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ABSTRACT

This thesis will explore how modernist authors' approach towards challenging easy pleasures offers an unpleasurable, but ultimately positive reading experience for the implied reader. Textual "blanks" will, in relation to ambivalent memories, challenge the implied reader with an unpleasant experience. The result is modern bliss. In recent discussions of modernist criticism, Mao and Walkowitz argue that modernism's most valuable feature is subverting and transforming the mind-set of bourgeois readers as a political act. (Altieri ftnt 10). However, while not dismissing this political aspect, the emphasis on subversion is a negative one (Altieri 769). This thesis suggests it is also valuable to explore how modernist texts produce unpleasure for the implied reader in works created in postmodern and contemporary literature. Rather than being a negative reading experience, the thesis will suggest that the result of unpleasure is a positive one, namely modern bliss.

To do this, I will explore the modern novel *Mrs Dalloway* and the postmodern novel *Never Let Me Go,* dedicating a chapter to each novel. Each chapter will attempt to locate "blanks" creating ambivalence in relation to the characters' memories in the novels. This ambivalence creates unpleasure for the implied reader. I will argue that even though ambivalence and challenging reading may have negative connotations, it becomes a positive reading experience for the implied reader. In addition, I will investigate the legacy of modern bliss in postmodern and contemporary works. Thus, the project offers both a contribution to the concept of unpleasure as a part of the implied reader's experience with the modern bliss, and a reflection on why it matters to read modernist works against this concept rather than only for the subversion principle.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family and closest friends, thank you for being you.

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Introduction

With the emergence of mass culture and a tendency towards a consumer society, modern authors took issue with the access to easy pleasures. The contrast between the devastation of the war, with its unimaginable repercussions, and the ways people were seeking easy pleasures as a potential distraction, come to fruition in modernist works such as *Mrs Dalloway*. As a reaction to the indulgence of highly achievable, but less gratifying pleasures, modernism seeks to complicate a reader's reading experience in favor of *unpleasure*. Therefore, it was more dedicated to invention of ways to highlight this complication. Put differently, modernism sought to emphasize a different kind of pleasure, one which demanded, sought and was reliant on pain. At the heart of unpleasure, the stark difference between the goal of pleasure and the interruptive, painful trail towards it, opens the possibility for modernist authors to create and invent exciting ways to represent that. This is what Altieri refers to when asking us to notice modernism as a time of creation and innovation.(ftn 10) We should take notice that modernism did not just subvert the minds and ways of bourgeois readers and their taste for pleasure. They created their tastes for pain as well.

Modern works demanded an educated analyst, one who could tolerate and embrace discomfort. By demanding hard, cognitive labor of their readers, readers were now required to have patience, to engage with repetition, fragmentation, irony and the other tools author had to create unpleasure. It demanded a certain type of reader, namely one who was not only able to acknowledge all of the pain portrayed through modernist works, but also to take pleasure in the pain of it. I take the position of Altieri and Frost, who are both giving credit to the labor, creativity and inventiveness of modernist authors. Their ability to experiment with all their effort to represent unpleasure, while demanding more of their readers, should be brought to attention. Their battle with easy pleasures in favor of unpleasure was not only educational to the readers, it created the space for postmodern works to develop it further. Without the boldness of modernist authors, authors of postmodern and contemporary works could not have a different attitude toward pushing the envelope of what was possible to do with the tool of unpleasure. There does, however,

seem to exist a major difference between the modern aim to complicate pleasure for its readers and the aim for modern and contemporary authors to do the same. With modern invention becoming part of the literary canon, the question becomes how to create the same effect that the unpleasure of modern bliss had on its readers.

The aim of this thesis is therefore to locate the potential change in the source and aim of engaging readers in unpleasure. Laura Frost has already exhibited and written a well-researched and enjoyable account of the modern aim for introducing unpleasure and the creation of modern bliss. My aim is specifically to both exploring unpleasure in the novel *Never Let Me Go*, and to locate the change of aim for engaging readers in said unpleasure in that novel. Ambivalent memories are present in both texts, but what will prove to be the difference is how the characters and thus the implied reader respond to them. The textual blanks created by the ambivalent memories, and the response to them, constitutes and complicates where unpleasure is found. I will attempt to prove the development in what the 'blanks' suggest in terms of the responses to them using theory from Slavoj Zizek's understanding of Lacan and his notion of truth.

I will then proceed to perform a close reading of the textual indication of the production of unpleasure, through focusing on where information is given and where it is negated. Similarly, I will explore how incongruity, duality, "half-knowledge" and the notion of art are all contributors to the same production. There will be an effort to find textual phenomenon that simultaneously create, indulges and "thwarts" pleasure at the same time. That will prove to be the placement of Iser's 'blanks'.

I have chosen two novels to analyze when exploring the creation of modern bliss of unpleasure and its legacy for postmodern and contemporary works. The modern novel is *Mrs Dalloway*, is written by Virginia Woolf and published during the inter-war period in 1925. To represent postmodern and contemporary literature, I have chosen the novel *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro, which was published in 2005. The novels have been chosen based on the characters' feature of ambivalent memories, where the creation and rejection of pleasure will be found. Due to the novels sharing this textual feature, it became an interest to see the potential difference between the construction and rejection of pleasures and use that as a basis for comparison and discussion on the legacy of modern bliss.

In Chapter 1, I will continue what Laura Frost has done in her work. In the analysis of *Mrs Dalloway*, the blanks will provide the foundation for exploring how going beyond Freud's «pleasure principle» result in modern bliss for the implied reader. It will thus be a psychoanalytical exploration of aesthetic response to the Freud's pleasure principle. The 'blanks' are provided through the interruptions occurring in relation to somatic pleasures existing primarily in Clarissa Dalloway, Peter, and Richard's relationship towards their own memories. Consequently, passion will prove to be the somatic pleasure which is both created, anticipated, and ultimately rejected. The focal point of the memories which are explored is Clarissa Dalloway, with the supplementary memories of Peter Walsh and Richard Dalloway. Seen through the lens of duality and incongruity, I attempt to locate specific instances where 'blanks' are created, and how they inform the reading in terms of the unpleasure of passion.

Chapter 2 will be the core of what this thesis will add to the conversation of modern criticism. Even though the work which is explored is a not a modern one, it is heavily based in what modern authors invented and created. Again, it will be a psychoanalytical exploration of aesthetic response to unpleasure. This time, however, my notion of a Lacanian truth will be implicated when reaching the height of the tension created by the blanks, i.e. at the intersection of modern bliss. In our second novel, the textual tension of unpleasure, when addressed in a climax, will result in a developed version of modern bliss. Unpleasure is similarly created in this novel, through interruptions and contradictions that appears as aesthetic features of the text. This pleasure exists in terms of *purpose*, and serves in some ways even as a regression towards an understanding of a more fundamental pleasure. While reliant on the modern and the postmodern problem with both cognitive and somatic pleasures, there is also a sense of a more existential pleasure. A response from the readers which requires and demand not only to accept unpleasure, but also requires acceptance when the blanks are filled in.

My conclusion will be a more thorough discussion of the problem with pleasure and the legacy of this complication for postmodern and contemporary readers. It will not only be a comparison between the two novels and how their characters leave blanks for their

implied readers. It will also seek out specifically how the text *Never Let Me Go* possibly further develops modern bliss, or in other words, symbolizes its legacy.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Regarding the theoretical framework of my thesis, I have employed Laura Frost as the primary source for my understanding of how modern authors sought to change the ways readers of modern works gained pleasure. She is also the source of my understanding of modern bliss. To formulate the social and academic conditions of postmodern works, I primarily use Frederic Jameson and Jean-François Lyotard. They will put emphasis on the role of modern creation in a postmodern and contemporary setting. In addition, they will help locate the source of the legacy of modern bliss. To help narrow the scope of possible readers, I use Wolfgang Iser's theory of the "implied reader", and I also employ his aesthetic response theory and the idea of "blanks" as a tool to explore the locations where unpleasure is produced when navigating through the novels. Freud and Lacan provide the psychoanalytical background for my thesis. Freud's contribution will be the notion of unpleasure and the psychoanalytical workings of gaining a greater cognitive pleasure. Lacan will also contribute to this concept, but I will add the notion of Slavoj Zizek's understanding of a Lacanian truth.

2.1 The Modern Problem with Pleasure

New modern criticism has a political approach to modernist texts. In Bad Modernisms, Mao and Walkowitz put emphasis on the subversive nature of modernist texts in relation to the bourgeois reader in the early 21st century. (Altieri ftnt 10). They argue that the most valuable component of modern literature is the shock-value which had the effect of subverting and transforming the mind-set of bourgeois readers. (ftnt 10). Charles Altieri suggests that emphasizing the negative subversive elements of modernist texts might prevent us from acknowledging its capacity "to think and to make" (ftnt 10). He exemplifies this when claiming that the "particular art object becomes a scene of instruction – not just as an exercise of imaginative desire to communicate in a distinctive way but as the possibility of self-reflexively illustrating new ways to envision the entire enterprise of artistic production" (Altieri 772) In other words, the instructive and self-reflexive nature of the text offer a new way of thinking about the making of art itself.

Similarly, Laura Frost suggests in “The Problem with Pleasure: Modernisms and its Discontents” (2013) that modernist authors ask the reader to both tolerate and embrace discomfort, confusion and hard cognitive labor of the authors’ attempt to redefine pleasure. (Frost 3) Commonly, pleasure was thought to be very a singular, pleasurable, and short-lived experience. Moreover, reading was thought to be delightful, beautiful, and easy. According to Frost, the classical notion of literature as pleasure or delight are being defied or complicated by the cognitive labor of reading modern texts. She claims the “fundamental goal of modernism is the redefinition of pleasure” (3), which is achieved by introducing pleasures that require more ambitious analysis from the reader. (3) To be able to perceive this, one must also expand the concept of what pleasure is. Frost claims that unpleasure is a different type of pleasure, its modification. (6) It is a pleasure rooted in ambivalence, located in the conflict between pain and pleasure. However, this does not mean that it is a lesser form of pleasure.

Quite the contrary, unpleasure is cast as an antidote to the types of pleasures which she claims modern writers thought to be a “potential threat to language itself that needed to be fought, in kind, through language” (19). Frost continues explain that modernist prose “is the opposite of technological efficiency. It means to discomfort its reader, to make them focus, think and grapple with language.” (28) In their rebellion against these lesser forms of pleasures, they changed and reinvented the form and content of their works. No longer were readers to expect an easily consumed, easily understood, or easily digested text. In modern writers’ effort to redefine pleasure, the readers were now faced with a “hostile reading environment that calls into question the most axiomatic premises of what literature and pleasure can do” (3) Modern authors seem engaged with shaking the very foundations of the relationship between literature and pleasure, and its effect on the reader. In the relationship between text and reader, many modern texts demand the reader to endure pain, allusion, and fragmentation. For it to be consumed, the reader must actually sit down and both analyze and process the text. In other words, as a reader of modern works, you are being instructed in the what Frost refers to “art of unpleasure.”(6) Namely, the art of having to tolerate what the text is presenting you, even though It is confusing or uncomfortable, that in itself is a different type of pleasure. That is the unpleasure that Laura Frost is referring to. In terms of reading, that is the modern bliss for the implied reader.

