

Reader, I Narrate:
Self-Expression and Reader Address in *Jane Eyre* and *Never Let Me Go*
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A thesis presented for the B.A. degree
with Honors in
The Department of English
University of Michigan
Winter 2022

For the Writers' Almanac: my newest submission

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance of my advisor, Daniel Hack, whose advice was endlessly helpful and wonderfully challenging, propelling this thesis forward at every turn. I give thanks for his commitment to my ideas here and in the classes I took with him that first ignited my passion for Victorian literature and the fascinating ways texts control our experience of reading them. The ideas behind this thesis would not have been possible without his engaging courses that so shaped the beginning of my journey with the U–M English department, and I certainly must be thankful for his introducing me to *Never Let Me Go!*

I give thanks to our two Honors instructors for their guidance throughout the lengthy process of envisioning and crafting our theses. Adela Pinch was an endless source of life and expertise that filled this project with joy, even through the opening months of our journey together on Zoom. Scotti Parrish was an invaluable instructor whose detailed and encouraging comments during our workshops truly helped me silence my inner critics.

To my thesis cohort: you made this experience exciting, and your unwavering collaboration and support made this thesis what it is today. Though we didn't find that shared sentence to unite us all, I feel your presence in every page I write. My thanks to you all.

Special thanks to all my friends: I particularly thank the writers who changed my life – Emilia Ferrante, Avery Sandstrum, and Sammy Saperstein – and my roommates, the patient witnesses to my frequent ramblings. Eleanor Wang provided endless encouragement at every turn. Mom, Dad, Alex — you were there from the start, and I would never be where I am today without our family. Go Blue!

Abstract

This thesis treats Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* as fictional autobiographies wherein the narrator retells their past to an imagined audience. The ways each narrator constructs their audience reinforce ongoing themes and obstacles in each text that influence each narrator's writing of her life.

In Chapter One, I argue that Jane's frequent addresses to the reader illustrate her compulsion to over-explain her narrative that stems from her previous failures to (verbally, artistically) express herself to an external audience. Centering focus on how Jane's addresses attempt to overcome her failings merits a rereading of *Jane Eyre* as a self-conscious work that tries to capture Jane's inner imaginative world in words.

In Chapter Two, I argue that Kathy's addresses to her audience mirror her own childhood where she was 'told and not told' enough information to form a contextualized picture of her world. Kathy addresses other fictional clones, and by assuming her audience is so limited and knowledgeable, Kathy 'tells and doesn't tell' the reader about her world, placing them in the same position she occupied as a child. Beyond reproducing this institutional mechanism, Kathy's text also reproduces the 'Gallery,' another subject that the clones are 'told and not told' about. The Gallery prompts Kathy to turn to art to cope with her future; centering focus on Kathy's reproduction of these institutions into her text merits a rereading of *Never Let Me Go* as an autobiography wholly informed by her external environment.

In Chapter Three, I turn to each text's present moment. Jane's present moment is mysterious and inaccessible. She voices no motive for writing and hides years of her life from the reader. This mysteriousness is yet another instance of Jane becoming inaccessible to the reader; she does not break this pattern by the end of her text. Kathy's present moment is clearly described without time gaps, and Kathy also voices her motives and goals for the text. That she achieves these goals – to retrace her memories, hoping to achieve a newfound understanding of her life – makes Kathy's ending *more* frustrating as she fails to reach any potentially revolutionary mindsets after she recounts her life, stuck reproducing her world into the text.

I conclude by asking whether these narrators have produced art that has achieved their goals. Each narrator fails, though this failure is Brontë and Ishiguro's success: these authors created texts that contain the terms of their own failures, using Jane and Kathy to illustrate points about the nature of writing and powerfully exploitative institutions, respectively.

Keywords: fictional autobiography, reader address, mock reader, autobiography

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Introduction

Reader, as you digest the words of this thesis, you enter into a relationship with me, its author, along with the text itself. This tripartite literary space is restructured in every text, though expectations about the author, the text, and its audience differ with genre and form. This thesis aims to analyze this set of relationships in two texts that use the narrative form of the fictional autobiography. The literary space now becomes cramped: alongside the author, the text, and the actual reader, this thesis centers around the fictional author/autobiographer and their imagined reader. In our first text, there exists the author, Charlotte Brontë, the text of *Jane Eyre*, and the actual reader. Our focus lies both with Jane Eyre as the creator of her autobiography and the audience who she imagines will read it. Similarly, our second text features the author, Kazuo Ishiguro, the text of *Never Let Me Go*, and the actual reader. This thesis instead looks to Kathy H., the creator of her autobiography, likewise addressing her imagined audience. In short, this thesis meets these narratives first on the terms of their fictional narrators rather than their actual authors.

These fictional autobiographies use the same structure, what I call the ‘present moment narrator,’ to call out to their imagined audiences. Each narrator engages in a retrospective retelling of their lives, relaying the events in their youth from a particular present moment in their adulthood. This thesis focuses on the ways these present moment narrators address (and thus imagine) their audience, arguing that these addresses reinforce other thematic matter and have an inner logic, reflecting the concerns of, and influences upon, each narrator as she writes and remembers her life. Beyond harmonizing with each text’s central preoccupations, I argue that focusing on reader address prompts a rereading of these texts as self-referential autobiographies written with specific motives in mind and in order to achieve specific goals.

Jane Eyre is in many respects a precursor to *Never Let Me Go*, as Kazuo Ishiguro himself notes. In 2015, Ishiguro made clear Brontë's influence on his writing: "As for Brontë, well, I owe my career, and a lot else besides, to 'Jane Eyre'" ("Kazuo Ishiguro: By the Book"). Ishiguro expanded upon this comment in a discussion with the Seattle Public Library, noting that when he "reread [*Jane Eyre*]," he "suddenly realized how much [he] had ripped off" from Brontë ("Kazuo Ishiguro Reads from His Much Anticipated New Novel, 'The Buried Giant'"). In his words, his first-person narrators mimic Brontë's by "appearing to confide, very intimately, with the reader and then you ... find actually that there is some ... hugely important thing that the narrator has just held back" ("Kazuo Ishiguro Reads from His Much Anticipated New Novel, 'The Buried Giant'"). Both Brontë and Ishiguro are interested in narrators who might not tell all to their audience, only partially revealing information:

I realized that that kind of thing had influenced me greatly in the way I write

Moments where you learn that Jane Eyre is crying, not because she the narrator says 'I was crying' ... but because the person she is talking to, in this example Rochester, says 'what's that in your eye, Jane?' ... I thought 'Whoops!' Exactly the same technique.

("Kazuo Ishiguro Reads from His Much Anticipated New Novel, 'The Buried Giant'")

This thesis follows Ishiguro's lead by focusing on the narrator and reader's complex relationship and placing *Never Let Me Go* in conversation with *Jane Eyre*, though our focus centers on moments where each narrator directly addresses their readership.

Despite their similar narrative techniques, each narrator addresses a different sort of imagined reader, a figure entirely separate from the actual reader. Narrative theorist Walker Gibson claims that there are "two readers" that exist once one opens a novel: "the 'real' individual ... [and] the fictitious reader ... whose mask and costume the individual takes on in

order to experience the language” (265–266). Each narrator will ask us to assume different masks, and these masks might not fit equally well. In broad strokes, Jane asks us to become the British public, amorphous and unspecified, though seemingly always questioning or reacting to her story. Jane’s imaginings of her reader’s reactions might not actually match with the actual reader’s feelings, though. Kathy makes a clearer demand, though more difficult, asking us to don the mask of a clone who exists in Ishiguro’s alternate nineties–era Britain, immediately creating a gap between what we actually know and what we are assumed to know.

In Chapter One, I begin by analyzing readerly addresses in *Jane Eyre*, separating them into three general categories: the emotional reader address, the anticipatory reader address, and the metafictional reader address. These addresses are a direct result of her compulsion to interject into the narrative from the present moment, adding in additional (and sometimes unnecessary) explanations about a variety of topics. For example, she struggles to narrate her inner feelings and often resorts to a reader address to retroactively attempt to explain them. Jane is so nervous that her reader might misunderstand her because she has previously failed to translate her inner imaginative world outwards for an audience, and her struggles to narrate her own feelings only add to this pattern that began in her youth. These failures are shown to the reader as Jane repeatedly struggles in her youth to transmit the scenes in her ‘mind’s eye’ into pieces of art. When she does create art, it still often fails to produce the effects she desires in herself and those around her. A consideration of reader address, especially the addresses where Jane self-referentially considers the act of novel writing and her role as narrator, points to her anxiety about these failures; a focus on these verbal, artistic, and narrative failures merits a rereading of *Jane Eyre* as a self-conscious work created to capture Jane’s inner world for an audience, attempting to overcome her previous artistic endeavors that failed to do so.

In Chapter Two, I begin by analyzing readerly addresses in *Never Let Me Go*, comparing Kathy's infrequent addresses to her audience with her childhood experiences. Kathy assumes her audience is made up of other fictional clones, and in so doing, she inadvertently excludes the actual reader from gaining a full understanding of the text. By assuming her audience is such a limited and knowledgeable group, Kathy forces the reader into the same position she occupied as a child where, as the novel says, she was 'told and not told' information that would fully contextualize her world. Just as we see a young Kathy piece together what makes her school unique and what future she is being prepared for, the reader too must do the difficult work of situating themselves in Kathy's world. This mirroring of the actual reader with the clones is the first way Kathy unconsciously reproduces her world, here the told/not told mechanism, into her text. The told/not told motif extends into every facet of Kathy's life, and a mysterious process called "the Gallery" is the longest lasting example of this phenomenon. The Gallery acts as a distraction that helps conceal the young clones' futures, channeling their focus into the creation of art, and not all art is made equal: creating 'good' art elevates one's social status, and one's art supposedly tells something inherent about its creator. The Gallery also judges art according to a complex hierarchical system that prioritizes written over visual art, among other values. This inclination to create art instead of facing her world remains with Kathy into adulthood and shapes her (perhaps final) artistic creation, the text of *Never Let Me Go*, according to the Gallery's rules and values. This is the second way Kathy reproduces the world around her into her text. I argue that a focus on the Gallery's influence, alongside the told/not told mechanism, is crucial to forming an alternate reading of *Never Let Me Go* as an autobiographical text that *only* emulates the conditions of Kathy's world.

In Chapter Three, I return to the present moment, exploring this adult retrospective space from which Jane and Kathy write. Each narrator locates herself in a particular present moment in ways that tie back to the fundamental preoccupations of each text. Jane's present moment is one of mystery: the reader does not know where she is, what happened to her in the last decade, how she feels about her life, or what she envisions for her future. Furthermore, the reader does not know why she was motivated to choose this specific moment to begin writing: Jane ultimately remains inaccessible at the novel's close. On the other hand, Kathy frequently describes her present moment in greater physical detail, not leaving swathes of her past untold. Kathy's future, which is also undeniably clear, prompts her to openly voice both her motives and goals for the narrative. Jane's mysterious circumstances at the end of her text only continue the pattern of inaccessibility she has seemingly attempted to overcome, and Kathy's clear depiction of her present moment is all the more frustrating because she seems not to have developed a new understanding of the cloning industry that could push her to escape her fate.

Chapter 1: Reader Address in *Jane Eyre*

This chapter will begin by examining Jane's thirty-five¹ direct addresses that each use the word 'reader,' focusing on where she turns away from her story to look to her audience. Jane's frequent addresses stem from two key failings in her life that prompt her to over-explain the text to her reader. In this chapter, I use the term 'over-explanation' to refer to how Jane cuts through her narrative as it unfolds in the past to explain some specific piece of information, attempting to prevent her audience from misinterpreting her text. Frequently, the relevant information might otherwise become clear in the next few sentences or paragraphs, or in other cases, the reader has already inferred this information, and this is what I point to when I use the term 'over-explain': Jane's interjections add information into the text from the present moment where, often, it can already be found in the unfolding of the past. Again, two areas of failure in her life prompt her to perform this multi-layered series of explanations throughout her text.

This chapter will first examine Jane's inability to articulate her own feelings using words and tie it to addresses to the reader she makes in emotionally intense moments. These addresses allow Jane to avoid centering her emotions by shifting focus onto the reader; this failure that lingers into the present comes from an inability to take her inner world (here her feelings) and put it on the page. Jane is hyper-focused on the presence of her audience, and beyond invoking the reader to hide her lexical shortcomings, Jane constantly worries about, and tries to anticipate, their reactions to the narrative. This chapter will examine moments where Jane imagines her audience as a presence that needs to constantly be engaged and directed so that they understand exactly what she tells them. This envisioning of her audience is tied to failings in her youth to manage and connect to audiences who view her artistic creations — here the reader watches as

¹ These pages correspond to the Norton Fourth Critical Edition of *Jane Eyre*. The thirty-five addresses are located on pages 45, 73, 81, 86, 101, 115, 134, 157, 158, 167, 168, 231, 247, 257, 267, 285, 288, 293, 294, 308, 327, 341, 350, 356, 362, 367, 369, 373, 377, 384, 398, 399, 400; pages 86 and 294 contain two addresses.

Jane continually fails to convey the fantastical imagery that lies inside her mind onto the canvas. Furthermore, when she does produce art, Jane finds that it does not succeed in influencing herself or others in the ways she desires. Finally, this chapter will turn to moments where Jane commands the reader, reminding them that they are reading a text she has created. Using these moments that overtly show narrator–Jane playing self–referentially with the written medium and exploring its limits, the end of this chapter will posit that *Jane Eyre* can be reread as a self–conscious work, one that attempts to translate Jane’s interiority outwards to her audience.

