

HUL 237
CONTEMPORARY FICTION
MAJOR EXAM
MAY 2007

Maximum Marks: 40
Time: 2 Hours

This is an open book exam. You are free to consult the primary texts. No other printed material is allowed.

Answer ONE question from each Section. Attempt Two questions in all. Each question carries 20 marks.

Section One

1. Kazuo Ishiguro uses the realist narrative mode to undercut the dominant view of realism that reality is both objective and re-locatable. Do you agree with this statement? Give examples from the novel to support your answer.
2. Ishiguro's style is characterized by evasion and side-stepping rather than a headlong confrontation or an 'ordinary climax'. Do you agree with this statement? Give examples from the novel to support your answer.
3. By characterizing Kathy H as an 'unreliable narrator', Ishiguro manages to reveal much more about the character and her relationships with other characters than he would have managed to do in a conventional first person narrative. Do you agree with this statement?

Section Two

1. *When I watched you dancing that day, I saw something else. I saw a new world coming rapidly. More scientific, efficient, yes. More cures for the old sicknesses. Very good. But a harsh, cruel world. And I saw a little girl, her eyes tightly closed, holding to her breast the old kind world, one that she knew in her heart could not remain, and she was holding it and pleading, never to let her go. That is what I saw.*

Does this quote from Kazuo Ishiguro's novel 'Never Let Me Go' encompass a dominant concern of other contemporary fiction as well? Which texts, and how? You must discuss at least two other texts.

2. Both 'Never Let Me Go' and the Harry Potter series deal with schools at the centre of the narrative, and both these educational institutions prepare the students for lives in the worlds outside. Discuss the space (both literal and metaphorical) assigned to these educational sites within the texts, paying attention to the future roles inscribed for the students in these societies.

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3. Would it fair to state that some of the novels read in this course demonstrate a desire to reach back into a 'forgotten' past and to re-construct the dominant mode of historical development of society? Base your answer on at least two texts.
4. Compare the use of the unreliable narrator offering a dialogic perspective on the narrative and the use of illustrations in the graphic novel as strategies that attempt to break the conventional hold of the text offering one dominant perspective.

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