Frost differentiates between “somatic pleasures” and “cognitive pleasures”. (27) By modernist authors, somatic pleasures are cast the easy pleasures, and as they thought them to be “facile, hollow and false” (3). This might be due to the where pleasure is located in relation to the human experience. Pleasure is, rightfully so, thought to manifest itself in the body. Frost claims that

> “Even as the words is overwhelmingly diffuse, the practice of pleasure has always been kept in tight, ethical check. For most ancient Greek philospohers, *hendone* (pleasure) is only one unruly factor away from eudamonia (happiness). Pleasure is integrally tied to the bodily, sensual experience”. (7)

With this description, there is no wonder why modern authors specifically rejected somatic pleasures and deemed them the source of easy pleasure. While it is fair to assume and restrict pleasure towards its function in, and reliance on, the body, I do agree with Frost’s understanding of unpleasure as a cognitive pleasure from the endurance of pain, discomfort and confusion. In turn, by asking the readers to seek out and endure pain, *modern bliss* emerges as an antidote to these easily consumed somatic pleasures.

With the emergence of mass culture and technological manifestations which made access to those pleasures a lot easier as well, it was deemed necessary to complicate this development in literature by introducing hard, cognitive labor into the texts. The lesser forms of pleasures were those who were easily achieved. Frost widens the types of modernist texts that can be analyzed. She also contemplates the need to analyse *both* somatic and cognitive pleasures. (27) The construction of cognitive pleasures in a text demands “highly self-conscious writing that demands a heightened attention to. The ones where gratification comes almost immediately.

Frost also argues that the scope of where unpleasure could be found was quite narrow, and that unpleasure could be found in other works that were not explicitly challenging in terms of form. (14) Those are the author who, instead of having a radical aesthetic form, would seek to redefine pleasure in an ideological way. Still, difficulty is seen as an inherent value, but it is not necessarily in terms of aesthetics. (20) Difficulty can take many different forms, both aesthetically and that of shock-value in terms of content. Due to

this thesis' aim of analyzing the aesthetic occurrence of 'blanks', the analysis will focus on how the text omits information, by either interrupting or contradicting itself. Thus, blanks are creating a void of information which will increase the tension between the reader and the text.

More than anything, Frost put an emphasis on the fact that pleasure is worth examining "for its own intrinsic value". (11) When pleasure is cast as something which is impossible to put into words or see when reading, this undermines the "powerful, specific, local, and stimulating effects" (11) that pleasure can have. She also critiques the notion that pleasure is only observable *after* an event has taken place, which is due to

> "twentieth-century scholars who have applied themselves to the problem of pleasure as an occasion of discussing something else – for example, politics, censorship, or aesthetics – while never quite registering pleasure's palpable effects or rendering it as a concrete, immediate, or phenomenological experience."(11)

This thesis will hopefully showcase how the tension, speculation and anticipation of pleasure *can* be found in the textual features of the novels which will be analyzed. Due to this, it will be rendered as a sort of phenomenological approach, where the effects on the reader will be cast as the most important aim. As I have chosen the implied reader, and the aesthetic response theory, the framework for the analysis to happen will necessarily be through the textual features of blanks. However, the notion of unpleasure is will not be analyzed *based on* history, culture or politics. The interest lies purely on the specific locations in the text where the prospect of ambivalence can occur, and the specific build-up of tension. In the novels that I have chosen, even when we are faced with the peak or revelation of the characters, it rejects itself. There is no satisfying conclusion to the reading, as the reading is intrinsically embedded with ambivalence, and that is where the reader meets the pleasure in pain.

2.2 The Postmodern and Contemporary Problem with Pleasure

In Frost's conclusion, she points out that modernism's legacy, particularly "its essential ambivalence" (Frost 244) has continued into postmodern and contemporary literature. As postulated by Fredric Jameson in "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" (Jameson, 1761), the forceful features of "high modernism" (1770) are still found in contemporary art, but the impact of those features have been restructured and lost their force when "high modernism and its dominant aesthetics become established in the academy and are henceforth felt to be academic by a whole new generation of poets, painters and musicians"(1771). In other words, when it becomes part of the literary canon it loses its power, what Jameson refers to as its "subversive power" (1770), which is what Mao and Walkowitz also credits modernism with. Again, it is not my wish to diminish the impact of modernisms subversive power. I do, however, agree with the sentiment that the power of those subversive features has ceased to be relevant in the discussions of postmodern and contemporary art. This is a problem not only concerning modernism, but every sort of writing style. Jameson highlights a feature called *pastiche* (1761) which imitates a peculiar discourse or style of writing. The shock-value of modernism does no longer hold the same significance because, as Jameson states: "there is very little in either the form or content of contemporary art that contemporary society finds intolerable and scandalous." (1770). In fact, what was thought to be the most offensive types of art, for example that which contains sexually explicit material, are now accepted and even "commercially successful" (1770). This means that very little is thought to be uncomfortable and disturbing. Mostly, this is due the cultural changes that has taken place *after* the subversion of the bourgeois.

Jean-François Lyotard agrees with this proposition in his text "Defining the Postmodern" (1986) by stating that

> "The idea of modernity is closely bound up with this principle that it is possible and necessary to break with tradition and to begin a new way of living and thinking. Today we can presume that this 'breaking' is, rather, a manner of forgetting and repressing the past. That's to say of repeating it. Not overcoming it." (Lyotard 1386)

The notion of the loss of subversive power does prompt a question for us: If one could say that the subversive power of modernism has essentially disappeared due it no longer existing "within the established order" (Jameson 1770), could one say the same thing about its problems with pleasure? I would argue that this is not the case, even though the formal hard, cognitive labor producing modern bliss has also arguably become a part of the literary canon. The fragmentation, discomfort and confusion which modern authors implemented in their works to engage readers in unpleasure, which prompts our understanding of modern bliss, and thus a redefined notion of pleasure could be said to have entered the status quo of postmodern works. It is certainly an interesting thought, as one can easily argue that those pleasures which are rejected, complicated or repressed in modernist works are more prevalent than ever. With the emergence of digital technology, even cognitive (cerebral) pleasures are easily accessible, in addition to the presumed hollow and meaningless somatic pleasures. With a plethora of fragmented information and impressions thrust at people in society in light of the digital revolution, easily accessible pleasures seem to be at our fingertips at any given moment.

A similar argument is again made by Lyotard, who claims that humans seem "destabilized by the results of this development". (1387) In regard to techno-sciences he claims that

> "This development seems to be taking place by itself, by an autonomous force or motrocity." (1387) It does not respond to a demand coming from human needs. On the contrary, human entities (individual or social) seem always to be destabilized by the results of this development.

Here, we can see Lyotard take issue with the emergence and, social accept, for techno-sciences, i.e. the development of digital science. He claims that people do not have a need for such things, because it disturbs the human individual more than it help. This is very relevant for the digital advancement in newer history and of today. The novel that is chosen does in some way share Lyotard's concern, due to the fact that it contains a sci-fi element of cloning human beings to sustain life.

By looking at what might be the cause of postmodern and contemporary authors to take issue with the notion of pleasure, one must necessarily also reshape the way unpleasure is to be understood in this context. Specifically, the introduction of a new unpleasure, namely the Lacanian truth, when the peak of tension is reached is the contribution made by this thesis. As postmodern and contemporary art seems limitless in the sense of form and structure, in addition to grappling with the constant recycling of form and structure which has already been invented, the postmodern problem with pleasure seems located in the attempt to find and create a hierarchy of pleasure to strive for. While simultaneously dealing with the notion of easy pleasures being the "white noise" of our time, the inability people seem to have to contain their own past seems to be a focal point of the contemporary condition.

The contribution of this thesis is to locate how a postmodern work such as *Never Let Me Go* is able to retain the past and *create a purpose* when faced with limitations in terms of agency. I will argue that it still has unpleasurable qualities, namely the interruption of memories and the subsequent increase of tension for the reader. However, as we arrive at the peak of unpleasure, development of modern bliss will prove to be produced by rejecting this unpleasure to have significance at all. It will redirect the source of unpleasure towards a Lacanian truth, which will then have implications for the purpose for creating unpleasure for the readers of postmodern and contemporary art. In my analysis, what the novel seems to be doing is to retain its own past, to live in the unpleasurable past and not to be living in a perpetual present. In addition, it suggests that it is significant to put value into accepting a horrible truth and to live past this revelation, even though it is still imbedded with ambivalence.

2.3 The Analyst of Unpleasure

While analogous in nature, "Unavoidable satisfactions" (2014), Michael Shulman's exposition of the pleasure analysts in psychoanalysis can have in their work, despite engaging in painful encounters, seems appropriate to properly explain how modern works create an unpleasurable reading experience for the reader. Instead of avoiding pain, the

analysts “know they must bear myriad disturbing feelings and be intimates to terror, misery, rage and despair. Yet, however close they are to the abyss of suffering, the experience of many analysts is hardly abysmal: the work yields a wide range of pleasures.” (Shulman 698) Much like how readers of modern works are asked to endure pain, the analyst is also able to achieve gratification from their hard labor.

There are also similarities in the types of pleasure the reader and analyst achieve. It is particularly in the intimacy the analyst receives in relation to the patient which is particularly interesting. There are striking similarities between the intimate relationship which is formed between analyst-patient and the reader-text. Through bearing witness to, and in some ways sharing, the pain and suffering, Shulman argues that the analyst is able to experience a wider range of pleasures. (711) He claims that the analysts are “savorers of human experience, of all the feelings of others, pleasurable and unpleasurable” (711). Precisely what Frost claims in her works, instead of enjoying easy, somatic pleasures, readers of modern works are able to widen the range of possible pleasures by enduring their hard, cognitive labor. Unpleasure is characterized by pain but is able to give the reader gratification through the “heightened attention to form and the construction of pleasure itself.” (Frost 5) The intimate relationship between the text and the reader makes for an experience where the text, in this case, offers the reader the cognitive labor to endure. The reader, on the other hand, is not a static participant (as I will argue using Iser’s aesthetic response theory), but rather an active participant to whatever the text may bring through its aesthetic features.

Wolfgang Iser argues in “Interaction between Text and Reader” that there is an interactive relationship between the text and the reader. (Iser 1451) However, instead of being a relationship where both parties can participate, the text is a static participant which does not respond to the reader’s questions. The fact that the text is not an active participant signals an asymmetric relationship between text and reader. This would in turn create “gaps”, or “blanks” (1453). Blanks are what the form of the text creates by giving and holding back information. It is the structure of the text that acts as a guide for the reader by offering “schematized aspects”. (1452) Iser suggests that this makes for an investigative reader who creates, expands, changes, and reacts to theories and explanations. The reader

may connect segments and modify their viewpoint and understanding of the text. This is referred to as the reader's "ideation". (1456) In other words, in the asymmetrical interaction between text and reader, meaning is continuously revised and altered through blanks. (1451) For this thesis, this is significant because the blanks are provided by the text and creates a response from the reader. In this thesis the "blanks" are created by the interruptions of the pleasures characters found in *Mrs Dalloway* and *Never Let Me Go* engage with.