Jane Eyre was published in three volumes in 1847 under Charlotte Brontë’s pseudonym Currer Bell, with the original publication subtitled “An Autobiography.” And what is Jane’s autobiography? Jane narrates her life as an orphan living with her aunt, Mrs. Reed, and cousins in Gateshead Hall. Jane is transferred to the Lowood Institution where she endures an austere upbringing and eventually becomes a teacher. She works as a governess at Thornfield Hall, educating Adèle Varens and serving Mr. Edward Rochester. As Jane and Mr. Rochester grow closer, the house is plagued by strange occurrences attributed to Grace Poole, an alcoholic servant. Two obstacles come in the form of the alluring Miss Blanche Ingram, poised to steal Mr. Rochester’s heart, and news of a stroke that nearly kills Mrs. Reed. On her deathbed, Mrs. Reed reveals that she lied to Jane’s paternal uncle when he asked to make Jane his heir, telling him Jane had died at Lowood. Jane returns, anticipating Mr. Rochester’s wedding, though when she confesses her feelings, he proposes to her. Wedding preparations ensue, but at the altar it is revealed that Mr. Rochester is already married to Bertha Mason, a woman with a congenital mental illness that he claims he was tricked into marrying. She has been kept in Thornfield’s attic with Grace Poole overseeing her, breaking out when the latter is drunkenly asleep to cause chaos. Jane leaves despite Mr. Rochester’s insistence that they can still marry and, destitute, meets the

Rivers family. St. John Rivers saves her from homelessness and uncovers Jane's true identity: she has inherited money from their shared uncle, making them her cousins. St. John asks Jane to marry him, not for love but for duty, and leave for missionary work. Jane refuses and returns to Thornfield after hearing a supernatural call from Mr. Rochester, but it is a ruin after Bertha Mason lit the house on fire and jumped to her death. In his attempt to save her, Mr. Rochester loses his eyesight and suffers other injuries. When Jane reunites with him, Mr. Rochester proposes and they have a son.

The Emotional Reader Address and Speechlessness

As is clear from the summary, Jane endures a life fraught with tense encounters, though she is often unable to express in words the feelings that are roused within her. This is a true obstacle for the creation of one's autobiography. Though Jane hypothesizes that children "can feel, but they cannot analyse their feelings; and if the analysis is partially effected in thought, they know not how to express the result of the process in words," this picture of childhood actually plagues Jane into the present adult moment (24). Jane's addresses to the reader during emotionally intense moments do not fully attempt to "express the result of the process in words," instead drawing the reader closer to the narrative so that they might do more of the interpretive work of deciphering and contextualizing her feelings (24). The 'result of the process' are Jane's short, simple sentences that address the reader, obscuring Jane's lived experience of her feelings; instead of relaying these moments to us directly in the narrative, Jane uses broad, declarative statements that involve the reader to draw their attention away from what she is unable to express.

Jane's inability to verbalize her feelings manifests in childhood with phrases like, "I felt, though I could not have expressed the feeling, ..." and persists with more frequency as she ages

(33). Jane's young adulthood is riddled with phrases that invoke her "sensations," which "no language can describe"; her "faculties," whose expectations she "cannot precisely define"; and her "aspirations and regrets" that are so "difficult to say," to explain, that Jane "could not distinctly say it to [herself]" (63, 90–91, 91). In youth, these placeholder terms keep Jane's emotions inaccessible, and in adulthood, Jane's lexical difficulties continue further when emotionally intense moments leave her completely speechless.² Even a decade into the future, in Jane's present moment, she is still unable to fully narrate these events using words.

Unsurprisingly, Jane's most intense moments are often romantic, and Mr. Rochester frequently invokes wordlessness in Jane, who herself says she "loved him very much ... more than words had power to express," that "no words could tell [him] what [she] feel[s] ..." (236, 251). Jane is also left speechless in moments of extreme despair. When Bertha Mason's presence is revealed, Jane resorts to "Psalms 22.11" to voice her feelings: "That bitter hour cannot be described: in truth, 'the waters came into my soul; I sank in deep mire: I felt no standing; I came into deep waters; the floods overflowed me'" (266n6, 266). Since she cannot describe it herself, she turns to a preexisting text to attempt to voice 'that bitter hour.' Though religion lends Jane necessary words, supernatural–religious experiences leave her speechless. It is "past [her] power" to describe St. John's sermon though she "wish[es]" she was able to, but she "cannot even render faithfully the effect it produced" on her (314). Similarly, Mr. Rochester's supernaturally delivered call and the "wonderous shock of feeling" it inspires cannot be spoken of or described, only "recalled" in hindsight: "I recalled that inward sensation I had experienced: for I could recall it, with all its unspeakable strangeness" (375). Jane can recall it, but she cannot truly describe the experience of receiving this call.

² See Jane's reaction to her upcoming wedding: "I could not quite comprehend it: it made me giddy. The feeling, the announcement sent through me, was something stronger than was consistent with joy—something that smote and stunned: it was, I think, almost fear" (232). The specific terms to describe her emotional landscape still elude her.

Jane fumbles for speech, addressing the reader as she struggles to tie the word ‘jealous’ to whatever is occurring inside her internal emotional landscape:

Much too, you will think, reader, to engender jealousy; if a woman, in my position, could presume to be jealous of a woman in Miss Ingram’s. But I was not jealous; or very rarely;—*the nature of the pain I suffered could not be explained by that word.* Miss Ingram was a mark beneath jealousy: she was too inferior to excite the feeling. (168, my italics)

Jane draws the reader in as she attempts to describe the emotional turmoil of seeing another suitor pursue Mr. Rochester, though she struggles to relate the physical reality of her pain to the mere word ‘jealous.’ Though she *is* able to point to where the ‘nerve was touched’ by the end of the scene, noting her ‘fever,’ Jane nonetheless settles on using this imperfect word. This visible struggle prompts Jane to acknowledge her own difficulties, saying, “Pardon the seeming paradox: I mean what I say,” continuing to address the reader after she has directly called their presence into the text (168). The reader’s presence draws the focus away from Jane’s own narration, included to try to bridge the gap between her vague conveyance of her feelings.³

On its own, this pattern of being left speechless during emotionally intense moments certainly is not strange; however, Jane directly addresses the reader in other moments that involve romance, despair, and supernatural–religious experiences, drawing the reader in where we have previously seen her become speechless. These summaries of her internal landscape might feel cheap to the reader, even misleading, untrue. The continual choice to retrospectively narrate emotional moments rather than deliver the experience of living through them runs the

³ This moment also invokes the reader's presence as Jane makes assumptions about their reactions to the text. She presumes they think that Miss Ingram might “engender jealousy” in her (168). We will return to this moment in the next section, analyzing Jane’s anticipatory assumptions about her reader.

risk of alienating the reader who may want to hear past–Jane’s voice in these moments more than present–Jane’s retrospection.

In romantically charged moments, instead of directly narrating her thoughts as they unfolded in the past, Jane turns to the reader, overtly justifying herself to them from the present: “Reader!—I forgave him at the moment, and on the spot. There was such deep remorse in his eye, ... and, besides, there was such unchanged love in his whole look and mien—I forgave him all: yet not in words, not outwardly; only at my heart’s core” (267). Jane later invokes the reader while narrating her physical actions, keeping her emotions obscured: “I had already gained the door: but, reader, I walked back—walked back as determinedly as I had retreated. I knelt down by him; I turned his face from the cushion to me; I kissed his cheek; I smoothed his hair with my hand” (285). The reader only knows what Jane does here, not how she feels.

These addresses help partially shift the focus away from past–Jane’s intense (and partially un–narrated) emotions, but in other instances, Jane uses the presence of the reader to try to indirectly speak about her feelings. These moments use the phrase ‘the reader knows ...,’ drawing on their presence to speak about her emotions as if they barely needed explanation. These open statements conceal and obscure the romantically charged emotions she felt in the moment: “I had not intended to love him: the reader knows I had wrought hard to extirpate from my soul the germs of love there detected” (158).⁴ Finally, the infamous start to the final chapter exemplifies the extent to which Jane will go to invoke the reader while simultaneously obscuring the process of living through these emotional moments: “Reader, I married him” (399). *‘And how did you feel about it, Jane? What were your thoughts on your second wedding day?’* the reader might ask, or in previous instances, the reader might wonder, *‘Jane, why did you walk back to*

⁴ See also page 369: “Now I never had, as the reader knows, either given any formal promise, or entered into any engagement; and this language was all much too hard, and much too despotic for the occasion.”

Mr. Rochester? Did I really know that you intended not to love him, or were you only trying to convince yourself of this? Did you really consciously forgive Mr. Rochester at the moment? What, really, were you thinking in all these romantic, emotional moments where you have addressed me?’

Jane likewise brings the reader into the text in moments of despair, redirecting her own feelings onto them, here wishing that they will not share what she felt in her past:

Gentle reader, may you never feel what I then felt! May your eyes never shed such stormy, scalding, heart-wrung tears as poured from mine. May you never appeal to Heaven in prayers so hopeless and so agonised as in that hour left my lips: for never may you, like me, dread to be the instrument of evil to what you wholly love. (288)

The reader must infer what Jane felt in that moment from her wishes directed towards them, and the actual scene wherein Jane collapses under the weight of these emotions is hidden behind her present moment address. Similarly, Jane redirects the intensity of her reckoning with St. John onto the reader, wondering if they too have experienced something similar: “Reader, do you know, as I do, what terror those cold people can put into the ice of their questions? How much of the fall of the avalanche is in their anger? of the breaking up of the frozen sea in their displeasure?” (367). The reader learns that Jane “felt,” that she cried, that she prayed, that she endured “terror,” not because Jane tells them how these moments felt but because she tries to draw a parallel between herself and her audience (367). ‘*Well, maybe I have and maybe I haven’t experienced this, Jane, but what I really want to know is how it felt for you!*’ the reader might think. St. John continues to cause strife in Jane’s life and thus prompts more retroactive explanations of her feelings: “I will not swear, reader, that there was not something of repressed sarcasm both in the tone in which I uttered this sentence, and in the feeling that accompanied it”

(362). The “feeling” and “tone” in this moment contain “something” of sarcasm, though surely there are other ‘things’ at work in Jane’s mind that the reader cannot access (362). One might turn to Jane’s earlier address to summarize the whole of what the reader knows about Jane’s feelings towards St. John: “Now, I did not like this, reader” (350).

Jane also draws the reader in as she reflects on her brief homelessness, shutting out the possibility of directly narrating the most painful moments: “‘Nay, there was naught but her, and she was housekeeper;’ and of her, reader, I could not bear to ask the relief for want of which I was sinking; I could not yet beg; and again I crawled away” (293). She voices this difficulty from a present moment, breaking away from the pain of the past: “Reader, it is not pleasant to dwell on these details. Some say there is enjoyment in looking back to painful experience past; but at this day I can scarcely bear to review the times to which I allude” (294). By addressing the reader so openly, Jane describes these moments from a distance while obscuring the distance itself. This concession to difficult emotions is undercut by the fact that she does not fully relay those emotions in the moment.

Finally, Jane draws the reader into the text during moments of supernatural–religious experience, most obviously seen in the call from Mr. Rochester: “I was excited more than I had ever been; and whether what followed was the effect of excitement, the reader shall judge” (373). It is now overtly the reader’s job to “judge” how Jane’s emotions – here only noted as “excitement” – affect the credibility of the text’s plot (373). The following “inexpressible feeling that thrilled” her heart, “sharp ... strange ... startling,” should come as no surprise to the reader, knowing how chronically unable Jane is to describe these moments (373). When Mr. Rochester later confirms this supernatural experience, Jane addresses the reader once more: “Reader, it was on Monday night—near midnight—that I too had received the mysterious summons: those were

the very words by which I had replied to it” (398). Though Jane explains her refusal to tell this to Mr. Rochester, she doesn’t remark on how this intense spiritual moment being confirmed by another person made her feel — it is, as she says, “too awful and inexplicable to be communicated or discussed” (398). Here the reader might beg, *‘Jane, please! How do you reconcile this inexplicable experience with the rest of your life? Does it bother you still, do you still wonder about it? Did you ever reveal it to your husband, even after ten years of marriage?’*

I have mimicked Jane by exaggeratingly taking up the voice of the reader myself to attempt to point to the multitude of other questions she leaves unanswered and obscured while she addresses her audience. If you, reader, have different questions beyond the ones I voiced, which I imagine you might, let them too be added to the list! In this first section we have examined how Jane’s speechlessness manifests in the narrative in moments of romance, despair, and religion, then examined how Jane’s addresses to the reader attempt to cover up her speechlessness, drawing the reader in to obscure what she is unable to say. At the end of this section, I hope any reader might balk at Jane when she writes, “and yet, reader, to tell you *all*, ...” (327, my italics).

The Anticipatory Reader Address and Artistic Failure

This section takes up moments where Jane *does* think about her reader’s potential reactions to the text; Jane constantly worries about these reactions, and this worry manifests itself into her reader addresses that take up the reader’s own voice.⁵ I will distinguish between the imagined reader, the actual reader, and those moments when Jane takes up the reader’s voice by calling this latter term Jane’s own ‘reader persona.’ Whenever Jane assumes this reader persona, trying to emulate the voice of her reader herself, she runs the risk of making a false

⁵ Outside of the text of *Jane Eyre*, in the 1848 Author’s Preface to the second edition of the text, Currer Bell makes use of the “Reader” phenomenon, directly addressing the English public: “Why have I alluded to this man? I have alluded to him, Reader, because ...,” mimicking Jane’s voicing of her imagined reader’s questions (6).

assumption that might alienate them. The actual reader's voice is not drawn into the text, and only Jane's anxieties about being misinterpreted come through when she gives voice to this reader persona. Jane's own imaginings of her audience reveal a lot, and as she voices what she thinks their questions and judgments are, she imbues her reader with certain traits. The picture of the reader that emerges is confusing: Jane sometimes positively characterizes them and other times imagines them as forgetful, prone to misinterpretation. The end of this section will investigate this fear of misinterpretation, which will emerge as a primary motivator for these addresses as Jane aims to succeed where her art has failed her before.

