan writes, "Beard was not wholly skeptical about climate change... he read about it, vaguely deplored it and expected governments to meet and take action" (McEwan, 2011, p. 15). One can attribute his lack of research to his preoccupation with his life with Patrice. Furthermore, he does not master the contemporary development of physics.

A new minister, Tony Blair, and his government invited researchers and professors to submit their proposals on sustainable energy. Beard is an unresponsive professor who transfers emails to Tony Blair. In *The Centre*, Michael Beard, Jock Braby, and postdoctoral researchers fail to design new models for sustainable energy. Throughout the days, the “Centre began to take shape... an in time the place resembled every other boring institute in the world” (McEwan, 2011, p. 19). Moreover, Tom Aldous is a new post-doctoral researcher who specializes in climate change and solar energy. He wants Professor Beard to approve his “Solar” concept. However, they do not work on the project because it is still in the conceptual stage and requires design work. Beard is sent to the North Pole to inspect climate change. Beard seems uninterested since he “had nothing beyond his Conflation” (McEwan, 2011, p. 50). He is an indolent person who fails to offer a solution to global warming. He is also a negligent professor who attends a conference while drunk.

Upon returning from the trip, he finds Tom Aldous sleeping on the sofa in his apartment. Aldous reveals his love for Patrice. He apologizes and inquires about the possibility of working with him. Owing to Beard’s disapproval, Aldous accidentally falls down from the stairs, breaks his neck, and dies. Hence, Beard brings some items and places them next to Aldous’s body, and then he leaves his apartment. He heads to *The Centre* and then remains at a coffee shop until Patrice contacts him. He feigns ignorance about Aldous’s death. In court, Patrice and Beard accuse Tarpin of the murder. Beard experiences a sense of relief because he escapes imprisonment.

In 2005, Beard expressed interest in Aldous’s solar power. He resides with Melissa following his resignation from *The Centre* because of his statements in front of journalists. He claimed that women do not specialize in physics and math due to male dominance in science. His speech became a scandal. Later on, he collaborates with Toby Hammer at the Institute of Physics. He is working on a new initiative with the objective of substituting coal and oil with solar energy. He

appropriates Aldous's initiative and designs the panels. During a conference, he argues that humans need to stop abusing nature as it causes climate change. Therefore, he intends to invest in solar energy in developing countries. In this sense, Beard says, "Solar will expand, and with your help" (McEwan, 2011, p. 154). He expects companies to allocate funds for the project.

In 2009, Beard and Hammer were still working on the project to save the planet while facing obstacles. McEwan (2011) writes, "The technical difficulties grew as the money declined" (p. 212). Beard realizes that Aldous failed to notice several parts of the project. Therefore, as they have already been working on it, Beard cannot rethink it. They attempt to preserve it and prevent its complete collapse. Barnard, Braby's lawyer, travels to the USA to notify Beard that Braby wants a share of the project because it is Aldous's idea. According to Barnard, some documents confirm that Beard's project is based on Aldous's documents. Barnard argues, "Theft of intellectual property on such scale is a serious matter, Mr. Beard" (McEwan, 2011, p. 268). Beard attempts to defend himself by claiming that he and Aldous were collaborating prior to Aldous's death. He significantly refuses any relationship with the Centre. Accidentally, Hammer discovers that Tarpin stole everything from the American station. Therefore, Hammer leaves the institution. More importantly, Beard will struggle with both theft and debt. Beard is hopeless, as he will not be able to confront the angry mob or save the world.

### **III. Analysis of Ian McEwan's *Solar***

#### **1. What makes Ian McEwan's *Solar* a climate change fiction?**

*Solar* (2011) delves into Michael Beard's life as a professor of physics. It is divided into three parts named "Part One 2000," "Part Two 2005," and "Part Three 2009." The novel is realistic because McEwan recounts the story's events in the present. The main focus of the novel is the

British government's fear of climate change and its attempts to find a solution to prevent any potential disaster. In this sense, McEwan writes,

some of the wild commentary... suggested the world was in 'peril', that humankind was drifting towards calamity when coastal cities would disappear under the waves, crops fail, and hundreds of millions of refugees surge from one country, one continent, to another, driven by drought, floods, famine, tempests, unceasing was for diminishing resources. (15-16)

This reflects the government's concern regarding climate change and its imminent consequences in the near future. Therefore, governments are concerned about climate change and global warming owing to the dangerous exploitation and abuse of nature. McEwan represents Tony Blair's desire to save the world from global warming and natural disasters. He encouraged scholars and researchers to submit their proposals on renewable energy in the late twentieth century. *Solar* describes the researchers' projects and ideas on renewable energy aimed at saving humanity. Likewise, it focuses on Aldous's and Beard's research and their failure to find a solution. McEwan attempts to expose the dangers of climate change and stress the urgency of taking action.

## **2. A Study of Climate Change in Ian McEwan's *Solar***

Some contemporary British novelists depict climate change in their novels. They may use a variety of literary techniques to tackle this phenomenon. Ian McEwan's *Solar* tackles climate change as its main theme, using satire and allegory to question the evil of some ideas. Satire is a literary technique used to criticize scientists' conduct and beliefs. This part investigates McEwan's reliance on satire and allegory to depict climate change.

Beard, a middle-aged man in the early twenty-first-century, struggles to find new ideas because of his fifth marriage's failure. In this context, McEwan writes, "None of his marriages lasted more than six years" (2011, p. 4). He develops an obsession with Patrice as she dates Tarpin.

Beard is shocked that Tarpin is an uneducated man. In this sense, McEwan says, “In this delusional state he was convinced that just as he was about to lose her he had the perfect wife” (2011, p. 6). Simply put, the protagonist is losing his wife owing to his long working hours at The Centre. As a result, he is depressed, hopeless, and lacks creativity. This suggests that he is unable to collaborate on innovative ideas with his colleagues. Beard is portrayed as an intellectual who is unable to offer any solutions to the world.

McEwan portrays Beard’s disinterest in research and climate change. Despite the government’s warning about the dangers of climate change, he fails to think of a solution. In this context, McEwan (2011) argues, “Beard was not wholly skeptical about climate change... he read about it, vaguely deplored it and expected to meet to take action” (p. 15). When Tony Blair asks researchers to submit their proposals, Beard does not provide any. Additionally, he is unwilling to answer the emails, which is why he forwards them to the ministry’s department. This reveals his dispassionateness, laziness, and carelessness about the issue. This occurs because he is abstracted by his obsession with Patrice, “insomnia and, above all, pathos” (McEwan, 2011, p. 18). This reflects contemporary scientists and researchers disinterest in global warming. The novel is a satire since it shows the inability of intellectuals to contribute new insights on the current phenomenon. Beard can be considered a symbol of contemporary culture that does not care about the earth.

Beard proposes a rubric that requires a working model, encouraging Jack Braby to ask post-doctoral researchers to create new models. These post-doctoral researchers are unproductive since they cannot generate anything beneficial for The Centre. According to McEwan, this centre looks like any “other boring institute in the world” (McEwan, 2011, p. 19). This depicts intellectual as incompetent and inefficient. For instance, Beard is represented as an unqualified researcher because he cannot comprehend contemporary physics and technology. In this context, McEwan

(2011) writes, “Some of the physics which they took for granted was unfamiliar to him. When he looked it up at home, he was irritated by the length and complexity of the calculations” (p. 21). Because he is middle-aged, he struggles to understand modern science and its progress. Consequently, he urges other intellectuals to design wind turbines. Beard is a parody of human weakness because of his inefficiency, lack of creativity, and problem-solving skills.

Tom Aldous, a post-doctoral researcher, joins The Centre owing to his passion for climate change and research. According to Aldous, solar energy is the best solution to global warming because governments can rely on clean energy. In this regard, McEwan (2011) writes, “Climate change was consuming Tom Aldous” (p. 36). He informs Beard about his project on artificial photosynthesis. McEwan ridicules Aldous’s concern and dedication because he works for Beard, who finds the job boring. Beard mocks Aldous’s “commitment” to solar energy and does not want to listen to his suggestion (Berndt, 2017, p. 93). The novel is a satire of both Aldous and Beard, who have different points of view concerning the job.

Beard travels to the North Pole to study the effects of global warming. He is neither “worried” nor “merry” about its impact on people and animals (McEwan, 2011, p. 65). He is described as a “shipwrecked man” because of his unfamiliarity with traveling in such circumstances (McEwan, 2011, p. 50). Put differently, Beard is an allegory for a “modern man” who is unsuccessful in raising people’s awareness (Goodbody and Johns-Putra, 2019, p. 241). Beard is also represented as an ignorant and incompetent intellectual and researcher who participates in social gatherings to drink alcohol with the guests. Hence, the absence of serious discussions renders these international gatherings absurd. In this context, Seyed Javad Habibi and Sara Soleimani Karbalei (2015) argue, “*Solar* reveals that such international gatherings are doomed to failure since their major incentive is selfishness and personal benefits” (p. 92). In other words, Beard is one of the scientists who

prioritizes his profits at the expense of climate change. His real motive is economic interest rather than saving humanity.

McEwan depicts Aldous's death following his fall and subsequent neck fracture. After resigning from The Centre, he starts working for a new laboratory. This facilitates his endeavor to work on Aldous's project. Beard peruses Aldous's file on solar energy and appropriates the initiative. He claims that he specializes in solar power. In a conference, he explains the dangerous effects of carbon dioxide on the environment and stresses the necessity of developing innovative solutions. He also explains his motive, which is to invest in solar energy in developing countries. In this context, he argues, "Solar will expand, and with your help, and with your and your clients' enrichment, it will expand faster. Basic science, the market and our grave situation will determine that this is the future-logic, not idealism, compels it" (McEwan, 2011, p. 154). McEwan's novel is a satire that displays Beard's lack of creativity. He plagiarizes a postdoctoral researcher's work and attempts to work on it. Moreover, when Melissa informs him about her pregnancy, he claims that he does not want to have children. He is convinced that "his mission" is to save the planet from global warming (McEwan, 2011, p. 173). Beard is considered immoral since he pretends to have an interest in research instead of family relationships. This denotes his inability to commit himself to anything that appears serious.

According to Habibi and Karabalei (2015), McEwan tackles the absence of morality and ethics through his description of Beard's plagiarism (p. 94). This denotes that Aldous is responsible for contributing and conceptualizing a new initiative, while Beard is in charge of designing the panels. Beard is a craftsman since his job is to create a generator. Habibi and Karabalei (2015) question his panels saying,

The designed solar panels operating on artificial photosynthesis require a hotter world to fight the disastrous global warming; such an interesting, thought-provoking situational irony symbolically implies that the two usually separate discourses of science and ethics can be fused together. (p. 97)

In other words, scientists should devise a solution to prevent global warming. These panels are problematic for the environment because they work only in hot places like the USA or undeveloped countries. Therefore, these panels will not be sufficient to put an end to climate change. McEwan humorously exhibits the lack of compatibility between “technological advancement and social progress” (Berndt, 2017, p. 87). Simply put, *Solar* allegorizes the British political scientist John Gray’s claim that science can have disruptive impacts on nature.

Despite his complaints about family relationships and child-rearing, Beard shows no interest in research. For example, he has an obsession with food. Since an early age, he has developed eating disorders. His mother used to feed him because he was her only offspring. She thought that an obese man would attract “beautiful women who can cook” (McEwan, 2011, p. 194). As a result, he is unable to manage his weight in his old age. Additionally, his love for food strongly influences his daily life and profession, as he prioritizes food before research. In this sense, Gregers Andersen (2020) argues, “Instead of being preoccupied with the collective issues that global warming raises for humanity, Beard is more occupied with his own personal issues – issues that are frequently caused by his inability to control his urges” (p. 24). In the same vein, Katrin Brendt portrays him as a comical character who focuses on “over-consumption” and illegal conduct (2017, p. 88). In other words, he favors food consumption and economic profits while disregarding climate change. According to Adeline Johns-Putra (2016), *Solar* is a satirical literary text that centers on “the flawed and unlikeable physicist Beard, who functions as an everyman (a representative of humankind) but represents us at our selfish worst” (pp. 269-70). This shows Beard’s selfishness since he stresses his own needs.

Beard and Toby Hammer faced a variety of challenges over the months to protect the project. Renovations and taxation have caused several delays. After the project's success, Braby seeks a share of the profits. When Beard refuses, Braby accuses him of theft. Braby orders Barnard to go to the United States to meet Beard about the matter. Barnard argues, "We have letters Aldous wrote to his father describing his ideas and his intentions of putting them before you in this file" (McEwan, 2011, p. 269). In other words, the lawyer intimidates them to expose their actions and sues them if they refuse to split profits. Researchers and scientists stress economic returns.

Once Barnard fails, Braby elects Tarpin to sabotage Beard's project in the US. Tarpin requests employment from Bear. He steals all the materials in Arizona after he is denied, leading to the project's collapse. In this sense, Toby argues, "Someone's taken a sledgehammer to the panels. They've gone down the rows and taken them all out... We've lost all the catalysts. Electronics. Everything" (McEwan, 2011, p. 277). In other words, Beard does not take any security measures because he does not anticipate any danger from Tarpin and Braby. As a result, Beard faces debts and enraged mobs following Toby's departure. This illustrates the protagonist's inability to think properly at the beginning of the project. Significantly, his reputation suffers irreversible damage because he is unable to confront the public or contribute to saving the world. Beard is considered an anti-hero because of his inability to save the world and humanity. McEwan represents Beard as an intellectual who is incapable of providing the world with a solution. In this vein, Katrin Brendt (2017) argues, "*Solar* presents science as comedy in order to mock human belief in salvation through technological advancement" (p. 98). McEwan demonstrates the insufficiency of science and technology to protect the planet. The novel also serves as a satire, highlighting the unrealistic nature of the solutions presented at the international summits (Habibi and Karabalei, 2015, p. 93). Hence, they do not have a sense of responsibility toward their society.

## Conclusion

To conclude, climate change fiction is a new literary genre that concentrates on climate change and global warming as its primary themes. McEwan's *Solar* is a realistic and satirical novel that delves into scientists' reluctance to provide a solution to climate change. At the beginning of the novel, Michael Beard is unable to provide original ideas that can solve the problem due to his failing marriage. He loses interest in science and climate change. Therefore, he plagiarizes Tom Aldous's solar energy project and falsely claims to have created panels that can save the planet. This project is doomed to failure by the end once everything is stolen. McEwan unveils the scientists' inability to save the planet and humanity from this phenomenon.

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### **Glossary:**

**A solar panel** is a device that uses photovoltaic cells that transmute sunlight into electric power.

**Global warming** is the long-term increase in average global temperatures over the last decades.

**Satire** is a literary medium of criticism that uses relying on humour, exaggeration, or mockery to highlight and denounce the foolishness or vices of people or current events.

**Solar energy:** one type of renewable energy produced by the sun is solar energy.

### **Tutorial Activities**

#### **First Tutorial**

**Activity One:** Why is Ian McEwan's *Solar* considered a climate change fiction? Discuss this idea with your classmates and your argument from the text. Discuss the setting of the novel and its relationship with climate change fiction.

**Activity Two:** Michael Beard, a physics professor, achieved early recognition by receiving a Nobel Prize at a young age for his research on Einstein's theory of Conflation. He currently serves as the head of The Centre. Beard travels to the North End to do research on the effects of global warming. Beard is unconcerned about the effects of climate change on mankind or animals. He

participates in a meeting with other individuals. Read page seventy-six and discuss the following points with your classmates.

- How does Ian McEwan's Beard?
- How does Michael Beard behave in the meeting?
- Does he seem interested in the meeting?

**Activity Three:** Read the second paragraph of page seventy-seven carefully. Comment on Beard's behavior during the meeting. Why is not he interested in climate change? How is he portrayed? Illustrate from the passage.

**Activity Four:** Examine the elements presented on pages seventy-eight and seventy-nine. Analyze Beard's lack of concentration on climate change at the conference. Can Beard provide a solution to climate change? Does it provide a genuine solution for climate change? Discuss with reference to the presented pages.

Since the setting of the first part is the 1990s, is climate change a significant preoccupation for scientists? How does McEwan portray of the expected outcomes of climate change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Illustrate from page seventy-nine.

**Assignment:** Page seventy-eight revolves around missing helmets in the North Pole. Write a well-developed essay to scrutinize McEwan's use of satire to depict intellectuals. Illustrate from the given passage to support your argument.

## **Second Tutorial**

In the second tutorial, the students are expected to read some pages from the middle of the novel. They have to explore Michael Beard's meeting where he attempts to convince people to

invest in solar energy. They have to focus on McEwan's description of scientists in international summits.

**Activity One:** Michael Beard commits plagiarism by appropriating Tom Aldous's project on solar energy following Aldous's death. Beard showcases the project in an international summit and extends invitations to potential investors. Read the content of the pages spanning from one hundred forty-eight to one hundred fifty and examine the following points with your peers.

