



دراسة مقارنة لنزع الإنسانية الحيواني والميكانيكي في روايتي "حكاية الخادمة" و "لا تدعني أرحل"

م.م. مروة عبد اللطيف سلطان كاظم

الجامعة المستنصرية/ كلية الآداب

eyesmagic434@yahoo.com

الملخص:

يختص هذا البحث في ظاهرتي "التشبيء" و"نزع الإنسانية" في روايتي مارغريت أتوود "قصة أمة" (1985) وكازو إيشيغورو "لا تدعني أرحل" (2005). وباستخدام منهج وصفي تحليلي مقارنة، تستكشف الدراسة كيف تحوّل الأنظمة القمعية الجسد البشري إلى مورد استهلاكي. ويستند الإطار النظري إلى نموذج نيك هاسلام المزدوج لنزع الإنسانية (الحيواني والميكانيكي)، ومعايير مارثا نوسباوم للتشبيء (وخاصة التبادلية والاستخدام الأداة)، ومفهوم ميشيل فوكو للسياسة الحيوية. وتجادل الدراسة بأن الروائيتين تستخدمان "التجريد الحيواني" لاختزال الأفراد إلى وظائف بيولوجية - كالتكاثر - و"التجريد الميكانيكي" للتعامل معهم كقطع غيار طبية قابلة للاستبدال. تكشف النتائج أنه على الرغم من الدوافع الأيديولوجية لثيوقراطية أتوود وديستوبيا إيشيغورو العلمية، فإنهما يشتركان في استراتيجيات هيكلية تتمثل في "التجسيد المزدوج". تعمل هذه الاستراتيجيات على إزالة التكلفة الأخلاقية للقمع، جاعلة الجرائم ضد الإنسانية تبدو مجرد تفاصيل فنية. وأخيراً، يُبرز البحث كيف تُشكّل "الذاكرة" و"الفعل السردي" أدوات أساسية للشخصيات الرئيسية لاستعادة هويتها المفقودة في مواجهة السيطرة البيولوجية التي تُديرها الدولة.

كلمات المفتاحية: التشبيء، نزع الإنسانية، السياسة الحيوية، مارغريت أتوود، كازو إيشيغورو، هاسلام، نوسباوم

A Comparative Study of Animalistic and Mechanistic Dehumanization in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

Assistant Lecturer. Marwa Abdulateef Sultan Kadim

AL-Mustansiriya University/College of Arts

eyesmagic434@yahoo.com

Abstract

This research examines the phenomena of "dehumanization" in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid* (1985) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005). Employing a descriptive, analytical, and comparative approach, the study explores how oppressive regimes transform the human body into a consumable resource. The theoretical framework draws on Nick Haslam's dual model of dehumanization (animal and mechanical), Martha Nussbaum's criteria for reification (**particularly fungibility and instrumentality**), and Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics. The study argues that both novels employ "animalistic dehumanization" to reduce individuals to biological functions, such as reproduction and "mechanical dehumanization" to treat them as replaceable medical spare parts. The findings reveal that, despite the ideological motivations of Atwood's theocracy and Ishiguro's scientific dystopia, they share a structural strategy of "double reification." This strategy effectively eliminates the moral cost of repression, making crimes against humanity appear as mere technicalities. Finally, the research highlights how "memory" and "narrative action" serve as



ultimate tools for protagonists to reclaim their lost identity against state-managed biological control.

Keywords: objectification, dehumanization, biopolitics, Margaret Atwood, Kazuo Ishiguro, Haslam, Nussbaum

Introduction

Dystopian literature serves as a mirror reflecting humanity's existential anxieties regarding absolute power and biological commodification. In this context, the human body is no longer merely a physical entity but has become a "political space" subjected to the most extreme forms of control. Margaret Atwood's **The Handmaid's Tale** (1985) and Kazuo Ishiguro's **Never Let Me Go** (2005) stand out as critical studies of how human identity is deconstructed. While Atwood focuses on the theocracy that enslaves the womb, Ishiguro focuses on the science that harvests organs; however, both share a common strategy: objectification.