Jane most clearly paints the reader as opinionated and questioning when she takes up their voice to insert questions into her narrative; she interrupts the narrative flow to gesture at whatever she thinks the reader might be wondering, always looking to over-explain to them. Here, though, the explanations come from Jane's false conversations with the reader: Jane talks to herself, exchanging dialogue with her own reader persona. This reader persona who questions Jane is opinionated and misguided, revealing how Jane thinks her audience will react to the text. The first of these moments makes this clear as Jane imagines her reader objecting to her new friendship: "And where, meantime, was Helen Burns? Why did I not spend these sweet days of liberty with her? Had I forgotten her? or was I so worthless as to have grown tired of her pure society? Surely the Ann Wilson I have mentioned was inferior to my first acquaintance ..."

(72–73). This series of questions, at first seemingly a rhetorical gesture, become grounded as Jane attaches them to the reader's perspective, elaborating with, "[t]rue, reader; and I knew and felt this ..." (73). This reader persona seems to pester Jane, asking questions that are not flattering, seemingly critical of her.⁶ This reader persona also asks questions about sensitive

⁶ Though not using this reader persona, another instance where Jane feels the need to justify her reaction to the reader occurs when she receives her inheritance: "It is a fine thing, reader, to be lifted in a moment from indigence to

subjects. First they ask about Helen, leading Jane to reveal Helen's sickness and death, and later they ask about Jane's budding feelings for Mr. Rochester. Again, this reader persona feels slightly adversarial, pestering Jane for answers: "And was Mr. Rochester now ugly in my eyes? No, reader" (134).⁷ Jane's reader persona nearly evokes the image of a childlike reader tugging on her sleeve to interrupt the narrative, forcing Jane to counter with these short, snappy responses. This reader persona causes Jane to run the risk of further increasing the gap between her imagined reader and the actual reader; perhaps the actual reader never questioned where Helen Burns went or whether Jane had forgotten Mr. Rochester, and these questions that Jane *has* voiced via her reader persona might take the place of other questions the reader more desperately wants answered.

Clearly Jane's reader persona shows that Jane thinks of her reader in ways that are not entirely positive. As the narrative progresses, more of these reader persona's characteristics reveal Jane's increasingly negative conception of her readership. The reader is not perceptive: "I knew, by instinct, how the matter stood before St. John had said another word: but I cannot expect the reader to have the same intuitive perception, so I must repeat his explanation" (343). Jane turns to imagining the reactions of her reader, which are most often entirely wrong: "Perhaps you think I had forgotten Mr. Rochester, reader, amidst these changes of place and fortune. Not for a moment" (356). The reader seems not to understand Jane's feelings about Mr. Rochester and Blanche Ingram, though as we have already seen, Jane herself makes the process of understanding her feelings quite difficult. Where the reader persona before thinks Jane's dedication to Mr. Rochester is weaker than it actually is, here the reader persona sees Jane as

wealth—a very fine thing: but not a matter one can comprehend, or consequently enjoy, all at once" (341). Jane anticipates their confusion and disapproval at her non-reaction, contributing to her image of the critical reader.

⁷ Addresses that take up the reader's voice so that Jane can quickly drop her emotions into the story only build off of the first section, highlighting her inability to deeply explore these emotions. As always, Jane redirects the focus away from her unspeakable feelings by drawing the reader's presence into the text.

jealous of Blanche Ingram: “There was nothing to cool or banish love in these circumstances; though much to create despair. Much too, you will think, reader, to engender jealousy ...” (168). As we have already discussed, Jane then proceeds to correct this mistaken reader, saying that she is not actually jealous of Miss Ingram. This reader persona asks Jane intimate questions, has poor perception, and misunderstands Jane’s feelings.

Having thus constructed her reader, Jane then needs to correct this mistaken and bumbling reader whenever they might possibly misunderstand her text. Jane anticipates the reader’s reaction to her description of St. John, cutting into the narrative to point to correct this perception. Though she begins by saying, “[t]his is a gentle delineation, is it not, reader,” Jane immediately punishes the reader for holding this perception of St. John, noting that he “scarcely impressed one with the idea of a gentle ... nature” (308). Even in these tiny moments where the reader is likely led on by Jane’s own narration about St. John, Jane feels the need to point out where the reader is incorrect, adjusting their misguided opinions. Where the reader misunderstands, they also have the capability to forget important figures in the narrative. Jane’s question to the reader in the final chapter points to this forgetfulness: “You have not quite forgotten little Adèle, have you, reader?” (400). The stakes are high for Jane’s reader, as their misunderstanding her feelings or her narration could potentially lessen their intimacy with Jane: “And, reader, do you think I feared him in his blind ferocity?—if you do, you little know me” (384). If even for a moment the reader imagines the possibility of Jane being fearful during her first encounter with a newly blind Mr. Rochester, Jane asserts that if they misread her feelings, the reader “little know[s]” her (384).⁸

⁸ In a reversal of this moment, Jane refers to tiny detail first relayed on page 92: “The church, as the reader knows, was but just beyond the gates” (257). Most readers, I would guess, *did* forget this piece of information, yet Jane does not berate the reader or assert that they ‘little know’ the text. Certainly Jane would think that her love for Mr. Rochester is the more important subject for her audience to understand, but it is still surprising that she does not reprimand the reader here where she otherwise does.

Though this reader seems forgetful, confused, and bothersome at times, Jane does not imagine her reader to be entirely without class. Jane imagines the reader to look down upon behavior that is unnecessarily base or vulgar. This consciousness of her reader's tastes causes Jane to apologize in advance for relaying the crude truth about Grace Poole's alcoholism: "she would come out of her room ... go down to the kitchen, and shortly return, generally (oh, romantic reader; forgive me for telling the plain truth:) bearing a pot of porter" (101). The 'romantic reader' may not be the most complacent or engaged of readers, but nonetheless they are assumedly unhappy to be made conscious of this vulgarity. Clearly, Jane paints a picture of her reader that is not entirely positive, though at the same time, she imagines her reader to have certain sensibilities that she wishes not to offend. Though she frequently berates the reader for potentially misunderstanding her, the potential that *she* is misunderstanding *them* goes unacknowledged.

This fear of being misinterpreted is not unfounded, and the second half of this section moves to examining how Jane's past influences her current anxieties about being misunderstood by an audience. Jane's display of her portfolio to Mr. Rochester is a dramatic reckoning with the previously tension-free sphere of artistic creation in her life. Previously, Jane "feasted ... on the spectacle of ideal drawings ... all the work of [her] own hands"; allowed her "mind's eye to dwell on whatever bright visions rose before it ... many and glowing"; and thought "best of all, to open [her] inward ear to a tale that was never ended—a tale [her] imagination created, and narrated continuously ..." (69–70, 100–101, 101). The internal landscape of Jane's youth is filled with "fancy vignettes, representing any scene that happened momentarily to shape itself in the ever-shifting kaleidoscope of imagination" (210). These blissful imaginings of impossible, endless creation exist without tension because these images remain in her head, not translated

into words or into a piece of visual art. Similarly, none of these imagined works seem to have an additional significance that the artist is trying to express—they are fancies of the new artist, not serious pieces of work designed to convey a specific sentiment. In these few moments where Jane imagines creating art before she must show her actual artistic products to Mr. Rochester at Thornfield, her art has not yet needed to exist in the outer world in order for it to be understood. The disconnect between what Jane creates in her inner mind's eye and the possibility of outwardly actualizing these works has not yet made itself known.

Once Mr. Rochester emerges as her audience, Jane must struggle to engage with a figure who doubts her originality and cannot perceive whatever messages she has taken from her inner world and tried to portray on the canvas; the disconnect between her inner artistic sanctum and the realities of trying to convey an artistic message outwards is now fully realized. Mr. Rochester repeatedly calls Jane's position as artist into question, saying, "I don't know whether they were entirely of your doing: probably a master aided you? ... fetch me your portfolio, if you can vouch for its contents being original; but don't pass your word unless you are certain: I can recognise patchwork" (114). Unlike Jane's imagined cascade of paintings that are all "the work of [her] own hands," once she brings this work in front of an audience, she loses authority over her pieces unless she can prove she has created them (70). This is a new difficulty to be reckoned with, especially after Mr. Rochester implies that she has copied other engravings: "I perceive these pictures were done by one hand: was that hand yours? ... And when did you find the time to do them? They have taken much time, and some thought. ... Where did you get your copies?" (114).⁹ Whereas Jane's paintings and never-ending stories endlessly reproduce themselves in an indistinguishable stream of images and words, once Mr. Rochester examines the pieces she has produced, Jane's works are reduced in number, filtered out after Mr. Rochester "deliberately

⁹ Here "Rochester assumes Jane has copied engravings" (114n9).

scrutinised each sketch and painting,” having three “laid aside; the others, when he had examined them, he swept from him” (114).

In response to Mr. Rochester’s question about where she ‘got her copies,’ Jane responds, “[o]ut of my head,” gesturing to the internal space that houses her inaccessible emotions, now also shown as a space of fantastical generative creation (114). Now that past–Jane has gestured to this internal unknowable space, present moment Jane interjects, addressing the reader as she speaks about its inaccessibility:

While he is so occupied I will tell you, reader, what they are: and first, I must premise that they are nothing wonderful. The subjects had, indeed, risen vividly on my mind. As I saw them with the spiritual eye, before I attempted to embody them, they were striking; but my hand would not second my fancy, and in each case it had wrought out but a pale portrait of the thing I had conceived. (115)

Just as we have seen extensive evidence of Jane’s internal feelings that she cannot easily articulate, here Jane’s ‘spiritual eye’ can create art that Jane’s hand cannot accurately reproduce onto a tangible object, leaving ‘but a pale portrait’ behind. Knowing, as Jane herself has told us, that these paintings are imitations of the ‘real’ thing, she does *not* note where these imitations failed to encompass what she saw in her ‘spirit’s eye.’ This is unsurprising, given Jane’s continual inability to transmit this inner space onto the page. Instead, this description focuses on the paintings’ physical compositions, emphasizing Jane’s artistic techniques: “a gold bracelet, set with gems, that I had touched with as brilliant tints as my palette could yield, and as glittering distinctness as my pencil could impart. ... a woman’s shape to the bust, portrayed in tints as dusk and soft as I could combine” (115).¹⁰ Jane is content to let ambiguity pervade this imagery,

¹⁰ For the full descriptions of each painting, see page 115. The focus here is less on how Jane describes these images in depth and more so on what she *cannot* describe, namely how they differ from her expansive inner ‘ideas’ originating from the ‘spirit’s eye.’

backing away from delivering an authoritative interpretation of these paintings. Whatever vision that compelled Jane to complete these pieces is left inaccessible, even when she breaks into the narrative from her present moment; the closest she comes to elaborating on the meaning behind these works is when she calls the second portrait a “vision of the Evening Star” and ends the description of the third with references to Milton’s depiction of Death in *Paradise Lost* (115n1). These gestures are incomplete, fragmented, pointing to existing ideas rather than revealing her own unique ones.

These works of art are not like Jane’s previous imaginings, and though she did “exist in a kind of artist’s dreamland while [she] blent and arranged these strange tints,” as Mr. Rochester posits, Jane’s ‘dreamland’ did not produce satisfactory results (116). Jane voices this, saying, “I was tormented by the contrast between my idea and my handiwork: in each case I had imagined something which I was quite powerless to realise” (116). Jane’s frustration is not exactly mirrored by Mr. Rochester, who responds, “Not quite: you have secured the shadow of your thought: but no more, probably. You had not enough of the artist’s skill and science to give it full being ...” (116). Where Jane sees a failure that is impossible to rectify because it stems from her inability to ‘realise’ work that is tied to the original ‘idea’ in her imagination, Mr. Rochester points only to Jane’s technical artistic development (though he is undeniably intrigued and fascinated by Jane’s artwork, later “exhibit[ing] its contents” when he had “company to dinner” (118)). Mr. Rochester’s misunderstanding of Jane’s struggles is just another way this first audience she encounters is at odds with her — is it so strange, then, that Jane’s present imagined audience so often misinterprets, needing to be constantly managed?

This overwhelmingly negative first interaction between Jane, a piece of work she creates, and an external audience is not the exception to the rule, and though the reader only sees Jane

create art a handful of times, Jane finds only the same frustration and failure ahead. The end of this section will summarize three other instances where Jane's art fails to produce the effects she desires, where the messages she imbues her pieces with do not achieve their desired results.

First, Jane attempts to suppress her romantic feelings for Mr. Rochester: "to-morrow, place the glass before you, and draw in chalk your own picture, faithfully; without softening one defect: omit no harsh line, smooth away no displeasing irregularity; write under it, 'Portrait of a Governess, disconnected, poor, and plain'" (146). Jane attempts to imbue this portrait with a specific meaning, one that is more grounded than the 'spirit's eye ideas' that we have previously seen her fail to reproduce. The portrait of herself is the device by which she will remember everything she cannot be. Jane commits to using better supplies, better techniques, and spends more time on the other portrait, entitled "Blanche, an accomplished lady of rank," to more powerfully influence her feelings (146). Jane seems initially successful, noting that "the contrast was as great as self-control could desire" and that it had "given force and fixedness to the new impressions" she hoped to "stamp indelibly on [her] heart" (146). Present moment Jane even congratulates herself on the effects of the portraits: "thanks to it, I was able to meet subsequent occurrences with a decent calm; which, had they found me unprepared, I should probably have been unequal to maintain" (146). Though these portraits helped Jane retain external composure for a temporary period, this creation is a failure not of technique or artistry but of a failure to affect Jane: despite her best efforts, Jane remains painfully in love with Mr. Rochester.

The next portrait she paints also centers around Mr. Rochester, though here she creates a face, saying, "what sort of a face it was to be, I did not care or know," though it quickly becomes clear that Jane unconsciously begins to recreate Mr. Rochester's visage (210). As Jane more consciously constructs it, she reveals its purpose: "There, I had a friend's face under my gaze;

and what did it signify that those young ladies turned their backs on me? I looked at it; I smiled at the speaking likeness: I was absorbed and content” (210). Jane wants a friend at Gateshead, having noted that her cousins Georgiana and Eliza were “very cold, indeed, at first,” that the former would “take no notice of [her]” and the latter would “scarcely utter a word either to [Jane] or her sister” (209). However, here too she ‘fails,’ though not in a high-stakes, negative way. After she creates the portrait, it draws the attention of both sisters, leading to them sitting “for a pencil outline” and a budding intimacy with Georgiana who is put into “good humor” after Jane promises to “contribute a water-colour drawing” to her portfolio (210). Jane’s “very faithful representation of Mr. Rochester” is so conducive to intimacy with Georgiana that Jane herself notes that “[b]efore we had been out two hours, we were deep in a confidential conversation” (210–211).