- Does solar energy serve an effective initiative to reduce climate change and save the planet?
- What are the primary areas of interest for the scientists?
- Is Michael Beard genuinely an intellectual?

**Activity Two:** Read page one hundred fifty-two and one hundred fifty-three and investigate the following points. What strategies does Beard employ to persuade the audience to make investments? How does he discuss human behavior and its impact on climate change? Engage in a discussion around this idea with your classmates.

**Activity Three:** Read page one hundred fifty-four which revolves around Beard's solar project. Examine McEwan's use of irony in the first two passages. Illustrate to support your argument.

### **Tutorial Three**

**Activity One:** Read the last pages of McEwan's *Solar*. Did Beard's initiative save humanity from the effects of climate change? Examine McEwan's portrayal of Michael Beard as an anti-hero in the novel. Analyze McEwan's use of satire to portray Beard. Illustrate from the given pages to support your argument.

**Activity Two:** McEwan relies on both satire and allegory in *Solar*. Discuss McEwan's use of literary techniques to discuss climate change with your classmates. Then, write a short essay on this.

**Activity:**

Climate change fiction is a subfield of ecocriticism that emerged in the twenty-first century. It aims to tackle climate change and global warming relying on a specific genre, setting and style of writing. How does Ian McEwan focus on climate change depending on a realistic setting and a specific mode of writing in *Solar*?

## Final Exam of Contemporary British Fiction

Answer **one** of the following questions

### Question One

“When Miss Cutmore left South London for Bath, Jamila got grudging and started to hate Miss Cutmore for forgetting that she was Indian. Jamila thought Miss Cutmore really wanted to eradicate everything that was foreign in her... She drove me mad by saying Miss Cutmore had colonized her... Yeah, sometimes we were French, Jammie and I, and other times we went black American. The thing was, we were supposed to be English, but to the English we were always wogs and nigs and Pakis and the rest of it”

Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia*

Discuss

### Question Two

Dystopian literature is a literary genre that provides the reader with an anti-utopian image. Numerous people are manipulated and discriminated by a few individuals. Therefore, Dystopian literature mirrors both discrimination and inequality in a futuristic world.

Discuss with reference to a literary text.

## Answers

**Answer One:** Belonging and Racism in Hanif Kureidhi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*

Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* revolves around Anglo-Indian characters' struggles in Britain. It describes the Amirs' and their friends' daily lives. The first part of the quote emphasizes Jamila's feelings towards Miss Cutmore since she believes that her teacher is racist. The second part deals with racism and a lack of acceptance. This essay investigates the representation of racism in Kureishi's novel.

Because of their origins, Anglo-Indian characters face different difficulties in England. Jamila sees Miss Cutmore as a racist instructor who refuses to accept her Indian heritage. In this vein, Miss Cutmore "wanted to eradicate everything that was foreign in her." Miss Cutmore's non-acceptance of Anglo-Indian immigrants suggests that England was not a cosmopolitan country. Moreover, Jamila is embarrassed because she perceives that Miss Cutmore intends to colonize her. This indicates that Miss Cutmore does not embrace Jamila's Indianness. Anglo-Indians experience bullying as shown by derogatory terms such as "French," "black," "wogs," "nigs," and "Pakis." These expressions suggest that English people emphasize differences. Anglo-Indians are subject to racism because of their ethnicity. Hence, despite being English citizens, they are not accepted in the UK.

Racism is a prevalent theme in the novel. Jamila, Anwar, and Auntie Jeeta encounter racism in the suburban area. Jamila's family was repeatedly targeted by white English groups. These groups pose a threat because they physically assault Asians, set fire to objects, and linger in the area to intimidate them. Karim writes, "The lives of Anwar and Jeeta and Jamila were pervaded by fear of violence... Many of Jamila's attitudes were inspired by the possibility that a white group

might kill one of us one day” (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 54). Jamila and her parents fear that one day they will be killed.

Karim, the protagonist, encounters racism and a lack of acceptability in both suburban and urban settings. At Haroon Amir’s performance at Eva’s house, a guest displayed discriminatory behavior by mocking Karim and inquiring if they owned camels or carpets to travel. In this sense, he says, “why has our Eva brought this brown Indian here?... And has he got his camel parked outside?” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 10). Besides, Eva views Karim as exotic and regards him as the ‘other’ or inferior. Karim feels exhausted in the suburbs due to the lack of purpose in his life. He articulates his aspirations for London. Shadwell is a racist theatre producer who employs Karim. Shadwell assumes that Karim is suitable for Mowgli’s this is why he humiliates him. For example, he argues, “You’re just right for him... In fact, you are Mowgli. You’re dark-skinned, you’re small and wiry, and you’ll be sweet but wholesome in the costume. Not too pornographic, I hope. Certain critics will go for you. Oh yes. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!” (Ishiguro, 1990, p. 139). Shadwell is a racist British character who belittles his actor on different occasions. Hence, racism was the fate of Anglo-Indians in the 1970s.

To conclude, *The Buddha of Suburbia* focuses on British racism. British citizens do not accept Anglo-Indians. Jamila faces racism both at school and in the suburbs. She assumes that Miss Cutmore is a racist instructor. Her family has faced multiple assaults from British citizens. Karim Amir is another character who grapples with racism in both the suburb and the city.

**Answer Two:** Inequality and discrimination in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

The twentieth century marked the emergence of dystopian literature as a means to describe societal concerns. It depicts a nightmarish life resulting from technological progress. Dystopia is a fictitious world characterized by discrimination and control imposed by a bureaucratic, technological, or totalitarian regime. Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* explores how technology affects clones in a society marked by inequality and discrimination. It depicts how Hailsham School influences and shapes clones' destiny. This essay investigates how clones are dehumanized by their guardians.

*Never Let Me Go* revolves around three characters: Kathy H., Ruth and Tommy D. The reader can identify these clones by their initial name, with or without an additional letter. They do not have full names because of their parents' absence. Therefore, they are devoid of any origins. This impacts their identity, as they are unable to define themselves. More importantly, the novel does not identify their race, and ethnicity. It seems that they are clones who were created to reside at Hailsham School. Technological development negatively affects these clones by depriving them of an identity similar to that of ordinary people.

The clones must adhere to their guardians' regulations. They spend their entire day studying, drawing, or preparing for an art gallery. Hailsham owners depend on guardians like Miss Lucy, Miss Emily, and Madame to oversee the students. Furthermore, the guardians divide the information about the clones into different segments to guarantee complete control. They understand they are special children, prohibited from smoking, drinking, or interacting with the outside world. They typically need to consult a doctor to maintain their physical well-being before

they can donate their organs. It is evident that Hailsham students do not have human rights. They are dehumanized and discriminated against by their creators.

The clones transition into caregivers, who care for several donors for a few years. Kathy is one of the few clones who served as a caregiver for nearly twelve years. In addition, they are required to donate their organs to ordinary people. Thus, clones do not have a promising future, while ordinary humans become immortal. Organ donation can be a discriminatory act since clones die at a young age. Moreover, clones do not have the right to get a deferred donation and establish a family. This suggests that they are prevented from resting, marrying, and having children. Kathy reflects on the dehumanization and inequity they have endured since their childhood.

To conclude, Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* explores the clones' experiences due to technological advancement. They struggle with discrimination and inequity in various stages. Having only a first name robs them of their identity. Furthermore, because they are experiments, they do not have the right to act as they wish. Additionally, their destiny is to serve as caregivers and donors. These clones may refer to victims of the late twentieth century or the rise of the twenty-first century.

## Appendix

### Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*

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1

My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don't care — Englishman I am (though not proud of it), from the South London suburbs and going somewhere. Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored. Or perhaps it was being brought up in the suburbs that did it. Anyway, why search the inner room when it's enough to say that I was looking for trouble, any kind of movement, action and sexual interest I could find, because things were so gloomy, so slow and heavy, in our family, I don't know why. Quite frankly, it was all getting me down and I was ready for anything.

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- 1 -

In my family nervous breakdowns were as exotic as New Orleans. I had no idea what they entailed, but Charlie's dad had seemed the nervous type to me. The only time he came to our house he sat on his own in the kitchen crying as he mended Dad's fountain pen, while in the living room Eva said she had to buy a motorcycle. This made Mum yawn, I remember.

Now Dad was sitting on the floor. The talk was of music and books, of names like Dvorak, Krishnamurti and Eclectic. Looking at them closely, I reckoned that the men were in advertising or design or almost artistic jobs like that. Charlie's dad designed advertisements. But the man in the black corduroy suit I couldn't work out at all. Whoever these people were, there was a terrific amount of showing off going on — more in this room than in the whole of the rest of southern England put together.

At home Dad would have laughed at all this. But now, in the thick of it, he looked as if he was having the highest time of his whole life. He led the discussion, talking loudly, interrupting people and touching whoever was nearest. The men and women — except for Corduroy Suit — were slowly gathering in a circle around him on the floor. Why did he save sullenness and resentful grunting for us?

I noticed that the man sitting near me turned to the man next to him and indicated my father, who was now in full flow about the importance of attaining an empty mind to a woman who was wearing only a man's long shirt and black tights. The woman was nodding encouragingly at Dad. The man said in a loud whisper to his friend, 'Why has our Eva brought this brown Indian here? Aren't we going to get pissed?'

'He's going to give us a demonstration of the mystic arts!'

'And has he got his camel parked outside?'

'No, he came on a magic carpet.'

'Cyril Lord or Debenhams?'

I gave the man a sharp kick in the kidney. He looked up.

'Come up to my pad, Karim,' said Charlie, to my relief.

But before we could get out Eva turned off the standard lamp. Over the one remaining light she draped a large diaphanous neckscarf, leaving the room illuminated only by a pink glow. Her movements had become balletic. One by one people fell silent. Eva smiled at everyone.

'So why don't we relax?' she said. They nodded their agreement. The woman in the shirt said, 'So why don't we?' 'Yes, yes,' someone else said. One man flapped his hands like loose gloves and opened his mouth as wide as he could, and thrust his tongue out, popping his eyes like a gargoyle.

Eva turned to my father and bowed to him, Japanese fashion. 'My good and deep friend Haroon here, he will show us the Way. The Path.'

'Jesus fucking Christ,' I whispered to Charlie, remembering how Dad couldn't even find his way to Beckenham.

'Watch, watch closely,' murmured Charlie, squatting down.

Dad sat down at the end of the room. Everyone looked keenly and expectantly at him, though the two men near me glanced at each other as if they wanted to laugh. Dad spoke slowly and with confidence. The nervousness he'd shown earlier appeared to have disappeared. He seemed to know he had their attention and that they'd do as he asked. I was sure he'd never done anything like this before. He was going to wing it.

'The things that are going to happen to you this evening are going to do you a lot of good. They may even change you a little, or make you want to change, in order to reach your full potential as human beings. But there is one thing you must not do. You must not resist. If you resist, it will be like driving a car with the handbrake on.'

He paused. Their eyes were on him.

'We'll do some floor work. Please sit with your legs apart.'

They parted their legs.

'Raise your arms.'

They raised their arms.

'Now, breathing out, stretch down to your right foot.'

After some basic yoga positions he had them lying on their backs. To his soft commands they were relaxing their fingers one by one, then their wrists, toes, ankles, foreheads and, peculiarly, their ears. Meanwhile Dad wasted no time in removing his shoes and socks, and then — I should have guessed it — his shirt and clean string vest. He padded around the circle of dreamers, lifting a loose arm here, a leg there, testing them for tension. Eva, also lying on her back, had one naughty, slowly enlarging eye open. Had she ever seen such a dark, hard, hairy chest before? When Dad floated past she touched his foot with her hand.

The man in black corduroy couldn't relax at all: he lay there like a bundle of sticks with his legs crossed, a burning cigarette in his fingers, gazing reflectively at the ceiling.

I hissed to Charlie, 'Let's get out of here before we're hypnotized like these idiots!'

'Isn't it just fascinating?'

On the upstairs landing of the house was a ladder which led up to Charlie's attic. 'Please remove your watch,' he said. 'In my domain time isn't a factor.' So I put my watch on the floor and climbed the ladder to the attic, which stretched out across the top of the house. Charlie had the whole space to himself. Mandalas and long-haired heads were painted on the sloping walls and low ceiling. His drum-kit stood in the centre of the floor. His four guitars — two acoustic and two Stratocasters — leaned against the wall in a line. Big cushions were flung about. There were piles of records and the four Beatles in their Sergeant Pepper period were on the wall like gods.

'Heard anything good lately?' he asked, lighting a candle.

'Yeah.'

After the calm and silence of the living room my voice sounded absurdly loud. 'The new Stones album. I played it at music society today and the lads went crazy. They threw off their jackets and ties and danced. I was on top of my desk! It was like some weird pagan ritual. You shoulda bin there, man.'

I knew immediately from the look on Charlie's face that I'd been an animal, a philistine, a child. Charlie threw his shoulder-length hair back, looked at me tolerantly for some time, and then smiled.

'I think it's time you bathed your ears in something really nourishing, Karim.'

He put on a record by the Pink Floyd called *Ummagumma*. I forced myself to listen while Charlie sat opposite me and rolled a joint, sprinkling a dried leaf over the tobacco.

'Your father. He's the best. He's wise. D'you do that meditation stuff every morning?'

I nodded. A nod can't be a lie, right?

'And chanting, too?'

'Not chanting every day, no.'

I thought of the morning in our place: Dad running around the kitchen looking for olive oil to put on his hair; my brother and I wrestling over the *Daily Mirror*; my mother complaining about having to go to work in the shoe shop.

Charlie handed me the joint. I pulled on it and handed it back, managing to sprinkle ash down the front of my shirt and burn a small hole in it. I was so excited and dizzy I stood up immediately.

'What's going down?'

'I have to go to the bog!'

I flew down the attic ladder. In the Kays' bathroom there were framed theatre posters for Genet plays. There were bamboo and parchment scrolls with tubby Orientals copulating on them. There was a bidet. As I sat there with my trousers down, taking it all in, I had an extraordinary revelation. I could see my life clearly for the first time: the future and what I wanted to do. I wanted to live always this intensely: mysticism, alcohol, sexual promise, clever people and drugs. I hadn't come upon it all like this before, and now I wanted nothing else. The door to the future had opened: I could see which way to go.

And Charlie? My love for him was unusual as love goes: it was not generous. I admired him more than anyone but I didn't wish him well. It was that I preferred him to me and wanted to be him. I coveted his talents, face, style. I wanted to wake up with them all transferred to me.

I stood in the upstairs hall. The house was silent except for the distant sound of 'A Saucerful of Secrets' coming from the top of the house. Someone was burning incense. I crept down the stairs to the ground floor. The living-room door was open. I peered round it into the dimly lit room. The advertising men and their wives were sitting up, cross-legged, straight-backed, eyes closed, breathing regularly and deeply. The Corduroy Suit was sitting in a chair with his back to everyone, reading and smoking. Neither Eva nor Dad were in the room. Where could they have gone?

I left the hypnotized Buddhas and went through the house and into the kitchen. The back door was wide open. I stepped out into the darkness. It was a warm evening; the moon was full.

I got down on my knees. I knew this was the thing to do — I'd gone highly intuitive since Dad's display. I crawled across the patio. They must have had a barbecue out there recently, because razor-sharp charcoal shards jabbed into my

knees, but I reached the edge of the lawn without serious injury. I could see vaguely that at the end of the lawn there was a garden bench. As I crawled closer there was enough moonlight for me to see that Eva was on the bench. She was pulling her kaftan up over her head. If I strained my eyes I could see her chest. And I did strain; I strained until my eyeballs went dry in their sockets. Eventually I knew I was right. Eva had only one breast. Where the other traditionally was, there was nothing, so far as I could see.

Beneath all this hair and flesh, and virtually concealed from me, was my father. I knew it was Daddio because he was crying out across the Beckenham gardens, with little concern for the neighbours, 'Oh God, oh my God, oh my God,' Was I conceived like this, I wondered, in the suburban night air, to the wailing of Christian curses from the mouth of a renegade Muslim masquerading as a Buddhist?

With a harsh crack, Eva slapped her hand over my father's mouth. This was a touch peremptory, I thought, and I almost jerked forward to object. But, my God, could Eva bounce! Head back, eyes to stars, kicking up from the grass like a footballer, her hair flying. But what of the crushing weight on Dad's arse? Surely the impress of the bench would remain for days seared into his poor buttocks, like grill marks on steak?

Eva released her hand from his mouth. He started to laugh. The happy fucker laughed and laughed. It was the exhilaration of someone I didn't know, full of greedy pleasure and self. It brought me all the way down.

I hobbled away. In the kitchen I poured myself a glass of Scotch and threw it down my throat. Corduroy Suit was standing in the corner of the kitchen. His eyes were twitching badly. He stuck out his hand. 'Shadwell,' he said.

Charlie was lying on his back on the attic floor. I took the joint from him, removed my boots and lay down.

'Come and lie beside me,' he said. 'Closer.' He put his hand on my arm. 'Now, you're not to take this badly.'