The research problem lies in the ethical and existential dilemma arising from the "dehumanization" of humanity. The protagonists in both works face a system that not only subjects them to physical oppression but also redefines their very humanity. In Gilead, women are reduced to instinctual biological functions, and in Ishiguro's world, clones are reduced to medical-mechanical roles. The central question this study poses is: how do animalistic and mechanistic metaphors contribute to the creation of oppressive systems that legitimize the crushing of individual identity and the reduction of human beings to consumable resources.?

This study is based on Nick Haslam's (2006) model, which posits a unique duality of dehumanization. The first is animalistic dehumanization, which denies human uniqueness, such as reason and morality, reducing humans to beasts. The second is mechanistic dehumanization, which denies human nature, such as emotion and warmth, reducing humans to machines. The study also intersects with Martha Nussbaum's concepts of objectification, specifically the idea of "fungibility," where the individual becomes a spare part that can be replaced by another without regard for their intrinsic value.

Despite the abundance of feminist studies on Atwood and ethical studies on Ishiguro, there is a clear gap in the systematic comparison of the two novels from the perspective of the psychology of dual objectification. Most previous literature has treated the two novels as separate entities; therefore, this study seeks to bridge this gap by demonstrating that "objectification" is not merely a passing theme, but rather a structural technique shared by religious dystopia (Atwood) and scientific dystopia (Ishiguro).

The study follows a descriptive-analytical approach based on close reading of the texts. The study will focus on analyzing linguistic markers that reinforce objectification, such as "vessel" and "completion." It will also employ comparative analysis to identify points of intersection between Atwood's



"slaughterhouse language" and Ishiguro's "laboratory language," and how these two languages lead to the same outcome: the blurring of the boundaries between human being and object

This research posits that the oppressive regimes in both novels succeed in controlling individuals through a strategy of "double objectification." By portraying the victim as an animal (for reproductive purposes) or a machine (for organ harvesting), the moral cost of oppression is minimized, making the crime against humanity appear as a technical procedure or a biological necessity. "Memory" remains the only avenue through which the protagonists attempt to reclaim their lost humanity.

2 .Literature Review.

The literature review in this study serves as a bridge between Atwood's classical feminist analyses and Ishiguro's contemporary bioethical analyses, focusing on the theme of "dehumanization".

2.1Critical Perspectives on The Handmaid's Tale

Literary criticism of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* has undergone a significant methodological evolution, moving from traditional feminist analysis toward more advanced discursive and biopolitical frameworks. This evolution has been characterized by a continued focus on the objectification of the body as a central mechanism of control within the framework of this study's dual objectification hypothesis.

Scarano D'Antonio (2021) highlights how Offred's narrative constitutes textually interactive resistance through parody of biblical narratives. It deconstructs Gilead's dominant discourse through Kristeva's *écriture féminine*, thereby exposing the contradictions of the system and proposing alternative conceptions of humanity .This analysis complements Hussein (2025)112–130,p.), who applies critical discourse analysis to demonstrate the dual function of language in Gilead, where the possessive label (of-fred) is used as a tool of oppression, while the inversion of the narrative achieves more effective resistance in the television adaptation than in the novel .

In a socio-pragmatic context, Majid (2025,p. 88–105) demonstrates how gender discrimination in Gilead transforms women into biological units of production through social pragmatism, with linguistic resistance revealing the fragility of patriarchal dominance .On the other hand, Ibrahim (2024,p67–89.) analyzes the pseudo-matriarchal society in Gilead, which weakens the female classes through internal conflict, where maids become "reproductive machines" and wives "patriarchal overseers" in a hierarchy that serves male power .



Finally, Al-Tae and Hussein (2025,P. 112–130) offer a Foucauldian reading of structural surveillance in the Red Center and disciplinary rituals as governmental mechanisms that transform women's bodies into sites of direct biopolitical population control.

These studies confirm an analytical evolution from classical feminism toward discursiveness and biopolitics, validating Atwood's precision in dissecting bodily objectification as a system of control that supports the animal-mechanical objectification hypothesis of this Search.

2.2 Critical Perspectives on Never Let Me Go

Recent critical studies of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Don't Let Me Go* focus on biocapitalism, posthumanism, and psychological trauma, with particular emphasis on mechanistic objectification as a central mechanism of control that underpins the dual objectification hypothesis of this research.