He further implies that what is *said* in the text takes on greater significance, due to the reader-response towards what is *not* said, i.e. the blanks of the text. The blanks would make the reader pay more attention and put heavier emphasis on what the text actually says. Iser continues to describe reading as an interaction that is "mutually restrictive and magnifying" (Iser 1455) meaning that the text and reader is continuously and simultaneously are concealing and revealing, being both implicit and explicit. (1455) Put differently, reading is always a relationship between the schemata and perspective of the text and the ideation of the reader. When these aspects are finally linked together and meet each other, the blanks are filled in. (1456) With the ambivalent memories which the characters are narrating, our attention will be on what information is given, and more importantly, *when the flow of information is interrupted*, and how this influences the response of the implied reader.

Due to the primary interest being the response from the reader who engages with unpleasure, it is important to thoroughly emphasize who the reader is. To narrow the scope of the possible reader, I have decided to apply Wolfgang Iser's implied reader in this thesis. In the Act of Reading, Iser defines the implied reader as a reader who "embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect" (Iser 34). Those predispositions are not pertained to our reality, but to the text itself. The implied reader is found in "the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader" (34). Put differently, the implied reader allows us to investigate the responses to literary texts without pertaining it to preexisting conditions of the potential "real" reader. It allows the text to become the primary basis for the reader's response, as the reader will respond directly from what the text offers in terms of "blanks". It is what Iser refers to as an

"aesthetic" pole, where the text and its full potential is "realized by the reader" (Iser 1452). This will provide a great framework to explore the unpleasurable modern reading experience of bliss.

Thus, in this thesis the aesthetic features which are examined are the blanks left by the interruptions of the characters' memories of pleasures and how they thrust the reader into an ambivalent state of knowing- but not knowing. On a different level, to the interruption of memories, there is simultaneously an interruption of achieving the pleasures which are present in those memories. In this way, creating an intimate, active relationship with the text through omitting information also thrusts the reader into the ambivalent state of enduring pain in anticipation of pleasure. The gratification from enduring that state is the basis of reading for modern bliss.

2.4 Psychoanalytical Background of Modern Bliss and Its Legacy

It is necessary to take a closer look into what specifically produces modern bliss from a psychological perspective. The works of Sigmund Freud will offer a more detailed description of how humans respond to both reaching and being rejected pleasure. After exploring how Freud explains the particulars of the pleasure-pain principle in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1922), I will use Lacan to further the conversation considering his teachings. This is especially relevant for the examination I will conduct on the novel that succeeds modern works, *Never Let Me Go*. In Lacan's theory, the emphasis will be on his notion of truth. Specifically, I will argue the importance development in the emergence of truth after a revelation has happened, i.e. after the blanks of the text are filled in. The revelation of the truth after the endurance of unpleasure, will prove to only relocate the source of unpleasure. Now, the source of unpleasure will be the Lacanian truth. Even after reconciling the source of the primary ambivalence, namely the textual feature of blanks that complicate pleasures, unpleasure will still be there. This will be the small contribution of this thesis to a possible alternative location of the source of unpleasure, and thus a contribution on the legacy of modern bliss in postmodern and contemporary novels as well.

The psychoanalytical background for Frost's analysis is the use of Freud's concept of "Unlust", translated as "Unpleasure". (Frost 23) In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud suggests that an individual "without giving up the intention of ultimately attaining pleasure yet demands and enforces the postponement of satisfaction, the renunciation of manifold possibilities of it, and the temporary endurance of 'pain' on the long and circuitous road to pleasure." (Freud 6) In a criticism of modernist works, this postponement of pleasure by enduring 'pain' (unpleasure), is to be understood as a *necessary means* to achieve the greater cognitive pleasure which is aimed for by modern authors. Even though seeking out pleasure, they are also simultaneously seeking out pain due to its essential nature in the production of said pleasure. Further, Freud points out that

> "The details of the process by which repression changes a possibility of pleasure into a source of 'pain' are not yet fully understood, or are not yet capable of clear presentation, but it is certain that all neurotic 'pain' is of this kind, is pleasure which cannot be experienced as such." (7)

Freud admits to not understanding the actual workings behind this in detail, but he puts emphasis on the fact that the pain, in a sense, *is* pleasure. However, he states that "We have decided to consider pleasure and 'pain' in relation to the quantity of excitation present in the psychic life—and not confined in any way—along such lines that 'pain' corresponds with an increase and pleasure with a decrease in this quantity." (4) In other words, what Freud postulates is that the heightening of tension experienced psychologically by the individual, in this case the reader, is an indication of pain (unpleasure), and a decrease in tension signals pleasure.

In his huge interest for Freud's works, Jacques Lacan also claims "that the satisfaction of a wish does give pleasure"(Lacan 14) but that the one who seeks it "does not have a simple and unambiguous relationship to his wish. He rejects it, he censures it, he doesn't want it." (14) From this, we can deduct that there is no linear trail towards pleasure which does not entail pain. Pain is instead an essential, but unconscious, process in the dimension of the desire of pleasure. Lacan argues that "it is always desire in the second degree, desire of desire" (14). It is therefore not the end goal that is the central component here, where the actual pleasure itself is reached. Instead, it is process of desiring to achieve

said goal, namely unpleasure. As Frost demonstrates in her work, this is what modernist writers attempt to highlight for their readers. The readers are seeking the goal of pleasure, to fill in the blanks and make sense of the text. However, in their reading for pleasure, they are faced with the postponement of it. Ironically, it is the blanks of the text that simultaneously produce and hinder their desire for satisfaction.

With this understanding of the mechanics of a linear desire of pleasure, which at its core entails unpleasure, one must look at the implications for the ambivalent memories which will be analyzed in this thesis. The first implication is that the characters are seeking pleasure though engaging which their memories. This pleasure is then understood as the "goal" referred to by Freud and Lacan. The memories displace their ego from their current state of being towards an ideation of their own past. It is a fascinating thought, how consciousness displaces the current state of an individual to engage with a virtual representation of something that has already passed, which is unreachable to engage with directly. Due to that fascination, this feature specifically has been chosen as a source of analysis. The memories have the potential of both conveying information and of representing pleasures to the reader.

When applying this to reading, it makes two things clear for an implied reader of modernist texts. Firstly, readers who read for pleasure are in modernism faced with a choice. Due to modernism's attempt to expand on the principle of pleasure itself by creating an unpleasurable experience for their reader, which involves sitting through pain, a reader must actively choose to endure this pain while reading. In addition, as both Freud and Lacan postulates, the pain they are enduring is essential for the reader to achieve pleasure at all. (Freud 6, Lacan 14) Secondly, should they choose to endure this pain, the result of their reading is an extended understanding of modern bliss, where ambivalence is still in the center. When enduring pain, while simultaneously seeking pleasure, it transforms itself into a process where the pain becomes a pleasure in itself.

To understand the legacy of the concept of modern bliss, what I argue is the process of accepting a painful Lacanian truth, it is helpful to look at how Lacan imagines the unconscious. Slavoj Zizek aids in explaining how that works in more common terms. Based on the teachings and core insights of Freud, Lacan explores how the unconscious is

constituted in language. (Zizek 3) Instead of being an opposite entity of the conscious, rational self, Lacan imagines the unconscious as being structured as a language. (4) As we have seen, the unconscious From this, the unconscious becomes something that also speaks, something that also constitutes people's truth. One might ask what truth is referred to in this context. For Lacan, the truth is that which most do not seek, i.e. that which is filled with dread. (4) Seeking truth is to seek the pain that pleasure constitutes itself upon. In Zizek's reading of Lacan, he claims that this "Truth is not something I have to identify with, but an unbearable truth that I have to learn to live with." (4) In other words, while people search for a truth, they might be searching for something outside of themselves which they can identify with. They should instead face themselves and exercise "permanent self-questioning". (5) The goal of the rigorous self-questioning is not for a person's well-being or for them to accomplish some form of fulfillment. It is rather for them to face how they themselves constitute their own truth, i.e. how their Truth come to be in the first place. (4) Therefore, he asks of people to confront their own unconsciousness as something that dictates their reality. What they end up facing is the radical dimensions of their own human existence. This method of self-questioning and ultimately facing what constitutes truth is especially helpful when analyzing how unpleasure can bring about modern bliss for the implied reader.

Consequently, my revised notion of modern bliss is not only an emotion that goes beyond the pleasure-principle, but it has to do with a borderline unreachable, indescribable, never-ending, and painful emotion which must be accepted to be fully realized. The source for this revised notion of modern bliss is highly reliant on the existence of those memories and the purpose they serve in the two texts. For the modernist and postmodern text, memories are a manifestation of what the character has lost in terms of identity. It represents the consequences of the agency that the characters have had, and the repercussions of the choices they have made. Consequently, there is a pleasure in revisiting those memories, but the interruption of those memories complicates the pleasure which is taken in them and there is a certain resistance, even contention, in engaging with those memories. However, that very pain is also the source of their pleasure.

This is exactly what Lacan encourages people to do in his psychoanalytical practice, when they are questioning themselves and what constitutes their reality. (Zizek 4) They must actively choose to question themselves and bear the radical discoveries of their own truths. Thus, the truth represents another form of unpleasure. As Frost suggests with her attempt to witness the legacy of modernist writer's efforts, this thesis will however move the conversation of modern bliss forward and discuss several aspects regarding writing unpleasure in postmodern and contemporary works. It will attempt to formulate a motivation for unpleasure, and why it is relevant to talk about unpleasure as an important modern legacy. Even though it might be understood as a more phenomenological attempt to locate this contention of pleasure in terms of reading the legacy of modern bliss, it still offers a small contribution towards the discussion and interests in what modern authors were able to create for the reader of their own time and for the readers that have been since. For this purpose, this thesis will more heavily emphasize Jacques Lacan's understanding of truth and its implications for pleasure in its analysis of *Never Let Me Go* respectively.

Chapter 3: *Mrs Dalloway* and the Unpleasure of Passion

Mrs Dalloway is written by Virginia Woolf and published in 1925 in the interwar period. The novel falls right into the category of what Laura Frost is referring to when considering modern works and writers. Written like a flow from consciousness to consciousness, it is structurally challenging in terms of tools used to make the implied reader feel discomfort. There is repetition, indirection and allusiveness which provides an implied reader with a reading experience which requires hard, cognitive labor. The sheer fluctuation in the points of views the text offer, makes for an often confusing and disorienting effect. For the purpose of exploring the production of modern bliss, these formal elements of the text could very well be investigated, and the result would arguably be the same.

However, for the purpose of this thesis, the ambivalent memories of Clarissa, Peter and finally Richard will be the object of examination. I will attempt to locate what causes a state of ambivalence, i.e. where the blanks of the text are created in relation to their memories. Most of the memories will be Clarissa's, but some of her memories are also referred to by Peter which is why it is useful to also look at the exposition of his own. Both of their ambivalent memories will entail a description and consideration of their present as well. They cannot have memories without existing in a present, and their present thoughts offer a lot of insight into why their memories holds such ambivalent qualities. Septimus will exhibit the unpleasure of a shell-shock memory. Most importantly, I argue that their interruption of their memories offers the reader blanks which allows the experience of modern bliss.