'No, never, whatever it is, Charlie.'

'You've got to wear less.'

'Wear less, Charlie?'

'Dress less. Yes.'

Under the influence of Angela Davis, Jamila had started exercising every day, learning karate and judo, getting up early to stretch and run and do press-ups. She bowled along like a dream, Jamila; she could have run on snow and left no footprints. She was preparing for the guerrilla war she knew would be necessary when the whites finally turned on the blacks and Asians and tried to force us into gas chambers or push us into leaky boats.

This wasn't as ludicrous as it sounded. The area in which Jamila lived was closer to London than our suburbs, and far poorer. It was full of neo-fascist groups, thugs who had their own pubs and clubs and shops. On Saturdays they'd be out in the High Street selling their newspapers and pamphlets. They also operated outside the schools and colleges and football grounds, like Millwall and Crystal Palace. At night they roamed the streets, beating Asians and shoving shit and burning rags through their letter-boxes. Frequently the mean, white, hating faces had public meetings and the Union Jacks were paraded through the streets, protected by the police. There was no evidence that these people would go away — no evidence that their power would diminish rather than increase. The lives of Anwar and Jeeta and Jamila were pervaded by fear of violence. I'm sure it was something they thought about every day. Jeeta kept buckets of water around her bed in case the shop was fire-bombed in the night. Many of Jamila's attitudes were inspired by the possibility that a white group might kill one of us one day.

Jamila tried to recruit me to her cadre for training but I couldn't get up in the morning. 'Why do we have to start training at eight?' I whined.

'Cuba wasn't won by getting up late, was it? Fidel and Che didn't get up at two in the afternoon, did they? They didn't even have time to shave!'

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time for my paper-round, followed by school. And school was another thing I'd had enough of.

Recently I'd been punched and kicked to the ground by a teacher because I called him a queer. This teacher was always making me sit on his knee, and when he asked me questions like 'What is the square root of five thousand six hundred and seventy-eight and a half?', which I couldn't answer, he tickled me. Very educational. I was sick too of being affectionately called Shitface and Curry face, and of coming home covered in spit and snot and chalk and wood-shavings. We did a lot of woodwork at our school, and the other kids liked to lock me and my friends in the storeroom and have us chant 'Manchester United, Manchester United, we are the boot boys' as they held chisels to our throats and cut off our shoelaces. We did a lot of woodwork at the school because they didn't think we could deal with books. One day the woodwork teacher had a heart attack right in front of our eyes as one of the lads put another kid's prick in a vice and started to turn the handle. Fuck you, Charles Dickens, nothing's changed. One kid tried to brand my arm with a red-hot lump of metal. Someone else pissed over my shoes, and all my Dad thought about was me becoming a doctor. What world was he living in? Every day I considered myself lucky to get home from school without serious injury.

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In bed before I went to sleep I fantasized about London and what I'd do there when the city belonged to me. There was a sound that London had. It was, I'm afraid, people in Hyde Park playing bongos with their hands; there was also the keyboard on the Doors's 'Light My Fire'. There were kids dressed in velvet cloaks who lived free lives; there were thousands of black people everywhere, so I wouldn't feel exposed; there were bookshops with racks of magazines printed without capital letters or the bourgeois disturbance of full stops; there were shops selling all the records you could desire; there were parties where girls and boys you didn't know took you upstairs and fucked you; there were all the drugs you could use. You see, I didn't ask much of life; this was the extent of my longing. But at least my goals were clear and I knew what I wanted. I was twenty. I was ready for anything.

And he went and sat down again, waiting for me to begin. I felt a complete wanker, waving at that wasp. But I wanted the part, whatever the part was. I couldn't face going back to that flat in West Kensington not knowing what to do with my life and having to be pleasant, and not being respected by anyone.

When I'd done with Shepard and the wasp, Shadwell put his arm round me. 'Well done! You deserve a coffee. Come on.'

He took me to a lorry driver's cafe next door. I felt elated, especially when he said, 'I'm looking for an actor just like you.'

My head rang with cheering bells. We sat down with our coffee. Shadwell put his elbow out half-way across the table in a puddle of tea, resting his cheek on the palm of his hand, and stared at me.

'Really?' I said enthusiastically. 'An actor like me in what way?'

'An actor who'll fit the part.'

'What part?' I asked.

He looked at me impatiently. The part in the book.'

I could be very direct at times. 'What book?'

The book I asked you to read, Karim.'

'But you didn't.'

'I told Eva to tell you.'

'But Eva didn't tell me anything. I would have remembered.'

'Oh Christ. Oh God, I'm going mad. Karim, what the hell is that woman playing at?' And he held his head in his hands.

'Don't ask me,' I said. 'At least tell me what the book is. Maybe I can buy it today.'

'Stop being so rational,' he said. 'It's The Jungle Book. Kipling. You know it, of course.'

'Yeah, I've seen the film.'

'I'm sure.'

He could be a snooty bastard, old Shadwell, that was for sure. But I was going to keep myself under control whatever he said. Then his attitude changed completely. Instead of talking about the job he said some words to me in Punjabi or Urdu and looked as if he wanted to get into a big conversation about Ray or Tagore or something. To tell the truth, when he spoke it sounded like he was gargling.

'Well?' he said. He rattled off some more words. 'You don't understand?'

'No, not really.'

What could I say? I couldn't win. I knew he'd hate me for it.

'Your own language!'

'Yeah, well, I get a bit. The dirty words. I know when I'm being called a camel's rectum.'

'Of course. But your father speaks, doesn't he? He must do.'

Of course he speaks, I felt like saying. He speaks out of his mouth, unlike you, you fucking cunt bastard shithead.

'Yes, but not to me,' I said. 'It would be stupid. We wouldn't know what he was on about. Things are difficult enough as it is.'

Shadwell persisted. There seemed no way he was ever going to get off this subject.

'You've never been there, I suppose.'

'Where?'

Why was he being so bloody aggressive about it?

'You know where. Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, Goa, the Punjab. You've never had that dust in your nostrils?'

'Never in my nostrils, no.'

'You must go,' he said, as if nobody had ever been there but him.

'I will, OK?'

'Yes, take a rucksack and see India, if it's the last thing you do in your life.'

'Right, Mr Shadwell.'

He lived in his own mind, he really did. He shook his head then and did a series of short barks in his throat. This was him laughing, I was certain. 'Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!' he went. He said, 'What a breed of people two hundred years of imperialism has given birth to. If the pioneers from the East India Company could see you. What puzzlement there'd be. Everyone looks at you, I'm sure, and thinks: an Indian boy, how exotic, how interesting, what stories of aunties and elephants we'll hear now from him. And you're from Orpington.'

'Yeah.'

'Oh God, what a strange world. The immigrant is the Everyman of the twentieth century. Yes?'

'Mr Shadwell — ' I started.

‘Eva can be a very difficult woman, you know.’

‘Yeah?’

I breathed more easily now he’d changed the subject. ‘The best women always are,’ he went on. ‘But she didn’t give you the book. She’s trying to protect you from your destiny, which is to be a half-caste in England. That must be complicated for you to accept — belonging nowhere, wanted nowhere. Racism. Do you find it difficult? Please tell me.’

He looked at me.

‘I don’t know,’ I said defensively. ‘Let’s talk about acting.’

‘Don’t you know?’ he persisted. ‘Don’t you really?’

I couldn’t answer his questions. I could barely speak at all; the muscles in my face seemed to have gone rigid. I was shaking with embarrassment that he could talk to me in this way at all, as if he knew me, as if he had the right to question me. Fortunately he didn’t wait for any reply.

He said, ‘When I saw more of Eva than I do now, she was often unstable. Highly strung, we call it. Yes? She’s been around, Eva, and she’s seen a lot. One morning we woke up in Tangier, where I was visiting Paul Bowles — a famous homosexual writer — and she was suffocating. All her hair had dropped out in the night and she was choking on it.’

I just looked at him.

‘Incredible, eh?’

‘Incredible. It must have been psychological.’ And I almost added that my hair would probably fall out if I had to spend too much time with him.

‘But I don’t want to talk about the past,’ I said.

‘Don’t you?’

This stuff about him and Eva was really making me uncomfortable. I didn’t want to know about it.

‘OK,’ he said at last. I breathed a sigh of relief. ‘Happy with your father, is she?’

Christ, he was a nippy little questioner. He could have slain people with his questioning, except that he never listened to the answers. He didn’t want answers but only the pleasure of his own voice.

‘Let’s hope it lasts, eh?’ he said. ‘Sceptical, eh?’

I shrugged. But now I had something to say. Off I went.

'I was in the Cubs. I remember it well. *The Jungle Book* is Baloo and Bagheera and all that, isn't it?'

'Correct. Ten out of ten. And?'

'And?'

'And Mowgli.'

'Oh yes, Mowgli.'

Shadwell searched my face for comment, a flinch or little sneer perhaps. 'You're just right for him,' he continued. 'In fact, you are Mowgli. You're dark-skinned, you're small and wiry, and you'll be sweet but wholesome in the costume. Not too pornographic, I hope. Certain critics will go for you. Oh yes. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!'

He jumped up as two young women carrying scripts came into the cafe. Shadwell embraced them, and they kissed him, apparently without revulsion. They talked to him with respect. This was my first indication of how desperate actors can get.

'I've found my Mowgli,' Shadwell told them, pointing down at me. 'I've found my little Mowgli at last. An unknown actor, just right and ready to break through.'

'Hallo,' one of the women said to me. 'I'm Roberta,' said the other.

'Hallo,' I said.

'Isn't he terrific?' Shadwell said.

The two women examined me. I was just perfect. I'd done it. I'd got a job.

competent as a little orang-utan on the scaffolding, I saw that our conflicts hadn't ended. Shadwell took me aside and said, 'A word about the accent, Karim. I think it should be an authentic accent/

'What d'you mean authentic?'

'Where was our Mowgli born?'

'India.'

'Yes. Not Orpington. What accent do they have in India?'

'Indian accents.'

'Ten out of ten.'

'No, Jeremy. Please, no.'

'Karim, you have been cast for authenticity and not for experience.'

I could hardly believe it. Even when I did believe it we discussed it several times, but he wouldn't change his mind.

'Just try it,' he kept saying as we went outside the rehearsal room to argue.

'You're very conservative, Karim. Try it until you feel comfortable as a Bengali. You're supposed to be an actor, but I suspect you may just be an exhibitionist.'

'Jeremy, help me, I can't do this.'

He shook his head. I swear, my eyes were melting.

A few days passed without the accent being mentioned again. During this time Shadwell had me concentrate on the animal noises I was to make between the dialogue, so that when, for instance, I was talking to Kaa the slithering snake, who saves Mowgli's life, I had to hiss. Terry and I had to hiss together. When hissing, the thought of Dad lecturing to Ted and Jean at Carl and Marianne's was an aid. Being a human zoo was acceptable, provided the Indian accent was off the menu.

Next time it was mentioned the entire cast was present.

'Now do the accent,' Shadwell suddenly said. 'I trust you've been rehearsing at home.'

'Jeremy,' I pleaded. 'It's a political matter to me.'

He looked at me violently. The cast watched me too, most of them sympathetically. One of them, Boyd, had done EST and assertion-training, and primal therapy, and liked to hurl chairs across the room as an expression of spontaneous feeling. I wondered if he might not have some spontaneous feeling in my defence. But he said nothing. I looked towards Terry. As an active

Trotskyite he encouraged me to speak of the prejudice and abuse I'd faced being the son of an Indian. In the evenings we talked of inequality, imperialism, white supremacy, and whether sexual experimentation was merely bourgeois indulgence or a contribution to the dissolution of established society. But now, like the others, Terry said nothing but stood there in his tracksuit waiting to slide hissing across the floor once more. I thought: You prefer generalizations like 'after the revolution the workers will wake up filled with unbelievable joy' to standing up to fascists like Shadwell.

Shadwell spoke sternly. 'Karim, this is a talented and expensive group of highly trained actors. They are ready to work, hungry to act, full of love for their humble craft, keen, eager and centred. But you, only you I am afraid, yes, only you out of everyone here, are holding back the entire production. Are you going to make the appropriate concession this experienced director requires from you?'

I wanted to run out of the room, back to South London, where I belonged, out of which I had wrongly and arrogantly stepped. I hated Shadwell and everyone in the cast.

'Yes,' I said to Shadwell.

That night in the pub I didn't sit at the same table as the others but moved into the other bar with my pint and newspaper. I despised the other actors for not sticking up for me, and for sniggering at the accent when I finally did it. Terry left the group he was sitting with and joined me.

'Come on,' he said, 'have another drink. Don't take it so badly, it's always crap for actors.' 'Crap for actors' was his favourite expression. Everything always seemed to be crap for actors and you just had to put up with it — while the present corruption continued.

I asked if people like Shitwell, as we called him among other things, would shove me around after the revolution; whether there'd be theatre directors at all or whether we'd all get a turn at telling the others where to stand and what to wear. Terry didn't appear to have thought about this before and he puzzled over it, staring into his bitter and a bag of smoky bacon crisps.

'There will be theatre directors,' he said eventually. 'I think. But they'll be elected by the cast. If they are a pain the cast will throw them out and they'll return to the factory they came from.'

## The Clash of generations

P18

We looked at her in surprise for a moment, before carrying on with our food. Mum did the washing-up as usual and no one helped her. After tea we all dispersed as soon as possible. My brother Amar, four years younger than me, called himself Allie to avoid racial trouble. He always went to bed as early as he could, taking with him fashion magazines like *Vogue*, *Harper's and Queen*, and anything European he could lay his hands on. In bed he wore a tiny pair of red silk pyjamas, a smoking jacket he got at a jumble sale, and his hairnet. 'What's wrong with looking good?' he'd say, going upstairs. In the evenings I often went to the park to sit in the piss-stinking shed and smoke with the other boys who'd escaped from home.

Dad had firm ideas about the division of labour between men and women. Both my parents worked: Mum had got a job in a shoe shop in the High Street to finance Allie, who had decided to become a ballet dancer and had to go to an expensive private school. But Mum did all the housework and the cooking. At lunchtime she shopped, and every evening she prepared the meal. After this she watched television until ten-thirty. The TV was her only area of absolute authority. The unspoken rule of the house was that she always watched what she wanted; if any of us wanted to watch anything else, we had no chance at all. With her last energy of the day she'd throw such a fit of anger, self-pity and frustration that no one dared interfere with her. She'd die for *Steptoe and Son*, *Candid Camera* and *The Fugitive*.

If there were only repeats or political programmes on TV, she liked to draw. Her hand flew: she'd been to art school. She had drawn us, our heads, three to a page, for years. Three selfish men, she called us. She said she'd never liked men because men were torturers. It wasn't women who turned on the gas at Auschwitz, according to her. Or bombed Vietnam. During this time of Dad's silence she drew a lot, putting her pad away behind the chair, with her knitting, her childhood diary of the war ('Air-raid tonight') and her Catherine Cookson novels. I'd often tried to oppress her into reading proper books like *Tender is the Night* and *The Dharma Bums*, but she always said the print was too small.

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He was certainly exotic, probably the only man in southern England at that moment (apart, possibly, from George Harrison) wearing a red and gold waistcoat and Indian pyjamas. He was also graceful, a front-room Nureyev beside the other pasty-faced Arbuckles with their tight drip-dry shirts glued to their guts and John Collier grey trousers with the crotch all sagging and creased. Perhaps Daddio really was a magician, having transformed himself by the bootlaces (as he put it) from being an Indian in the Civil Service who was always cleaning his teeth with Monkey Brand black toothpowder manufactured by Nogi & Co. of Bombay, into the wise adviser he now appeared to be. Sexy

Sadie! Now he was the centre of the room. If they could see him in Whitehall!  
He was talking to Eva, and she had casually laid her hand on his arm. The gesture cried out. Yes, it shouted, we are together, we touch each other without inhibition in front of strangers. Confused, I turned away, to the matter of Helen.

....

Eva and Marianne were starting to organize the room. The candle industry was stimulated, Venetian blinds were lowered, Indian sandalwood stinkers were ignited and put in flowerpots,

and a small carpet was put down for the Buddha of suburbia to fly on. Eva bowed to him and handed him a daffodil. God smiled at people recognized from last time. He seemed confident and calm, easier than before, doing less and allowing the admirers to illuminate him with the respect that Eva must have been encouraging in her friends.

Then Uncle Ted and Auntie Jean walked in.

**P 85**

I could see the erosion in the foundations of our family every day. Every day when Dad came home from work he went into the bedroom and didn't come out. Recently he'd encouraged Allie and me to talk to him. We sat in there with him and told him about school. I suspected he liked these ink-stained accounts because, while our voices filled the room like smoke, he could lie back concealed in its swathes and think of Eva. Or we sat with Mum and watched television, braving her constant irritation and sighs of self-pity. And all the time, like pipes dripping, weakening and preparing to burst in the attic, around the house hearts were slowly breaking while nothing was being said.