In Jane’s final attempt at portrait making, she initially succeeds in that she pleases Mr. Oliver with the outcome of her portrait of Rosamond Oliver. However, on a larger scale, Jane fails here, too. While she is finishing up the portrait, St. John interrupts the “execution of these nice details,” and Jane immediately attempts to use her portrait to talk candidly about St. John’s feelings, urging him to court Rosamond: “I conceived an inclination to do him some good, if I could” (331). Jane asks if the portrait is “like,” forcing St. John to acknowledge that it is a “well-executed picture” (331, 332). Though for a moment it seems that Jane’s plans may be successful when St. John’s feelings are roused — “the longer he looked, the firmer he held it, the more he seemed to covet it” — when Jane offers to create a “similar painting” for him to take, St. John is uncertain (332). The painting cannot convince him to seriously pursue Rosamond as his wife: “Rosamond a sufferer, a labourer, a female apostle? Rosamond a missionary’s wife? No!”

(334). In the end, St. John will not consent to Jane painting another portrait for him, and her portrait has failed to change his convictions despite his clear love for Rosamond (336).

On the whole, Jane's artistic endeavors throughout the text often fail once her ideas exit the 'kaleidoscope of imagination' and are translated into a piece of art that comes into contact with an audience. Jane's constant attention to the reader, whether via direct address or the construction of the reader persona, is understandable when viewed in the light of these past failures. With the failures of her past examined, her current failures to relay her feelings in words in the narrative now seem to fit into a larger pattern of inaccessibility; the final section of this chapter overtly turns towards the narrative at large, bringing Jane's role as narrator into focus.

The Metafictional Reader Address and *Jane Eyre* as a Self-Conscious Text

The final section of this chapter builds upon Jane's constant attention to her audience, her need for control over her narrative to prevent misinterpretation, and her fraught relationship with creating both visual and lexical art. Jane most overtly plays with all three of these central concerns when she makes imperative addresses to the reader that command them. The reader is addressed here to be reminded of their own inferior position relative to 'narrator Jane' who is engaged in self-referentially exploring the literary space. These self-referential addresses help us see Jane in action as she shapes *Jane Eyre*, trying to succeed where her previous artistic creations have failed.

The tamest of these commands hardly read as such, but they are nonetheless initial forays into a space where Jane is aware of her own power over the reader. These moments revolve around Jane directing the reader's perception of the scene: "You are not to suppose, reader, that Adèle has all this time been sitting, motionless ..." (157). Here, Jane only lightly modifies the reader's mental conception of the scene around them, telling the reader what they should

‘suppose’ about a character’s actions. Similarly, Jane later lightly commands the reader to pardon Mr. Rochester, attempting to influence their feelings towards him in a parenthetical address: “(I had green eyes, reader; but you must excuse the mistake: for him they were new–dyed, I suppose)” (231). These small moments only make Jane’s other commands stand out more as Jane overtly shapes the text around the reader.

These overt commands revolve around the image of Jane’s memory inside her head and her attempts to convey this image in words to the reader, as always highlighting the inaccessible space inside her mind; instead of describing the scene while making her own presence invisible, Jane overtly directs the reader to create a vision in their mind based on her narration. Jane moves from the visual (what’s inaccessible in her mind, her memories) onto the written page, then back to the visual (attempting to shape what the reader sees in their minds, trying again to bridge this gap). The first reader address in the text uses this structure: “Let the reader add, to complete the picture, refined features; a complexion, if pale, clear; and a stately air and carriage, and he will have, at least as clearly as words can give it, a correct idea of the exterior of Miss Temple” (45).¹¹ The impetus is placed on the reader to ‘add’ features to bridge the gap between Jane’s image of Miss Temple and how her clear ‘words can give’ an idea of it. When Jane instructs the reader in this self-conscious way, aiming to create visual effects using words, she centers her process of narrating onto an audience who must participate in the act of visualizing it. This attention to the process of creating visuals based upon the written word draws Jane’s literary project to the forefront. The overt play with the reader’s mental images is clearly self-referential, with Jane and the actual reader alike aware of their positions within the literary space she creates.

¹¹ Jane’s gendering of the reader as masculine only occurs once, and as Carla Kaplan notes in *Girl Talk: "Jane Eyre" and the Romance of Women's Narration*, though “Jane's only gender-specific reference to the reader marks him as a man, it is significant that readers universally (and for generally good reasons) ‘think of the fictionalized reader ... as female’” (25). In this thesis, I point to this only as an example of another way Jane might imagine her reader, though as Kaplan notes, how exclusionary this gendered address seems to the actual reader remains under debate.

The most prolonged example of this sort of verbal/visual direction occurs at the start of Chapter 11:

A new chapter in a novel is something like a new scene in a play: and when I draw up the curtain this time, reader, you must fancy you see a room in the ‘George Inn’ at Millcote, with such large figured papering on the walls, such ornaments on the mantelpiece, such prints; including a portrait of George the Third, and another of the Prince of Wales, and a representation of the death of Wolfe. All this is visible to you by the light of an oil lamp hanging from the ceiling, and by that of an excellent fire, near which I sit in my cloak and bonnet; ... Reader, though I look comfortably accommodated, I am not very tranquil in my mind. (86)

Never so clearly does Jane impose an effect as the narrator onto the reader, overtly referencing the fact that this passage opens a new chapter, commenting on her own autobiography as she writes it. Present moment Jane links the self-referential act of writing a new chapter in a text to “a new scene in a play,” and of course Jane herself is the one to “pull up the curtain” for us, ordering that the reader “must fancy” a scene relayed to them in great detail (86). Though every reader address reminds us that Jane imagines and addresses a specific audience, none so clearly remind us that Jane is also actively writing this text as she addresses her reader. Later, Jane orders, “[h]ear an illustration, reader,” then comparing her encounter with the “blackened ruin” of Thornfield to a “lover [who] finds his mistress asleep on a mossy bank” and “finds she is stone-dead” (377, 378). Jane commands the reader to watch as she openly engages in rhetorical abstraction, reveling in her role as narrator. When she doesn’t urge the reader to watch her at play, to witness the creation of a novel around them, Jane still tells the reader how they must receive the information she gives them. Much like Jane’s self-conscious opening of a new

chapter, she directs the reader's attention to the narrative space around them once again, ordering them to linger there: "Stay here till he comes, reader; and, when I disclose my secret to him, you shall share the confidence" (247). Of course the reader cannot do anything but 'stay here' in the narrative space with Jane, and she playfully references this hold she has over them.

These moments of overt creation and play within her own narrative are the culmination of several influences we have investigated. We have examined the inability to verbalize her feelings and to translate her internal imaginings into art, the compulsion to draw the reader in during these moments of failure, and the need to shape her readers' reactions, stemming from these past failures. What she seems to be unable to do without frustration and failure in the visual medium is perhaps possible if she turns to the written word. Jane is certainly making herself at home in this new artistic space, exploring what she can make happen for the reader, how she can try to convey the feelings and memories she has locked inside her mind.

Both the exhibition of a painting and the reading of a novel involve an audience, and for Jane the introduction of a viewer into the creative space causes trouble, first with Mr. Rochester's exhibition, then in her attempts to create portraits. Now Jane must contend with the fact that once more an audience will be privy to her work, able to consume it, judge it, and to misinterpret it. What makes the written form more terrifying is that Jane will not have control over the narrative in the same way she might have over an audience viewing her paintings; the informational exchanges she has with Mr. Rochester during her exhibition are impossible to recreate with every reader of *Jane Eyre*. The widespread public that Jane addresses only heightens her already-present desire to over-explain, to avoid misinterpretation and accurately share her inner world. How else, then, to exert as much control as possible over this vast audience, if not to directly address them? Jane's sharing of her previous failures might help us understand what

she's aiming to avoid in her autobiography. It is both through these portrayals of failure (emotional, artistic) and through her direct addresses that Jane compels a widespread audience to grapple with her interior world.

Chapter 2: Reader Address in *Never Let Me Go*

This chapter will first analyze Kathy's fourteen most direct reader addresses¹² in relation to her assumptions about her audience; most of her direct addresses use a second-person address, addressing the 'you' figure of her imagined audience, though her addresses vary in structure and overtness, often subtly acknowledging her reader multiple times per page. Because Kathy assumes that her audience is composed of other clones who exist within the fictional confines of *Never Let Me Go*, she does not relay basic information about the world to the reader. This knowledge gap between Kathy's assumed audience and the actual reader frames the narrative, and this chapter will investigate how this framing resonates with the novel's project at large, mirroring the "told and not told" mechanism described within the novel itself. After analyzing the told/not told mechanism, this chapter will move into an analysis of "the Gallery," the longest lasting subject that the students are told/not told about. However, the Gallery is more than just another example of the novel's framing mechanism, and the end of this chapter will investigate the Gallery's influence on the young students as a metric with which to create and evaluate art. Finally, I argue that the Gallery's influence on Kathy's youth is crucial to understanding *Never Let Me Go* as an autobiographical text that is informed by the Gallery and the told/not told mechanism.

Never Let Me Go is Ishiguro's sixth novel, published in 2005. The narrative opens as Kathy H. is nearing the end of her eleven-year career as a 'carer,' a position that involves guiding other clones through the process of donating their organs. Kathy briefly discusses her life at thirty-one, then slips into a recollection of her youth spent at her boarding school, Hailsham. Kathy recalls her youth at Hailsham where 'guardians' guide the students through

¹² Pages correspond to the First Vintage International Edition of *Never Let Me Go*. The most overt reader addresses I have collected are on pages 4, 13, 16, 22, 36, 38, 66, 74, 86, 96, 99, 103, 279. Page 4 contains two addresses.

lessons, rigorously monitor their physical health, and encourage them to make art. These recollections often center around Kathy's friend Ruth and the ostracized Tommy. The students then graduate from Hailsham and move to the Cottages. By this time, the students are fully aware that they are clones, predestined for a future of organ 'donation' to non-clones that will lead to their eventual 'completion,' or death. At the Cottages, Kathy becomes estranged from Ruth and Tommy and applies to be a carer, separating herself from them for ten years. When she meets Ruth again, Ruth is in the process of donating, and Kathy, now her carer, reunites her with Tommy. Before Ruth's death, she tells Kathy and Tommy about a potential loophole in the system that might allow them to spend a few years on their own together before 'completing.' Kathy and Tommy track down their old Hailsham administrators, hoping that the art that was taken from them as children will be used to prove that they are truly in love with one another, giving them a temporary extension before they die. What they find is not that the art admitted into the Gallery showed something inherently true or special about the individual artist, but that the administrators of Hailsham collected it largely en masse to display to the public to advocate for humane treatment of clones. Tommy then quickly dies after undergoing his final donations, and the novel ends with Kathy's soon-to-be retirement from caring and entry into donating, and thus her inevitable death, hanging in the near future.

Mirroring the Reader with the Told/Not Told Mechanism:

Although a summary of the text is essential to appreciating the novel in whole, summarizing *Never Let Me Go* removes its most essential element, which is that of information control. From the start, Kathy's narration leaves the reader confused by using euphemistic language to talk about her world, thus leaving out crucial information because she assumes that her audience is already familiar with this world. In the opening section of the novel, Kathy

summarizes her present moment in terms that the reader doesn't yet fully understand: "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" (3). These details about her present moment are surely interesting, but fully comprehending what is at stake in Kathy's life is impossible for the first-time reader. The reader does not immediately realize that a carer's job consists of supporting other clones through organ-removal procedures in order to transplant these organs into humans. To be a donor is not a position of choice or of compassion, and more importantly, to be a donor in Kathy's world is to die prematurely. Even though she retells her encounter with one donor who had "just come through his third donation ... and he must have known he wasn't going to make it," Kathy obscures the institutional processes by which this clone is forced to undergo these procedures (5). Even death itself is obscured, as instead of dying, the donors "complete" (101). These euphemistic terms that Kathy grew up using are undoubtedly a product of the cloning institution that aims to legitimize these practices. Viewing death as a completion (*of a clone's purpose*, the reader might fill in) and forced surgeries as donations (*willingly given; needed*) reinforce the system in which Kathy has spent her entire life.¹³

Kathy *does* explicitly acknowledge an audience in the beginning of her narrative, despite obscuring other information. While explaining her career she notes, "[t]hat sounds long enough, I know," as if acknowledging another figure's surprise (3). The reader has no context with which to judge Kathy's career — only another clone would have a frame of reference for its length. As she continues, it becomes clear that her audience could very well be composed of carers: "I know carers, working now, who are just as good and don't get half the credit. *If you're one of them, ...*"

¹³ Other euphemistic terms that will reappear throughout this chapter include "possibles," humans that clones might have been copied from; "veterans," students already departed from the Cottages; and "deferrals," rumored pre-donation extensions temporarily given to clones. See pages 139, 117, and 258, respectively, for these passages.

(4, my italics). Whoever these clones are, they are similarly connected to these institutional processes through firsthand experience, or so Kathy thinks when she references how ex-Hailsham students are perceived as privileged: “I’ve heard it said enough, so I’m sure you’ve heard it plenty more ...” (4). Kathy seems to take for granted that her audience is familiar with caring and donating, remarking near the end of the text that “you’ll have heard the same talk,” referencing the possibility of remaining conscious after a fourth donation (279). Though she assumes her audience has had these experiences, Kathy seems certain that her audience did not attend Hailsham.