3.1 Memories and Moments

Firstly, Clarissa particularly states that she loves her present (Woolf 9). For all purposes, she seems most content in this particular moment. This is also reiterated some pages later when she "plunged into the moment". (Woolf 36) The present moment seems to be something she uses as an escape, as she does not consider the past while being in it. She does, however, dive into her memories on numerous occasions, providing her, and the

implied reader, with a different type of “moment”. It could be important to ask the question of what this moment where she is delving into her past offers in terms of differences to the ‘present moments’. The difference could be that the moments from her memories have gained a different significance as time has passed. One does not fully comprehend the complexity or the context of the present moment – because we cannot read into the future. As previously stated, memories themselves do not fully entail what the past moment was actually like. Due to how fickle the human memory is, it is more fitting to describe a memory as we do with present moments, namely as just that – moments. Or, if reversed, describe Clarissa’s precious present moment as a future memory.

Whether using the technical terms of ‘moments’ or ‘memories’, at the heart of it lies the self-reflexive nature of them. Moments become memories immediately after they happen, simply because time passes. Clarissa’s exposition of this simple fact makes one aware of which moments becomes a part of our memories. (Woolf 9) Some seem to be utterly unimportant, while others might hold great significance in our minds. Perhaps it is in the very nature of our perception, where in the moment, one notices details which ultimately do not matter, or, in other instances, one gives a meaning to them which in hindsight is not true. Memories and moments alike cannot be complete, fully understood or comprehended. Thus, they provide Clarissa, Peter and the implied reader with blanks.

One of these blanks provided by interrupting memories are the multitudes of potential outcomes that possibly could have happened. The moment is something which is also irrevocable, it cannot be changed. While there will be a closer examination of this memory later, Clarissa seems to ponder about this when she thinks about her potential marriage to Peter, which she ultimately rejected. (Woolf 46) “What if?” is the central question which can never be answered or explored, even though both Clarissa and Peter try their best to do so. The endless potential present moments they could have had seems to weigh them down. (40-47) Here, one can see the ambivalent nature of their memories. They seem pained by the blanks of the life they could have led, and they will never know whether that could be better than the life they are leading now. Their assessments of their past choices are reminders that they happened at all. They seek the pleasure of justifying their past choices by lashing out insults in their minds. (41-47) However, their pleasure is

continuously rejected when they are also simultaneously considering how their present lives could have been or what their future could potentially be. As the implied reader is exposed to their inner turmoil considering their ambivalent memories, the self-reflexive nature of this could provide pain. It is human to ponder and reflect on the past, but it will always involve the very question of a possible different outcome. When a reader is exposed to this, and more importantly are enduring the pain of this question, the reader must face their own relationship towards their own memories and their potential outcomes. I argue that this engagement with the painful blank of not knowing contributes to the implied readers experience of modern bliss because it requires hard, cognitive labor from said reader. It postpones the satisfaction of a narrative that is linear with no regrets, no inner turmoil or conflict when thinking about the past. What the readers are introduced to is juxtaposition of engaging with the somatic pleasure of passion and the rejection of it.

More than anything, these memories highlight the present moment. It puts a spotlight on the here, the now, the immediate. Due to this spotlight, it makes the reader acutely aware of it. There is hard, cognitive labor to be found in this awareness. The text requires the immediate attention to the possible outcomes of the reading itself. It requires the acknowledgement of the multitudes of potential outcomes, the multitudes of potential pasts, presents and futures of Clarissa and Peter. It requires the acknowledgement of their pain, their pleasure, and the complexity of their contexts. Most of all it requires a postponement of the pleasure given by answering the question of "What if?", for it is a question that refuses to be answered. Whether memory or moment, the question rejects itself, because it cannot even be asked before a moment has already passed. When trying to find the answer, it is a chase of an unreachable pleasure, a pleasure in pain, or, a source of unpleasure if you will.

3.2 The Unpleasure of Dualism

In "The Dramatic Modern Novel: Mimesis and the Poetics of Tragedy in *Mrs Dalloway*" (2018), Sian White argues that Woolf has aimed to "experiment with formal rigor in the interest of reconfiguring modern narrative." (101) She claims Woolf's narrative

discourse navigates between "a depth of interiority not available in direct speech, while retaining the quality of directness, of mimetic *showing,* by presenting a minimally intrusive narrator." (104) Also, White points out that the notion of "*mimesis* – its closeness – is superior for its greater emotional effect. *Mimesis* is considered the closest likeness to life, and is useful for attaining the wanted emotional response from the audience. (105) Finally, White argues that Woolf's "modernist novel is neither a fixed object nor representing a fixed reality – nor idealizing formal or social stability – but rather offers a way of experiencing that comes from the difficulty of accessing or becoming familiar with the text and its world. That difficulty falls to the reader who must actively engage with Woolf's dynamic mimesis". (111) Put differently, the indirect narration in *Mrs Dalloway* allows the reader a closeness with the text, "a narrative intimacy" (105), which attempts to simulate a closeness to life. Similar to how we imagine our implied analytical reader, the reader in this manner becomes an active participant in navigating the text and in responding to what the text offers in terms of complexity. (111) In terms of the difficulty referred to by Frost, the style of narration in the novel asks the readers to engage with and endure the complexity and production of unpleasure in the text.

White also offers the concept of "dualism" as insight into the style of mimetic showing of *Mrs Dalloway*. (128) Dualism is found where "contrasting concepts and emotions – success and failure, familiar and stranger, alienation and connection, conclusion and continuation – coexist without order or reconciliation, and without the domination of one over the other." (128) As an example of the textual occurrence of this dualism, we could take a look at the ending of *Mrs Dalloway*. In the conclusion of the novel, Clarissa's character has a moment of epiphany after hearing about Septimus' death. Septimus could be argued to be another dual component of the text, as he is the opposite of Clarissa in terms of memories. While Septimus is not able to retain his past at all after his time in the war, due to him suffering from shellshock, Clarissa drifts in and out of mostly clear-cut memories. However, in this moment, Clarissa considers all her memories which had followed her that day: memories about Burton, about Peter and about Sally. She has the realization that "they would grow old". This indicates the dualism of life and death, as Clarissa shows fascination considering the fact that he had killed himself, that he died by his

own hand, and immediately considers the fact that the places and people of her memories will live.

In terms of duality which produces unpleasure for the reader, it could be beneficial to take a closer look at the relationship between Clarissa and Sally. In "Exquisite Moments and the Temporality of the kiss in *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Hours*" (2010), Kate Haffey considers the past relationship between Clarissa and a girl named Sally Seton. She explores the temporality of their kiss, a sensuous somatic pleasure they partook in when they were younger and spent their summer at Burton. (Woolf 32) According to Haffey, is what she refers to as an "erotic pause" (Stockton 302, qtd. In Haffey 137), where she argues the tendency for the novel "to create pockets where time functions in a different manner." (Haffey 137) Clarissa calls this moment "the most exquisite moment of her whole life" (Woolf 35). As Haffey acknowledges, this moment does not have any direct bearing on the development on the novel's plot. However, in the search for the textual creation of unpleasure, and the consequent complication of somatic pleasure, this moment has many facets to it.

Clarissa's memory of Sally starts off with "a question of love . . ., this falling in love with women. Take Sally Seton; her relation in the old days with Sally Seton. Had not that, after all, been love?" (Woolf 32) When meeting Sally, Clarissa considered her to be an "extraordinary beauty" (32) and thought that "Sally's power was amazing, her gift, her personality." (33) Clarissa and Sally becomes friends and share a lot of ideas and conversations together. Clarissa contemplates the strangeness of "the purity, the integrity, of her feelings for Sally." (33) This memory of Sally, then, is highly pleasurable. However, she also indicates that the words Sally used "meant nothing to her now. She could not get an echo of her old emotion." (34) Finally, while the memory of Sally emerges, so does the pleasure felt in the present. During a walk with Sally, Peter Walsh and Joseph Breitkopf, the "exquisite moment" occurs when Sally innocently kisses Clarissa. (35) This exquisite moment will resonate though the narrative as a symbol for Clarissa's love for the present because her experience of this moment was that

"The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally. And she felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!" (35)

This moment is the most explicitly sensual moment of Clarissa's collection of memories. We are introduced to the epitome of the somatic pleasure represented by her memories. At this very moment, the text also interrupts itself, rejects her pleasure and introduced a dual emotion: her recollection of Peter's hostility and jealousy. (35)

There is also another consideration to make. During Clarissa's exposition of her memory, the placement for that textual event to happen also seems to be important. After her transfixion of that memory is disturbed, she becomes transfixed in the present moment. The memory triggers her to think about her age, and thus, Clarissa "plunged into the moment, transfixed it". (36) And, as a strong implication of Clarissa's division between her past and present self, she looks into the mirror and sees "the delicate pink face of a woman who was that very night to give a party; of Clarissa Dalloway; of herself." (36) In fact, there seems to exist another incongruity. The most "exquisite moment" of Clarissa's *past* is juxtaposed Clarissa's transfixion on the present moment, on *herself*. In other words, just as with the party, and there exists a dual opposition between past and present. The tension heightens, due to the ambivalent character of Clarissa, and the dual image of Clarissa emerges, and creates a textual blank which is unresolved.

3.3 The Unpleasure of Incongruity

Herbert Marder suggests in "Split Perspective: Types of Incongruity in *Mrs Dalloway*" (2002) that Virginia Woolf, the author, had a "love-hate relationship with the idols of her youth" (51) He further claims that the creation of her society novel, for example *Mrs Dalloway*, happened during "a state of painful ambivalence". (51) This state of ambivalence, namely the love-hate relationship of her past, was then woven into the design of the novel. As he states: "In a sense they were the design." (51) In regard to our attempt to analyze the location of unpleasure, the first place seems to be found outside of the text itself. Marder is, in a sense, claiming that the creation of Mrs Dalloway was created in a state of unpleasure.

In an effort to symbolize her relationship with her past, she injected the character Mrs Dalloway with the contradictions of "nostalgia and angry distaste." (51) While this sentiment is certainly helpful in our analysis of Clarissa Dalloway as a character, he points out one more essential feature of the text. He claims that

> "incongruity is inherent in Woolf's art, and they key to an understanding of her narrative technique. We must measure Clarissa's empathic powers without underestimating her moral obtuseness. The novelist's purpose is neither to celebrate nor to satirize, but rather to portray a paradoxical condition, and incidentally to explore a conflict between rebellious and conformist impulses in her own life." (53-54)

In this, there exists the potential for analyzing where those incongruities are located, as a means to direct attention to how Clarissa's character behaves in relation to her memories. Incongruity will then be understood as a modification of interruptions, as interruptions is merely the place where the text contradicts itself or complicates the flow of the information which is given. While Marder assigns these incongruities to Woolf's "ambivalence toward the English ruling classes, her intense loyalty to the system and her contempt for patriarchal representatives" (54), our analysis will only focus on the incongruities showcasing an ambivalence towards somatic, sensuous pleasure gained within or in relation to Clarissa, Peter and Septimus' memories. Those incongruities are that which will provide create blanks for the reader to engage with and attempt to analyze, in a futile manner, might I add. The whole argument of the ambivalent qualities of their memories is rooted in the discomfort in trying to make sense of those contradiction sentiments.