In some ways it was worse for little Allie, as he had no facts about anything. For him the house was filled with suffering and fluffed attempts to pretend that suffering didn't exist. But no one talked to him. No one said, Mum and Dad are unhappy together. He must have been more confused than any of us; or perhaps his ignorance prevented him from grasping just how bad things were. Whatever was happening at this time, we were all isolated from each other.

**260:**

'I have lived in the West for most of my life, and I will die here, yet I remain to all intents and purposes an Indian man. I will never be anything but an Indian. When I was young we saw the Englishman as a superior being.'

### **Jamila and Anwar**

**P 55**

Through these calls Anwar's brother in Bombay had fixed up Jamila with a boy eager to come and live in London as Jamila's husband. Except that this boy wasn't a boy. He was thirty. As a dowry the ageing boy had demanded a warm winter overcoat from Moss Bros., a colour television and, mysteriously, an edition of the complete works of Conan Doyle. Anwar agreed to this, but consulted Dad. Dad thought the Conan Doyle demand very strange. 'What normal Indian man would want such a thing? The boy must be investigated further — immediately!' But Anwar ignored Dad's feeling. There had been friction between Anwar and Dad over the question of children before. Dad was very proud that he had two sons. He was convinced it meant he had 'good seed'. As Anwar had only produced one daughter it meant that he had 'weak seed'. Dad loved pointing this out to Anwar. 'Surely, *yaar*, you have potentially more than one girl and one girl only in your entire lifetime's seed-production, eh?' 'Fuck it,' Anwar replied, rattled. 'It's my wife's fault, you bastard. Her

womb has shrivelled like a prune.'

Anwar had told Jamila what he'd decided: she was to marry the Indian and he would come over, slip on his overcoat and wife and live happily ever after in her muscly arms.

**P62:**

It was certainly bizarre, Uncle Anwar behaving like a Muslim. I'd never known him believe in anything before, so it was an amazing novelty to find him literally staking his life on the principle of absolute patriarchal authority. Through her mother's staunch and indulgent love (plus the fibbing extravagances of her wonderful imagination), but mainly because of Anwar's indifference, Jamila had got away with things some of her white counterparts wouldn't dream of. There had been years of smoking, drinking, sexual intercourse and dances, helped by there being a fire escape outside her bedroom and the fact her parents were always so exhausted they slept like mummies.

Maybe there were similarities between what was happening to Dad, with his discovery of Eastern philosophy, and Anwar's last stand. Perhaps it was the immigrant condition living itself out through them. For years they were both happy to live like Englishmen. Anwar even scoffed pork pies as long as Jeeta wasn't looking. (My dad never touched the pig, though I was sure this was conditioning rather than religious scruple, just as I wouldn't eat horse's scrotum. But once, to test this, when I offered him a smoky bacon crisp and said, as he crunched greedily into it, 'I didn't know you liked smoky bacon,' he sprinted into the bathroom and washed out his mouth with soap, screaming from his frothing lips that he would burn in hell.)

Now, as they aged and seemed settled here, Anwar and Dad appeared to be returning internally to India, or at least to be resisting the English here. It was puzzling: neither of them expressed any desire actually to see their origins again. 'India's a rotten place,' Anwar grumbled. 'Why would I want to go there again? It's filthy and hot and it's a big pain-in-the-arse to get anything done. If I went anywhere it would be to Florida and Las Vegas for gambling.' And my father was too involved with things here to consider returning.

**P 205**

Uncle Anwar didn't sleep at all now. At night he sat on the edge of his chair, smoking and drinking un-Islamic drinks and thinking portentous thoughts, dreaming of other countries, lost houses, mothers, beaches. Anwar did no work in the shop, not even rewarding work like watching for shoplifters and shirtlifters. Jamila often found him drunk on the floor, rancid with unhappiness, when she went by to see her mother in the morning before work. Anwar's hunger-strike hadn't endeared him to his family, and now no one attended to him or enquired into the state of his cracking heart. 'Bury me in a pauper's grave,' he said to me. 'I've had it, Karim, boy.' 'Right you are, Uncle,' I said. And Princess Jeeta was becoming stronger and more wilful as Anwar declined; she appeared to be growing an iron nose like a hook with which she could lift heavy boxes of corned beef. She'd leave him drunk on the floor now, maybe wiping her feet on him as she passed through to raise the steel shutters on her domain of vegetables. It was Jamila who picked him up and put him in his chair, though they never spoke, looking at each other with bemused and angry love.

## Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

### CHAPTER ONE

My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years. That sounds long enough, I know, but actually they want me to go on for another eight months, until the end of this year. That'll make it almost exactly twelve years. Now I know my being a carer so long isn't necessarily because they think I'm fantastic at what I do. There are some really good carers who've been told to stop after just two or three years. And I can think of one carer at least who went on for all of fourteen years despite being a complete waste of space. So I'm not trying to boast. But then I do know for a fact they've been pleased with my work, and by and large, I have too. My donors have always tended to do much better than expected. Their recovery times have been impressive, and hardly any of them have been classified as "agitated," even before fourth donation. Okay, maybe I *am* boasting now. But it means a lot to me, being able to do my work well, especially that bit about my donors staying "calm." I've developed a kind of instinct around donors. I know when to hang around and comfort them, when to leave them to themselves; when to listen to everything they have to say, and when just to shrug and tell them to snap out of it.

Anyway, I'm not making any big claims for myself. I know carers, working now, who are just as good and don't get half the credit. If you're one of them, I can understand how you might get resentful—about my bedsit, my car, above all, the way I get to pick and choose who I look after. And I'm a Hailsham student—which is enough by itself sometimes to get people's backs up. Kathy H., they say, she gets to pick and choose, and she always chooses her own kind: people from Hailsham, or one of the other privileged estates. No wonder she has a great record. I've heard it said enough, so I'm sure you've heard it plenty more, and maybe there's something in it. But I'm not the first to be allowed to pick and choose, and I doubt if I'll be the last. And anyway, I've done my share of looking after donors brought up in every kind of place. By the time I finish, remember, I'll have done twelve years of this, and it's only for the last six they've let me choose.

And why shouldn't they? Carers aren't machines. You try and do your best for every donor, but in the end, it wears you down. You don't have unlimited patience and energy. So when you get a chance to choose, of course, you choose your own kind. That's natural. There's no way I could have gone on for as long as I have if I'd stopped feeling for my donors every step of the way. And anyway, if I'd never started choosing, how would I ever have got close again to Ruth and Tommy after all those

years?

But these days, of course, there are fewer and fewer donors left who I remember, and so in practice, I haven't been choosing that much. As I say, the work gets a lot harder when you don't have that deeper link with the donor, and though I'll miss being a carer, it feels just about right to be finishing at last come the end of the year.

Ruth, incidentally, was only the third or fourth donor I got to choose. She already had a carer assigned to her at the time, and I remember it taking a bit of nerve on my part. But in the end I managed it, and the instant I saw her again, at that recovery centre in Dover, all our differences—while they didn't exactly vanish—seemed not nearly as important as all the other things: like the fact that we'd grown up together at Hailsham, the fact that we knew and remembered things no one else did. It's ever since then, I suppose, I started seeking out for my donors people from the past, and whenever I could, people from Hailsham.

There have been times over the years when I've tried to leave Hailsham behind, when I've told myself I shouldn't look back so much. But then there came a point when I just stopped resisting. It had to do with this particular donor I had once, in my third year as a carer; it was his reaction when I mentioned I was from Hailsham. He'd just come through his third donation, it hadn't gone well, and he must have known he wasn't going to make it. He could hardly breathe, but he looked towards me and said: "Hailsham. I bet that was a beautiful place." Then the next morning, when I was making conversation to keep his mind off it all, and I asked where *he'd* grown up, he mentioned some place in Dorset and his face beneath the blotches went into a completely new kind of grimace. And I realised then how desperately he didn't want reminded. Instead, he wanted to hear about Hailsham.

So over the next five or six days, I told him whatever he wanted to know, and he'd lie there, all hooked up, a gentle smile breaking through. He'd ask me about the big things and the little things. About our guardians, about how we each had our own collection chests under our beds, the football, the rounders, the little path that took you all round the outside of the main house, round all its nooks and crannies, the duck pond, the food, the view from the Art Room over the fields on a foggy morning. Sometimes he'd make me say things over and over; things I'd told him only the day before, he'd ask about like I'd never told him. "Did you have a sports pavilion?" "Which guardian was your special favourite?" At first I thought this was just the drugs, but then I realised his mind was clear enough. What he wanted was not just to hear about Hailsham, but to *remember* Hailsham, just like it had been his own childhood. He knew he was close to completing and so that's what he was doing: getting me to describe things to him, so they'd really sink in, so that maybe during those sleepless nights, with the drugs and the pain and the exhaustion, the line would blur between what were my memories and what were his. That was when I first understood, really understood, just how lucky we'd been—Tommy, Ruth, me, all the rest of us.

DRIVING AROUND THE COUNTRY NOW, I still see things that will remind me of Hailsham. I

"You've got a point, Kathy. It's not nice. But if he wants it to stop, he's got to change his own attitude. He didn't have a thing for the Spring Exchange. And has he got anything for next month? I bet he hasn't."

I should explain a bit here about the Exchanges we had at Hailsham. Four times a year—spring, summer, autumn, winter—we had a kind of big exhibition-cum-sale of all the things we'd been creating in the three months since the last Exchange. Paintings, drawings, pottery; all sorts of "sculptures" made from whatever was the craze of the day—bashed-up cans, maybe, or bottle tops stuck onto cardboard. For each thing you put in, you were paid in Exchange Tokens—the guardians decided how many your particular masterpiece merited—and then on the day of the Exchange you went along with your tokens and "bought" the stuff you liked. The rule was you could only buy work done by students in your own year, but that still gave us plenty to choose from, since most of us could get pretty prolific over a three-month period.

Looking back now, I can see why the Exchanges became so important to us. For a start, they were our only means, aside from the Sales—the Sales were something else, which I'll come to later—of building up a collection of personal possessions. If, say, you wanted to decorate the walls around your bed, or wanted something to carry around in your bag and place on your desk from room to room, then you could find it at the Exchange. I can see now, too, how the Exchanges had a more subtle effect on us all. If you think about it, being dependent on each other to produce the stuff that might become your private treasures—that's bound to do things to your relationships. The Tommy business was typical. A lot of the time, how you were regarded at Hailsham, how much you were liked and respected, had to do with how good you were at "creating."

Ruth and I often found ourselves remembering these things a few years ago, when I was caring for her down at the recovery centre in Dover.

"It's all part of what made Hailsham so special," she said once. "The way we were encouraged to value each other's work."

"True," I said. "But sometimes, when I think about the Exchanges now, a lot of it seems a bit odd. The poetry, for instance. I remember we were allowed to hand in poems, instead of a drawing or a painting. And the strange thing was, we all thought that was fine, we thought that made sense."

"Why shouldn't it? Poetry's important."

"But we're talking about nine-year-old stuff, funny little lines, all misspelt, in exercise books. We'd spend our precious tokens on an exercise book full of that stuff rather than on something really nice for around our beds. If we were so keen on a person's poetry, why didn't we just borrow it and copy it down ourselves any old afternoon? But you remember how it was. An Exchange would come along and we'd be standing there torn between Susie K.'s poems and those giraffes Jackie used to make."

"Jackie's giraffes," Ruth said with a laugh. "They were so beautiful. I used to have one."

We were having this conversation on a fine summer evening, sitting out on the little balcony of her recovery room. It was a few months after her first donation, and now she was over the worst of it, I'd always time my evening visits so that we'd be able to spend a half hour or so out there, watching the sun go down over the rooftops. You could see lots of aerals and satellite dishes, and sometimes, right over in the distance, a glistening line that was the sea. I'd bring mineral water and biscuits, and we'd sit there talking about anything that came into our heads. The centre Ruth was in that time, it's one of my favourites, and I wouldn't mind at all if that's where I ended up. The recovery rooms are small, but they're well-designed and comfortable. 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, shadowy movement all around you in the tiles. Anyway, Ruth's room at that centre, it also had these big glass sliding panels, so she could easily see the outside from her bed. Even with her head on the pillow she'd see a big lot of sky, and if it was warm enough, she could get all the fresh air she wanted by stepping out onto the balcony. I loved visiting her there, loved those meandering talks we had, through the summer to the early autumn, sitting on that balcony together, talking about Hailsham, the Cottages, whatever else drifted into our thoughts.

"What I'm saying," I went on, "is that when we were that age, when we were eleven, say, we really weren't interested in each other's poems at all. But remember, someone like Christy? Christy had this great reputation for poetry, and we all looked up to her for it. Even you, Ruth, you didn't dare boss Christy around. All because we thought she was great at poetry. But we didn't know a thing about poetry. We didn't care about it. It's strange."

But Ruth didn't get my point—or maybe she was deliberately avoiding it. Maybe she was determined to remember us all as more sophisticated than we were. Or maybe she could sense where my talk was leading, and didn't want us to go that way. Anyway, she let out a long sigh and said:

"We all thought Christy's poems were so good. But I wonder how they'd look to us now. I wish we had some here, I'd love to see what we'd think." Then she laughed and said: "I *have* still got some poems by Peter B. But that was much later, when we were in Senior 4. I must have fancied him. I can't think why else I'd have bought his poems. They're just hysterically daft. Takes himself so seriously. But Christy, she was good, I remember she was. It's funny, she went right off poems when she started her painting. And she was nowhere near as good at that."

But let me get back to Tommy. What Ruth said that time in our dorm after lights-out, about how Tommy had brought all his problems on himself, probably summed up what most people at Hailsham thought at that time. But it was when she said what she did that it occurred to me, as I lay there, that this whole notion of his deliberately not trying was one that had been doing the rounds from as far back as the Juniors. And it came home to me, with a kind of chill, that Tommy had been going through what he'd been going through not just for weeks or months, but for years.

Tommy and I talked about all this not so long ago, and his own account of how his troubles began confirmed what I was thinking that night. According to him, it had all started one afternoon in one of

▷ Thinking back now, I can see we were just at that age when we knew a few things about ourselves—about who we were, how we were different from our guardians, from the people outside—but hadn't yet understood what any of it meant. I'm sure somewhere in your childhood, you too had an experience like ours that day; similar if not in the actual details, then inside, in the feelings. Because it doesn't really matter how well your guardians try to prepare you: all the talks, videos, discussions, warnings, none of that can really bring it home. Not when you're eight years old, and you're all together in a place like Hailsham; when you've got guardians like the ones we had; when the gardeners and the delivery men joke and laugh with you and call you "sweetheart."

All the same, some of it must go in somewhere. It must go in, because by the time a moment like that comes along, there's a part of you that's been waiting. Maybe from as early as when you're five or six, there's been a whisper going at the back of your head, saying: "One day, maybe not so long from now, you'll get to know how it feels." So you're waiting, even if you don't quite know it, waiting for the moment when you realise that you really are different to them; that there are people out there, like Madame, who don't hate you or wish you any harm, but who nevertheless shudder at the very thought of you—of how you were brought into this world and why—and who dread the idea of your hand brushing against theirs. The first time you glimpse yourself through the eyes of a person like that, it's a cold moment. It's like walking past a mirror you've walked past every day of your life, and suddenly it shows you something else, something troubling and strange.

## CHAPTER FOUR

I won't be a carer any more come the end of the year, and though I've got a lot out of it, I have to admit I'll welcome the chance to rest—to stop and think and remember. I'm sure it's at least partly to do with that, to do with preparing for the change of pace, that I've been getting this urge to order all these old memories. What I really wanted, I suppose, was to get straight all the things that happened between me and Tommy and Ruth after we grew up and left Hailsham. But I realise now just how much of what occurred later came out of our time at Hailsham, and that's why I want first to go over these earlier memories quite carefully. Take all this curiosity about Madame, for instance. At one level, it was just us kids larking about. But at another, as you'll see, it was the start of a process that kept growing and growing over the years until it came to dominate our lives.

After that day, mention of Madame became, while not taboo exactly, pretty rare among us. And this was something that soon spread beyond our little group to just about all the students in our year. We were, I'd say, as curious as ever about her, but we all sensed that to probe any further—about what she did with our work, whether there really was a gallery—would get us into territory we weren't ready for yet.

The topic of the Gallery, though, still cropped up every once in a while, so that when a few years later Tommy started telling me beside the pond about his odd talk with Miss Lucy, I found something tugging away at my memory. It was only afterwards, when I'd left him sitting on his rock and was hurrying towards the fields to catch up with my friends, that it came back to me.

It was something Miss Lucy had once said to us during a class. I'd remembered it because it had puzzled me at the time, and also because it was one of the few occasions when the Gallery had been mentioned so deliberately in front of a guardian.

We'd been in the middle of what we later came to call the "tokens controversy." Tommy and I discussed the tokens controversy a few years ago, and we couldn't at first agree when it had happened. I said we'd been ten at the time; he thought it was later, but in the end came round to agreeing with me. I'm pretty sure I got it right: we were in Junior 4—a while after that incident with Madame, but still three years before our talk by the pond.