She believes that her audience grew up in some other facility in their childhood, though she doesn’t name specific locations: “*I don’t know how it was where you were*, but at Hailsham ...” (13, my italics). She repeats this phrase nearly verbatim, saying, “I don’t know if you had ‘collections’ where you were” (38). She prefaces Hailsham-specific stories¹⁴ with “I should explain a bit here ...”; “I suppose this might sound odd, but at Hailsham ...”; “This might all sound daft, but you have to remember ...”; and “I don’t know how it was where you were, but at Hailsham ...” (16, 22, 66, 96). It’s clear that this clone audience does *not* consist of Hailsham students, though which school they did attend remains unspecified. However, Kathy assumes her clone audience has had generally similar childhood experiences to her own: “I’m sure somewhere in your childhood, you too had an experience like ours that day; similar if not in details, then inside, in the feelings” (36). If unable to connect with these clones using Hailsham-specific stories, Kathy can appeal to her audience with what seems to be a universal experience for young clones:

¹⁴ See also: Kathy’s prefacing explanation of the Gallery, presumably for the audience, and her explanation of the Sales on pages 31 and 41, respectively.

there's a part of you that's been 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 ... The first time you glimpse yourself through the eyes of a person like that, it's a cold moment. (36)

These few moments where Kathy compares her own life with her readers' lives make up a majority of her direct addresses to them.

This knowledge gap between the reader and Kathy's imagined audience prevents the reader from grasping the true stakes at hand in the novel, mirroring how the Hailsham students themselves receive information. The students receive information through one primary mechanism that Miss Lucy, a guardian, dubs being "told and not told" (81). Before Miss Lucy names this mechanism, Kathy has already indirectly recounted a few examples of this type of information release, mimicking the mechanism herself. One example occurs when Kathy reflects on her hostility towards another student after they suggested to "cross some line together," saying, "I wasn't prepared for that yet. I think I sensed how beyond that line, there was something harder and darker and I didn't want that. Not for me, not for any of us" (55). Kathy indirectly understands that beyond her world of childish conspiracy there really does lurk something much more serious, but she can't allow herself to retain confidence in her recollection, immediately backtracking: "But at other times, I think that's wrong" (55). This threat simultaneously *does* and *doesn't* lurk in the back of her mind.

In a situation prefacing the second and more explicit encounter with Miss Lucy, the class is silent when nearly pushed into a conversation about why they cannot smoke:

I suppose it was because even at that age . . . 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 a long way down the line there were donations waiting for us. But we didn't really know what that meant. (69)

Here, the clones “certainly knew” *and* “didn't really know” about their futures (69). A few pages later, Kathy mentions this knowledge imbalance again, saying, “we all knew something I hadn't known back then, which was that none of us could have babies” (72–73). Again, she knows *and* doesn't know, noting that she could've “picked up the idea when [she] was younger without fully registering it” (73). Kathy summarizes these series of moments, “odd little things,” where knowledge is partially transferred or picked up through social circles: “It's even possible I began to realise, right back then, the nature of [Miss Lucy's] worries and frustrations. But that's probably going too far; chances are, at the time, I noticed all these things without knowing what on earth to make of them” (78, 78–79). By assuming she is narrating to other clones, Kathy inadvertently employs the told/not told mechanism of information release onto the actual reader, forcing them into an analogous position to the one that she *actually* occupied as a child.

The told/not told mechanism constitutes the parallel between the reader and the young clones: in both cases, each group is given access to fragmentary pieces of information without the accompanying context that makes the information itself meaningful. The clones' education at Hailsham prioritizes teaching certain facts about the students (e.g., that they cannot smoke, must avoid contracting sexually transmitted diseases, and are infertile) without the underlying reasons *why* they are taught these facts (they cannot damage their bodies before they donate, they are genetically incapable of reproduction). Kathy's introductory statements about donors, carers, and

completion, veiled in euphemism, are a prime example of this phenomenon. In both cases, it is not necessarily that the out-group, whether it be reader or clone, does not have access to *any* information at all, but that the information they *do* have access to is incomplete or ungrounded, lacking a holistic framework. For example, the reader only understands the consequences of becoming a donor *after* learning that the donations are a forced series of procedures on healthy young bodies that end in death.

This is what is so crucial about the told/not told mechanism: for it to function most effectively — both in Kathy’s world as a tool to keep the young clones docile *and* as a narrative tool that makes *Never Let Me Go* a comprehensible story — the group in question must receive *most* of the relevant information but must lack the overarching frame needed to contextualize it. This mechanism enables one to hold a piece of information without acting upon it or truly understanding its consequences: the young clones *are* partially aware that they are predestined to die for non-clones to survive, yet they hold this knowledge in their heads without attempting to escape this fate. This mechanism works in a similar fashion to Freud’s principle of disavowal, the ability to hold information in one’s head without (truly) comprehending its meaning.¹⁵ We practice disavowal when we behave as if there is no chance that every moment could be our last while also knowing that everyone must eventually die. For the clones, this rings even truer: they live their lives knowing that they will prematurely die but do not make any substantial changes to their life.¹⁶ Kathy will soon undergo donations and eventually die, but she seems to have no urge

¹⁵ Here referring to Freud’s later imagining of the term as something working “well beyond the realm of psychosis,” as “the possible juxtaposition in the psyche of at least two incompatible mental attitudes that appeared to have no influence on one another,” as the *International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* notes (415, 416).

¹⁶ Even the potentially terrifying rumor that “after the fourth donation, even if you’ve technically completed, you’re still conscious in some sort of way; how then you find there are more donations, plenty of them, on the other side of that line; how there are no more recovery centres, no carers, no friends; how there’s nothing to do except watch your remaining donations until they switch you off” is not powerful enough to break their disavowal (297). Kathy says that “[i]t’s horror movie stuff, and most of the time people don’t want to think about it,” showcasing how this horrific information lives in the clones’ heads without causing a change in their behavior (297).

to escape, choosing to spend her time reminiscing about her past. The ability to hold what would otherwise be life-altering information in one's head while ignoring its consequences arises in the clones' youth and continues up to their last moments alive.

The students even police conversations to avoid coming to terms with the truths that lurk underneath their lives, making it that much harder to uncover the told/not told mechanism as a powerful force. Instead of avoiding topics because they would reveal too much about their futures, Kathy asserts that the students avoid certain topics because they are embarrassing, even claiming that the students do not know why they avoid them. She does not elaborate on the clear reasons why certain topics are forbidden at Hailsham — what is forbidden is whatever would expose the clones' futures. Avoiding verbal conversation with a guardian about topics that could relate back to forbidden subjects is key, and Kathy recounts a few incidents where the forbidden is nearly spoken about. First, a student asks a guardian a 'rude' or 'unexpected' question, then the question is avoided or half-explained, and finally other students become angry, embarrassed, and socially punish the asker.

For example, when Marge "asked Miss Lucy her question" about smoking, Kathy repeatedly calls it "a shock," noting that the class was "glaring at Marge, really furious she'd asked such a rude question—to [the class], she might as well have asked if Miss Lucy had ever attacked anyone with an axe" (68). This question — "if Miss Lucy had herself ever had a cigarette" — is "rude," as Kathy explains, but *why* it is rude is another question (68). A discussion about why they cannot smoke, if truly placed in context, would bring to light the fact that their bodies are the most valued thing about them, that they must keep themselves healthy not for their own prosperity but because their organs will eventually be wanted. After Marge asks her question, Kathy remembers that the class "made Marge's life an utter misery," punishing her

“cruelly for bringing it all up that day” (68, 69).¹⁷ Kathy notes that the guardians’ reactions implicitly reinforce this system: “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” (69).

Miss Lucy is undoubtedly the exception amongst the Hailsham educators. At first she adhered to Hailsham procedures by telling/not telling the students answers to their questions about smoking: “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” (68–69). The clones are told that they are different, that it is more important for them to be healthy, but they are not told *why* they are so different and *why* they must remain healthy. These are quintessential told/not told answers, but Miss Lucy does not stick to them for long. Kathy correctly notices the potential for Miss Lucy to break out of this method of information control: “I’ve often thought about that day, and I’m sure now, in the light of what happened after, 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” (69).

The positions of the actual reader and the Hailsham students parallel each other in this moment of revelation where the told/not told mechanism is finally named. The reader’s burgeoning realization that they are reading a text about cloning and not a boarding school novel parallels the clones’ incomplete understanding of their own inevitable futures. For each group, Miss Lucy’s information illuminates the previously obscured consequences of the text’s world.

¹⁷ See also page 40: Miss Lucy is the guardian in question here, too, and Kathy remembers feeling “furious ... [and] virtually everybody shot daggers at Polly,” after she asks about the Gallery, displaying the expected punishment (40). Likewise, the “atmosphere ... became one of deep embarrassment” (40). Miss Lucy also tells/doesn’t tell the class: “All I can tell you today is that it’s for a good reason. A very important reason ...” (40).

This moment is a culmination of the pattern of Hailsham-era conversations with Miss Lucy, though as will become clear in our later investigation of the Gallery, information control remains a significant force in the clones' lives as they age. Miss Lucy finally breaks, saying she "can't listen to [them] any more and keep silent," that "it's time someone spelt it out" (80). After overhearing the students speak about "what it would feel like if [they] became actors ...," Miss Lucy declares that "there's just too much talk like this ... it's been allowed to go on, and it's not right" (80, 81). Finally, she names the phenomenon herself:

'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 ... 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. ... 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.' (81)

This is the first attempt by a guardian to expose the clones to their futures, and likewise this is Kathy's first retelling of a moment that bridges the gap between the imagined reader's assumed knowledge and the actual reader's understanding of the text. This isn't a perfect exposure of the system, though, and Kathy inadvertently highlights this as she immediately backtracks her recollection, saying, "I think that was all she said" and moving to Ruth's memory of the moment: "She claimed Miss Lucy ... explained how before donations we'd all spend some

time as carers, about the usual sequence of the donations, the recovery centres and so on—but I’m pretty sure she didn’t” (82). Kathy’s point here is that Ruth’s memory is incorrect, but by narrating this she exposes the incompleteness of the nevertheless revealing information dump: “*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” (82, my italics). What is more crucial than Kathy’s habitual second guessing of her memory is that she knowingly characterizes Miss Lucy’s position as one of impossibility, and given the efforts to effectively forbid this conversation, the impossibility of a full information reveal is unsurprising. It would be *more* surprising if Ruth’s memory actually was correct, that Miss Lucy *did* have a detailed conversation with the clones about the ins and outs of the organ harvesting industry for which they are fodder. Regardless of who remembers it correctly, this moment is nevertheless an exception to the told/not told mechanism that dominates the clones’ lives.

This moment, as exceptional as it is to the reader, is received differently by the students themselves, breaking from the brief parallelism that had developed between these two groups. The young clones have little reaction to the newly clarified stakes at hand:

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. . . . 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.’ (82)

It is unsurprising that the clones do not react to this information.¹⁸ Kathy inadvertently highlights what is so genius about the told/not told mechanism while she attempts to explain the students’

¹⁸ See page 29 for another example of the students’ non–reaction after Miss Lucy says they “aren’t being taught enough” about “what’s going to happen to [them] one day. Donations and all that,” to which Kathy responds, “But we *have* been taught about all that” (29).

non-reactions: “But that had been Miss Lucy’s point exactly. We’d been ‘told and not told,’ as she’d put it” (82). The curtain is not pulled back here so much as it is gently guided away, giving the young clones a peek at a view that is already half-familiar. This is the most significant instance wherein the underlying context of the cloning institution is revealed to its subjects, and although it reveals a fleeting, incomplete picture of their futures, it still breaks from Hailsham norms.

Kathy and her friends disagree about whether the guardians consciously told/didn’t tell information at Hailsham. Tommy’s “conspiracy theory” asserts that there *was* conscious motive on the guardians’ parts to tell/not tell:

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. (82)

Kathy is, as always, hesitant to commit. She eventually concedes to Tommy’s point in a small way: “I don’t think our guardians were that crafty—but there’s probably something in it” (82–83). This concession seems likelier when one considers that Miss Lucy herself states that “some people are quite happy to leave it that way,” referring to the students being told/not told about their futures (81). Who these ‘some people’ are remains unclear, but this is probably the most damning statement directed towards the Hailsham administration’s conscious use of this method of information control. Kathy *does* seem to quickly accept the validity of Tommy’s theory insofar as he accurately explains how it ‘felt’ growing up at Hailsham, though she is hesitant to assert that the guardians used a conscious method of information control:

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. (83)

Kathy also identifies another way the guardians might have worked to tell and not tell the clones, namely by speaking about their futures alongside information that is more attention-grabbing, here lectures about reproductive health. She concludes that these lectures were “typical 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’” (84). Her summary of this method needs no addition: “In other words, it's possible the guardians managed to smuggle into our heads a lot of the basic facts about our futures” (83).

Kathy's half-acceptance of Tommy's theory helps her contrast their youth with their young adulthood, tracing the way the told/not told mechanism helped them transition into a casual acceptance of their futures. This “marked change” that she notices in the way they “approached the whole territory surrounding donations” happened “around that age” when the conversation with Miss Lucy occurred (84). She explicitly places the behaviors that previously perpetuated the told/not told mechanism in contrast with their newfound acceptance of the future: “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” (84). From that age onwards, though, the clones have been told just enough to understand and begin to accept their futures:

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 that 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. (84)

Humor helps the clones begin to reckon with new details that emerge about the donation process: “the idea of things ‘unzipping’ ... [became] a running joke among us about the donations. The idea was that when the time came, you'd be able just to unzip a bit of yourself, a kidney or something would slide out, and you'd hand it over” (87–88). This is a rather heartbreaking moment wherein the clones use humor to mentally minimize the damage that will be done to their bodies. Kathy herself voices this, saying that the jokes were “some way of acknowledging what was in front of us,” that they “no longer shrank from the subject of donations as [they'd] have done a year or two earlier; but neither did [they] think about it very seriously, or discuss it” (88). She also points to Miss Lucy's conversation that afternoon as a clear turning point in the clones' lives:

I'd say what Miss Lucy said to us that afternoon led to a real shift in our attitudes. ... jokes about donations faded away, and we started to think properly about things. If anything, the donations went back to being a subject to be avoided, but not in the way it had been when we were younger. This time around it wasn't awkward or embarrassing any more; just sombre and serious. (88)

This transition marks the clones' Hailsham-era evolution under the told/not told mechanism, and by the end of their days there, the clones live in complete disavowal, fully understanding their futures and willingly accepting them. The post-Miss Lucy confrontation section of Part One of *Never Let Me Go* makes no mention of donations or obscured futures: as the clones enter the Cottages, then begin caring and donating, there shouldn't be any more surprises in their lives. However, there *is* one more subject that employs the told/not told mechanism into the clones' adulthood.

