

A Study of Power Space and Spiritual Space in *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro

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Abstract: A study of power space and spiritual space in *Never Let Me Go* focuses on the power space and spiritual space and their sources. Using Foucault's space theory, this paper reveals the survival dilemma faced by modern people, awakens us intoxicated in the world appearance, and lets us rethink the "abyss" of current and future life and make changes.

Keywords: power space; spiritual space; Kazuo Ishiguro; Foucault

1. Introduction

Kazuo Ishiguro has published seven full-length novels, including *A Pale View of Hills*, *An Artist of the Floating World*, *The Remains of the Day*, *The Unconsoled*, *When We Were Orphans*, *Never Let Me Go*, *The Buried Giant*, and a collection of short stories *Nocturnes: Five Stories of Music and Nightfall* [1].

Kazuo Ishiguro is one of the most famous contemporary British writers. His works are exquisite in structure, elegant and concise in language, profound in thought and of high artistic value [2]. In October 2017, Ishiguro won the Nobel Prize for literature for his immense emotional power in uncovering the abyss beneath our illusory connection with the world.

2. Research Status at Home and Abroad

As early as the 1980s, foreign countries began to study Kazuo Ishiguro's works, with many monographs and journal papers. However, the domestic research on Ishiguro kazuo started late, and the research monograph has been blank for a long time [3]. The journal literature started relatively early, but scholars focused on Ishiguro's Booker Prize-winning novel—*The Remains of the Day*, for a long time and from a single perspective. There are many foreign journal papers on Kazuo Ishiguro from the perspectives of narrative, psychology, identity and international writing.

After entering the new era, domestic research gradually prospered. Research focused on the "other" in the post-colonial context research, subject research, modern science fiction narrative strategy research, novel contains the traditional Japanese culture research, a novel metaphorical image research, identity construction research, modernism and post-modernism research, writing strategy research, "international" writing research, ishiguro fiction film adaptation and space research.

3. Power Space in *Never Let Me Go*

Since 1960s and 1970s, "space" has become the focus of academic circles. In 1967, Foucault delivered his speech alternative space, which began with the following statement: "The present era is an era of space. Today people are anxiously concerned with space, which is undoubtedly more concerned with time." (Foucault, 2003:21). Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment* puts forward the relationship between "space" and "power" [4]. The space is so diverse that people's anxiety about the modern world also comes from this.

"Space" is the focus of Ishiguro's novel. From his works we can see that he designed the space is not flat, the fictional, but like movie space stereo, a new reality and artistic processing, and spent a lot of pen and ink to depict these Spaces, such as: replacement of specific geographical location, fine painting space overall modelling, internal structure and furniture decoration and people in the active

state and wonderful feeling. In particular, the abnormal state of characters in different Spaces is particularly attractive and arousing people's exploration. If you are in it, you can't know the whole picture. Only by stepping out of the style can you realize the purpose of Ishiguro's creation of these Spaces [5].

Moreover, Ishiguro believes that his novels focus on the relationships between characters and the other relationships that emanate from them, and that "space" as a venue for the expression of those relationships is perfectly appropriate. Therefore, we take Ishiguro's "space" as a starting point to explore the deep meaning of the novel [6].

The first chapter discusses the space of power in Ishiguro's writings. Power space is different from ordinary space that can be entered and left freely. It is a highly concentrated forbidden area, which is ubiquitous in daily life. There are two forms of permeable power space: power space of hierarchical surveillance and power space of invisible class.

3.1. Permeable Power Space

In the *Never Let Me Go*, the permeable power space is manifested in the form of disciplining power and ruling power, and the operation means hierarchical monitoring. Their spatial structure is similar to forbidden area. According to Foucault, there is a gate or entrance like switch system, the interior is closed, no one can enter casually, but also has a certain permeability. It reflects that modern power is pervasive and achieves the purpose of controlling people by means of discourse and surveillance.

3.1.1. Power Space of Hierarchical Surveillance

In the power space of hierarchical surveillance, power is expressed in the form of discipline right. "Discipline right" uses different means to intervene in the body, discipline and manage the living body to improve productivity and labor force. Their space features a "panoramic prison" with a complete hierarchical surveillance system inside. Those who want to infiltrate power must be subjected to hierarchical surveillance, which will punish them or expel them as soon as they find transgressions. Hailsham in *Never Let Me Go* is such a space of power. Next, I will take Hailsham as an example to illustrate how the power space of hierarchical monitoring works.

Hailsham, the clone boarding school, was a forbidden place for outsiders and insiders to go out without permission. It was located in a flat valley, surrounded by hills, uplands and dense woods. Only the winding road in the mountains could be seen, which was extremely closed. The switch system is strictly managed. Not only that, but it also has a surveillance geospatial design. If you stand high and far behind Hailsham, you can overlook the students' dormitories and the playground, which means that the school can be monitored by those heights. But Hailsham is also permeable, and the people who enter it have a certain freedom of movement. It allows "students" of all ages, chaperones, Madame Crowder, trucks coming for sports goods, a variety of cultural lessons about the outside world and physiological mysteries, access to any room where they are allowed to interact, play, have sex, and leave after graduation.