④

BUT I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT MY TAPE, *Songs After Dark* by Judy Bridgewater. I suppose it was originally an LP—the recording date's 1956—but what I had was the cassette, and the cover picture was what must have been a scaled-down version of the record sleeve. Judy Bridgewater is wearing a purple satin dress, one of those off-the-shoulder ones popular in those days, and you can see her from just above the waist because she's sitting on a bar-stool. I think it's supposed to be South America, because there are palms behind her and swarthy waiters in white tuxedos. You're looking at Judy from exactly where the barman would be when he's serving her drinks. She's looking back in a friendly, not too sexy way, like she might be flirting just a tiny bit, but you're someone she knows from way back. Now the other thing about this cover is that Judy's got her elbows up on the bar and there's a cigarette burning in her hand. And it was because of this cigarette that I got so secretive about the tape, right from the moment I found it at the Sale.

I don't know how it was where you were, but at Hailsham the guardians were really strict about smoking. I'm sure they'd have preferred it if we never found out smoking even existed; but since this wasn't possible, they made sure to give us some sort of lecture each time any reference to cigarettes came along. Even if we were being shown a picture of a famous writer or world leader, and they happened to have a cigarette in their hand, then the whole lesson would grind to a halt. There was even a rumour that some classic books—like the Sherlock Holmes ones—weren't in our library because the main characters smoked too much, and when you came across a page torn out of an illustrated book or magazine, this was because there'd been a picture on it of someone smoking. And then there were the actual lessons where they showed us horrible pictures of what smoking did to the insides of your body. That's why it was such a shock that time Marge K. asked Miss Lucy her question.

We were sitting on the grass after a rounders match and Miss Lucy had been giving us a typical talk on smoking when Marge suddenly asked if Miss Lucy had herself ever had a cigarette. Miss Lucy went quiet for a few seconds. Then she said:

"I'd like to be able to say no. But to be honest, I did smoke for a little while. For about two years, when I was younger."

You can imagine what a shock this was. Before Miss Lucy's reply, we'd all been glaring at Marge, really furious she'd asked such a rude question—to us, she might as well have asked if Miss Lucy had ever attacked anyone with an axe. And for days afterwards I remember how we made Marge's life an utter misery; in fact, that incident I mentioned before, the night we held Marge's face to the dorm window to make her look at the woods, that was all part of what came afterwards. But at the time, the moment Miss Lucy said what she did, we were too confused to think any more about Marge. I think we all just stared at Miss Lucy in horror, waiting for what she'd say next.

When she did speak, Miss Lucy seemed to be weighing up each word carefully. "It's not good that I smoked. It wasn't good for me so I stopped it. But what you must understand is that for you, all of you,

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it's much, much worse to smoke than it ever was for me."

Then she paused and went quiet. Someone said later she'd gone off into a daydream, but I was pretty sure, as was Ruth, that she was thinking hard about what to say next. Finally she said:

"You've been told about it. You're students. You're . . . *special*. So keeping yourselves well, keeping yourselves very healthy inside, that's much more important for each of you than it is for me."

She stopped again and looked at us in a strange way. Afterwards, when we discussed it, some of us were sure she was dying for someone to ask: "Why? Why is it so much worse for us?" But no one did. I've often thought about that day, and I'm sure now, in the light of what happened later, that we only needed to ask and Miss Lucy would have told us all kinds of things. All it would have taken was just one more question about smoking.

So why had we stayed silent that day? I suppose it was because even at that age—we were nine or ten—we knew just enough to make us wary of that whole territory. It's hard now to remember just how much we knew by then. We certainly knew—though not in any deep sense—that we were different from our guardians, and also from the normal people outside; we perhaps even knew that a long way down the line there were donations waiting for us. But we didn't really know what that meant. If we were keen to avoid certain topics, it was probably more because it *embarrassed* us. We hated the way our guardians, usually so on top of everything, became so awkward whenever we came near this territory. It unnerved us to see them change like that. I think that's why we never asked that one further question, and why we punished Marge K. so cruelly for bringing it all up that day after the rounders match.

ANYWAY, THAT'S WHY I WAS SO SECRETIVE about my tape. I even turned the cover inside out so you'd only see Judy and her cigarette if you opened up the plastic case. But the reason the tape meant so much to me had nothing to do with the cigarette, or even with the way Judy Bridgewater sang—she's one of those singers from her time, cocktail-bar stuff, not the sort of thing any of us at Hailsham liked. What made the tape so special for me was this one particular song: track number three, "Never Let Me Go."

It's slow and late night and American, and there's a bit that keeps coming round when Judy sings: "Never let me go . . . Oh baby, baby . . . Never let me go . . ." I was eleven then, and hadn't listened to much music, but this one song, it really got to me. I always tried to keep the tape wound to just that spot so I could play the song whenever a chance came by.

I didn't have so many opportunities, mind you, this being a few years before Walkmans started appearing at the Sales. There was a big machine in the billiards room, but I hardly ever played the tape in there because it was always full of people. The Art Room also had a player, but that was usually just as noisy. The only place I could listen properly was in our dorm.

talking to two boys sitting on the benches immediately in front of her. Her voice wasn't exactly strange, but she was speaking very loudly, in the sort of voice she'd use to announce something to the lot of us, and that was why we'd all gone quiet. "No, Peter, I'm going to have to stop you. I can't listen to you any more and keep silent."

Then she raised her gaze to include the rest of us and took a deep breath. "All right, you can hear this, it's for all of you. It's time someone spelt it out."

We waited while she kept staring at us. Later, some people said they'd thought she was going to give us a big telling-off; others that she was about to announce a new rule on how we played rounders. But I knew before she said another word it would be something more.

"Boys, you must forgive me for listening. But you were right behind me, so I couldn't help it. Peter, why don't you tell the others what you were saying to Gordon just now?"

Peter J. looked bewildered and I could see him getting ready his injured innocence face. But then Miss Lucy said again, this time much more gently:

"Peter, go on. Please tell the others what you were just saying."

Peter shrugged. "We were just talking about what it would feel like if we became actors. What sort of life it would be."

"Yes," Miss Lucy said, "and you were saying to Gordon you'd have to go to America to stand the best chance."

Peter J. shrugged again and muttered quietly: "Yes, Miss Lucy."

But Miss Lucy was now moving her gaze over the lot of us. "I know you don't mean any harm. But there's just too much talk like this. I hear it all the time, it's been allowed to go on, and it's not right." I could see more drops coming off the gutter and landing on her shoulder, but she didn't seem to notice. "If no one else will talk to you," she continued, "then I will. The problem, as I see it, is that you've been told and not told. You've been told, but none of you really understand, and I dare say, some people are quite happy to leave it that way. But I'm not. If you're going to have decent lives, then you've got to know and know properly. 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 out for you. You'll become adults, then before you're old, before you're even middle-aged, you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you was created to do. You're not like the actors you watch on your videos, you're not even like me. You were brought into this world for a purpose, and your futures, all of them, have been decided. So you're not to talk that way any more. You'll be leaving Hailsham before long, and it's not so far off, the day you'll be preparing for your first donations. You need to remember that. If you're to have decent lives, you have to know who you are and what lies ahead of you, every one of you."

Then she went silent, but my impression was that she was continuing to say things inside her head,

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because for some time her gaze kept roving over us, going from face to face just as if she were still speaking to us. We were all pretty relieved when she turned to look out over the playing field again.

"It's not so bad now," she said, even though the rain was as steady as ever. "Let's just go out there. Then maybe the sun will come out too."

I think that was all she said. When I was discussing it with Ruth a few years ago at the centre in Dover, she claimed Miss Lucy had told us a lot more; that she'd explained how before donations we'd all spend some time first as carers, about the usual sequence of the donations, the recovery centres and so on—but I'm pretty sure she didn't. Okay, she probably intended to when she began talking. But my guess is once she'd set off, once she'd seen the puzzled, uncomfortable faces in front of her, she realised the impossibility of completing what she'd started.

It's hard to say clearly what sort of impact Miss Lucy's outburst at the pavilion made. Word got round fast enough, but the talk mostly focused on Miss Lucy herself rather than on what she'd been trying to tell us. Some students thought she'd lost her marbles for a moment; others that she'd been asked to say what she had by Miss Emily and the other guardians; there were even some who'd actually been there and who thought Miss Lucy had been telling us off for being too rowdy on the veranda. But as I say there was surprisingly little discussion about what she'd said. If it did come up, people tended to say: "Well so what? We already knew all that."

But that had been Miss Lucy's point exactly. We'd been "told and not told," as she'd put it. A few years ago, when Tommy and I were going over it all again, and I reminded him of Miss Lucy's "told and not told" idea, he came up with a theory.

Tommy thought it possible the guardians had, throughout all our years at Hailsham, timed very carefully and deliberately everything they told us, so that we were always just too young to understand properly the latest piece of information. But of course we'd take it in at some level, so that before long all this stuff was there in our heads without us ever having examined it properly.

It's a bit too much like a conspiracy theory for me—I don't think our guardians were that crafty—but there's probably something in it. Certainly, it feels like I *always* knew about donations in some vague way, even as early as six or seven. And it's curious, when we were older and the guardians were giving us those talks, nothing came as a complete surprise. It *was* like we'd heard everything somewhere before.

One thing that occurs to me now is that when the guardians first started giving us proper lectures about sex, they tended to run them together with talk about the donations. At that age—again, I'm talking of around thirteen—we were all pretty worried and excited about sex, and naturally would have pushed the other stuff into the background. In other words, it's possible the guardians managed to smuggle into our heads a lot of the basic facts about our futures.

Now to be fair, it was probably natural to run these two subjects together. If, say, they were telling us how we'd have to be very careful to avoid diseases when we had sex, it would have been odd not

to mention how much more important this was for us than for normal people outside. And that, of course, would bring us onto the donations.

Then there was the whole business about our not being able to have babies. Miss Emily used to give a lot of the sex lectures herself, and I remember once, she brought in a life-size skeleton from the biology class to demonstrate how it was done. We watched in complete astonishment as she put the skeleton through various contortions, thrusting her pointer around without the slightest self-consciousness. She was going through all the nuts and bolts of how you did it, what went in where, the different variations, like this was still Geography. Then suddenly, with the skeleton in an obscene heap on the desktop, she turned away and began telling us how we had to be careful *who* we had sex with. Not just because of the diseases, but because, she said, "sex affects emotions in ways you'd never expect." We had to be extremely careful about having sex in the outside world, especially with people who weren't students, because out there sex meant all sorts of things. Out there people were even fighting and killing each other over who had sex with whom. And the reason it meant so much—so much more than, say, dancing or table-tennis—was because the people out there were different from us students: they could have babies from sex. That was why it was so important to them, this question of who did it with whom. And even though, as we knew, it was completely impossible for any of us to have babies, out there, we had to behave like them. We had to respect the rules and treat sex as something pretty special.

Miss Emily's lecture that day was typical of what I'm talking about. We'd be focusing on sex, and then the other stuff would creep in. I suppose that was all part of how we came to be "told and not told."

I think in the end we must have absorbed quite a lot of information, because I remember, around that age, a marked change in the way we approached the whole territory surrounding the donations. Until then, as I've said, we'd done everything to avoid the subject; we'd backed off at the first sign we were entering that ground, and there'd been severe punishment for any idiot—like Marge that time—who got careless. But from when we were thirteen, like I say, things started to change. We still didn't discuss the donations and all that went with them; we still found the whole area awkward enough. But it became something we made jokes about, in much the way we joked about sex. Looking back now, I'd say the rule about not discussing the donations openly was still there, as strong as ever. But now it was okay, almost required, every now and then, to make some jokey allusion to these things that lay in front of us.

A good example is what happened the time Tommy got the gash on his elbow. It must have been just before my talk with him by the pond; a time, I suppose, when Tommy was still coming out of that phase of being teased and taunted.

IT WASN'T SUCH A BAD GASH, and though he was sent to Crow Face to have it seen to, he was back almost straight away with a square of dressing plastered to his elbow. No one thought much

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So now, to prove he was happy, here he was, trying to sparkle with bonhomie. As I say, there would come a time when I'd think this was sweet; but that summer all I could see was that it advertised what a child he still was, and how easily you could take advantage of him. I didn't know much then about the world that awaited us beyond Hailsham, but I'd guessed we'd need all our wits about us, and when Tommy did anything like this, I felt something close to panic. Until that afternoon I'd always let it go—it always seemed too difficult to explain—but this time I burst out, saying:

“Tommy, you look so *stupid*, laughing like that! If you want to pretend you're happy, you don't do it that way! Just take it from me, you don't do it that way! You definitely don't! Look, you've got to grow up. And you've got to get yourself back on track. Everything's been falling apart for you just lately, and we both know why.”

Tommy was looking puzzled. When he was sure I'd finished, he said: “You're right. Things have been falling apart for me. But I don't see what you mean, Kath. What do you mean, we both know? I don't see how you could know. I haven't told anyone.”

“Obviously I don't have all the details. But we all know about you splitting with Ruth.”

Tommy still looked puzzled. Finally he did another little laugh, but this time it was a real one. “I see what you mean,” he mumbled, then paused a moment to think something over. “To be honest, Kath,” he said eventually, “that's not really what's bothering me. It's really something else altogether. I just keep thinking about it all the time. About Miss Lucy.”

And that was how I came to hear about it, about what had happened between Tommy and Miss Lucy at the start of that summer. Later, when I'd had time to think it over, I worked out it must have happened no more than a few days after the morning I'd seen Miss Lucy up in Room 22 scrawling over her paperwork. And like I said, I felt like kicking myself I hadn't found out from him earlier.

It had been in the afternoon near the “dead hour”—when the lessons were finished but there was still some time to go until supper. Tommy had seen Miss Lucy coming out of the main house, her arms loaded with flipcharts and box files, and because it looked like she'd drop something any moment, he'd run over and offered to help.

“Well, she gave me a few things to carry and said we were headed back to her study with it all. Even between the two of us there was too much and I dropped a couple of things on the way. Then when we were coming up to the Orangery, she suddenly stopped, and I thought she'd dropped something else. But she was looking at me, like *this*, straight in the face, all serious. Then she says we've got to have a talk, a good talk. I say fine, and so we go into the Orangery, into her study, put all the stuff down. And she tells me to sit down, and I end up exactly where I was the last time, you know, that time years ago. And I can tell she's remembering that time as well, because she starts talking about it like it was only the day before. No explanations, nothing, she just starts off saying something like: ‘Tommy, I made a mistake, when I said what I did to you. And I should have put you right about it long before now.’ Then she's saying I should forget everything she told me before. That she'd done me a big disservice telling me not to worry about being creative. That the other guardians

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had been right all along, and there was no excuse for my art being so rubbish . . .”

“Hold on, Tommy. Did she actually say your art was ‘rubbish?’”

“If it wasn’t ‘rubbish’ it was something like it. Negligible. That might have been it. Or incompetent. She might as well have said rubbish. She said she was sorry she’d told me what she had the last time because if she hadn’t, I might have sorted it all by now.”

“What were you saying through all this?”

“I didn’t know *what* to say. In the end, she actually asked. She said: ‘Tommy, what are you thinking?’ So I said I wasn’t sure but that she shouldn’t worry either way because I was all right now. And she said, no, I wasn’t all right. My art was rubbish, and that was partly her fault for telling me what she had. And I said to her, but what does it matter? I’m all right now, no one laughs at me about that any more. But she keeps shaking her head saying: ‘It does matter. I shouldn’t have said what I did.’ So it occurs to me she’s talking about later, you know, about after we leave here. So I say: ‘But I’ll be all right, Miss. I’m really fit, I know how to look after myself. When it’s time for donations, I’ll be able to do it really well.’ When I said this, she starts shaking her head, shaking it really hard so I’m worried she’ll get dizzy. Then she says: ‘Listen, Tommy, your art, it *is* important. And not just because it’s evidence. But for your own sake. You’ll get a lot from it, just for yourself.’”

“Hold on. What did she mean, ‘evidence’?”

“I don’t know. But she definitely said that. She said our art was important, and ‘not just because it’s evidence.’ God knows what she meant. I did actually ask her, when she said that. I said I didn’t understand what she was telling me, and was it something to do with Madame and her gallery? And she did a big sigh and said: ‘Madame’s gallery, yes, that’s important. Much more important than I once thought. I see that now.’ Then she said: ‘Look, there are all kinds of things you don’t understand, Tommy, and I can’t tell you about them. Things about Hailsham, about your place in the wider world, all kinds of things. But perhaps one day, you’ll try and find out. They won’t make it easy for you, but if you want to, really want to, you might find out.’ She started shaking her head again after that, though not as bad as before, and she says: ‘But why should you be any different? The students who leave here, they never find out much. Why should you be any different?’ I didn’t know what she was talking about, so I just said again: ‘I’ll be all right, Miss.’ She was quiet for a time, then she suddenly stood up and kind of bent over me and hugged me. Not in a sexy way. More like they used to do when we were little. I just kept as still as possible. Then she stood back and said again she was sorry for what she’d told me before. And that it wasn’t too late, I should start straight away, making up the lost time. I don’t think I said anything, and she looked at me and I thought she’d hug me again. But instead she said: ‘Just do it for my sake, Tommy.’ I told her I’d do my best, because by then I just wanted out of there. I was probably bright scarlet, what with her hugging me and everything. I mean, it’s not the same, is it, now we’ve got bigger.”