Mirroring *Never Let Me Go* with The Gallery:

The Gallery is yet another example of Hailsham's told/not told mechanism, as we will see, but it is unique in that it is the sole holdover of this mechanism from their youth into adulthood. Beyond the Gallery's enduring power as a told/not told mechanism, though, this childhood fixture has a deep impact on Kathy's creative process: the Gallery both provides a context out of which Kathy derives meaning from her life *and* shapes how she creates a physical product that elucidates this meaning. I argue that *Never Let Me Go* is heavily influenced by the culture of artistic creation that the Gallery fosters for the Hailsham students and that Kathy's autobiography can be best understood by examining how this culture is reproduced in her text.

The Gallery exerts a lasting influence on Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy's lives, and the stakes attached to its existence only increase as they age. The Gallery is seemingly unique to Hailsham because Kathy has to explain it, implying that her imagined audience needs clarification just as much as the actual reader does. Young Kathy initially links it with other "puzzling things" happening at Hailsham, saying, "I keep thinking about all these things. Like why Madame comes and takes away our best pictures. What's that for exactly?" (30). The only concrete object associated with the Gallery is Madame, a Hailsham administrator: "if for us the Gallery remained

in a hazy realm, what was solid enough fact was Madame's turning up usually twice—sometimes three or four times—each year to select from our best work” (32). Kathy links this mystery to being told/not told about their futures: “It’s got something to do with what Miss Lucy said to [Tommy]. About us, about how one day we’ll start giving donations. I don’t know why, but I’ve had this feeling for some time now, that it’s all linked in, though I can’t figure out how” (31).

Kathy’s eventual retrospective explanation illustrates the told/not told mechanism at work here:

The gallery Tommy and I were discussing was something we’d all of us grown up with. Everyone talked about it as though it existed, though in truth none of us knew for sure that it did. I’m sure I was pretty typical in not being able to remember how or when I’d first heard about it. Certainly, it hadn’t been from the guardians: they never mentioned the Gallery, and there was an unspoken rule that we should never even raise the subject in their presence. (31)

The Gallery is another forbidden topic, existing and not existing, whose discussion is policed by the students, somehow linked to future donations, and most importantly, is so tenuous that its very existence is in question.¹⁹ Kathy is characteristically uncertain about her memory, immediately hedging her recollection of the Gallery’s mythic popularity: “But did we really believe in the Gallery? Today, I’m not sure. As I’ve said, we never mentioned it to the guardians and looking back, it seems to me this was a rule we imposed on ourselves” (32).

The Gallery's mystery lingers into the clones’ adulthood, though for different reasons, and its uncertain presence is certainly linked to donations, though the clones don’t understand exactly how. In this sense, the Gallery is perhaps the most effective told/not told area of subject

¹⁹ For other examples of told/not told moments that involve the Gallery, see 32 and 108–109. Mentioning the Gallery in front of a guardian is “a mistake,” just like other forbidden topics (32). Miss Lucy gives told/not told answers about Tommy’s artistic failures, saying there are “all kinds of things [he doesn’t] understand” that she cannot tell him about (108).

matter as it has the longest delay before the moment of true information release: the clones and the reader only find out the Gallery's 'true' purpose near the end of the text.

The non-Hailsham students they encounter at the Cottages introduce what is at first a seemingly unrelated phenomenon, the deferral, though it quickly becomes linked to the Gallery. Vaguely originating from "up in Wales," this rumor posits that "if you were a boy and a girl, and you were in love with each other, really, properly in love, and if you could show it, then the people who run Hailsham, they sorted it out for you ... so you could have a few years together before you began your donations" (153). This rumor was perpetuated for the "past several weeks" amongst the "veterans," older non-Hailsham students (154). Like the Gallery, the deferrals conjure swirling decentralized rumors that quietly spread according to social rules. Ruth's disingenuous perpetuation of this rumor as truth, that they were told "a few things, obviously" at Hailsham about it, only contributes to the swelling myth (154). Although it is clear²⁰ that the deferral is initially just that, a myth, it eventually becomes more and more plausible as it is linked to the Gallery as they age.

The deferrals, Tommy explains, must derive from the Gallery, having overheard Miss Emily say that "things like pictures, poetry, all that kind of stuff ... they *revealed what you were like inside*. ... they *revealed your soul*" (175). Revealing one's soul becomes crucial for determining romantic compatibility, as Tommy theorizes:

Suppose two people say they're truly in love, and they want extra time to be together.

Then you see Kath, there has to be a way to judge if they're really telling the truth. That they aren't just saying they're in love, just to defer their donations. You see how difficult it could be to decide? ... But the point is, whoever decides, Madame or whoever it is,

²⁰ See Tommy's recollection: "I'm sure we were right, there was no talk like that when we were at Hailsham" (174).

they need something to go on. ... She can find the art they've done over years and years.

... If they match. Don't forget Kath, what she's got reveals our souls. (175–176)

Tommy's theory explains why their art was taken in the first place *and* why the Gallery was such an important fixture in their youth: "The thing about being from Hailsham was that you had this special chance. And if you didn't get stuff into Madame's gallery, then you were as good as throwing that chance away" (176). Miss Lucy's earlier discussion with him wherein she notes that Tommy's art "*is* important. And not just because it's evidence. But for [his] own sake ..." only adds fuel to the fire (108). This theory is of particular relevance to Tommy, who never submitted art into the Gallery as a student, having thrown away his chance. However, in his adulthood, Tommy creates art, hoping he can still submit it as evidence (193). These "imaginary animals" Tommy creates become his pseudo-submissions to the Gallery, his last hope at attaining a deferral (178).

It is only in Chapter Twenty-Two that we realize that although the Gallery does not exist to provide evidence for a deferral, it *did* exist and it *did* serve a particular purpose. The rumor of the Gallery "*did* have some truth to it. There *was* a gallery" (259). The Gallery was actually a series of "special exhibitions" in the "late seventies" during the height of Hailsham's influence, where they held "large events all around the country for "all sorts of famous people to attend" with "speeches, large funds pledged" (261–262). The Gallery functioned as a sympathy-eliciting device for the administration in their efforts to secure support for their movement, as Miss Emily notes: "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*" (260). Tommy's conspiracy theory was fittingly close to the truth: "You said an interesting thing earlier, Tommy. ... You said it was because your

art would reveal what you were like. What you were like inside. ... Well, you weren't far wrong about that” (260).

With the truth behind the Gallery finally told, Kathy and Tommy are left with two key questions that form the basis for Kathy’s creation of *Never Let Me Go*. Kathy asks, “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?” (259). Tommy follows in the same vein, later echoing Kathy’s confusion: “So what you’re saying, Miss ... is that everything we did, all the lessons, everything. It was all about what you just told us? There was nothing more to it than that?” (266). The answer to these questions is that, beyond functioning as ‘pro-clone’ propaganda, the Gallery existed to keep the students interested in the Gallery, to keep the students occupied and distracted through the medium of art and writing, as Miss Emily makes clear:

You wouldn’t have become absorbed in your lessons, you wouldn’t have lost yourselves in your art and your writing. Why should you have done, knowing what lay in store for each of you? You would have told us it was all pointless, and how could we have argued with you? (268)

After venturing as closely as possible to questioning the system in front of her, voicing its pointlessness – “If we’re just going to give donations anyway, then die, why all those ... books and discussions?” – Kathy nonetheless continues to care for Tommy until his death, then quietly prepares for her own upcoming donations (259). With the systems in her life so exposed to her late in her life, I argue that it is the Gallery’s influence, beginning in her youth, that shapes her final acceptance of her fate.

I argue that the Gallery, beyond functioning as a key example of the told/not told mechanism, can help us understand *Never Let Me Go* as a text that Kathy produces because it is the only action she has been conditioned to take in response to her world. Kathy's entrenched position within this cultural space leaves her only with the option of turning to art to express herself before her death, taking resistance out of the picture. Right until the end, the Gallery keeps clones willingly embedded in a system that kills them: it gives the clones purpose in their youth, distracting them from questioning the pointlessness of Hailsham as an institution; its tantalizing linkage to deferrals in adulthood keeps the clones' focus on attaining this temporary exception to the rule instead of questioning the system at large; and finally, it influences Kathy to remain a willing participant in her own death through its perpetuation of art as a deeply meaningful process, here more deeply instinctual than any potential escape.

Many characteristics of the text can be traced back to the influences of the Gallery in Kathy's youth. The Gallery functioned as something that "passed down through the different generations" and continued as they aged: "As we got older, we went on talking about the Gallery" (31). Its persistence in the clones' lives helps it become an ingrained method of thinking and perceiving the world around them — the Gallery and art itself does really function as "evidence," to use Miss Lucy's words, though not to prove the clones' humanity *or* their romantic compatibility. The Gallery measured the success or failure of the students' pieces and, on a larger scale, the artistic merit of the creator. To "praise someone's work, you'd say: 'That's good enough for the Gallery.' And after [they] discovered irony, whenever [they] came across any laughably bad work, [they'd] go: 'Oh yes! Straight to the Gallery with that one!'" (31–32). This system continues into their adulthood; Kathy's first reaction to Tommy's work is to ask, "I wonder what Madame would say if she saw these," to which Tommy replies that he'll "have to

get a lot better before *she* gets to see any of it,” reaffirming the Gallery’s status as judge of ‘good’ art (187). The Gallery gave the young clones a system with which to view and judge themselves, one that revolved around being seen as an accomplished artist: “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’” (16). On the one hand, students like Christy, who “had this great reputation for poetry” were “looked up to,” free from bullying, as Kathy explains: “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” (18).

On the other hand, failing to produce esteemed art was devastating for one’s social life. Tommy posits that “his troubles began ... in one of Miss Geraldine’s art classes” where after painting an “elephant standing in some tall grass” that looked as if a “kid three years younger might have” made it, Miss Geraldine “went too far the other way, actually finding things to praise, pointing them out to the class,” which was “how the resentment started” (19, 20). For Tommy, “the harder he tried, the more laughable his efforts turned out,” leading him to produce “work that seemed deliberately childish” (20). What started as art quickly spirals outwards, affecting all of Tommy’s life: “He got left out of games, boys refused to sit next to him at dinner, or pretended not to hear if he said anything in his dorm after lights-out. ... he’d think the whole thing was behind him, then something he did ... would get it all going again” (20–21). The Gallery’s influence ran so deep that not only were the students encouraged to produce art, but they were also “encouraged to value each other’s work,” a process that clearly had consequences for those who couldn’t succeed, like Tommy (17). Being a ‘good’ artist meant the world to Hailsham students, a trait which I argue continues to influence Kathy into her adulthood and prompts her to create art, here *Never Let Me Go*.

Assigning explicit values to the students' works was only further encouraged by the pseudo-Gallery events held "four times a year" called "Exchanges," which were a "exhibition-cum-sale of all the things [they'd] been creating" (16). For each item, whether it be "paintings, drawings, pottery," etc., the student was "paid in Exchange Tokens ... and then ... you went along with your tokens and 'bought' the stuff you liked" (16). Beyond solidifying the link between creating 'good' art and being potentially rewarded for it, these events created hierarchies of artistic media. They were "allowed to hand in poems, instead of a drawing or painting," and Kathy remarks that the "strange thing was, we all thought that was fine, we thought that made sense," noting how commonly accepted this hierarchy became despite its subjective valuation of the written over the visual (17). The students so preferred written work that they'd "spend [their] precious tokens on an exercise book full of [poetry] rather than on something really nice for around [the] beds" (17). This "nine-year old stuff, funny little lines, all misspelt, in exercise books" was more valued than any visual art (17).

The Gallery remained a way for Kathy to think about the value of art and what it can tell about its creator, whether it be artistic merit or romantic compatibility. As Kathy herself notes, "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" (37). Kathy is certainly right that the Gallery's processes "came to dominate" their lives, "growing and growing," I argue, right up until her own death; cut off from fellow students, Hailsham itself, and any other meaningful connections to her youth, Kathy turns to writing in the final months of her life to reconnect to her past (37). Informed as she was by its presence throughout her life, this text is exactly the type of creation

that the Gallery would have valued — it is a written work that tries to reveal the innermost workings of Kathy herself.

Kathy states that her purpose behind writing *Never Let Me Go* is to “get straight all the things that happened between [her] and Tommy and Ruth after [they] grew up and left Hailsham,” to “order all these old memories” (37). Kathy says that she has realized “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” (37). Kathy plays into the Gallery’s influence again; in her ‘careful’ examination of her past, she attempts to reveal something about herself in the same way that the Gallery posits that art tells something inherent about its creator. Kathy links her art to the potential to tell something meaningful about herself. She believes that ‘ordering all these old memories’ will help her see how the circumstances of her life might have a greater meaning that she can extrapolate, that new conclusions can be reached in her recounting.

By constantly telling/not telling the reader the circumstances of her world because she assumes they are also clones, on the one hand, and mimicking what the Gallery has taught her about art (that art will reveal meaningful qualities of the artist, that written art is superior to visual art) on the other hand, I argue that *Never Let Me Go* can be read as an autobiographical text that reproduces the conditions of Kathy’s world. The told/not told mechanism and the Gallery push their way into the text, dominating it just like they do in her real life; this microcosmic reproduction of her lived experience reproduces it too accurately.