An interesting relationship to take a look at is the past, and subsequently present, relationship between Clarissa and Peter. The first blank provided through the memories of Clarissa and Peter becomes apparent in their consideration of the present. When Peter returns from India, he visits Clarissa in person, and it becomes apparent that the past holds an ambivalent quality for both of them. (39) After somewhat breaking into her house, Peter proceeds to ask Clarissa how she is doing, and their social roleplaying game ensues. (40) This scene will be thoroughly examined, due to the many contradictions found when contemplating their memories of each other, both with each other and without each other. As mentioned, they were on a path towards marriage in the past and shared a deep bond

between them. It could be interesting to note that they have been in touch over the years through correspondence, so one could argue that both are reluctant to let go of each other. All of the memories are rooted in a memory of their past passion, which lingers over them as their interaction proceeds.

After taking notice that Clarissa had become older, Peter becomes embarrassed "as if though he had kissed her hands" (40) and then proceeds to take out a knife and play with it. This is a textual interruption, not an incongruity, as it is behavior worth noticing but not really a contradiction. The interruption indicates that Peter, whenever feeling certain emotions, exhibits that though playing with this knife. The evidence for that is Clarissa's assessment of his knife-playing: "He had his knife out. That's so like him, she thought." (40) The reason for pointing this out is to highlight the apparent intimacy that they share. They *know* each other, even though they have been apart for some time. However, as an incongruity to his embarrassment on the thought of kissing her hands and their apparent intimacy, we are presented with a different reaction towards Clarissa shortly afterwards:

> "Here she is mending her dress; mending her dress as usual, he thought; here she's been sitting all the time I've been to India; mending her dress; playing about; going to parties; running to the House and back and all that, he thought, growing more and more agitated, for there is nothing in the world so bad for some women as marriage," (Woolf 40)

From this it is possible to contemplate several things that what Peter is so agitated by, all centered around his memories about the Clarissa he knew from the past. He seems to reject the choice she made marrying Richard Dalloway, and alludes to her becoming somewhat stale, just sitting about and "mending her dress". On a different level he seems to juxtapose her position of "sitting all this time" which his movement, or travels, in India. Why this is a thing to become agitated about is not quite clear, at least not at this point in the scene. However, after putting this agitation away, he contradicts himself again by reacting pleasantly to her calling him "my dear Peter" (41). Actually, he uses the word "delicious" to describe the feeling of hearing that. This leaves a blank for the reader, with the juxtaposition of his agitation and then his response to her address to him, it is not clear whether Clarissa and the memory of her brings him pain or pleasure.

Their past passion is significantly highlighted when continuing their conversation. Clarissa notices that "he's enchanting! perfectly enchanting! "(41) In addition to this reaction, there is a much stronger indication of their underlying passion for each other. Clarissa proceeds to think "Now I remember how impossible it was to ever make up my mind – and why did I make up my mind – not to marry him, she wondered, that awful summer?" (41) In this statement, we can take notice of several blanks of Clarissa's memory. First, she seems to indicate that the summer which she is referring to was awful. This indicates that her memories are filled with pain. That source of that pain seems to be rooted in the decision of choosing to not marry Peter. Finally, there is textual tension in the indication that she might regret that decision. The memory of their passion in the past is filled with pain as Clarissa contemplates her own agency in her past decisions. She is indicating that she is not convinced that she made the right choice. For Peter, Clarissa's decision not to marry him also elicits pain, as he confesses that he did in fact want to marry her. (41) He says, "Of course I did . . .; it almost broke my heart too, he thought and was overcome with his own grief". (41) Peter also admits that he "was more unhappy than I've ever been since". (41) This occurs even though they both *somewhat* agree that they made the right choice by separating due to them both being annoyed at each other. (40, 45) That they *somewhat* agree is a very interesting point. They seem to continuously contradict themselves in their consideration of their relationship. They love each other, think about each other, want each other – *to an extent*. However, they do not directly address it to each other. It is not even properly explored in their own minds. The reader is thus thrust into ambivalent relationship between the tension of anticipatory passion still embedded into their memories, and the pain which is also instilled into them.

At a textual peak of tension during this scene, Peter bursts into tears. (46) Clarissa consoles him by taking his hand and she kisses him. Clarissa states that "if I had married him, this gaiety would have been mine all day." (46) After Peter gets up, a moment of impulsivity floods Clarissa and she *thinks* "Take me with you". (46) This moment signifies them being closer to the past passions, which is why the tension has increased. "and then, next moment, it was as if the five acts of a play that had been very exciting and moving were now over and she had lived a lifetime in them and had run away, had lived with Peter, and now it was over."(46) Not long after that, a direct implication of passion is spoken by Peter:

"'Tell me,' he said, seizing her by her shoulders. 'Are you happy, Clarissa? Does Richard ---' The door opened." (47) The text here suggests that Clarissa and Peter can somehow rectify their past choices and move forward into the future. Clarissa imagines her whole potential past *with* Peter, she kissed him. Even so, the imagined memories are rejected, as she claims it was over. Peter came was near the potential of filling in their blank of unaddressed passion towards each other, and even spoke his thoughts out loud. However, at the very textual location where the blank could be filled, it was rejected and interrupted by the door opening. This reinstates their tension, perhaps even increasing it, as they were close to consolidating their thoughts, emotions and desires of the past. These potential outcomes, where the love, thought and want between them could exist, again loom over them as blanks which they do not explore. Again, the question of "what if?" proves to be the source of their ambivalence towards their relationship. Thus, the text offers the implied reader with several blanks. The potential, but lost past, and the potential, and very present moment.

Another incongruity appears shortly after when Clarissa brings up the past. This is located between the direct juxtaposition of their response to the question of the past itself. As Peter imagines himself as a failure, this sparks anger in him. "Do you remember the lake?" Clarissa asks. He has a quite dramatic emotional response:

> "'Yes,' said Peter. 'Yes, yes, yes,' he said, as if she drew up to the surface something which positively hurt him as it rose. Stop! Stop! he wanted to cry. For he was not old; his life was not over; not by any means. He was only just past fifty." (42)

The amount of repetitions suggests that there is an underlying fear of his past, that he has utilized it in the wrong way. In other words, he feels unpleasure at the thought of answering the question of "what if?" Instead of engaging in a direct emotional response towards Clarissa, he internalizes his anger, and proceeds to direct his distaste at Richard Dalloway. (42) Clarissa has the opposite reaction to that very same question. She asked the question in an "abrupt voice, under the pressure of an emotion which caught her heart, made the muscles of her throat stiff, and contracted her lips in as spasm as she said 'lake'." (42) The emotion is similar to nostalgia, an unpleasurable feeling in itself. Nostalgia is an emotion which indicates a longing for the past, signifying that it is pleasurable, and the sad

realization that the past is just that – a moment which has gone. Interestingly enough, Clarissa also contemplates what she had made of her own life. “What indeed?” (42)

Marder has claimed that the character of Clarissa exhibits the contradicting features of “nostalgia and angry distaste”. (Marder 51) What we are finally introduced to here, then, is the textual manifestation of that argument. Not in terms of just Clarissa’s character, but in the responses to their memories as well. Peter is the manifestation of the ‘angry distaste’ and Clarissa is the manifestation of ‘nostalgia’. When juxtaposed in response to the same question, we have found the specific location of incongruity. Thus, we have also found the location of our ambivalence. The two emotional responses towards the memory creates a void, or an increase in tension, because it is not directly expressed by the characters towards one another. Instead, it is an internal response to the contemplation of the question “what if?”. Both characters wonder what *could have happened* if they had decided to marry each other. Their memories of each other, and their individual lives after they split, both creates the tension between them and also rejects the possibility of relieving that tension. Put differently, the split in their reactions and incongruities, are created by their split in the past.

Marder also considers this notion of “splitting” (56) and suggests that this is a deliberate choice on Woolf’s part. He also suggests that “Woolf does not attempt to reconcile or mediate between diverging states of mind.” (57) For the reader, this split (or incongruence) is then the source of unpleasure. This is exactly why it is so relevant for the analysis of unpleasure in this novel to contemplate how ambivalent memories create blanks for the reader to respond to. There is also another layer to consider, which is the continuous indulgence in those memories. Even though both characters are reluctant to think about memories and the potential pain they might face there, both of them indulge in those very memories. The memories do not only hold pain, but also passion, the ghost of their shared somatic pleasure. Thus, when they repeatedly indulge in those memories they are also indulging in the memory of that passion. However, they are rejected satisfaction of achieving that pleasure because it is situated in the past.

After this interaction with Clarissa, Peter wanders through London before ending up at Regent’s Park. (58) He eventually falls asleep, but is woken up with

"extreme suddenness, saying to himself, 'The death of the soul.' 'Lord, 'Lord!' he said to himself out loud, stretching and opening his eyes. 'The death of the soul.' The words attached themselves to some scene, to some room, to some past he had been dreaming of. It became clearer; the scene, the room, the past he had been dreaming of. It was at Bourton that summer, early in the 'nineties, when he was so passionately in love with Clarissa." (58)

In this scene, he was noticeably interrupted from a state of calm to startlingly wake and saying the "death of the soul". He does not explain what it means, but it is directly attached to the memory of Clarissa. Due to the nature of the whole statement, that is, the juxtaposition of a memory and the ominous statement, the tension is increased for the reader. After this statement, the reader is plunged into the Peter's memory of what happened between him and Clarissa in Burton when they were supposed to get married. Then, at the sight of seeing Clarissa from the past, his statement of 'death of the soul' becomes "the death of *her* soul". (59) This increases the tension further due to not knowing what it signifies. If you consider his already apparent unpleasure in his memories, this memory could be the source of that.

In his memory of their relationship, Peter admits to always criticizing Clarissa and it becomes clear that they are quarreling a lot. (59) This seems to be an incongruity compared to the apparent nostalgia Clarissa when mentioning and contemplating the past in the earlier analysis. In relation to their quarreling, he states that "it all seemed useless – going on being in love; going on quarreling; going on making it up, and he wandered off alone". (59) Later that evening, the reader is introduced to yet another incongruency: his seemingly dualistic description of the old Clarissa. (60) Peter describes getting "more and more gloomy" (60), being affected by their quarreling. Clarissa moved on "as if nothing had happened. That was the devilish part of her – this coldness, this woodenness, something very profound in her which he had felt again this morning talking to her: an impenetrability." (60) Despite these harsh character descriptions, he claims he still loves her. (60) There seems to be a discrepancy on Clarissa's character. The old Clarissa compared to the hostess Mrs Dalloway, unsettles, and disturbs the readers impression of her.

Reaching one of the peaks of his memories, he remembers that same night at dinner. When he was seating himself at the table, he did not look at Clarissa at first. When he does, he notices that she is "talking to a young man on her right". (60) Peter was overcome with "revelation. 'She will marry that man,'" (60) He continues explaining that "He was prey to revelations at that time. This one – that she would marry Dalloway – was blinding – overwhelming at one moment. There was sort of – how could he put it? – a sort of ease in her manner to him; something maternal; something gentle." (61) The man is of course Richard Dalloway. This is the first glimpse the reader gets of *Mrs Dalloway*, Richard hostess, and the first glimpse of Clarissa's growing duality. Knowing the outcome of their meeting, brings the reader to the same position as Peter in his revelation, anticipation of unpleasure.