Until this point I’d been so engrossed in Tommy’s story, I’d forgotten my reason for having this talk with him. But this reference to our getting “bigger” reminded me of my original mission.

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"Look, Tommy," I said, "we'll have to talk this over carefully soon. It's really interesting and I can see how it must have made you miserable. But either way, you're going to have to pull yourself together a bit more. We're going to be leaving here this summer. You've got to get yourself sorted again, and there's one thing you can straighten out right now. Ruth told me she's prepared to call it quits and have you get back with her again. I think that's a good chance for you. Don't mess it up."

He was quiet for a few seconds, then said: "I don't know, Kath. There are all these other things to think about."

"Tommy, just listen. You're really lucky. Of all the people here, you've got Ruth fancying you. After we leave, if you're with her, you won't have to worry. She's the best, you'll be fine so long as you're with her. She's saying she wants a fresh start. So don't blow it."

I waited but Tommy gave no response, and again I felt something like panic coming over me. I leaned forward and said: "Look, you fool, you're not going to get many more chances. Don't you realise, we won't be here together like this much longer?"

To my surprise Tommy's response, when it came, was calm and considered—the side of Tommy that was to emerge more and more in the years ahead.

"I do realise that, Kath. That's exactly why I can't rush back into it with Ruth. We've got to think about the next move really carefully." Then he sighed and looked right at me. "Like you say, Kath. We're going to be leaving here soon. It's not like a game any more. We've got to think carefully."

I was suddenly lost for what to say and just sat there tugging away at the clovers. I could feel his eyes on me, but I didn't look up. We might have gone on that way for a while longer, except we were interrupted, I think the boys he'd been playing football with earlier came back, or maybe it was some students strolling by who came and sat down with us. Anyway, our little heart-to-heart was at an end and I came away feeling I hadn't done what I'd set out to do—that I'd somehow let Ruth down.



I NEVER GOT TO ASSESS WHAT KIND of impact my talk with Tommy had had, because it was the very next day the news broke. It was midway through the morning and we'd been in yet another Culture Briefing. These were classes where we had to role play various people we'd find out there—waiters in cafés, policemen and so on. The sessions always got us excited and worried all at the same time, so we were pretty keyed up anyway. Then at the end of the lesson, as we were filing out, Charlotte F. came rushing into the room and the news about Miss Lucy leaving Hailsham spread through us in an instant. Mr. Chris, who'd been taking the class and who must have known all along, shuffled off guiltily before we could ask him anything. At first we weren't sure if Charlotte was just reporting a rumour, but the more she told us, the clearer it became this was for real. Earlier in the morning, one of the other Senior classes had gone into Room 12 expecting Music Appreciation with Miss Lucy. But Miss Emily had been there instead and she'd told them Miss Lucy couldn't come just

at that moment, so she would take the class. For the next twenty minutes or so everything had gone quite normally. Then suddenly—right in mid-sentence, apparently—Miss Emily had broken off from talking about Beethoven and announced that Miss Lucy had left Hailsham and wouldn't be returning. That class had finished several minutes early—Miss Emily had rushed off with a preoccupied frown—and the word had started to go round as soon as the students had come out.

I immediately set off to look for Tommy, because I desperately wanted him to hear it first from me. But when I stepped into the courtyard, I saw I was too late. There was Tommy, over on the far side, on the edge of a circle of boys, nodding to what was being said. The other boys were animated, maybe excited even, but Tommy's eyes looked empty. That very evening, Tommy and Ruth got back together again, and I remember Ruth finding me a few days later to thank me for "sorting it all out so well." I told her I probably hadn't helped much, but she was having none of that. I was most definitely in her good books. And that was more or less the way things stayed throughout our last days at Hailsham.

### Session 03

thinking anything like that at the time. I remember noticing how tense he'd got, and worrying he'd blurt out something completely daft. That was why, when she asked us, not unkindly, what it was we wanted, I stepped in quickly.

It probably came out pretty muddled at first, but after a while, as I became more confident she'd hear me out, I calmed down and got a lot clearer. I'd been turning over in my mind for weeks and weeks just what I'd say to her. I'd gone over it during those long car journeys, and while sitting at quiet tables in service-station cafés. It had seemed so difficult then, and I'd eventually resorted to a plan: I'd memorised word for word a few key lines, then drawn a mental map of how I'd go from one point to the next. But now she was there in front of me, most of what I'd prepared seemed either unnecessary or completely wrong. The strange thing was—and Tommy agreed when we discussed it afterwards—although at Hailsham she'd been like this hostile stranger from the outside, now that we were facing her again, even though she hadn't said or done anything to suggest any warmth towards us, Madame now appeared to me like an intimate, someone much closer to us than anyone new we'd met over the recent years. That's why suddenly all the things I'd been preparing in my head just went, and I spoke to her honestly and simply, almost as I might have done years ago to a guardian. I told her what we'd heard, the rumours about Hailsham students and deferrals; how we realised the rumours might not be accurate, and that we weren't banking on anything.

"And even if it *is* true," I said, "we know you must get tired of it, all these couples coming to you, claiming to be in love. Tommy and me, we never would have come and bothered you if we weren't really sure."

"Sure?" It was the first time she'd spoken for ages and we both jolted back a bit in surprise. "You say you're *sure*? Sure that you're in love? How can you know it? You think love is so simple? So you are in love. Deeply in love. Is that what you're saying to me?"

Her voice sounded almost sarcastic, but then I saw, with a kind of shock, little tears in her eyes as she looked from one to the other of us.

"You believe this? That you're deeply in love? And therefore you've come to me for this . . . this deferral? Why? Why did you come to me?"

If she'd asked this in a certain way, like the whole idea was completely crazy, then I'm sure I'd have felt pretty devastated. But she hadn't quite said it like that. She'd asked it almost like it was a test question she knew the answer to; as if, even, she'd taken other couples through an identical routine many times before. That was what kept me hopeful. But Tommy must have got anxious, because he suddenly burst in:

"We came to see you because of your gallery. We think we know what your gallery's for."

"My gallery?" She leaned back on the window ledge, causing the curtains to sway behind her, and took a slow breath. "My gallery. You must mean my collection. All those paintings, poems, all those things of yours I gathered over the years. It was hard work for me, but I believed in it, we all did in

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those days. So you think you know what it was for, why we did it. Well, that would be most interesting to hear. Because I have to say, it's a question I ask myself all the time." She suddenly switched her gaze from Tommy to me. "Do I go too far?" she asked.

I didn't know what to say, so just replied: "No, no."

"I go too far," she said. "I'm sorry. I often go too far on this subject. Forget what I just said. Young man, you were going to tell me about my gallery. Please, let me hear."

"It's so you could tell," Tommy said. "So you'd have something to go on. Otherwise how would you know when students came to you and said they were in love?"

Madame's gaze had drifted over to me again, but I had the feeling she was staring at something on my arm. I actually looked down to see if there was birdshit or something on my sleeve. Then I heard her say:

"And this is why you think I gathered all those things of yours. My *gallery*, as all of you always called it. I laughed when I first heard that's what you were calling it. But in time, I too came to think of it as that. My gallery. Now why, young man, explain it to me. Why would my gallery help in telling which of you were really in love?"

"Because it would help show you what we were like," Tommy said. "Because . . ."

"Because of course"—Madame cut in suddenly—"your art will reveal your inner selves! That's it, isn't it? Because your art will display your *souls*!" Then suddenly she turned to me again and said: "I go too far?"

She'd said this before, and I again had the impression she was staring at a spot on my sleeve. But by this point a faint suspicion I'd had ever since the first time she'd asked "I go too far?" had started to grow. I looked at Madame carefully, but she seemed to sense my scrutiny and she turned back to Tommy.

"All right," she said. "Let us continue. What was it you were telling me?"

"The trouble is," Tommy said, "I was a bit mixed up in those days."

"You were saying something about your art. How art bares the soul of the artist."

"Well, what I'm trying to say," Tommy persisted, "is that I was so mixed up in those days, I didn't really do any art. I didn't do anything. I know now I should have done, but I was mixed up. So you haven't got anything of mine in your gallery. I know that's my fault, and I know it's probably way too late, but I've brought some things with me now." He raised his bag, then began to unzip it. "Some of it was done recently, but some of it's from quite a long time ago. You should have Kath's stuff already. She got plenty into the Gallery. Didn't you, Kath?"

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For a moment they were both looking at me. Then Madame said, barely audibly:

"Poor creatures. What did we do to you? With all our schemes and plans?" She let that hang, and I thought I could see tears in her eyes again. Then she turned to me and asked: "Do we continue with this talk? You wish to go on?"

It was when she said this that the vague idea I'd had before became something more substantial. "Do I go too far?" And now: "Do we continue?" I realised, with a little chill, that these questions had never been for me, or for Tommy, but for someone else—someone listening behind us in the darkened half of the room.

I turned round quite slowly and looked into the darkness. I couldn't see anything, but I heard a sound, a mechanical one, surprisingly far away—the house seemed to go much further back into the dark than I'd guessed. Then I could make out a shape moving towards us, and a woman's voice said: "Yes, Marie-Claude. Let us carry on."

I was still looking into the darkness when I heard Madame let out a kind of snort, and she came striding past us and on into the dark. Then there were more mechanical sounds, and Madame emerged pushing a figure in a wheelchair. She passed between us again, and for a moment longer, because Madame's back was blocking the view, I couldn't see the person in the wheelchair. But then Madame steered it around to face us and said:

"You speak to them. It's you they've come to speak to."

"I suppose it is."

The figure in the wheelchair was frail and contorted, and it was the voice more than anything that helped me recognise her.

"Miss Emily," Tommy said, quite softly.

"You speak to them," Madame said, as though washing her hands of everything. But she remained standing behind the wheelchair, her eyes blazing towards us.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

"Marie-Claude is correct," Miss Emily said. "I'm the one to whom you should be speaking. Marie-Claude worked hard for our project. And the way it all ended has left her feeling somewhat disillusioned. As for myself, whatever the disappointments, I don't feel so badly about it. I think what we achieved merits some respect. Look at the two of you. You've turned out well. I'm sure you have much you could tell me to make me proud. What did you say your names were? No, no, wait. I think I shall remember. You're the boy with the bad temper. A bad temper, but a big heart. Tommy. Am I right? And you, of course, are Kathy H. You've done well as a carer. We've heard a lot about you. I remember, you see. I dare say I can remember you all."

"What good does it do you or them?" Madame asked, then strode away from the wheelchair, past the two of us and into the darkness, for all I know to occupy the space Miss Emily had been in before.

"Miss Emily," I said, "it's very nice to see you again."

"How kind of you to say so. I recognised you, but you may well not have recognised me. In fact, Kathy H., once not so long ago, I passed you sitting on that bench out there, and you certainly didn't recognise me then. You glanced at George, the big Nigerian man pushing me. Oh yes, you had quite a good look at him, and he at you. I didn't say a word, and you didn't know it was me. But tonight, in context, as it were, we know each other. You both look rather shocked at the sight of me. I've not been well recently, but I'm hoping this contraption isn't a permanent fixture. Unfortunately, my dears, I won't be able to entertain you for as long as I'd like just now, because in a short while some men are coming to take away my bedside cabinet. It's a quite wonderful object. George has put protective padding around it, but I've insisted I'll accompany it myself all the same. You never know with these men. They handle it roughly, hurl it around their vehicle, then their employer claims it was like that from the start. It happened to us before, so this time, I've insisted on going along with it. It's a beautiful object, I had it with me at Hailsham, so I'm determined to get a fair price. So when they come, I'm afraid that's when I shall have to leave you. But I can see, my dears, you've come on a mission close to your hearts. I must say, it does cheer me to see you. And it cheers Marie-Claude too, even though you'd never know it to look at her. Isn't that so, darling? Oh, she pretends it's not so, but it is. She's touched that you've come to find us. Oh, she's in a sulk, ignore her, students, ignore her.

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Now, I'll try and answer your questions the best I can. I've heard this rumour countless times. When we still had Hailsham, we'd get two or three couples each year, trying to get in to talk to us. One even wrote to us. I suppose it's not so hard to find a large estate like that if you mean to break the rules. So you see, it's been there, this rumour, from long before your time."

She stopped, so I said: "What we want to know now, Miss Emily, is if the rumour's true or not."

She went on gazing at us for a moment, then took a deep breath. "Within Hailsham itself, whenever this talk started up, I made sure to stamp it out good and proper. But as for what students said after they'd left us, what could I do? In the end, I came to believe—and Marie-Claude believes this too, don't you, darling?—I came to believe that this rumour, it's not just a single rumour. What I mean is, I think it's one that gets created from scratch over and over. You go to the source, stamp it out, you'll not stop it starting again elsewhere. I came to this conclusion and ceased to worry about it. Marie-Claude never did worry about it. Her view was: 'If they're so foolish, let them believe it.' Oh yes, don't show me that sour face of yours. That's been your view of it from the beginning. After many years of it, I came not exactly to the same viewpoint. But I began to think, well, perhaps I shouldn't worry. It's not my doing, after all. And for the few couples who get disappointed, the rest will never put it to the test anyway. It's something for them to dream about, a little fantasy. What harm is there? But for the two of you, I can see this doesn't apply. You are serious. You've thought carefully. You've *hoped* carefully. For students like you, I do feel regret. It gives me no pleasure at all to disappoint you. But there it is."

I didn't want to look at Tommy. I felt surprisingly calm, and even though Miss Emily's words should have crushed us, there was an aspect to them that implied something further, something being held back, that suggested we hadn't yet got to the bottom of things. There was even the possibility she wasn't telling the truth. So I asked:

"Is it the case, then, that deferrals don't exist? There's nothing you can do?"

She shook her head slowly from side to side. "There's no truth in the rumour. I'm sorry. I truly am."

Suddenly Tommy asked: "Was it true once though? Before Hailsham closed?"

Miss Emily went on shaking her head. "It was never true. Even before the Morningdale scandal, even back when Hailsham was considered a shining beacon, an example of how we might move to a more humane and better way of doing things, even then, it wasn't true. It's best to be clear about this. A wishful rumour. That's all it ever was. Oh dear, is that the men come for the cabinet?"

The doorbell had gone, and footsteps came down the stairs to answer it. There were men's voices out in the narrow hall, and Madame came out of the darkness behind us, crossed the room and went out. Miss Emily leaned forward in the wheelchair, listening intently. Then she said:

"It's not them. It's that awful man from the decorating company again. Marie-Claude will see to it. So, my dears, we have a few minutes more. Was there something else you wished to talk to me about? This is all strictly against regulations, of course, and Marie-Claude should never have asked you in.

And naturally, I should have turned you out the second I knew you were here. But Marie-Claude doesn't care much for their regulations these days, and I must say, neither do I. So if you wish to stay a little longer, you're very welcome."

"If the rumour was never true," Tommy said, "then why did you take all our art stuff away? Didn't the Gallery exist either?"

"The Gallery? Well, that rumour *did* have some truth to it. There *was* a gallery. And after a fashion, there still is. These days it's here, in this house. I had to prune it down, which I regret. But there wasn't room for all of it in here. But why did we take your work away? That's what you're asking, isn't it?"

"Not just that," I said quietly. "Why did we do all of that work in the first place? Why train us, encourage us, make us produce all of that? If we're just going to give donations anyway, then die, why all those lessons? Why all those books and discussions?"

"Why Hailsham at all?" Madame had said this from the hallway. She came past us again and back into the darkened section of the room. "It's a good question for you to ask."

Miss Emily's gaze followed her, and for a moment, remained fixed behind us. I felt like turning to see what looks were being exchanged, but it was almost like we were back at Hailsham, and we had to keep facing the front with complete attention. Then Miss Emily said:

"Yes, why Hailsham at all? Marie-Claude likes to ask that a lot these days. But not so long ago, before the Morningdale scandal, she wouldn't have dreamt of asking a question like that. It wouldn't have entered her head. You know that's right, don't look at me like that! There was only one person in those days who would ask a question like that, and that was me. Long before Morningdale, right from the very beginning, I asked that. And that made it easy for the rest of them, Marie-Claude, all the rest of them, they could all carry on without a care. All you students too. I did all the worrying and questioning for the lot of you. And as long as I was steadfast, then no doubts ever crossed your minds, any of you. But you asked your questions, dear boy. Let's answer the simplest one, and perhaps it will answer all the rest. Why did we take your artwork? Why did we do that? You said an interesting thing earlier, Tommy. When you were discussing this with Marie-Claude. You said it was because your art would reveal what you were like. What you were like inside. That's what you said, wasn't it? Well, you weren't far wrong about that. We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your souls. Or to put it more finely, we did it to *prove you had souls at all.*"

She paused, and Tommy and I exchanged glances for the first time in ages. Then I asked:

"Why did you have to prove a thing like that, Miss Emily? Did someone think we didn't have souls?"