Chapter 3: Staging the Present Moment

This chapter investigates each narrator's present moment, and though we have dissected the many addresses that are voiced from this space, the space itself has thus far been left untouched. Both Jane and Kathy make clear certain aspects of their present moments, though they differ in what they reveal and when they reveal it. Jane's present moment is full of mystery and inaccessibility, riddled with gaps in time and lacking a clear motive for writing her text. Jane details the general circumstances of a few relevant characters into the present, but she does not comment on the mysterious ten-year gap before the present, the circumstances of her current married life, or what the future might hold for her. The final chapter of *Jane Eyre* fails to bring together all the information the reader wants to know, leaving yet another inaccessible space between the reader and Jane — she cannot, in the end, break through her hidden interiority. Kathy, on the other hand, has no qualms about sharing the circumstances of her present moment from the first page of *Never Let Me Go*; Kathy frequently returns to this present moment, detailing her habitual routines, the physical spaces she occupies, and her present thoughts and feelings. Moreover, Kathy's present moment *does* lend itself to an understanding of her future; the unspoken circumstances of her approaching death frame the future with a finality unmatched by Jane's narrative. This future shapes her motive for writing the text, which Kathy openly voices alongside her goals. Her inevitable death spurs the need to trace the connections between her childhood and adulthood, and the implicit goal of this retracing is to come to a newfound understanding of her life. Kathy names her motives and goals and even seems to achieve them, though at the most perfunctory level. The explicit voicing and passive achievement of these motives and goals makes the end of the novel all the more frustrating: the reader watches as

Kathy remains within the system that will soon kill her, failing to reach any new, revolutionary mindsets after retracing her youth, stuck reproducing her world into the text until the bitter end.

Though the truly extensive present moment occurs in the final chapter, Jane does make use of her present moment throughout the text. Before the final chapter, Jane mostly uses the present to note extremely specific details about the changing world. Instead of understanding where she is, what has happened to her, and what she will do in the future, the reader is left to pick up the pieces of information about her present that Jane drops in the text. Even when Jane does speak from this present moment, she often comments on specific trends that are indicative of society writ large. By drawing on knowledge not yet available to her past self, Jane uses the passage of time to openly note changes in fashion, education, and “the golden age of modern literature,” even translating a language she has yet to learn: “At a later day, I knew the language and the book; therefore I will here quote the line ...” (331, 297).²¹ The reader learns little about adult Jane in these moments beyond her attention to societal trends, her belief that literature has stagnated, and that she learns German. The reader learns more about what happens to Jane’s world rather than Jane herself in the time elapsed between the narrative and the present.

In other moments, though, Jane *does* share her adult perspective with the reader. Though brief, Jane distinguishes her adult self from her younger self, reflecting on her inexperience. Jane once openly notes, “it is a very strange sensation to inexperienced youth to feel itself quite alone in the world...,” and she later reflects on what would have been best for her young self: “What good it would have done me at that time to have been tossed in the storms of an uncertain struggling life ...” (87, 107). No retrospection is as explicit as her reflections on her male relationships, prompted by the memory of St. John’s forceful proposal:

²¹ See 61 for changes in fashion, 81 for a reader address on changes in education, and 331 for modern literature.

I was almost as hard beset by him now as I had been once before, in a different way, by another. I was a fool both times. To have yielded then would have been an error of principle; to have yielded now would have been an error of judgment. So I think at this hour, when I look back to the crisis through the quiet medium of time: I was unconscious of folly at the instant. (373)

Clearly the ‘quiet medium of time’ has allowed Jane to succinctly vocalize where she erred in her youth, and she makes this clear, referencing ‘this hour’ of the present as compared to her ‘folly at the instant’ in the past. Yet as soon as she speaks from the present to voice these reflections, the reader might wonder what has happened to Jane in the intervening years that prompts these convictions — is the mere passage of time what influences her retrospection here, or have other events occurred that have drastically changed her? These questions only persist as Jane makes frequent exclamatory proclamations, asserting her adult perspective about a variety of subjects²² into the narrative. Once Jane forms a series of opinions about the world around her and interjects them into her narrative, her own trajectory in life is called into focus.

And what do we know about this life? The reader is made privy to her adult reflections and observations, but the confounding presence of the ten-year gap before the final chapter remains a silent mystery that we cannot easily parse. We know Jane learns languages, tracks changes in society, and also that she comes into contact with other Europeans, as revealed when she speaks about her Morton students: “since those days I have seen paysannes and Bäuerinnen: and the best of them seemed to me ignorant, coarse, and besotted, compared with my own Morton girls” (347). Perhaps Jane continues to teach? She travels? Encounters European women

²² For her proclamations on topics ranging from youth, ‘sketching character,’ children, presentiments, ‘young ladies,’ prejudices, and ‘reserved people,’ respectively, see: 97, 100–101, 198, 206, 304, 332–333.

somewhere in Britain? Since these events transpire in that silent space, the reader can only know exactly what Jane tells them about this time in her life.

In contrast to this span of years, Jane's present moment is a little clearer, though the future remains similarly blank. The final chapter consists of Jane's narration 'wrapping up' the fates of the central figures in her narrative, though she does some of this work earlier on. After it is revealed that Helen Burns has died, Jane briefly steps into the narrative to note that Helen's "grave is in Brocklebridge churchyard," and that "for fifteen years after her death it was only covered by a grassy mound; but now a grey marble tablet marks the spot, inscribed with her name, and the word 'Resurgam'" (77). Again, the reader gets a small glimpse into Jane's life in the interim: we can infer that she visits Helen and that eventually helps change the gravestone. Similarly, since she "shall not have occasion to refer either to her or her sister again" after Mrs. Reed's death, Jane tells us that she "may as well mention here that Georgiana made an advantageous match ... and that Eliza actually took the veil, and is at this day superior of the convent..." (217–218). With the fates of these corollary characters delivered before the reader can forget about them, Jane only turns to relaying more explicit present moment information in the final chapter.

The final chapter, the 'Conclusion,' begins with the infamous, "Reader, I married him," which sets the tone for the kind of work Jane looks to do at the narrative's close (399). Jane uses this chapter to inform the reader of anything she deems relevant to the conclusion of her autobiography: "My tale draws to its close: one word respecting my experience of married life, and one brief glance at the fortunes of those whose names have most frequently recurred in this narrative, and I have done. I have now been married ten years" (401). Here the ten-year gap is illuminated by a few details: we learn of Jane's "quiet wedding," Adèle's maturation, and Mr.

Rochester's slowly improving vision (399). The details of Diana and Mary Rivers' marriages, alongside the birth and maturation of Jane's son are blurrier events, and the reader is told nothing about whatever occurs in the latter half of this decade. Finally, Jane ends with a turn to the near future, anticipating only St. John's death, and with that her 'brief glance' into the present is over.

These final pages are *not* a culmination of the reader's knowledge about the text: at no point does Jane relay a full picture of her life in the present moment. The reader finds out about the presence of the ten-year gap within the final pages of the novel only for it to remain inaccessible. The circumstances of Jane's married life, too, are half-narrated, filled with an effusive positivity and a general vagueness at odds with the level of detail we have previously been accustomed to.²³ Jane chooses to conclude her narrative only by gesturing forward towards St. John's death, a man who few readers truly sympathize with, instead of looking forward to her own future or back at her recent past! The reader is left alone to puzzle through the ending of *Jane Eyre*: once Jane reaches the present, the inclination to open herself up for an audience seemingly vanishes.

This ending does not quite align with the goals Jane has for her text, or at least the ones she names within it. Jane sees her autobiography as her "task to advert," and this task involves sorting through her past and retelling what is good enough to "merit record" (71, 46). Not everything makes the cut: her childhood reflections are "too undefined and fragmentary" to record and are thus removed from the narrative (46). The act of recording what is deemed to be 'good enough' is intertwined with Jane's awareness of her audience's presence:

Hitherto I have recorded in detail the events of my insignificant existence: to the first ten years of my life, I have given almost as many chapters. But this is not to be a regular

²³ The extreme detail in every tense exchange between Mr. Rochester and Jane, for example, are worlds away from the six or so paragraphs Jane spends speaking about their married life as a whole. Jane moves from verbal transcriptions of her conversations to a mere page spent describing an entire decade.

autobiography: I am only bound to invoke memory where I know her responses will possess some degree of interest; therefore I now pass a space of eight years almost in silence: a few lines only are necessary to keep up the links of connection. (77)

Clearly, one of her goals is to recount what she thinks will compel an audience to keep reading, though the accomplishment of this goal revolves around Jane's judgments of what is interesting about her life, not the reader's. In response to an imagined objection that "persons who entertain solemn doctrines about the angelic nature of children" will have to her "cool language" about them, Jane asserts, "I am not writing to flatter parental egotism, to echo cant, or prop up humbug; I am merely telling the truth" (100). The ending of the text certainly might tell the truth, but it does not tell us the *whole* truth. This claim to truth telling is perhaps less a goal and more a practice that Jane claims to follow, but there still exists the same mismatch between Jane's own ideas about her ending and what the reader might actually want, mirroring the mismatch present when she voices her goals. The reader is likely interested in the answers to a horde of pressing questions at the end of the text, but Jane instead focuses on the fates of lesser characters — are readers truly interested in speculation about how quickly St. John might die or how often the Rivers sisters visit? Jane seems to turn away from what the reader wants to know, leaving behind more questions than answers.

Though Jane speaks about some of her goals, she is silent about her motives. The premise of the fictional autobiography hinges on the notion that the narrator has sat down and, in that moment, writes the text we read. So what is it about this specific present moment, at least a decade after the events of the narrative, that causes Jane to sit down and write? Just as Jane leaves blank the ten-year gap preceding it and the future that will follow it, the present moment is similarly unmoored if the reader cannot understand her motive. The reader might speculate

about Jane's duties caring for Mr. Rochester and her young son, perhaps seeing these as obstacles that hindered her until one's eyesight improved and the other grew up. But if she finally has the time to transcribe her life's story, why end with her life at this particular period? Why not continue narrating into the present, including that now-blank decade, or wait until she's even older to begin writing? These attempts to understand Jane's present moment only prompt more questions. Jane does not end her text right after she marries Mr. Rochester, but she simultaneously does not give the reader more than a short glimpse into her new roles as wife, mother, and nurse. Though Jane subverts expectations by continuing her text after the wedding bells cease ringing, she does not shed light on the invisible years of motherhood that make up her foreseeable future.

This frustrating inaccessibility is a final instance of the pattern Jane struggles to overcome: by attempting to convey her interiority to the reader right up until the present moment, Jane still leaves parts of herself hidden, just as she did in her youth! Perhaps the stakes have been raised — as we have seen, the medium of time lent Jane authority and space to grow and reflect on her youth, but as time marches on, Jane's distance from her current self dwindles. Furthermore, Jane Eyre herself is no longer: by the final chapter Jane Rochester speaks to the reader! Perhaps it is Jane's new identity that stops her from continuing her narrative, or maybe it is the discomfort of retelling her story in the present without the passage of time to aid her that explains this abrupt halt. Or perhaps Jane wants to remain mysterious after all, flaunting her inaccessible interior to her bumbling reader from afar, renouncing attempts to transmit it in the present. Despite these tentative guesses, there is no true way of knowing what Jane's motives are at the end of her text, and this lingering mystery fits all too well with her continued failings to make clear her inner space for an audience.

Kathy, on the other hand, portrays her present moment with a much clearer voice. From the opening pages of *Never Let Me Go*, the reader knows how old Kathy is, what she does, and that there is a big change in her life that lingers on the horizon (3). One of the most obvious ways Kathy speaks from her adult retrospective present in the text is by using the trigger word “now,” often using variations of the phrase ‘it occurs to me now/looking/thinking back now.’²⁴ Whereas *Jane Eyre* builds to a present moment information reveal in its final chapter, Kathy does not hesitate to do this kind of work from the start of *Never Let Me Go*; she spends paragraphs²⁵ in the present moment, clearly delineating the state of her adult life as she writes her autobiography.

Kathy’s present moments often center around the near past wherein she is “driving around the country now,” looking at the “grey sky” and thinking in “daydreams” (55). While driving, she often thinks she has encountered Hailsham (6, 286). These encounters are the exception to the rule of her driving trips, which often give her thoughts “nowhere special to go,” prompting these recollections (55). She listens to her Judy Bridgewater tape in the car, has “coffee in a service station” while thinking of revisiting her Cottages essay, or strolls into “somewhere like [Woolworth’s], ... where you can hang around and enjoy yourself,” “looking for a shop with another lamp like [hers] in its window” (64, 116, 157, 208). This offhand discussion of lamps actually prompts Kathy to reveal the physical location where she is recording her narrative: “Here in my bedsit, I’ve got these four desk–lamps ...” (208). Kathy does not ever return to the bedsit, but this small gesture nonetheless illuminates the physical setting around her as she writes. The reader becomes familiarized with these repeated scenes of driving, stopping at motorways, and shopping that act as background for memories that take Kathy by surprise: she’ll “catch” herself thinking, “find” herself thinking, and note that these old

²⁴ See: 16, 36, 69, 72, 83, 89, 95, 102, 119, 127, 129, 143, 150, 171, 211, 236, 242

²⁵ See: 3, 6, 37, 45, 55, 64, 65, 115–116, 207–209, 286–287.

memories will “pop” into her head “for no reason,” prompting Hailsham–era recollections (45, 115, 116).

Kathy also turns to the future, and in her speculation about it, she reveals a half–formed picture of what it holds. The reader learns early on that Kathy will “welcome the chance to rest—to stop and think and remember” after she “won’t be a carer any more come the end of the year,” though she says she “got a lot out of it” (37). Kathy points to other potential activities she could engage in after her career ends, illuminating this future space. She anticipates that the “end of the year” will allow her to “listen to [Songs After Dark] more often” or to think about “going back and working on [her Cottages essay]” (64, 116).²⁶ She is also “looking forward to a bit more companionship come the end of the year,” speaking positively about donorhood (208). Her driving will come to an end, but not finding Hailsham again seems not to trouble her: “I’m glad that’s the way it’ll be. It’s like with my memories of Tommy and Ruth. Once I’m able to have a quieter life, in whichever centre they send me to, I’ll have Hailsham with me, safely in my head, and that’ll be something no one can take away” (286–287). Beyond these glimpses into Kathy’s near future of donating, listening to music, writing, and remembering Hailsham, there exists a certainty about what will happen to her that cannot be matched by Jane’s closing of her narrative.