The scene prior to the very peak of anticipation, has Clarissa and Peter spending time together during a trip to the famous lake that Clarissa mentioned earlier in the analysis. There Peter recollects having

> "twenty minutes of perfect happiness. Her voice, her laugh, her dress . . . her spirit, her adventurousness; she made them all disembark and explore the island; she startled a hen; she laughed; she sang. And all the time, he knew perfectly well, Dalloway was falling in love with her; she was falling in love with Dalloway; but it didn't seem to matter. Nothing mattered. They sat and talked – he and Clarissa" (62)

This Clarissa, juxtaposed to the Clarissa earlier on in the memory, is strikingly different. There is no coldness, woodenness, or impenetrability. Just an embodiment of why Peter was, and partly is, so infatuated with her. This difference does, however, again point out the duality of Clarissa's character. There is also a sense of saying goodbye to the old Clarissa, actually leaving her behind in this scene. The final scene of old Clarissa before she becomes *Mrs Dalloway.*

Finally, the anticipation of unpleasure has reached its peak. "The final scene, the terrible scene which he believed had mattered more than anything in his life . . . happened at three o'clock in the afternoon of a very hot day." (63) Sally Seton is making fun of Richard, and the reaction Clarissa has spurs Peter into making the decision of having a direct confrontation with Clarissa about this matter. *Clarissa became angry on Richard's behalf*. He

asks Sally to arrange a meeting with him later on, on the basis that "something very important has happened." (63) When Clarissa arrives, and Peter confronts her, wants her to tell him and admit to him what she feels for Richard. "She did not move. 'Tell me the truth,' he kept on saying. He felt as if his forehead would burst. She seemed contracted, petrified. She did not move". (63) Clarissa is unrelenting and denies him any answer. Peter felt as if "he was grinding against something physically hard; she was unyielding. She was like iron, like flint" (63) When Clarissa does finally answer him, she says "'It's no use. It's no use. This is the end'" (64) Then, at last: "She turned, she left him, she went away. 'Clarissa!' he cried. 'Clarissa!' But she never came back. It was over. He went away that night. He never saw her again." (64) First of all, what we must observe here is that when Clarissa turns and walks away, we are witnessing 'the death of her soul'. The ominous message has come to fruition, and the old Clarissa is no more. *Mrs Dalloway* is the one who walks away from Peter. This signifies the emergence of Clarissa's duality. Secondly, it is also important to notice that Clarissa never confirmed that she *was* in love with Richard. The anticipation of unpleasure renders the reader into a permanent state of unpleasure because it is not a cathartic release. Finally, it is this scene which makes their memories so ambivalent, and the passion so unspoken.

Richard Dalloway also provide us with a perspective to contemplate. He is mostly a peripheral character throughout the first part of the book. He is only referred to indirectly, so when he emerges as a consciousness, he sheds another light on Clarissa as a character through his memories of her. He describes his appreciation for Clarissa and their life together as "a miracle". (114) In addition to this, he has bought her flowers in order to tell her that he loves her. (114) However, here we also find a cryptic textual occurrence, namely when he says that "still there was a time for a spark between them." (115) This indicates that their relationship is lacking something which is prevalent in the interactions between Clarissa and Peter – namely passion. This textual occurrence rejects this somatic pleasure for them again when he approaches Clarissa with his flowers, and he fails to tell her that he loves her. "He was holding out flowers – roses, red and white roses. (But he could not bring himself to say that he loved her; not in so many words.)" (116-117) He seems content that just holding her hand was "happiness". (117) This creates the blank of why he would not tell her and find the spark he was referring to – the passion he claims they had time for.

Clarissa then proceeds to tell him that Peter Walsh had visited, and honestly exclaimed: “And then it came over me “I might have married you”. (117) Previously, Richard had been not been worried about Peter Walsh in relation to Clarissa. Prior to Clarissa statement, he admits

> He had, once upon a time, been jealous of Peter Walsh; jealous of him and Clarissa. But she had often said to him that she had been right not to marry Peter Walsh; which, knowing Clarissa, was obviously true; she wanted support. Not that she was weak, but she wanted support.” (115)

So, Richard apparently trusts that Clarissa is telling him the truth about there being no regrets in terms of not marrying Peter. He also indicates an aspect which sheds some more light on Clarissa’s character. She wanted support, even though not explicitly saying so. There is a textual blank in terms of why Clarissa has chosen to reject the possibility for passion, in favor of Richard who is not able to tell her that he loves her, and who alludes to there not being a spark between them. This blank is confirmed a page later, when Clarissa’s words about Peter Walsh seems to catch up with him. By this point he has even forgotten what he was going to say to her. (118) “Did she wish she had married Peter?” (118) Now, Richard admits to the doubt casted over his previous trust that Clarissa does not regret her rejection of Peter. In terms of unpleasure, there exists a “duality” here. The Richard who does not feel threatened by Peter, and the one who does. This is largely due to the incongruity of what the two men mean to Clarissa. With Peter, she shares memories filled with passion, but also pain. With Richard she finds support, but no passion. This incongruity implies these ambivalent relationships, and thus creates unpleasure for the reader as it rejects somatic pleasure for both Clarissa, Richard, and by extension, Peter Walsh.

In this analysis, I have explored the memories of Clarissa Dalloway, Peter Walsh and Richard Dalloway. Due to the interiority of their character, a lot of the tension arises from their indirectness. In several instances, for example with Richard Dalloway’s indirectness in his love for Clarissa, the indirectness creates tension. We have explored to specific textual occurrences apart from this, namely the notion of “duality” and “incongruity”. In terms of

duality, Clarissa as character stands out. You could argue that she has a split identity in a way: one identity belonging to the past, specifically relating to the place called Burton, and her relationship towards Sally Seton and Peter Walsh. The second identity belongs to her present, as Mrs Dalloway, Richard Dalloway's wife. Even though she argues she loves the present moment, it is juxtaposed with the apparent unpleasure of her memories that she cannot seem to let go of.

In terms of incongruity, we have located several different instances of incompatibility. First of all, in the indirectness Peter and Clarissa seems to communicate with. There is very little direct correlation between their interior states and the actual words they communicate to each other. In addition to this, when Clarissa asks Peter about the past, the question triggers incongruent responses between the two. Peter resorts to frustration and anger, while Clarissa experiences nostalgia. All connected to their unpleasant past together, and all increasing the tension for the implied reader of their interactions.

I want to highlight the peak of unpleasure, which is the emergence of *Mrs Dalloway,* and in many ways the peak of the novel. Many assign the peak at the end, but the narration towards the death of Clarissa's soul is very cleverly written. It engages with Clarissa from a different perspective, so you get a clearer notion of what is happening. It is especially warranted to emphasize the anticipation of unpleasure. The ominous message of death is not the only indication that this is happening. Peter himself also become a catalyst for the reader's anticipation when the claims that Clarissa will marry Richard from the very first time he saw them together. As the memory progresses, then, every act is cast in that very shadow. The reader, then must navigate between their relationship towards Clarissa and her apparent qualities such as "woodenness" and "impenetrability". Their expectations of their resolve renders futile when Clarissa refuses to answer Peter when he confronts her about her relationship with Richard. When engaging with Clarissa in the rest of the narrative, the now exist a heightened sense of unpleasure due to the rejection of catharsis, and the rejection Peter got for his passion.

Passion is the main topic of the analysis, as it is a somatic pleasure. There are plenty of textual occurrences where the pleasure of passion can be given, but it is continuously

rejected. Both in relation to Peter Walsh, Sally Seton and towards Richard Dalloway. The novel is then successful in the production of unpleasure for the reader, as the tension increases accordingly. *Mrs Dalloway* turns out to be a lot more than just a story about temporality

CHAPTER 2: *Never Let Me Go* and the Unpleasure of Purpose

This chapter will examine how the novel *Never Let Me Go* (2005) by Kazuo Ishiguro increases tension, and thus produces unpleasure for the implied reader through its interruption of memories. Like *Mrs Dalloway*, those interruptions provide the aesthetic feature of blanks which increase the quantity of tension while reading. Also, as with Mrs Dalloway, these interruptions complicate somatic pleasures. However, unlike Mrs Dalloway, in addition to complicating somatic pleasures, this novel also complicates cognitive pleasures. The text interrupts memories of these pleasures on different occasions and in different manners. Those occasions will be isolated and mostly explored chronologically until reaching the point of revelation, i.e. the potential lessening in tension and the blanks filled in. When the tension is potentially lessened, I will contemplate where pleasure is actually situated for the posthuman character of Kathy. A more thorough discussion of the legacy of modern bliss, where the findings in the two novels are compared, will be conducted in chapter 3.

2.1 Postmodern or contemporary?

It is difficult to place *Never Let Me Go* as either a postmodern or a contemporary work due to when it was written, namely 2005. While understanding why people would argue that it is solely contemporary or solely postmodern, I would argue that it exists somewhere in-between. The novel does reject some of the conventions of postmodern works, such as the "perpetual present" (Jameson 1771) and a "disappearing sense of history" (1771), as it is highly concerned with memories of the past. However, as Jameson states in relation to *pastiche*, contemporary works are in some ways bound to the confines of what has already been created and are left to imitate those styles in some shape or form. (1762) In any case, whether it is to be considered postmodern or contemporary, it does not matter significantly. The focal point of my analysis will be the production of unpleasure for the reader and the legacy of modern bliss after the inventions of modern authors have become canon. The novel still has a problem with easily achieved pleasure, both in terms of technology and in terms of ontology. Interestingly enough, in terms of genre, *Never Let Me* Go is also a difficult work to place. It is within the genre of sci-fi, and it also has some

dystopian features. However, Keith McDonald argues that it does seem to serve more like a "speculative memoir" (McDonald 2007), as *Never Let Me Go* follows the retrospective narrative of the character Kathy H. I will also consider the novel from this perspective. He argues that it is speculative, due to the characters continuous speculation of their own reality, i.e. their truth.

Keeping in mind Frost's suggestion that postmodern and contemporary works still produce modernism's essential ambivalence, the work which is examined in this chapter differs significantly in complexity from *Mrs Dalloway*. This is especially regarding the structure of the text and the cognitive labor required from the implied reader. This text does not use the style of mimetic showing. However, the reader still gets close to the main character who is also the narrator. The narrator of the book is Kathy herself, which gives the narrative a personal, close feel reminiscent of how we experience Clarissa and Peter, but it is not the same as the modern writing style used in *Mrs Dalloway*. While Mrs Dalloway allows the reader access to multiple characters and their lived experiences, *Never Let Me Go* does not allow the reader access to any of the other characters emotions or thoughts apart from the dialogue in Kathy's memories.