Pokharel et al. (2025,P.1) offer a Marxist reading that demonstrates how Helsham has been transformed from an educational institution into a “corporate apparatus that normalizes the objectification of bodies,” where clones become exchangeable commodities in which emotions are suppressed in favor of use-value. This view is complemented by Banerjee (2024) with the concept of “gene worship,” showing how technology produces clones as racial products “exchangeable in service of a future deprived of them” (Banerjee, 2024, p. 1).

From a biopolitical perspective, Sadeq (2024) analyzes power as a life management system that transforms clones into "bare lives" managed for political and economic purposes. Wang (2023,p.1) reinforces this with Agamben's concept of "Homo sacrament," where spatial isolation transforms clones into a legal exception that justifies their "legal" deprivation of life .

Within a post-humanist framework, Kutovyi (2025,p.1) highlights multiple layers of mechanistic objectification in the construction of clone bodies and the emotional reality of the non-human, revealing "the moral bankruptcy of a society that uses life" . Xu and Wang (2025,p.1) offer a pre-doctoral reading that reveals the clones' pursuit of subjectivity through the production of "pure life" (Zoe) as a nomad resistance that deconstructs objectification.

Afzal et al. (2025) demonstrate how repressed knowledge of predetermined fate shapes the identities and relationships of the clones through Freudian and Lacanian catharsis. Wajiran and Maslida (2025) assert that non-linear narratives and identity fragmentation are hallmarks of collective trauma manifested in a dystopian social order.



These studies demonstrate a methodological evolution from classical critiques of capitalism towards post-humanism and biopolitics, affirming Ishiguro's mechanistic reification as a complement to Atwood's animalistic reification, thus supporting the dual reification hypothesis of this research.

Chapter Three

3. Theoretical Framework: Haslam's Dehumanization Model

3.1 Animalistic Dehumanization: Concept and Mechanisms

Animalistic dehumanization is a cornerstone of Nick Haslam's model (Haslam, 2006). It represents the psychological and social process by which individuals or groups are deprived of their "human uniqueness" (HU). Haslam argues that humans are distinguished from other living beings by a set of essential characteristics, most notably: the capacity for complex logical reasoning, a high degree of moral consciousness, social refinement, and the ability to control impulses (Haslam, 2006, p. 257). When an individual is stripped of these characteristics in public or political discourse, they are forcibly relegated to a subhuman status, specifically to the status of an "animal".

The mechanism of animalistic dehumanization relies on "reductionist biology," that is, reducing the complex human being to their basic, instinctual bodily functions (such as eating, sleeping, and reproduction). In this context, the victim is not viewed as a malevolent being or a cold "machine" (as in mechanistic abstraction), but rather as an "instinctual" being lacking intelligence, dignity, or self-control. This categorization reduces the moral cost of exploiting the victim; just as it is permissible for humans to use animals for labor or production, it becomes socially "acceptable" to exploit "animalized" groups to serve the system's ends.

In dystopian literature, particularly in the novels **The Handmaid** and **Never Let Me Go**, this concept manifests as a tool for total biological control. In **Gilad**, the "handmaid" is likened to "trophy pigs" or "pots," metaphors intended to convince society that these women do not possess "rational selves" or civil rights, but are merely raw biological resources for reproduction. In contrast, Ishiguro portrays clones as a herd isolated and raised on educational farms (such as Hilsham), where they are denied participation in genuine human culture. This makes the process of "harvesting their organs" appear to society as a mere agricultural or veterinary procedure rather than a crime against humanity (Black, 2009, p. 786).

This animalistic abstraction acts as an "ideological veil," blurring the boundaries between "person" and "animal." By denying the victim's intellectual and moral capacity, they are stripped of their agency and reduced to an "object" available for biological consumption. This paves the way for what Michel Foucault calls



"biopolitics," where the management of life and death becomes a purely technical matter concerning the "human herd".

3.2 Mechanistic Dehumanization: Concept and Mechanism

Mechanistic dehumanization represents the second pattern in Nick Haslam's model (Haslam, 2006). It differs fundamentally from animal dehumanization in that it does not target "rationality" but rather "human nature" (HN). Haslam argues that what makes us "human" is our possession of emotional warmth, vitality, psychological resilience, and agency. When an individual is stripped of these attributes, they are forcibly reduced to the status of an "inanimate object," a "machine," or a "functional tool".

