

Never Let Me Go, Kazuo Ishiguro's Time Capsule for Disability in 1990s Britain

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Introduction

My research examines Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* as a representation for disability in 1990s Great Britain. Ishiguro switches the roles of his characters as "they [Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy] paradoxically possess normate embodiment and disabled status" (Garland-Thomson 138). *Towards Inclusion—civil rights for disabled people* relates to *Never Let Me Go* as it addresses the shortcomings of legislation during the time the novel is set (DfEE). *Never Let Me Go* relates to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in discussions of normality as well (Garland-Thomson 140).

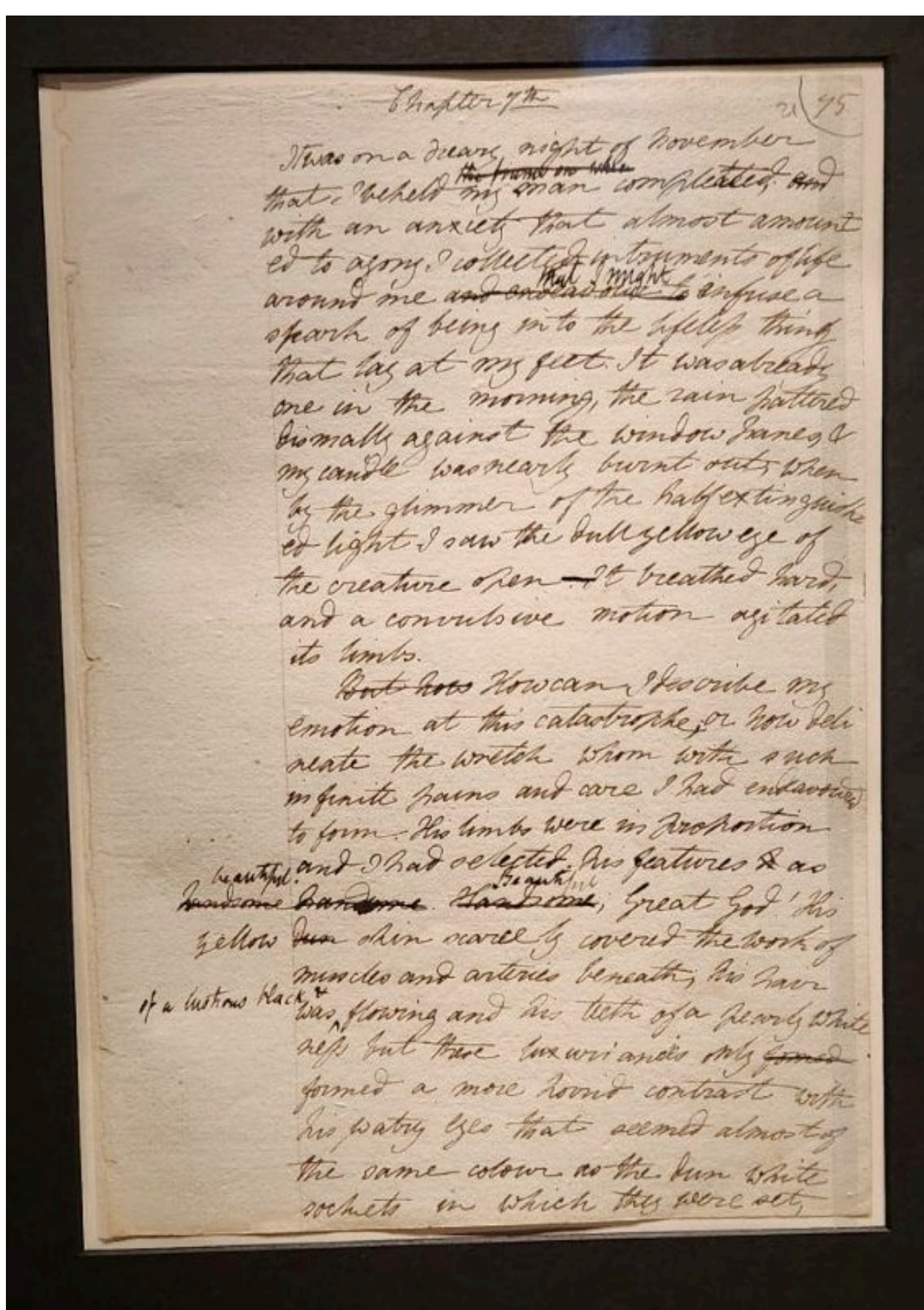


Key Points

- Ishiguro splits Kathy's life into three parts.
 - The inaccessibility of education, transportation, and employment
- These factors align with *Towards Inclusion*.
 - Section 2.4 (Education)
 - Section 2.35 (Transport)
 - Section 3.3.1 (Employment)
- Shelley splits *Frankenstein* into three volumes that encompass similar themes.

Impact

As scholars like Garland-Thomson point out, *Never Let Me Go* asks the question: "What is normal?". The UK Science Museum film *When Medicine Defines What's "Normal": Family, Genes, and Normality* helps answer this question. One of the interviewees, Jamie: Actor, Father, Friend, relates how people "may define me by my disability, but it's one of many, many characteristics." Because *Never Let Me Go* challenges its readers to consider what is normal in the context of disability, its importance to British culture (and society as a whole) is paramount.



A page from the original *Frankenstein* draft.

References

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