2.2 The Unpleasure of Interruptions

The novel starts off with a direct address to the reader with "My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years." (Ishiguro, 3) This is an important feature to highlight, as that encapsulates the reader solely in Kathy's memories and exposition of events that occur. What is essentially happening is that Kathy is directly narrating to an *implied reader,* which is why it is highly relevant to use Iser's concept to examine what the direct relationship between the text and the reader involves. The narrator, Kathy H., tells the reader about her upbringing in the school named Hailsham, and the following years after she became aware of her true purpose in the world. However, these interruptions are written in a very passive manner. She does not explicitly explain anything outside of her memories, like giving specific accounts of an account of space and time. In fact, the only access you get is prior to her narration of her memories. This piece of text states "England. Late 1990's" (Ishiguro 2005) One could also argue that while she is

reminiscing about her childhood with fondness, there is an underlying resistance to her own memory. (4)

In the article “Possibles and Possibilities: The Aesthetics of Speculation in Ishiguro’s Never let Me Go” (2015), Anushka Sen also argues that “the narrator’s school experiences carry an unspecified weight that estranges her memories from the stock images of childhood or the personal angst recalled in conventional autobiography.” (97) Those stock images are the “schooling, everyday life, rites of passage and other related tropes” (98), but underneath the surface, as suggested by the interruptions of her memories, “the shadow of its ruthlessly determined fate looms over the entire narrative”(98). Put differently, this parallel narrative of her fate is therefore always present, while not given in its entirety. It is a suggestion of something unknown, a parallel narrative which is given semi-access to. By juxtaposing Kathy’s memories with the seemingly parallel one, the novel places the reader in a state of having “half-knowledge” of what “dominates the student’s existence” (100).

While Hailsham first appears to be a normal school, we can locate moments where the reader is told otherwise. At first, during her exposition about her current work as a ‘carer’, she claims her ‘donors’ always wishes for her to tell them stories about Hailsham. When she was treating a donor, it had become clear to her that “what he wanted was not just to hear about Hailsham, but to *remember* Hailsham, just like it had been his own childhood.”(Ishiguro 5) and that “was when I first understood, really understood, just how lucky we’d been”(5-6) For the reader, it quickly becomes clear how dear Hailsham is to Kathy and her memories of her childhood, it signifies the pleasurable aspect of that memory to her. It also becomes clear that others like her do not have fond memories of their own childhood. This is an important observation to make, as the reader is instantly challenged with an increase in tension, the source of which has not been revealed yet. While a reader would accept Kathy and her fond memory, it is intertwined with a narrative where she currently is a ‘carer’ for ‘donors’. These terms are, however, not explained to a reader who would question what exactly that means.

In another instance, Kathy claims that she “tried to leave Hailsham behind, when I’ve told myself I shouldn’t look back so much.” (4) We have thus encountered the second interruption of her indulgence in memories, which is located in the pleasure of

remembering the school at all. This interruption is not aligned with the other interruption. Instead of being "lucky", her memories are something that she suggests should be left behind. It seems like her memories are a double-edged sword, one that both induces pain and pleasure. It casts a highly ambivalent tension over the narrative. The account of her narrative is written as a form of memoir, but there is resistance towards the memories due to some unspoken truth. Consequently, as she continues to explore her memories, small pieces of information will be revealed. With art classes, math and physical activities, it seems like she remembers the school as continuously and mostly pleasurable. However, the reader has also been introduced to Kathy's ambivalent attitude towards her upbringing. While her exposition is filled with nostalgia and a tender vision of her memories, there is clearly something unspoken in her narrative. We have then located two accounts of an underlying, but unexplained, interruption of recollection regarding Hailsham and have established the ambivalence "half-knowledge" of the reader.

What complicates the narrative further is the apparent existence of Kathy's own half-knowledge while attending the school. In an interruption later in the narrative, Kathy admits that

> "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 that a long way down the line there was donations waiting for us. But we didn't really know what that meant." (Ishiguro 69)

This is a self-reflexive image from the text which in turn replicates the response that the reader is experiencing. Both Kathy and the reader have the same ambivalent "half-knowledge", created from the blanks of her recollection. The reader also knows, though not explicitly or meaningfully, that they will become donors. It was implied through one of the earlier interruptions of her recollection. As Sen suggests, "their knowledge expands as they grow older, but it is always obfuscated to some extent, and hence heavy with implication while lacking the solidity of truth". (101) Therefore, the word choice is also something to take notice of here. Kathy again mentions "donations", which is continually not explained, apart from the actual signified notion of donations being a practice where something is given freely to something else. In addition to donations, she also creates a blank by using

the word “normal people” and putting herself in opposition to those people. The implication from the blank is that she is something other than a normal human being, but as Sen argues, the implication lacks the confirmation necessary to fill in the blank.

Jay Rajiva also considers the student’s constant ambivalent state of half-knowledge. He suggests in “Never Let Me Finish: Ishiguro’s Interruptions” (2020), that “interruption shapes the subject’s ability to “read” (interpret) people, situations, and larger structures of meaning.”(78) This observation is highly significant for the argument of creating unpleasure for the reader. In this case, the subject is Kathy *and* the reader. There exists a lack, a blank, of the opportunity to interpret due to interruptions. Rajiva underlines that what specifically is going on in the during Kathy’s recollection is an aesthetic feature which he refers to as “the mechanic of interruption”. (78) As we understand it in the sense of how unpleasure is aesthetically manifested through blanks *created by interruptions*, this notion of an aesthetic feature is important to highlight. From this we can establish interruptions as the mechanical force of unpleasure for the reader. Put differently, being denied the cognitive pleasure of interpreting is something integral to the aesthetic interruptions of the novel.

Rajiva alludes to this mechanical aesthetic feature of interruption, juxtaposed the way Kathy explores her memories, as being the source of something bigger regarding contemporary society. He first describes the manner Kathy’s description, “which is replete with equivocations, dull description, and other narrative chaff” (82). We have already touched briefly upon this passiveness of Kathy’s narration. The interruptions, he then claims, mimics the “social conditions that impinge on one’s ability to focus “on the horror that floats just beyond the horizon of our daily routine”(Robbins 293, qtd in Rajiva 82) It is therefore implied that the social conditions of a digital social reality have changed reading practices. Explicitly, the interruption simulates hyper attention, and avoids deep attention. (78) It is therefore a good example of the attempt to avoid the cognitive pleasure of deep attention, which for modern authors were the source of a greater pleasure. On a broader scale, Rajiva seems to suggest and agree with the notion of not being able to navigate a reality which continually distracts from gaining understanding. This is why he emphasizes that interruptions disturb the ability to interpret things properly. We may consider this regarding the aesthetic blanks created by those interruptions: even though hyper attention

has the benefit of being able to keep up with tasks in a digital world, in the setting of a novel, it creates unpleasure for the reader.

We have now located the placements of some interruptions of cognitive pleasures. However, there are several interruptions of memories regarding somatic pleasures as well. Sex, for example, is described mechanically and lifelessly as well. Kathy explains that "we were pretty confused about this whole area of sex". (93) It seems like not only the students were confused, but many of the guardians who watched over them as well. (93) Miss Emily, their head guardian, had told them that sex was "a very beautiful gift". (93) She encourages them to not be ashamed of their bodies, and if they were to have "physical needs", those should be respected.(93) Interestingly enough, giving into easy, somatic pleasures is encouraged in this scenario. However, it turns out that those pleasures are not as easy after all. Kathy's source of confusion is the juxtaposition between what Miss Emily had said and the unspoken understanding that they would be in trouble if they acted on this encouragement. The text implies contradictory things but does not really explain them. Again, the text interrupts itself when Kathy admits that she only assumed that was the case, and directs the reader's attention to a singular incident where a guardian had caught two students "doing it" in the classroom.(93-94) Despite what Miss Emily had said, the guardian who caught them told them that it was inappropriate"(94). Sex between is then cast as an ambivalent feature, being beautiful and encouraged, but also kept as a pleasure not suitable for in their time at Hailsham.

These contradicting statements did not stop the students from at least *claiming* that they engaged in sexual activities. As a result, Kathy is left feeling "more and more like the odd one out". (95) She does not explicitly at any point during these particular memories claim that she has any desire to have sex, but she still feels the pressure to achieve this somatic pleasure to be at the same level as her peers. Even though Miss Emily had encouraged them to do it with someone of significance, she argues that this can happen later, when she "would do things right." (96) She then proceeds to choose a boy named Harry C. on the grounds that he "had done it before", "unlikely to go around gossiping afterwards" and she did not think that he was "sick-making."(96) However, she is still confused as to how the actual procedure of having sex is.

Perhaps worried by her own feelings of inadequacy, she keeps delaying this particular pleasure. (97) Instead, she does something quite profound and interrupting in a completely different way. She attempts to do research on the process of having sex. Contrary to the passiveness of Kathy's description of her behavior prior to this, she now makes the genuine attempt to "read" (Rajiva 78), to understand and to know. From watching scenes in movies, to reading books which could contain descriptive scenes, she tries to unveil the truth of what sex is. However, another textual interruption occurs when she feels ready. Ruth and Tommy, her best friends, split up. (97) The interruption then creates another blank, one which complicates the somatic pleasure of sex.

Later on, during her time at the Cottages, is when the actual participation in sexual activity occurs. The Cottages acts as a middle ground between Hailsham and their eventual time as donors and carers. She describes the activity as "functional" (125), not as beautiful. She has one-night stands in "freezing rooms, in the pitch dark, usually under a ton of blankets" (125). In fact, it seems like it was more compulsory than enjoyable. Kathy elaborates on this in a conversation with Ruth, where she asks Ruth: "Do you ever get so you have to do it? With anybody almost?" (126) It becomes clear that even though she satisfies her need for somatic pleasure, she still does not understand it. As Ruth rejects the notion of feeling the same way, the reason for this compulsory aspect of her need is also not explained.

The final engagement with sexual activity happens during her time as Tommy's carer. It is necessary to reiterate that her assumption was that when she does it with someone important, it would be very beautiful. Alas, that proves to not be the case. Even though she describes them as being "happy about it" (235), and sometimes "doing it really well" (235), she still has a "nagging feeling". (235) This nagging feeling occurs as an interruption in their pursuit of somatic pleasure. She attempts to make the nagging feeling go away, claiming that she would "say anything, do anything I thought would make it better, more passionate, but it still never quite went away." (235) As with the other interruptions in her memories, the notion of achieving pleasure is rejected, and never explained. The reader is again cast into a state of "half-knowledge", with no textual revelation of the truth.

2.3 The Unpleasure of Creating Art

There exists a strong emphasis on the importance of art in this novel. The students are required to create art for a practice called “Exchanges”. (15) Every three months, the students at Hailsham would accumulate their creations and exchange them with the students who were of the same age. Kathy stresses the importance of this practice as “it was the only was for any of them to get “a personal collection of possessions” (16). Nevertheless, there was also another aspect to it. During a textual interruption from her own memories, Kathy acknowledges that the quality of the art created a sort of hierarchy amongst the students. (16) She claims that “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) The reason for this was Madame’s “Gallery”. (30) Madame was the curator of the Gallery and came to collect the best artworks from the students at Hailsham. (30-32) The Gallery in itself creates a blank for the reader, as the students knew very little about it.