However, the students and guardians who infiltrate Hailsham must be subject to hierarchical, continuous, and practical surveillance by their superiors, an anonymous but realistic hierarchical surveillance. In order to make the clone service in the discipline power, without knowing, healthy growth to contribute to the medical productivity of the organ, Hailsham used the means of surveillance, in every corner of the surveillance line, even the students hide in the corner of the house. The guardians of the students are monitored by a higher level, who monitor every class of the guardians in the main building. Anyone who leaks information will be dismissed immediately. Emily, the founder of the school, suspended Miss Lucy, the guardian, for giving too many hints to the children.

3.1.2. Reveal the Operation Mode of Modern Power in Space

The significance of Ishiguro's construction of power space lies in revealing the operation mode of modern power in space.

Foucault believed that modern power has two forms, one is the disciplining power, the other is the ruling power. Discipline power is a new type of power in modern times. It sets up closed forbidden areas such as prison, school and military camp. It regards human as a body with labor force and trains human body into a tame body that can bring huge productive benefits to the economy and society through various ways of monitoring, discipline and punishment. Its discipline method is also modern with the help of modern space. In the 18th century, the emergence of disciplinary power made power

no longer beyond the state and unreachable, but divided into the daily life of modern people, and controlled modern people openly and honestly. Kazuo Ishiguro has shaped the power space of hierarchical surveillance, showing us how disciplinary power operates in modern space. It is an open and closed transparent new prison -- panoramic prison, where the people monitor it at different levels. In the micro way, the monitoring is a ubiquitous, unabashed. It goes into every corner of the space, even if it is not criminal law -- it can also be seen in everyone's space. In this way, the body becomes more docile, standard and obedient to serve "modern" society.

3.1.3. The Exclusive Power Space

If outsiders want to integrate into this space or even conquer it, they will have a fierce confrontation with the indigenous people, which is a hidden duel between ideas and ideology. People create human clones, but they hate and reject them. When his wife went to boarding school, she hated clones and felt humble and afraid of clones, which was invisible. This also reflects the class nature.

3.1.4. Reveal the Universality of Modern Rights

Modern space is the fundamental carrier of power operation. Foucault said: "no matter what form of power operation, space is the fundamental thing". Because of this, power is pervasive in space. It opens space, diffuses into space and penetrates into every corner of space. It is not fixed on a certain front or a specific area, but diffuses everywhere.

4. Spiritual Space in Never Let Me Go

Spirit space refers to create illusion. It exists in the real world, but it excludes the negation of all orders in the real world, such as class relations, power mechanisms, ethical relations between men, women and children, as well as disasters, wars, hunger, diseases and other problems.

4.1. The Spiritual Space Derived from the Family

The so-called "spiritual space derived from family" refers to the spiritual space formed by the breakdown or absence of family.

In the novel, Cathy is trapped in memories due to the mental trauma brought by her identity, and they are lost in a series of mental spaces juxtaposed and interlacing with traditional linear time breaks, past, present and even future time.

4.1.1. The Spiritual Space Filled with Family Love

In *Never Let Me Go*, The Kingsfield Rehabilitation Center is a spiritual space filled with family love. It was real, a paradise for the clones Cathy and Tommy. They were alone together, from the physical contact to the communication of mind, from passion lover to rely on eachothers' relatives. They chat, read and paint together, there is the "home" have the power to live. So the two clones try their best to delay donation and maintain the spiritual home. The space of rehabilitation center is the imagination and expectation of clones. Because since birth, they have been in no home, no relatives of the spiritual state, the rehabilitation center for the first time to feel the family, for the impossible to enjoy the human life of the clone is precious.

Therefore, the formation of the spiritual space filled with affection is rooted in people's desire for a happy family and harmonious family, which is also derived from the mental trauma caused by family division in reality.

4.1.2. Reveal the Mental Trauma Caused by Modern Family Division

Kazuo Ishiguro constructs the spiritual space derived from the family, not only to express the traumatic psychology of the characters in the novel, but also to reveal the family crisis commonly faced by modern people and the spiritual pain brought by the family. Because the home is very important to a person, it is a geographical space for people to rest, is a member of the family emotional communication, the relationship between ideas, get trust and recognition, it also includes material culture, social identity, national identity, gender relations, is a small society

Therefore, clone people are looking for the spiritual space of "home", repairing the pain of family affection. As contemporary people, we are also so.

Looking at the present, the rich material life occupies the spiritual space, the complex social

relations make people build the heart wall, the tired people scattered in every corner of the city, the overflow of social circle has weakened the important status of family. Developed communication technology to transmit sound and video, so that the communication between relatives more superficial, heart-to-heart days are gone. Marriage becomes impure, external temptations taint the original intention of love, parents tend to bring up their children for utilitarian purposes, and young people gradually cut off contact with their families while pursuing independent life. Spiritual alienation in modern society makes people's psychological distance gradually further and further, and also promotes their longing for home. Ishiguro describes the spiritual space came from family, reveals the modern society divided family causing trauma, the characterization of the people the longing for harmony harmonious family relations, fast understanding between relatives, maintain a common spiritual home, otherwise, The "home" will become an illusory place providing only the illusion of "home".