The mechanism of mechanical dehumanization relies on portraying the victim as a cold, rigid being, devoid of psychological depth. In this pattern, the victim is not seen as an "instinctual" being (an animal), but rather as a "programmed" being performing predetermined functions without emotional awareness or a genuine feeling of pain. The "mechanically anthropomorphized" victim is treated as an instrument, denied the capacity to feel suffering, thus making their exploitation appear as a purely technical procedure devoid of any moral guilt (Haslam, 2006, p. 258).

In dystopian literature, particularly in the comparison between Margaret Atwood and Kazuo Ishiguro, mechanistic abstraction emerges as a tool of technological and political domination. In **Never Let Me Go**, the clones are mechanically constructed by defining their existence as stores of spare parts. The use of the term "completion" instead of "death" is the culmination of this abstraction; it is the machine that completes its cycle or reaches the end of its usefulness, while it is the human being who dies. This classification reduces the bodies of cloned individuals to mere "cogs" in the global medical machine, mechanically dismantled (through organ donation) to ensure the continued functioning of the original "human machine" (Griffin, 2009, p. 650).

In *"Handmaid"*, this mechanical abstraction manifests through procedural routines and linguistic programming. Transforming the act of reproduction into a technically structured "ceremony," in which three individuals participate as parts of a single engine, strips the participants of their human warmth and reduces them to functional instruments. Here, "action" is separated from "feeling," which Offred describes as her soul being separated from her body while performing her mechanical function as a handmaid.

Mechanical abstraction, as this study presents it, is the means by which systems transform living beings into replaceable "objects." By scanning the victim's "emotional uniqueness," society is transformed into a large laboratory or a huge



maintenance workshop, where the value of the individual is determined solely by their functional efficiency, which paves the way for the dominance of "biopolitics" that prioritizes the maintenance of systems over the dignity of individuals.

3.3 Martha Nussbaum's Theory and the Connection Between the Two Works

To deepen the comparative analysis between **The Handmaid ** and **Never Let Me Go**, this research draws on philosopher Martha Nussbaum's (1995) thesis on objectification. Nussbaum argues that objectification is not a singular concept, but rather comprises seven fundamental elements that lead to the treatment of a person as an object. Here, we will focus on three elements that fundamentally connect Gilead and Helsham:

3.3.1 First: Fungibility

Nussbaum argues that objectification occurs when an individual is viewed as a tool that can be replaced by other tools of the same kind.

The Connection Between the Two Works: In **The Handmaid's **, this idea is clearly evident in the system of "functional names." When a handmaid disappears (such as Oveglin), it is immediately replaced by another woman who takes the same name, suggesting that it is the "womb" that matters, not the "woman who owns the womb." Similarly, in **Never Let Me Go**, clones are treated as interchangeable carbon copies; each clone is merely a biological "spare part" to fulfill a medical need, thus negating individuality and uniqueness (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 257).

3.3.2. Second: Denial of Autonomy and Agency

According to Nussbaum, a person is constructed when they are treated as an entity lacking the capacity for self-determination or initiative.

The connection between the two works: In both novels, the protagonists are stripped of their "will" and transformed into passive beings. In **Gilad**, the "nation" is domesticated to accept its fate as a vessel, and in **Hillsham**, the clones are "conditioned" educationally and psychologically to accept "completion" (death) as a social obligation. This denial of subjectivity transforms the human being from a "subject" to a "passive" or "instrument" in the hands of the system (Haslam, 2006; Nussbaum, 1995).

3.3.3. Third: Ownership. Objectification involves treating the person as an object that can be bought, sold, or possessed.



The connection between the two works: The idea of the "body as public property" is prominent in both works. In Atwood's work, the body belongs to the state and the leader for the purpose of procreation. In Ishiguro's work, the body belongs to the medical establishment for the purpose of harvesting. This "commodification" is the point where animal objectification (an object to be owned) intersects with mechanical objectification (a product to be consumed).

3.4. Biopolitics by Michel Foucault's Thought

The concept of biopolitics, coined by the French philosopher Michel Foucault, is the political framework that explains how "biological life" has become an object of authoritarian practice. In his book **The History of Sexuality** (1978), Foucault argues that power in modern times has undergone a fundamental transformation. Whereas "sovereign power" once meant the ruler's right to "take life or let the subjects live," modern power has shifted to what he calls "biopower," a power that aims to "make life live or let it die" (Foucault, 1978, p. 140).