Kathy will soon die after undergoing several donations. Her friends and loved ones, Ruth and Tommy, are already dead, and the nostalgic refuge of Hailsham, the only place she expresses a wish to return to, has been destroyed. Jane’s death, though also inevitable, is not as preordained, not looming on the horizon. Kathy is intimately familiar with what happens to donors, and thus her ending does not wrap up any personal loose ends simply because there are no loose ends to be wrapped (nothing new can have happened to Tommy or Ruth; nothing new

²⁶ Kathy’s inclination to rework her Cottages essay seems resonant with the Gallery’s influence in her life, too: this essay is in the written form, as the Gallery would have valued, though as an academic text it is not the kind of conventionally artistic creative project the Gallery accepted.

can come of Hailsham; nothing new will come of her life before her approaching death). On the whole, an examination of Kathy's present moment reveals a clear picture of the trajectory of her life from her childhood into her present moment — there is no decade-long time gap here, the present is well explained, and Kathy's future has a clear path that leads to her death.

This future informs Kathy's motives for writing her autobiography, and though on a plot level there is no change possible at the close of her text, certainly the reader might hope Kathy herself has changed. The most obvious space for this potential growth to be realized is in the context of Kathy's motives for writing. She explicitly voices these motives early in the text:

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. (37)

She seems to have realized that the circumstances of her adult life are inexorably tied to her childhood, citing the need to “go over these earlier memories quite carefully” to trace their effects into the present (37). Kathy's motives are seemingly two-fold: on the one hand, the end of her role as a carer has brought death closer to her horizon, prompting the recording of her memories into an external product.²⁷ On the other hand, the text serves as a way for Kathy to explore why her life took the course it did, beginning with events in her childhood and tracing them onwards. If her motive is to draw a legible picture of how the events of her life led her to

²⁷ Clearly she believes that only other clones might ever read this product, though how and why it would be disseminated remains unclear, one of the only mysteries in Kathy's present. Since Kathy's motives and goals are directed inwards, centering around *her* understanding of her life, *her* retracing of her memories, this lack of clarity about how and why her audience will receive her text is perhaps less surprising.

the present moment, then ostensibly the goal of *Never Let Me Go* is to produce that explanation, to newly understand her life.

Yet as clearly as Kathy conveys her present thoughts, feelings, and anticipations about the future, she seems to conclude the text without coming to new conclusions about the passage of her life. Kathy fulfills the baseline of her goal: she *is* able to retrace her memories and note where significant events began in her childhood. Just after Kathy states her motive for writing, she very accurately notes that “all this curiosity about Madame, for instance,” was simultaneously “just us kids larking about,” yet at another level, “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” (37). This retrospection allows her to verbalize the process of the Gallery ‘growing and growing over the years’ that then shapes her adulthood. There are a handful of moments where Kathy ‘looks back in light of what happened afterwards,’ to borrow her own phrasing, and notices a significance that she was previously unable to see: “It felt bad enough at the time, but I had no idea in the churchyard that day how far-reaching the repercussions would be” (194). She also returns to conversations with Miss Lucy and “other little incidents” all in “light of what came after,” retrospectively marking them as significant (78–79). The retracing of her past allows her to connect ‘real meanings’ to these moments using her retrospective knowledge. In the titular scene where Kathy listens to the song “Never Let Me Go,” she uses her final encounter with Madame, years later, to establish a meaningful order of events that began in her youth: “There was one strange incident around this time ... and although I wasn’t to find out its real meaning until years later, I think I sensed, even then, some deeper significance to it” (70–71). Here Kathy alludes to Madame’s perspective of this moment, revealed in Chapter Twenty-Two, connecting it to her own recollection of the moment in her childhood. In moments like these, Kathy seems to

be able to point to the connections between her youth and later life and point to their significance, yet she does not go much further than that.

Even in Kathy's most extended moments of retrospection and connection-making, she seems only able to speak generally about the presence of these connections and not about *why* these series of events that shaped her life were so meaningful. Though it is perhaps exciting to the reader that her text so overtly shows her in the process of achieving her own goals to serve her own motivations, this overtness in itself makes Kathy's own lack of development all the more frustrating. Here, I venture to guess, is where many readers and critics alike find fault with Kathy: by clearly stating her goals and even (somewhat successfully) achieving them, why does Kathy stop there? After retracing her life, she still chooses to remain within the cloning system, even speaking about it in her present moment as a space of rest and relaxation before her death. The readers might feel that Kathy is on the cusp of verbalizing every inhumane failure of this system as the text progresses, but this lack of resistance to her looming death is startling. Outside of her questions in Chapter Twenty-Two that point to Hailsham's pointlessness, Kathy comes close to broaching these topics when she leaves the Cottages:

As I've said, it wasn't until a long time afterwards—long after I'd left the Cottages—that I realised just how significant our little encounter in the churchyard had been. I was upset at the time, yes. But I didn't believe it to be anything so different from other tiffs we'd had. It never occurred to me that our lives, until then so closely interwoven, could unravel and separate over a thing like that. But the fact was, I suppose, there were powerful tides tugging us apart by then, and it only needed something like that to finish the task. If we'd understood that back then—who knows?—maybe we'd have kept a tighter hold of one another. (197)

The “powerful tides” that wrench these young adults apart from one another seem unconquerable, even in Kathy’s retrospection, and the closest thing to resistance she can offer is the half-baked notion of ‘keeping a tighter hold of one another.’ Her language is so vague here that though Kathy seems to be speaking about the complicated romantic and platonic tensions present in the group, she could also be describing the system that is poised to rope her into beginning to ‘care.’ Kathy misses the system at work in front of her, only focusing on the individuals in her life — even in the face of emotional conflict, Kathy can only vaguely say that they should attempt to remain closer together. It seems unthinkable, then, that Kathy could put up any resistance when propelled into entering donorhood in the near future. That potential for personal growth the reader may have hoped for is clearly unfulfilled, impossible.

On the whole, if Kathy is (at least somewhat) successful in tracing how her childhood informed what followed it, the establishment of these connections nonetheless does not yield a new perspective that results in any change in Kathy’s circumstances or worldview. Though Kathy’s present moment affords a clarity unseen in Jane’s, this explicitness of motive and goal only frustrates us further when these goals are not pushed as far as the readers might desire. Kathy only achieves her goals at their bare minimum, failing once again to escape the circumstances of her life in her autobiography — Kathy cannot rise above the systems that inform her novel’s creation, cannot use her recollections to fuel any inner change.

Each narrator structures their present moment in ways that point to the failures we investigated in the previous chapters: for Jane, the mystery of motive and the circumstances of her life constitute another inaccessible space between herself and the reader. For Kathy, her clear description of the present moment, her motives, and her goals only make her lack of resistance more frustrating, proving once more that the text fails to escape its environment.

Conclusions

This thesis has examined the patterns of reader address in each text and connected them to the forces that drive Jane and Kathy to create their autobiographies. Jane's addresses led to a consideration of her inability to narrativize her feelings and to represent her inner ideas in an external artistic product. Jane's failures to both verbalize and create in art her inner feelings and ideas recontextualize *Jane Eyre* itself: the autobiography can be read as an attempt to convey this inner world outwards to the reader, to succeed where her art has previously failed. Kathy's reader addresses mirror her own childhood experiences with the told/not told mechanism, and the Gallery shapes her life as the longest told/not told subject in her text. Kathy's failure to mentally or physically escape the systems under which she lives renders *Never Let Me Go* a text that reproduces the conditions it describes, informed by the Gallery's influence on her art-making alongside the told/not told mechanism. Though she achieves her 'goal' of ordering her memories, this remembering fails to prompt any newfound revelations within Kathy, and she remains uncritical of the systems that oppress her.

For each text, we must ask whether our narrators have succeeded in the tasks they have set out for themselves, whether the art they have produced has done what they wanted it to do. In short, the answer to these questions must be a resounding *no*. Jane's text has *not* actually conveyed the inexpressible to the reader, despite her unending efforts to do so. The text is still filled with Jane's vague feelings and impossible artistic ideas, and when she struggles to relay her emotions or to depict the tantalizing visuals that dance in her mind, she draws the reader in, distracting them from what she cannot overcome in her narration. She cannot make the reader experience what she has experienced in her 'spirit's eye,' cannot make the reader see the "ever-shifting kaleidoscope of imagination," the "tale that was never ended," or any other of her

impossibly fantastic artistic creations (210, 101). Addressing someone to explain something to them, as Jane does, only highlights the informational gap in her narration that necessitates an explanation in the first place! Every time Jane addresses her reader, then, she indirectly affirms their presence as a separate entity who needs to be addressed because the unfolding narration of her past fails to adequately express her inner landscape. Even in her present moment at the end of the text, Jane still does not break through her pattern of inaccessibility. She becomes more mysterious as she becomes Jane Rochester, leaving the reader with no information about the trajectory her life has taken in the previous decade.

Kathy's text, on the other hand, fails to help her reach truly radical conclusions after tracing connections between her youth and adulthood; though she does achieve her goals in the sense that she is now able to point to significant events in the past and order them, she does not succeed at coming to a larger understanding of her life after she retraces it. Her own explicit voicing of her goal to 'order her memories' only focuses the reader's attention more on her passive acceptance of the conditions of her life. Though Kathy spends paragraphs in the present moment, the reader is not made privy to any epiphanies she might have after retelling her life's story. We know that Kathy believes she "won't lose [her] memories" of Ruth, Tommy, and Hailsham, *not* that these memories have spurred her to take any action before she dies and truly loses them (286). Instead of becoming critical of the school that quietly funneled her into the cloning institution without overtly informing her of her future, present-moment Kathy says she'll "have Hailsham ... safely in [her] head, and that'll be something no one can take away" (286-287). The tragedy is, of course, that Kathy still thinks the inside of her mind is 'safe,' that these memories cannot be tarnished as long as she keeps ahold of them. What she does not realize is that the Gallery and the told/not told mechanism have so seeped into her life that even

the piece of art she creates cannot escape their influence. Even thinking that Hailsham is deserving of being kept safe is evidence that Kathy has clearly not seen Hailsham with new eyes. Unsurprisingly, this act of artistic creation so influenced by the Gallery and the told/not told mechanism keeps Kathy entrenched within her system until the very end, forcing her to fail at her own goal.

Jane cannot make the reader experience what she has experienced, thus failing to overcome her past failures with a specific narrative form, but Kathy's text *only* recreates her experiences with the told/not told mechanism and the Gallery, failing to reveal new conclusions about her life. Jane's inner space remains too distant, closed off from the reader, whereas Kathy's inner space becomes infiltrated by the forces from the outside world. Each narrative reveals to us why they cannot succeed on the terms their narrators have voiced within the texts, and this is where their brilliance lies. Jane so often emphasizes the inability of language to capture whatever is inside of her that the failure of *Jane Eyre* as a text becomes unsurprising, perhaps even self-fulfilling. Kathy's life is a tragedy because she only reproduces her blindness to the world for the reader rather than any new thing; the only reason she creates the text is because she cannot do any other thing to cope with her oncoming death, and the text itself only reproduces these circumstances. It would be more unrealistic, I posit, if these narratives *did* manage to succeed at their own goals, if Jane was suddenly able to accurately capture her interior spaces without using additional addresses, or if after ordering her memories Kathy suddenly became critical of the cloning industry (it seems unthinkable, even in this hypothetical, that Kathy could go beyond that: escaping and leading a pro-clone revolution seems out of the question). In each case, tracing reader addresses illuminates the circumstances that make each novel a failure on the part of its narrator.

Though the narrators of each text fail at their undertakings, it would be foolish to consider these narratives as failed ventures by Brontë and Ishiguro. A final return to the figures of the actual author, the actual text, and the actual reader is necessary to appreciate the failure of the other two figures present in this literary space. Though these authors have created texts wherein the narrators fail to achieve their goals, the novels themselves, when viewed at the level of the actual author and the actual reader, are not failures. Why might Brontë and Ishiguro have wanted to portray these two narrators who fail to achieve their goals?

Brontë points to a failure that exists not just in Jane, but in all life-writing: it is impossible to capture the multitude of physical sensations, emotional resonances, and internal imaginings present in life onto the page. Just as Jane's 'real' inner life cannot be captured once it is translated into text, so too do all attempts to transform life into writing 'fail.' In this failure, though, we see Jane's decades of struggle to overcome this hurdle, and we see exactly why Jane's venture is doomed from the start. Jane's failure is a common one, shared by autobiographers everywhere: why do we try to depict the breadth of our lives into text? Why are we so worried about accuracy, about faithfully translating this impossibly rich existence into a static page? Brontë forces us to consider these questions by portraying a fictional woman's failure to depict her own life, pointing to the unavoidable difficulties of autobiographical writing, and in turn, the irreplaceable and inaccessible nature of living our lives.

Ishiguro's novel points to the institutional forces at play in Kathy's life more so than illuminating Kathy herself, as her failures to achieve the fullest extent of her goals are entirely influenced by the world around her. This is to say that an examination of Kathy is simultaneously an examination of Hailsham, of the cloning industry writ large, and of the told/not told mechanism and the Gallery. Ishiguro portrays a woman so deeply entrenched in the conditions

that oppress her that she has no inclination to seriously resist or question them, that the art she creates for herself remains a reproduction of her own oppressive life. How much of an escape can writing or art as a whole truly be? An escape from one's life via text is made more difficult if the institutions in power consciously take up this tool as a way to safeguard their own existence: Kathy's static position within the cloning industry points to how dangerous our institutions can be if they seize control over more than just our bodies, if they too are able to see the subversive nature of art, of writing.

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