A thin smile appeared on her face. "It's touching, Kathy, to see you so taken aback. It demonstrates, in a way, that we did our job well. As you say, why would anyone doubt you had a soul? But I have to tell you, my dear, it wasn't something commonly held when we first set out all those years ago. And

though we've come a long way since then, it's still not a notion universally held, even today. You Hailsham students, even after you've been out in the world like this, you still don't know the half of it. All around the country, at this very moment, there are students being reared in deplorable conditions, conditions you Hailsham students could hardly imagine. And now we're no more, things will only get worse."

She paused again, and for a moment she seemed to be inspecting us carefully through narrowed eyes. Finally she went on:

"Whatever else, we at least saw to it that all of you in our care, you grew up in wonderful surroundings. And we saw to it too, after you left us, you were kept away from the worst of those horrors. We were able to do that much for you at least. But this dream of yours, this dream of being able to *defer*. Such a thing would always have been beyond us to grant, even at the height of our influence. I'm sorry, I can see what I'm saying won't be welcome to you. But you mustn't be dejected. I hope you can appreciate how much we *were* able to secure for you. Look at you both now! You've had good lives, you're educated and cultured. I'm sorry we couldn't secure more for you than we did, but you must realise how much worse things once were. When Marie-Claude and I started out, there were no places like Hailsham in existence. We were the first, along with Glenmorgan House. Then a few years later came the Saunders Trust. Together, we became a small but very vocal movement, and we challenged the entire way the donations programme was being run. Most importantly, we demonstrated to the world that if students were reared in humane, cultivated environments, it was possible for them to grow to be as sensitive and intelligent as any ordinary human being. Before that, all clones—or *students*, as we preferred to call you—existed only to supply medical science. In the early days, after the war, that's largely all you were to most people. Shadowy objects in test tubes. Wouldn't you agree, Marie-Claude? She's being very quiet. Usually you can't get her to shut up on this subject. Your presence, my dears, appears to have tied her tongue. Very well. So to answer your question, Tommy. That was why we collected your art. We selected the best of it and put on special exhibitions. In the late seventies, at the height of our influence, we were organising large events all around the country. There'd be cabinet ministers, bishops, all sorts of famous people coming to attend. There were speeches, large funds pledged. 'There, look!' we could say. 'Look at this art! How dare you claim these children are anything less than fully human?' Oh yes, there was a lot of support for our movement back then, the tide was with us."

For the next few minutes, Miss Emily went on reminiscing about different events from those days, mentioning a lot of people whose names meant nothing to us. In fact, for a moment, it was almost like we were listening to her again at one of her morning assemblies as she drifted off on tangents none of us could follow. She seemed to enjoy herself, though, and a gentle smile settled around her eyes. Then suddenly she came out of it and said in a new tone:

"But we never quite lost touch with reality, did we, Marie-Claude? Not like our colleagues at the Saunders Trust. Even during the best of times, we always knew what a difficult battle we were engaged in. And sure enough, the Morningdale business came along, then one or two other things, and before we knew it all our hard work had come undone."

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"But what I don't understand," I said, "is why people would want students treated so badly in the first place."

"From your perspective today, Kathy, your bemusement is perfectly reasonable. But you must try and see it historically. After the war, in the early fifties, when the great breakthroughs in science followed one after the other so rapidly, there wasn't time to take stock, to ask the sensible questions. Suddenly there were all these new possibilities laid before us, all these ways to cure so many previously incurable conditions. This was what the world noticed the most, wanted the most. And for a long time, people preferred to believe these organs appeared from nowhere, or at most that they grew in a kind of vacuum. Yes, there *were* arguments. But by the time people became concerned about . . . about *students*, by the time they came to consider just how you were reared, whether you should have been brought into existence at all, well by then it was too late. There was no way to reverse the process. How can you ask a world that has come to regard cancer as curable, how can you ask such a world to put away that cure, to go back to the dark days? There was no going back. However uncomfortable people were about your existence, their overwhelming concern was that their own children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, did not die from cancer, motor neurone disease, heart disease. So for a long time you were kept in the 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 it didn't matter. And that was how things stood until our little movement came along. But do you see what we were up against? We were virtually attempting to square the circle. Here was the world, requiring students to donate. While that remained the case, there would always be a barrier against seeing you as properly human. Well, we fought that battle for many years, and what we won for you, at least, were many improvements, though of course, you were only a select few. But then came the Morningdale scandal, then other things, and before we knew it, the climate had quite changed. No one wanted to be seen supporting us any more, and our little movement, Hailsham, Glennmorgan, the Saunders Trust, we were all of us swept away."

"What was this Morningdale scandal you keep mentioning, Miss Emily?" I asked. "You'll have to tell us, because we don't know about it."

"Well, I suppose there's no reason why you should. It was never such a large matter in the wider world. It concerned a scientist called James Morningdale, quite talented in his way. He carried on his work in a remote part of Scotland, where I suppose he thought he'd attract less attention. What he wanted was to offer people the possibility of having children with enhanced characteristics. Superior intelligence, superior athleticism, that sort of thing. Of course, there'd been others with similar ambitions, but this Morningdale fellow, he'd taken his research much further than anyone before him, far beyond legal boundaries. Well, he was discovered, they put an end to his work and that seemed to be that. Except, of course, it wasn't, not for us. As I say, it never became an enormous matter. But it did create a certain atmosphere, you see. It reminded people, reminded them of a fear they'd always had. It's one thing to create students, such as yourselves, for the donation programme. But a generation of created children who'd take their place in society? Children demonstrably *superior* to the rest of us? Oh no. That frightened people. They recoiled from that."

"But Miss Emily," I said, "what did any of that have to do with us? Why did Hailsham have to

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Otherwise, he listened and drank. After two or three glasses of the white, the red went down painlessly, like water, at least at first. There were themes – some were canonic and chased each other crazily, others were fugal and ran concurrently, as if disappointment did with bitterness: the century had ended and climate change remained a marginal concern, Bush had torn up Clinton's modest proposals, the United States would turn its back on Kyoto, Blair showed no grip on the subject, the long-ago hopes of Rio were lost. Canonically pursuing then overtaking disappointment was alarm. The Gulf Stream would vanish, Europeans would freeze to death in their beds, the Amazon would be a desert, some continents would catch fire, others would drown, and by 2085 the Arctic summer ice would be gone and the polar bears with it. Beard had heard these predictions before and believed none of them. And if he had, he would not have been alarmed. A childless man of a certain age at the end of his fifth marriage could afford a touch of nihilism. The earth could do without Patrice and Michael Beard. And if it struggled off all the other humans, the biosphere would soldier on, and in a mere ten million years team with strange new forms, perhaps none of them clever in an apeish way. Then who would regret that no one remembered Shakespeare, Bach, Einstein, or the Beard-Einstein Conflation?

While dark and even greater cold enveloped the ship in the lonely frozen fjord, and the brave yellow gleam from its portholes was the only light, the only sign of life for a hundred miles across the crackling icy wastes, other themes flourished symphonically: what was to be done, what treaties were to be made between the quarrelsome nations, what concessions, what gifts should the rich world self-interestedly make to the poor? In the mess room's humid after-dinner warmth, it seemed to the owners of full stomachs sealed with wine that it was only reason that could prevail against short-term interests and greed, only rationality could draw, by way of warning, the indistinct cartoon of a calamitous future in which all must bake, shiver or drown.

did mind. He was not a communally-spirited person, but there were certain deficiencies he took for granted – in himself and therefore in others. He always put his stuff on and below the same peg, number seventeen, and was disappointed to note that others had trouble observing such simple procedures. Gloves were a particular problem, for it was impossible to go outside without them. As a precaution, he stuffed his inside his boots, along with the glove liners. The next day the boots were gone.

He liked the evenings. By the time they started gathering in the mess room before dinner, it had been dark for five hours. There was two hours' drinking before the first course. The wine was from a neglected region of Libya. He generally started on the white, drank the red until he sickened and returned to the white, and there was generally enough time to switch back before bedtime. After dinner, there was, of course, only one topic. Mostly, Beard listened. Never before had he encountered idealists in such concentration and he was by turns intrigued, embarrassed, constrained. When Pickett asked him on the third night to talk about his work he stood up to speak. He described the Centre and the quadruple-helix rooftop wind turbine, plausibly claiming it as his own initiative. It was a revolutionary design, he told the room, and he made a sketch to be passed around. It would cut household bills by eighty-five per cent, a saving that would be the equivalent of building – not quite drunk, he summoned a number – *twenty-three* medium-sized power stations. There were respectful questions, and he answered them judiciously, lucidly. He was among scientific illiterates and could have said anything. There was an impassioned statement of support from Stella Polkinghorne. She said that Beard was the only one here doing something 'real', at which the whole room warmed to him and applauded loudly. He had never cared much what others thought, but now – how lowering – he was touched and could not conceal it, to be, for just a few minutes, the darling of the ship.

The statehood-and-treaty talk was worldly in comparison with another leitmotiv that summoned a cooling measure of austere plainsong, a puritanical air from the old conservation days, distrustful of technological fixes, determined that what was required was a different way of life for everyone a lighter tread on the precious filigree of ecosystems, a near-religious regard for new rules of human fulfilment in order to flourish beyond supermarkets, airports, concrete, traffic, even power stations - a minority view, but heard with guilty respect by all who had steered a stinking snowmobile across the pristine land.

Listening, as he usually did, with Jesus at his side from their corner of the mess room, Beard interjected only once on the last evening when a gangling novelist called Meredith Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, said that more one knew of a particle's position, the less one knew of its velocity, and vice versa, encapsulated for our time the loss of a 'moral compass', the difficulty of absolute judgements. Beard was peevisish in his interruption. It was worthwhile to be correct, he told this crop-haired fellow with rimless glasses. What was at issue was not velocity but momentum, in other words, mass times velocity. At such hair-splitting there were muted groans. Beard said that the principle had no application to the moral sphere. On the contrary, quantum mechanics was a superb predictor of the statistical probability of physical states. The novelist blushed but would not give way. Did he not know who he was talking to? Fine, yes, OK, statistical probability, he insisted, but that was not certainty. And Beard, just finishing his eighth glass of wine and feeling nose and upper lip elevate in contempt for an ignorant trespasser on his field, said loudly that the principle was not incompatible with knowing precisely the state of, say, a photon, so long as one could observe it repeatedly. The analogy in the moral sphere might be to re-examine a moral problem a number of times before arriving at a conclusion. But this was

the point - Heisenberg's Principle would only have application if the sum of right plus wrong divided by the square root of two had any meaning.

The silence in the room was not so much stunned as embarrassed. Meredith stared helplessly as Beard brought his fist down hard on the table. 'So come on. Tell me. Let's hear you apply Heisenberg to ethics. Right plus wrong over the square root of two. What the hell does it mean? Nothing!'

Barry Pickett intervened to move the discussion on. That was an isolated discordant note. What was memorable and surprising came every evening, usually late on, in the bright tones of a marching brass band, or the sound of massed voices in unison, elated in common purpose and obliterating for a while all disappointment, all bitterness. Beard would not have believed it possible that he would be in a room drinking with so many seized by the same particular assumption, that it was art in its highest forms, poetry, sculpture, dance, abstract music, conceptual art, that would lift climate change as a subject, gild it, palpate it, reveal all the horror and lost beauty and awesome threat, and inspire the public to take thought, take action, or demand it of others. He sat in silent wonder. Idealism was so alien to his nature that he could not raise an objection. He was in new territory, among a friendly tribe of exotics. Those sentinel snowmen guarding the foot of the gangplank, the recorded sound of the wind moaning through the rigging, the disc of polished ice that refracted the day-long setting sun, Jesus's penguins, thirty of them, and three polar bears, marching along the ice beyond the ship's bow, the harsh, impenetrable fragment of a novel punctuated with expletives that Meredith read, or shouted, aloud one evening - all these demonstrations, like prayers, like totem-pole dances, were fashioned to deflect the course of a catastrophe.

Such was the music and magic of ship-bound climate-change talk. Meanwhile, on the other side of the wall he had learned to call a bulkhead, the boot room continued to

deteriorate. By midweek four helmets were missing along with three of the heavy snowmobile suits and many smaller items. It was no longer possible for more than two thirds of the company to be outside at the same time. To go out was to steal. The state of the boot room, the gathering entropy, became a subject of Barry Pickett's evening announcements. And Beard, oblivious to his own vital role, his generous assistance in setting the initial conditions, could not help reflecting expansively on this post-lapsarian state. Four days ago the room had started out in orderly condition, with all gear hanging on or stowed below the numbered pegs. Finite resources, equally shared, in the golden age of not so long ago. Now it was a ruin. Even harder to impose order once the room was strewn with backpacks and stuff-bags and supermarket plastic bags half filled with extra gloves and scarves and chocolate bars. No one, he thought, admiring his own generosity, had behaved badly, everyone, in the immediate circumstances, wanting to get out on the ice, had been entirely rational in 'discovering' their missing balaclava or glove in an unexpected spot. It was perverse or cynical of him to take pleasure in the thought, but he could not help himself. How were they to save the earth - assuming it needed saving, which he doubted - when it was so much larger than the boot room?

On the last morning they ate their breakfast to the dim of the entire snowmobile fleet warming up outside. They went out onto the ice, many of them missing pieces of their equipment. Beard was without a helmet. While he waited for the signal to leave, he warmed his goggles on the engine and wound a scarf round his head. The low orange sun was unhindered, there would be a useful tailwind, and it looked like the journey back to Longyearbyen might even be pleasant, if one were fully clothed. There was a shout from the deck. Between them, Barry Pickett and one of the crew were manhandling down the gangplank a huge plastic and fibre sack of the sort that builders use to store sand in. Lost

property. They gathered around the treasure and poked about in it. Beard found a helmet that fitted and knew it must be his. No one was ashamed, or even faintly embarrassed. Here was their stuff. Where had it been hiding all this time?

They said their goodbyes to the crew, and set off in loud and poisonous single file across the fjord towards Longyearbyen, keeping to a stately twenty-five kilometres per hour to avoid the cutting headwind. Hunched low over his machine, trying to draw a little of its heat onto his face, Beard found himself in a mellow state - an unfamiliar cast of mind for the morning. He was not even hung-over. On the frozen shores of the fjord they slowed to walking pace to navigate deep ruts, trenches, in the ice. He could not remember them from the outward journey. But of course, he had been asleep behind Jan's back. Then they were on a long straight snowy track, passing a hut where, the guides had told them, a great eccentric once lived a lonely life.

If Beard thought, he ever travelled by spaceship to another galaxy, he would soon be fatally homesick for these, his brothers and sisters up ahead of him, for everyone, ex-wives included. He was suffused with the pleasant illusion of liking people. Entirely forgivable, all of them. And somewhat cooperative, somewhat selfish, sometimes cruel, above all, funny. The snowmobiles were passing through the narrow, high-sided gully, scene of his shame, a moment best buried. He preferred to recall his cool escape from a murderous bear. But yes, he felt unusually warm towards humankind. He even thought that it could warm to him. Everyone, all of us, individually facing oblivion, as a matter of course, and no one complaining much. As a species, not the best imaginable, but certainly the best, no, the most interesting there was. But what about the general disgrace that was the boot room? Evidently, a matter of human nature. And how were we ever going to learn about that? Science of course was fine, and who knew, art was too, but perhaps self-knowledge was beside the point. Boot rooms needed good systems so that

half-smile, pretending to listen to Saleel's long and too-fulsome introduction, and even more so when at last he stood to bored applause and took his place behind the lectern, gripping tight its edges in both hands, he felt an oily nausea at something monstrous and rotten from the sea, stranded on the tidal mud flats of a stagnant estuary, decaying gaseously in his gut and welling up, contaminating his breath, his words and, suddenly, his thoughts.

'The planet,' he said, surprising himself, 'is sick.'

There was a groan, followed by a susurrus of dismissal from his audience. Pension-fund managers preferred more nuanced terms. But using the word 'sick', rather like vomiting itself, gave Beard some instant relief.

'Curing the patient is a matter of urgency and is going to be expensive - perhaps as much as two per cent of global GDP, and far more if we delay the treatment. I am convinced, and I have come here to tell you, that anyone who wishes to help with the therapy, to be a part of the process and invest in it, is going to make very large sums of money, staggering sums. What's at issue is the creation of another industrial revolution. Here is your opportunity. Coal and then oil have made our civilisation, they have been superb resources, lifting hundreds of millions of us out of the mental prison of rural subsistence. Liberation from the daily grind coupled with our innate curiosity has produced in a mere two hundred years an exponential growth of our knowledge base. The process began in Europe and the United States, has spread in our lifetime to parts of Asia, and now to India and China and South America, with Africa yet to come. All our other problems and conflicts conceal this obvious fact: we barely understand how successful we have been.