Biopolitics relies on the exercise of control and regulation over the "social body" as a biological entity. Here, issues such as reproduction, public health, birth rates, and death rates become not merely individual choices, but rather "statistical files" managed by the state to ensure the efficiency and strength of the system. In this Foucauldian perspective, the body is not treated as a legal entity with rights, but rather as a "biological machine" whose production must be optimized (Anatomopolitics of the human body) or as a "human species" whose reproduction must be regulated (Biopolitics of the population).

In the fictional context of Margaret Atwood and Kazuo Ishiguro, biopolitics manifests itself in its most dystopian form. In the Republic of Gilead, the state exercises a "nationalization of biological functions," where the female body is stripped from its owner and transformed into public property belonging to the state to solve the infertility crisis. Here, the nation is not a citizenry, but a "biological resource" subject to strict control to ensure the continuation of the "human species" for the ruling class. In Ishiguro's world, biopolitics takes on a capitalist medical character, where entire bodies (clones) are "manufactured" for the sole purpose of serving as a storehouse of biological spare parts. Life here is mechanically produced and maintained to serve another life, embodying what Foucault calls the "politicization of bare life".

The connection between "biopolitics" and models of "dehumanization" (Haslam) reveals the strategy of oppressive regimes: biopower first needs to dehumanize the victim (either animalistically, by reducing them to the function of reproduction, or mechanically, by reducing them to the function of donation) in order to morally and scientifically justify the exercise of absolute control over



their body. In this sense, objectification becomes the oil that drives the gears of the biopolitical machine, where the human being is transformed from an "end" into a mere "biological given" in the equation of the regime's survival and growth.

Based on the foregoing, it becomes clear that animal and mechanical objectification (Haslam) are the two psychological tools that pave the way for the dominance of biopolitics (Foucault). By classifying humans as instinctual beings or functional machines, it becomes easier for the regimes in *The Handmaid* and *Never Let Me Go* to manage bodies as objects, thus erasing the gap between the human being and raw material.

Chapter 4

4.1 The Handmaid's Tale: A Textual Analysis of Animalistic Dehumanization 4.1

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* exposes dehumanization by the forced restriction of handmaids to consider them mere reproductive bodies. At the beginning of the novel, Offred says:

"We are wombs with legs, nothing more: sacred vessels, walking chalices" (Atwood, 1985, p. 136).

The metaphor of the "womb with legs" characterizes animalistic dehumanization, decreasing their role women to a mere function of their biological ability. The paradox of the "sacred vessels" shows how religious discourse covers exploitation, transforming living women into sacred vessels. This aligns with Haslam's (2006, p.257) confirmation that animalistic dehumanization relies on the denial of peerless human characteristics like rationality and moral will .

The narrative of Offred frequently hesitates between separated observation and painful awareness, revealing the psychological disintegration resulting from dehumanization. In one passage, she says:

"I used to regard my body as an instrument of pleasure, a means of transport, or a tool for the fulfillment of my will... Now, the body has changed shape" (Atwood, 1985, p. 73).

Here, the internal monologue of maid reflects her isolation from her body as a source of self. Her body became the property of the state , she no longer own it .The linguistic construction "the body has changed shape" depicts her body as an independent substance, separate from consciousness, reflecting the objectification of the female body.

As Nussbaum (1995, p.257) explains, objectification occurs when one's body or its functions are treated as instruments for the purposes of another (p. 257).



Atwood also uses ritualistic language and atmosphere to show the brutal objectification of women. During the “ritual,” Offred recounts:

”My arms are raised; she holds my hand, her hand and his. This is supposed to symbolize that we are one body, one being” (Atwood, 1985, p. 96).

The artificial intimacy of this act highlights the degradation of spiritual unity; the servant is physically fixed in place while her identity is symbolically removed. The phrase “one being” deletes a triad of dominance—the master, the wife, and the servant—bound in a forced ritual. Religious symbolism is used to permit this enslavement, recalling Foucault’s (1995,139) argument that systems of power produce submission by planting meaning in bodies .