4.2. The Spiritual Space Derived from Modern Technology

In fact, the source of modern people's mental trauma is not only the family mentioned above, but also the rapid development of modern technology that breaks the limit. In Kazuo Ishiguro's novel, human beings develop modern technology irrationally in order to prolong their life indefinitely, leading to the runaway of science and technology and the advent of an unethical society. In this section, we will focus on the spiritual space in *The Never Let Me Go* soft science novel, and reveal the formation of the spiritual space derived from modern technology and its tectonic significance.

4.2.1. The Spiritual Space under the Development of Science and Technology

Norfolk is a spiritual space born of modern technology, really existing in the world of the novel. Kathy not only found her childhood favorite tape, but also found her long-lost love. Norfolk also gave the clones a taste of what they wanted human life to be.

In their search for Ruth in Norfolk, they followed the city's office workers, visited their well-heeled office buildings and saw their dream jobs. Ruth's "prototype" is a white-collar, her career and life are Ruth's dream desire, she is fashionable dress, love art, elegant manners, all of Ruth's dreams are realized on her, so that Ruth indirectly realized the right to pursue a better life. Unaware of the true identity of the clones, humans here wave to them in a friendly way and talk to them on an equal basis, making them feel the kindness of the world. Norfolk fulfilled all the fantasies of the clones about the world and humanity, and made them so attached to it that Kathy regarded it as the final home of her soul, returning to it again before she began to donate herself, imagining that all that she had lost, along with her loved ones, would be recovered here.

In essence, clones are not considered as "natural human beings" because they are not sexually reproducing human beings in the natural order of things, but rather new species created by biochemical techniques in laboratory containers. As a result, they have no blood relatives and have not experienced kinship love growing up. In boarding schools, they are just scary biological monsters in the eyes of the school staff, who are not respected and recognized by anyone. Therefore, the clone traveled to Norfolk many times to absorb the human love and warmth. They observe human beings interact, they learn how to love, and by interacting with human beings, they feel loved. You can have human rights, even the right to life can be taken away, they are just "things".

4.2.2. The Troubles Brought by Modern Technology

In *Never Let Me Go*, cloning is the super modern technology, bringing human cloning to the real life. On the one side, it is undoubtedly that people are benefited from human cloning. On the another side, cloning is an anti-ethical activity, doing harm on the development of science and technology. Through cloning, we can sense that human are so selfish that we prefer sacrificing others' benefits to obtaining what we want, which is the degradation of human spirit. Of course, it is caused by the high technology.

4.2.3. Criticize the Anti-ethical Society under the Development of Science and Technology

From the successful cloning of frog in 1952, to the cloning of fish in 1963, to the cloning of sheep in 1997, and to the cloning of monkey in 2000, human cloning technology has made great progress, and ethical issues have become the focus of the world. In 1978, the success of test-tube baby stimulated the development of surrogacy industry. It is hard to imagine that one day in the future, human beings go beyond ethical principles and breed cloned human beings or robots with human consciousness. How will human beings define them, how will they survive in the society that violates human ethics, and how will they react against human beings and bring terrible disasters to human beings. Ishiguro lead to

construct such society to show the spirit of hope—human clones simple guileless life space. He borrowed these absurd mental space to protest against the current unreasonable technology practice, has criticized those who violate the social ethics, scientific ethics and bioethics modern science and technology, alert the misuse of science and technology. It is an incalculable disaster not only for technological products but also for human beings.

4.2.4. Metaphor for the Degradation of Human Spirit Caused by High Technology

Kazuo Ishiguro also satirizes the ugly human nature that is increasingly corrupted in order to satisfy personal desires under the development of high technology by constructing the spiritual space derived from modern science and technology. Spiritual space means death without oppression and anti-ethics for cloned people, which is also a metaphor for the paradise that modern humans yearn for, where life is extended indefinitely and death is free from disease. However, at the cost of sacrificing the lives of others, mankind pursues the spirit of space, pursues self-survival and yearns for the world. It reflects only the regression of “human nature”, the degeneration of the spirit, marking the degeneration of “human”, and the clone is just the opposite.

Kazuo Ishiguro created such a spiritual space, which is a metaphor for the degradation of human spirit under the development of science and technology. However, he is not rejecting the development of science and technology, but calling for rationality and opposing the development of science and technology at the cost of destroying humanity and spiritual degradation.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, from what we have discussed above, we know that there are some connections between space and power. Nowadays, space has been the focus. Undoubtedly, space power is everywhere, but Kazuo Ishiguro teaches us to be optimistic and calls for justice, being rational towards high technology and rejecting to abuse technology to hit the mark. If not, it would be mankind’s spiritual degradation.

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