'So of course, we should salute our own inventiveness. We are very clever monkeys. But the engine of our industrial revolution has been cheap, accessible energy. We would have got nowhere without it. Look how fantastic it is. A kilogram of gasoline contains roughly thirteen thousand watt hours of

energy. Hard to beat. But we want to replace it. So what's next? The best electrical batteries we have store about three hundred watt hours of energy per kilogram. And that's the scale of our problem, thirteen thousand against three hundred. No contest! But unfortunately, we don't have the luxury of choice. We have to replace that gasoline quickly for three compelling reasons. First, and simplest, the oil must run out. No one knows exactly when, but there's a consensus that we'll be at peak production at some point in the next five to fifteen years. After that, production will decline, while the demand for energy will go on rising as the world's population expands and people strive for a better standard of living. Second, many oil-producing areas are politically unstable and we can no longer risk our levels of dependence. Third, and most crucially, burning fossil fuels, putting carbon dioxide and other gases into the atmosphere, is steadily warming the planet, the consequences of which we are only beginning to understand. But the basic science is in. We either slow down, and then stop, or face an economic and human catastrophe on a grand scale within our grandchildren's lifetime.

'And this brings us to the central question, the burning question. How do we slow down and stop while sustaining our civilisation and continuing to bring millions out of poverty? Not by being virtuous, not by going to the bottle bank and turning down the thermostat and buying a smaller car. That merely delays the catastrophe by a year or two. Any delay is useful, but it's not the solution. This matter has to move beyond virtue. Virtue is too passive, too narrow. Virtue can motivate individuals, but for groups, societies, a whole civilisation, it's a weak force. Nations are never virtuous, though they might sometimes think they are. For humanity en masse, greed trumps virtue. So we have to welcome into our solutions the ordinary compulsions of self-interest, and also celebrate novelty, the thrill of invention, the pleasures of ingenuity and co-operation, the satisfaction of profit.

Oil and coal are energy carriers, and so, in abstract form, is money. And the answer to that burning question is of course exactly where that money, your money, has to flow - affordable clean energy.

Imagine if I were standing in front of you two hundred and fifty years ago - you, a collection of country gentlemen and ladies - predicting the coming of the first industrial revolution, and telling you to invest in coal and iron, steam engines, cotton mills and, later, railways. Or a century or so later, with the invention of the internal combustion engine. I foresaw the growing importance of oil and urged you to invest in that. Or a hundred years on, in microprocessors, in personal computers and the internet and the opportunities they offered. So here, ladies and gentlemen, is another such moment. Do not be tempted by the illusion that the world economy and its stock exchanges can exist apart from the world's natural environment. Our planet earth is a finite entity. You have the data in front of you, you have the choice - the human project must be safely and cleanly fuelled, or it fails, it sinks. You, the market, either rise to this, and get rich along the way, or you sink with all the rest. We are on this rock together, you have nowhere else to go . . .

He was hearing dismissive whispers from separate quarters of the room, which had begun, he thought, on his words 'warming the planet'. His nausea was rising, that bloated carcass within his own was odiously stirring. While listening to Saleel's introduction he had noticed that the velvet curtain behind him had a gap at its centre - an escape route he might just need. He stopped speaking, inhaled deeply, and made himself stand erect and gaze about the room, trying to identify the dissenter. A lifetime of public speaking had taught him the value of the unembarrassed pause. He knew that the solid institutions of the City nurtured a vigorous culture of irrationalist denial, in the face of basic physics and years of good data. The deniers, like people everywhere, wanted business as usual. They feared a threat to shareholder value, they

suspected that climate scientists were a self-serving industry, just like themselves. Beard felt towards them all the contempt of the recent convert.

As he drew breath to continue speaking, he experienced a fishy reflux rising from his gorge, like salted anchovies, with a dash of bile. He closed his eyes, swallowed hard, and changed tack.

I read in yesterday's paper that in just four years' time we'll arrive at the bicentennial of Charles Darwin's birth, and the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the first edition of *The Origin of Species*. The celebrations are bound to obscure the work of another great Victorian scientist, an Irishman named John Tyndall, who began a serious study of the atmosphere in that same year, 1859. One of his interests was light, which is why I feel a special affinity with him. He was the first to suggest that it was the scattering of light by the atmosphere that made the sky blue, and he was the first to describe and explain the hothouse or greenhouse effect. He built experimental equipment that showed how water vapour, carbon dioxide and other gases prevent the earth's warmth from the sun being radiated back out into space, and so make life possible. Remove this blanket of vapour and gases and, as he famously wrote - Beard drew a card from the top pocket of his jacket and read - "You would assuredly destroy every plant capable of being destroyed by a freezing temperature. The warmth of our fields and gardens would pour itself unrequited into space, and the sun would rise upon an island held fast in the iron grip of frost."

By the beginning of the twentieth century it was known to a few that industrial civilisation was adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. In succeeding years it was understood precisely how a molecule of this gas absorbs and contains the longer wavelengths of radiant light and traps heat. The more carbon dioxide, the warmer the planet. In the nineteen sixties an unmanned satellite showed that our neighbour Venus has an atmosphere that is ninety-five per cent carbon

dioxide. And it's more than four hundred and sixty degrees at the surface, hot enough to melt zinc. Without its greenhouse effect, Venus would have roughly the same temperature as the earth. Fifty years ago we were putting thirteen billion metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year. That figure has almost doubled. It's more than twenty-five years since scientists first warned the US government of anthropogenic climate change. In fifteen years there have been three IPCC reports of mounting urgency. Last year a survey of nearly a thousand peer-reviewed papers showed not one dissenting from the majority view. Forget sunspots, forget the Tunguska Meteorite of 1908, ignore the oil industry lobbies and their think-tank and media clients who pretend as the tobacco lobby has done, that there are two sides to this, that scientists are divided. The science is relatively simple, one-sided and beyond doubt. Ladies and gentlemen, the question has been discussed and investigated for a hundred and fifty years, for as long as Darwin's *Origin of Species* has been in print, and is as incontestable as the basics of natural selection. We've observed and we know the mechanisms, we've measured and the numbers tell the story, the earth is warming and we know why. There is no scientific controversy, only this plain fact. That may sadden you or frighten you, but it also should position you beyond doubt free to consider your next move.

The nausea came in on a fresh wave and threatened to disgrace him. He was sweating coldly, he was aching and weak in his spine. He had to keep talking to distract himself. And he had to talk fast. He was being pursued, he had to run.

'So,' he said, cracking the word through something glutinous in his throat. 'Allow me to make some suggestions. Collectively, according to my enquiries, your various organisations represent around four hundred billion dollars of investments. These are golden days in the global markets and sometimes it seems the party will never end. But you

might just have overlooked one sector that is outperforming the rest by doubling every two years. You may have noticed, you may have turned away. Not quite respectable enough, a mere passing fashion, you may have thought, too many of those post-hippie plutocrats from Stanford involved. But also involved are BP, General Electric, Sharp, Mitsubishi. Renewable energy. The revolution has begun. The market will be even more lucrative than coal or oil because the world economy is many times bigger and the rate of change is faster. Colossal fortunes will be made. The sector is seething with vitality, invention – and, above all, growth. It has thousands of unquoted companies positioning themselves with new techniques. Scientists, engineers, designers are pouring into the sector. There are log jams in the patent offices and supply chains. This is an ocean of dreams, of realistic dreams, of making hydrogen from algae, aviation fuel from genetically modified microbes, of electricity out of sunlight, wind, tides, waves, cellulose, household waste, of scrubbing carbon dioxide from the air and turning it into a fuel, of imitating the secrets of plant life. An alien landing on our planet and noticing how it was bathed in radiant energy would be amazed to learn that we believe ourselves to have an energy problem, that we ever should have thought of poisoning ourselves by burning fossil fuels or creating plutonium.

Imagine we came across a man at the edge of a forest in heavy rainfall. This man is dying of thirst. He has an axe in his hand and he is felling the trees in order to suck sap from the trunks. There are a few mouthfuls in each tree. All around him is devastation, dead trees, no birdsong, and he knows the forest is vanishing. So why doesn't he tip back his head and drink the rain? Because he cuts trees expertly, because he has always done it this way, because the kind of people who advocate rain-drinking he considers suspicious types.

That rain is our sunlight. An energy source drenches our planet, drives its climate and its life. It falls on us in a constant stream, a sweet rain of photons. A single photon striking a

semiconductor releases an electron, and so electricity is born, as simple as that, right out of sunbeams. This is photovoltaics. Einstein described it and won a Nobel Prize. If I believed in God, I would say this is his greatest gift to us. Since I don't, I say how auspicious are the laws of physics! Less than an hour's worth of all the sunlight falling on the earth would satisfy the whole world's needs for a year. A fraction of our hot deserts could power our civilisation. No one can own sunlight, no one can privatise or nationalise it. Soon, everyone will harvest it, from rooftops, ships' sails, from kids' backpacks. I spoke of poverty at the start - some of the poorest countries in the world are solar rich. We could help them by buying their megawatts. And domestic consumers will love making power out of sunlight and selling it to the grid. It's primal.

There are a dozen proven ways of making electricity out of sunlight, but the ultimate goal is still ahead, and this is close to my heart. I'm talking of artificial photosynthesis, of copying the methods nature took three billion years to perfect. We'll use light directly to make cheap hydrogen and oxygen out of water, and run our turbines night and day, or we'll make fuels out of water, sunlight and carbon dioxide, or we'll build desalination plants that make electricity as well as fresh water. Believe me, this will happen. Solar will expand, and with your help, and with your and your clients' enrichment, it will expand faster. Basic science, the market and our grave situation will determine that this is the future - logic, not idealism, compels it.

He thought now he was going to be sick. His mind went blank and, fearful of a moment's pause, he spoke of the first thing that came to mind, and lurched into a personal anecdote. Blandly at first, like a man testing a microphone by itemising his breakfast, he summoned for his audience his journey that afternoon from the airport. Before long he was convinced that the story was not such a poor choice after all. He had yet to make real contact with his listeners, he had

said nothing droll, and this was England, where people expected to be amused, however faintly, by speeches on public occasions. He was ahead of the nausea now as he described his purchase of newspapers at the airport shop. When he confessed to a weakness for a certain flavour of crisp there was a stirring of muted amusement in the rows of suited figures. Perhaps it was pity.

He was warning to his tale, convinced that it had a useful conclusion that he would discover in the telling. He set it out, the crowded train, the bottle of water on the table and, by it, the lurid packet opened by himself, and the unnerving stare of a large young man. There were appreciative titters as he described the way the adversaries devoured the snack. Beard did not embellish, but he intensified the moment at which he lunged in revenge at the water bottle and drained it in a few gulps and tossed it back on the table. He lingered on the way the man swung the suitcase down from the rack, and on his own furious refusal to engage with him. He spun them out, those seconds on the station platform before the discovery, which he divulged with a quickening of pulse, and a flush of eager pride when his audience chuckled, or even laughed out loud, as he, boldly miming now, held with outstretched arm the second packet before him, like Hamlet with Yorick's skull. Yes, they all seemed to like him a little more.

He hurried towards his conclusion, his excuse for telling this story. Were his points somewhat forced, or had he stumbled upon two important truths? No time to consider.

What I discovered on Paddington station was, first, that in a grave situation, a crisis, we understand, sometimes too late, that it is not in other people, or in the system, or in the nature of things, that the problem lies, but in ourselves, our own follies and unexamined assumptions. And second, there are moments when the acquisition of new information forces us to make a fundamental reinterpretation of our situation. Industrial civilisation is at just such a moment. We pass

from an old friend, an ex-physicist now working as a consultant in Paris. A consortium of power companies wanted Beard to bring his 'wide experience of green technologies to the task of steering public policy in the direction of carbon-free nuclear energy'. On offer was a salary well into six figures, along with an office in central London, a researcher and a car. Well, of course. The argument could be made. The CO<sub>2</sub> levels went on rising and time was running out. There was really only one well-tested means of producing electricity on a scale to meet the needs of a growing world population, and do it soon, without adding to the problem. Many respected environmentalists had come round to this view, that nuclear was the only way out, the lesser of two evils. James Lovelock, Stewart Brand, Tim Flannery, Jared Diamond, Paul Ehrlich. Scientists and good men all. In the new scale of things, was the occasional accident, the local radiation leak, the worst outcome possible? Even without an accident, coal was daily creating a disaster, and the effects were global. Was not the 28-kilometre exclusion zone around Chernobyl now the biologically richest and most diverse region of Central Europe, with mutation rates in all species of flora and fauna barely above the norm, if at all? Besides, wasn't radiation just another name for sunlight?

The second email was an invitation to address a meeting of foreign ministers at COP 15, the grand climate-change conference in Copenhagen in December. He would be at one with its spirit and he was, he supposed, the perfect choice. He would be there. His starter arrived, orange-coloured cheese, dipped in batter, rolled in breadcrumb and salt and deep-fried, with a creamy dip of pale green. Perfection, and in such quantity. As soon as the area around his booth was clear of waiting staff, he poured the remains of the Genever. He ate rapidly and was down to his last three lozenges, and beginning to wonder if some of them were filled with mushroom, not cheese, when the palmtop vibrated by his plate.

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'Toby.'

'Listen. I've got all kinds of bad news for you, but the worst has just happened, minutes ago.'

Beard noted the strained tone of controlled hostility in his friend's voice.

'Go on.'

'Someone's taken a sledgehammer to the panels. They've gone down the rows and taken them all out. Shattered. We've lost all the catalysts. Electronics. Everything.'

There was no taking this in properly. Beard pushed his plate away. Builder's work. What would Barnard have needed to pay Tarpin? Two hundred dollars? Less?

'What else?'

'We won't be meeting again. I don't think I could bear the sight of you, Michael. But you might as well know. I'm talking to a lawyer in Oregon. I'll be taking action to protect myself against what are rightfully your debts. We, you, already owe three and a half million. Tomorrow's going to cost another half million. You can go down there yourself and explain to all the good people. Also, Braby is going to take you for everything you have and will ever have. And in the UK that dead boy's father has persuaded the authorities to move against you on criminal charges, basically theft and fraud. I hate you, Michael. You lied to me and you're a thief. But I don't want to see you in prison. So stay out of England. Go somewhere that doesn't have an extradition treaty.'

'Anything else?'

'Only this. You deserve almost everything that's coming to you. So go fuck yourself.' The line went dead.

This time he did not conceal the flask as he shook it over his glass. Two drops fell out. His waitress was standing by his elbow with a heaped plate. She was a solemn teenager with hair in a prim ponytail and on her teeth were braces studded with colourful glass beads. It cost her a lot to say what she had to.

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Ian McEwan

'Sir? We have a no-alcohol policy on these premises?'

I didn't know. I'm terribly sorry.'

She took away the bowl with the three cold lozenges and set the main course down before him. Four wedges of skinless chicken breast, interleaved with three minute steaks, the whole wrapped in bacon, with a honey and cheese topping, and served with twice-roasted jacket potatoes already impregnated with butter and cream cheese.

He stared at it a good while. The destination of choice, as the cliché ran, to avoid extradition was Brazil. Was he to buy a ticket to São Paulo and stay with Sylvia? She was a lovely woman, and interesting too. It might not be so bad. But impossible. To soothe himself he took up his knife and fork and was immediately distracted by the sight of the lesion, the melanoma on the back of his hand. It was larger, he thought, since he last looked, and was an angry purplish-brown under the Blooberry's fluorescent lights. Was he really going to deal with this now, along with everything else? He thought it unlikely. It would take care of itself. Nor would he go to the site tomorrow to speak to the angry crowds. Nor would he be saving the world.

He set the cutlery down unused. What he wanted most was to go alone to a bar and sit at the counter with a scotch. It was a short walk down to 4th Street. But he would take the car. He was about to call his waitress over for the check when he heard a commotion on the far side of the restaurant. He turned and saw Melissa with high colour in her cheeks and wearing one of her vibrant Caribbean dresses of big green flowers against a red and black ground. She was striding past the 'Please Wait To Be Seated' sign, and right behind her, surprisingly, was Darlene, and both women looked stormy, furious and rumped, as if they had just had a fight outside. Now they were looking for him. Ahead of them by several feet was Cattriona, carrying a little girl's backpack designed to give the impression that

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a koala bear was clinging to her shoulders for a free ride. She saw her father before the women did and was running towards him, coming to claim him, calling out something indistinct, skipping between the crowded tables. As Beard rose to greet her, he felt in his heart an unfamiliar, swelling sensation, but he doubted as he opened his arms to her that anyone would ever believe him now if he tried to pass it off as love.

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