Language itself becomes a mechanism of control. Offred recalls how reading and writing were forbidden:

”The pen between my fingers is exciting, almost alive. I feel its power, the power of the words it contains” (Atwood, 1985, p. 186).

This moment of forbidden pleasure in language focuses on how literacy ,and thus self-expression is criminalized to obligate dehumanization. The pen, portrait as “alive,” symbolizes, awareness, autonomy and human rareliness , precisely what Gilead denies women. By restricting language, the state deprives individuals of the means to conceive of identity or resistance, which aligns with Haslam’s conception of dehumanization as a denial of rationality and moral agency (2006, p. 258).

Even Offred’s fragmented narrative style reveals the psychological impact of reduction to mere animal beings. Her changes between past and present reflect a consciousness striving to maintain its coherence amidst this fragmentation.

“I narrate; therefore, you are,” she says, inverting Descartes’s rationalist maxim (Atwood, 1985, p. 248).

By confirming her narrative voice, Offred resists reduction to silence. Although she cannot act openly, storytelling becomes an act of reclamation, proof that the human self persists even under complete objectification.

4.2.Never Let Me Go: A Textual Analysis of Automated Dehumanization

In her novel *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro portrays accurate and insidious process of automated dehumanization, in which characters are deprived from their emotional authenticity and individuality. Cathy H., the narrator, talks in a calm, emotionless voice, even in moments of loss. When she recalls her childhood at Highsham, she says:

“We were always told how special we were... but we never really understood what that meant” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 81).



This paradox being "special" without understanding why characterizes the paradox of automated oppression: the machines are human enough in order to obey and work, but not human enough to be valued. Haslam (2006,p.258) defines mechanical dehumanization as the deprivation of persons from warmth, emotion, and agency , all of which are systematically removed from Highsham's curriculum and emotional conditioning.

Language has an active role in the novel's normalization of death and pain. Cathy never uses the word "death," instead pointing to "completion." She portrays the destiny of her friends:

“After Ruth had completed her life, I looked after her for a while... I took her to rehabilitation centers, and we talked about Haylsham" (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 199).

The use of "completion" as a metaphor reduces the blow of death, decreasing the moral tragedy to a routine procedure. This bureaucratic tone mirrors the mechanized world in which human being suffering is arranged administratively. Sontag (1978,p.59) referring to that this linguistic abstraction delivers violence into a technical process, depriving it of any moral value. Cathy's negative tone reveals how deeply ingrained the system's logic is include her.

The clones' longing for love and art confirms their conflicts for human dignity within a system that neglects it. When Cathy reminiscences listening to “Never Let Me Go,” she says:

”I was holding an old pillow to my chest, singing softly, and I began to imagine it as a child... I closed my eyes, held it to my chest, and rocked it gently” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 70).

This scene characterizes Cathy's unconscious yearning for intimacy and creativity, qualities neglected to the clones who are enable of reproduction. Her tears represents not only their sadness but also a fleeting awareness of her humanity. Miss Emily later discuss that the guards promoted art to confirm that the clones “have souls” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 255), but this very justification portrays their humanism: humanity must be proven by performance. decreasing life to mere mechanical clue echoes Nussbaum's (1995,p.257) confirmation that treating individuals as tools for external purposes constitutes exploitation .

Tommy's confusion with the art requirement also refers to his resistance to mechanization. When he realizes that art offers him no moral validation, he breaks down, saying:

.“It's no use, Cathy... It's over. It's too late” (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 276)

Tommy's profound despair contrasts sharply with Cathy's composure, revealing two possible products of mechanized dehumanization: emotional collapse and



emotional annihilation. The tragedy of the clones depends not only in their exploitation but also in their acceptance of it. Their "quiet" extinction represents what Haslam (2006,p.260) calls the most complete form of mechanized dehumanization, where the victim internalizes their objectification .

Chapter five

5.1 Memory as an Act of Rebellion in The Handmaid's Tale 5.1

In Gilead, the state aims to remove the past in order to create the present the only reality. But by preserving "memory" Offred resists this objectification. Here, memory is not only nostalgia; it is a political tool to assert that she is a "self" with a history, not simply a "container" of the present.

" I repeat my name to myself. I tell myself my name is not Offred, it is someone else... I keep the knowledge of this name like something hidden, some treasure I'll come back to dig up, one day." (Atwood, 1985, p. 84)

By neglecting her name, Clinging to the old name is a direct rebellion against "mechanical objectification." The name which is given by the state (Offred) is a sign of ownership, while her original name is referred to "human uniqueness." By recalling her name in her mind, Offred rebuilt the "human agency" that the state has deprived from her. Memory here works as a private space that biopolitics cannot prelude, proving that the so-called "thing" still possesses a rebellious "soul". That also refers to her awareness to injustice of the state.

5.2. Search for Soul by Art in Never Let Me Go

By creativity, the clones face objectification in Ishiguro's world, "The Gallery" characterizes a gathered try to demonstrate that human "spare parts" has "interiority." The students discuss that art is considers as collective clue of the entity of the soul, thus negating their status as "deaf machines".

" 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." (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 260)

This attempt is succeeded narratively, although it never changes the fate of the clones. Art in the novel is the against of "animalistic objectification"; animals do not draw or make beauty. By hanging to their memories of Hilsham and their artwork, Cathy and her friends reject to be as "numbers" in donation records. Cathy's confirmation see on writing her story is itself an act of "re-humanization," changing her status from a "subject" of medical study into a "narrator" with her own voice.

5.3 Narrative as a Shield Against Forgetness

In the two novels ,both narratives agree that "the word" is the last line of defense:



In Atwood's work, Offred registers her story (on cassette tapes, as seen in the historical epilogue) to leave a trace, confronting the notion that she is a "tool" to be used and forgotten.

In Ishiguro's work, Cathy uses narrative to piece together the fragments of her life, believing that her memories of Tommy and Ruth add to her life a "meaning" that transcends the function of organ donation.

5.4 Timeless Connections: An Analysis of the Latin Locker Message

The Latin phrase **"Nolite te bastardes carborundorum"** that Offred noticed that engraved in her locker is considered one of the most powerful symbols of resistance against **"mechanical dehumanization"**. In a system that longing for isolating individuals and change them into silent, desolated cogs in a machine, this message could be as a "narrative" act of rebellion.

"It was a message, and it was in code... It was a scrap of paper, it was a voice. It was a hand reaching out from the past." (Atwood, 1985, p. 156)

According to Haslam's (2006) model, dehumanization steals individuals of their "inner depth" and history. But this engraved phrase, though untruthful Latin—functions as a "human connection" that can be stripped from isolation. She confirms to Offred that she is not the first "tool" to live in this room, that another "self" before her experience from suffer and still resistance. This message rehabilitates the "human agency"; it turns the wall from a prison boundary into a means of communication. The knowledge that another woman "was here" can gave Offred a feel of individuality and name, undermining Gilead's attempt to turn the handmaids into, interchangeable, identical and irreplaceable mechanical copies.

5.5 Personal Possessions: Material Re-humanization

In dystopia, because individual ownership reinforces the sense of "self." humans are deprived from their possessions. The research here make contrasts Offred's desire for a "flower" with the "collectibles boxes" of the Helsham students as mechanisms for restoring "human individuality."

A. Offred's Flower: Stealing Beauty in an Ugly World

We can see Ofred, in several scenes, attempts to "steal" things can be simple, like a flower or a bar of soap.

"I would like to have a knife like that... or a flower. Something to keep, something to touch that is not myself." (Atwood, 1985, p. 107).

The desire of possessing, can be referred to something "not myself" is an attempt to flee from biological restrictions. In Gilead, the body can be the only thing



allowed, so touching a flower referees to the connection with nature and to the beauty that the mechanical state prevents. The flower here represents the "vibrancy" that cold, mechanical objectification lacks.

B. Hilsham's Boxes: The Material Archive of the Soul

In the novel *Never Let Me Go*, each student has a "box" in which they gather trifles (postcards, cheap trinkets). For normal humans, this is junk ;has no importance, but for clones, it's an "existential anchor".

"Our treasures... the things we kept in our chests. They were more than just objects; they were proof that we had a past." (Ishiguro, 2005, p. 38)

This comes with Nussbaum's (1995) criterion of "denial of sovereignty."

By possessing these objects, can be confirmed a small degree of students' sovereignty over their own world. These possessions demonstrate their "materiality" as human beings, not as medical instruments. If the system deals with them as "spare parts", which be consumed, then the box represents their entity. The obsession with gathering is a defense against "disappearance"; the object which can be tangible ,object is undeniable, and thus the box confirms material proof of a soul behind the replicated body.

Atwood and Ishiguro come with that "material" whether it be a mural, a flower, or a junk box) is what can saved their soul from objectification. Resistance here is not necessarily an armed revolution, but rather a "collective revolution"; that is, the insistence on possessing a trifles thing in order to confirm their existence.

Conclusion

In this research ,within I explore in both to novels by Atwwod and Ishigor , my selection to both novel written in different time never be arbitrary, the different timeline ,that means the dehumanization can be uses in different faces in different times till nowadays we face objectification, it's not conditional from religion or state me comes from a closest persons , by mistreatment , we face dehumanization may be in our house in our job or either our neighbors. In community is injustice with child with women and with older ,we are still in society follow the rule" the large fish eat the small one", here I confirms how words play a pivotal role to express what move in the internality ,by words we can prove that we are still a live .

References

- Afzal, M., Malik, S., Maqsood, S., & Zia, S. (2025). Memory, trauma, and the death drive: A psychoanalytic perspective on *Never Let Me Go*. *Psychology and Literature Quarterly*.
- Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (D. Heller-Roazen, Trans.). Stanford University Press.



- Al-Taee, S., & Hussein, M. (2025). Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale: A Foucauldian analysis of panopticism and governmentality. *Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 2(2), 112–130. <https://jellls.aliraqia.edu.iq/index.php/jellls/article/view/44>.
- Atwood, M. (1985). *The Handmaid's Tale*. McClelland and Stewart.
- Banerjee, A. (2024). Shadowy objects in test tubes: Gene fetishism and racialized biocapital in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 65(5), 1–20.
- Black, S. (2009). Ishiguro's inhuman aesthetics. *Modern Fiction Studies*, 55(4), 785–807.
- Descartes, R. (1637). *Discourse on the Method*. (Referenced as the source of the "rationalist maxim" inverted in the text).
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Vintage Books.
- Griffin, G. (2009). Science and the cultural imaginary: The case of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. *Textual Practice*, 23(4), 645–663.
- Haslam, N. (2006). Dehumanization: An integrative review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10(3), 252–264.
- Hussein, A. (2025). Language and authority: Power structures in *The Handmaid's Tale*. *Journal of Language Studies*, 5(1), 45–62. <https://jls.tu.edu.iq/index.php/jls/article/view/1415>.
- Ibrahim, H. R. (2024). Examining the matriarchal society in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. *Al-Mustansiriya for Human Sciences*, 12(1), 67–89. <https://amm.uomustansiriyah.edu.iq/index.php/mustansiriyah/article/view/1432>.
- Ishiguro, K. (2005). *Never Let Me Go*. Faber and Faber.
- Kristeva, J. (1984). *Revolution in Poetic Language*. (Source for écriture féminine used in the analysis).
- Kutovyi, A. (2025). Reading against the human (?): A posthumanist analysis of Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. *Philology and Cultural Studies*, 24(9), 1–15.
- Majid, H. R. (2025). A socio-pragmatic study of sexism in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. *Journal of University of Information and Communication*, 4(2), 88–105.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (1995). Objectification. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 24(4), 249–291.
- Pokharel, B., Banu, S., & Sapkota, B. (2025). Human organs as commodities: A critical study of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. *Nepal Journal of Medical Research*, 8(3), 79295.
- Sadeq, Z. R. (2024). Biopolitics in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, 4(7), 10.



- Scarano D'Antonio, E. (2021). The Handmaid's Tale: An intertextual transformation of the reader. *Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association*, 23(3), 231–245.
- Sontag, S. (1978). *Illness as Metaphor*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Wajiran, W., & Maslida, N. R. (2025). Trauma representation in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. *Lingua Kultura*, 19(2), 26518.
- Wang, H. (2023). Hidden oppression and narrative as resistance: A biopolitical reading of *Never Let Me Go*. *International Journal of Frontier Science*, 5(3), 5.
- Xu, W., & Wang, S. (2025). From being disciplined to becoming Zoe: The posthuman subjectivity of clones in *Never Let Me Go*. *Journal of Humanities and Arts*, 3(1), 1.