In her article “On being a slow reader: psychoanalytic reading problems in Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*” (2006), Deborah Britzman is primarily concerned with how *Never Let Me Go* creates a “discord between the signifier and the signified”(307), creating a need for “slow reading”. (308) The implication of this slow reading for Britzman is that the text of Never Let Me Go performs its own resistance to being read. Similar to how Rajiva points out interruptions in the narration, Britzman also points out Kathy’s “mismatched and unclear” (308) narrative. She claims that this is due to there not being a correlation between what the text is saying and what it is attempting to portray, i.e. the words used does not represent the objects of the words. (310) It is very much similar to how the process of blanks work as well. The words used to convey information does not correlate to what it is portraying. Thus, the reader is left with a blank. It is also similar to how Lacan argues that the unconscious, or the reality of the truth, is structured through language. If you do not possess the language for putting the unconscious into words, then truth cannot be conveyed.

Even though we have touched slightly on this topic before, as an example of this “slow reading”, one might consider then the word use of Kathy’s narration in a closer manner. Words like “donor”, “carer”, “completing”, “Exchange” and “Gallery” are

euphemisms and does not correspond to the reality of what those words *mean.* As Kathy has previously stated, “we didn’t really know what it meant.” (Ishiguro 69) Britzman refers to this as “the veil of deception that is language” (315). The implications of this is that the language offered to Kathy and the students at Hailsham to explain their own reality and existence was in itself untruthful.

Based on this linguistic and textual deception, it is interesting to analyze the behavior of a guardian named Miss Lucy in relation to Tommy in particular. Tommy did not possess creative abilities and was mocked by other students due to this apparent flaw. (Ishiguro 20) The problem with his art for the other students was that it was considered “childish” after we got sympathetic praise for an elephant he created (20). He started drawing pictures of childish imagery on purpose, to avoid getting bullied on the premises of his skills. Due to the continuous mockery of his art, he was prone to having “temper tantrums”. (21) Then Kathy observes a significant interruption in his behavior. He stopped having those temper tantrums, “not overnight, but rapidly enough”. (21) Apparently, he had talked with Miss Lucy, who had told him that “if I didn’t want to be creative, if I really didn’t feel like it, that was perfectly alright.” (23) The blank from this interaction with Miss Lucy is that the creation of art was highly valued at Hailsham, so why would Miss Lucy suggest that it was okay to not at least try? This information was a disturbing moment for Kathy, who became “genuinely angry” (23).

The textual deception is suggested later, as Tommy goes into detail about Miss Lucy’s behavior when telling him this. The first interruption of her behavior is Tommy’s recollection of her “leading up to something. Something different.” (27) This suggests that the words that Miss Lucy had said to him carried more meaning that initially believed. Another interrupting behavior was the fact that Miss Lucy apparently “Shaking. With rage.” (28) when talking to him. He also suggests that her rage was directed at something that had to do with *them*, and the donations that they would eventually give. Then, Kathy actively asks “Why did she bring up donations? What’s that got to do with you being creative?” (30) Due to the blanks of their knowledge, and thus the readers, the answer is not accessible to them.

This encounter also creates doubt on the pleasure of creating art for the Gallery as well. In a moment of speculation, Kathy asks the necessary question for the purpose of Madame to come and collect their artworks for her gallery: “What’s that for exactly?” (30). She also questions *what* the gallery actually is, and she rejects Tommy’s suggestion of Madame selling their art in the outside world. (31) Instead, she contemplates her own “half-knowledge”: “It’s got something to do with with what Miss Lucy said to you. 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) Here, we are introduced to a textual representation of another blank. While Kathy is making a lot of effort to examine her own “half-knowledge”, another interruption occurs because right after asking those tough questions. Instead of thinking more deeply about everything she has been told, she claims that “I’ll have to go now, Tommy.” (31) True to her passive manner, she proceeds to leave the blank that she identified as it is.

Later in the novel, during a conversation between Kathy and Tommy, he sheds further light on Miss Lucy’s behavior towards him. This time, she had implored him that they “needed to talk, a good talk.” (105) Now, Miss Lucy told him that what she suggested to him previously was wrong, and that he should forget all about it. The reason for this remained unknown as Tommy states, there was “No explanation, no nothing . . .” (105) She had also told him that she had done him a huge disservice by telling him that is was okay not to be creative. This is completely different from her previous behavior, and the textual manifestation of what she says contradicts what she had previously stated. This has two effects. The first is that those contradictions highlight the textual deception that has occurred, while still being rejected the knowledge of which statement was correct. Secondly, it highlights a specific feature of her latter statement, namely that the art they had created was “evidence” (106). Her emphasis being that it was evidence for Tommy himself and that he had something to gain from art because his art *was* important. (106) However, as Kathy interrupts the conversation in her usual manner, the reason for his was not explained. We can take notice here that the significance of art has moved from being strongly emphasized, to being diminished, towards being *explicitly* emphasized.

With this newly revised notion on the significance of art, we need to direct the attention on an important scene which occurs later in the novel. In this scene, Kathy and Tommy are looking for a cassette with the song “Never Let Me Go”. (171-177) The textual information, which is revealed here, attempts to close the ambivalent “half-knowledge” that Kathy, Tommy and the reader possess about the purpose and significance of their art. There was a rumor that circulated the Cottages, a rumor that introduced the notion of being able to get a deferral from donations if one could prove that they were in love. (172) In their attempt to connect their “half-knowledge” about the significance of art, Tommy and Kathy speculate that their art was the basis of whether they could get this deferral. In a moment of naivety, they connect the collection Madame was keeping of their art to the rumor of possibility that they could escape their donations. (173-175) The fact that Miss Lucy had emphasized the importance of their creation of art, was another indication of that being the truth. The final evidence for their theory was the fact that Tommy had overheard Miss Emily saying that their art “*revealed what you were like inside.* She said *they revealed your soul.*” (173) Thus, a new truth has emerged. A truth full of hope that has filled in some of the textual blanks the interruptions on information has left. From this moment, while not being confirmed by anything but speculation, Kathy and Tommy believes that they have the opportunity to escape their purpose as donors, and they eventual death.

2.4 The Truth of Madame and Miss Emily

As a final analysis, the attention is directed at Madame herself, who is a very interesting character. As a peripheral character, she does not appear very often. (Ishiguro 34, 71, 243) As mentioned, she is the curator of the mysterious “Gallery”, the place where the students work could potentially be exhibited. However, she is a figure belonging to the world outside of what Kathy knows of. Madame is one of the “normal people” that she knows very little about, and she is then rendered equally as mysterious as the rest of the outside world. During her first two appearances it is worth noting that she has no dialogue. What the reader is faced with is solely an emotional response, which without words unsettled and interrupts the passivity of Kathy’s narration. There are no words to give any indication of what Madame comes to represent, apart from Kathy’s attempt to “read” her

reaction. As she has little understanding of the outside world and the true texture of her reality, her account is flawed. Thus, the reaction from Madame and Kathy's response to that will present us with more textual blanks. It is especially interesting, as Madame proves to be a very significant character in this narrative. These accounts will therefore increase tension quite a bit, due to her being the catalyst of the revelation. This will be further explored later in the analysis, when facing this revelation of Kathy's truth. Consequently, all of Kathy's interactions with Madame will be examined.

The first interaction between Kathy and Madame occurs during one of her occasional visits to Hailsham. Madame is much like a ghost in Hailsham, collecting their products of art for her gallery, but never seen interacting with the students directly. As Kathy describes her, "she wouldn't talk to us and kept us at a distance with a chilly look." (Ishiguro 32) Kathy and her friends assume that Madame fears them and decide to approach her to confirm this. (35) Actually, Kathy claims that "until that point, this whole thing about Madame had been, if not a joke exactly, very much a private thing we'd want to settle among ourselves". (35) This is an indication of Kathy's apprehensiveness as a child of being an active seeker of truth, which is also very much in line with her apparent passiveness. As they do approach her, Madame's reaction catches them off guard. (35) This is where we locate the first interruption of her memories of Madame. In Kathy's own words, "I can still see it now, the shudder she seemed to be repressing, the real dread that one of us would accidentally brush against her." (35) The interruptive element to both Kathy and the reader is that up till this point, their assumption was thought to be false. A huge increase on tension occurs due to Madame's reaction to Kathy as *being something to be scared of*. As Kathy is unaware of the full extent of what she is and represents, this reaction is very impactful. She acknowledges that

> "Ruth had been right: she *was* afraid of us. But she was afraid of us in the same way someone might be afraid of spiders. We hadn't been ready for that. It had never occurred to us to wonder how *we* would feel, being seen like that, being the spiders. By the time we'd crossed the courtyard and reached the grass, we were a very different group from the one that had stood about excitedly waiting for Madame to get out of her car." (35)

The interruption had the effect of destabilizing the internal passiveness of Kathy's relationship towards the outside world. Until that point, as she mentions, they had never considered the idea that they were a source of dread. Being surrounded with humane cognitive and somatic pleasures, such as school, friends and art, put a veil over the fact that she did not belong to the outside world. She was different from normal people, but as she said herself, the depth of that understanding was shallow.

The second moment in Kathy's exposition of her memories of Madame, also paints a highly ambivalent picture for the reader. Again, Rajiva provides much insight into the interruptions that occurs textually during this scene. Kathy is dancing to the song «Never Let Me Go» by Judy Bridgewater and is blissfully unaware of anything else around her. Rajiva argues that "At the level of genre, and as her adult self notes in recollection, Kathy misreads the song." (86) The chorus of "Never Let Me Go" is "baby, baby, never let me go". (71) The moment is filled with tenderness for the reader, as Kathy imagines herself as a mother hugging her baby. As Kathy imagined it, the mother had always been told that she could not conceive, but she had a baby anyway. Now, the mother "is so afraid that something will happen, that the baby will get ill or be taken away from her." (Ishiguro 70) Thus, the way Kathy interprets the lyrics becomes moving for the reader. It is filled with unpleasure, as the memory is interrupted in several manners.

First of all, Kathy herself does not have a mother. The notion of having real parents in the novel is non-existent. The closest to something of the sort is their "possible". (143) A possible is the actual human being the clones are copied from, or in a way, the parent of their DNA. This is tragic, as Kathy is being cast as a sort of orphan, but she is rejected that terminology as she is not considered to be human. Secondly, Kathy retrospectively recollects telling Tommy about this specific moment and revealing that "we all knew something I didn't know back then, which was that none of us could have babies." (72) We can locate the loss of two pleasures, the loss of a potential mother and the loss of a potential child. The reader, on the other hand, is reading about a young child who is experiencing these ambivalent emotions. That might be pleasurable in the moment, being introduced to such a tender, but conflicting scene. However, the reader's pleasure will quickly be challenged by grown Kathy's commentary on this memory. Even though some

blanks about the nature of Kathy has been filled in, the result of that is by no means gratifying as it represents loss and not pleasure.

Returning to the same scene where Kathy dances with a pillow to the song "Never Let Me Go", there is another layer to observe. This is the second direct interaction between Kathy and Madame in the novel. During her dance, Kathy finds Madame staring directly at her from the doorway. She freezes and explains that she "began to feel a new kind of alarm, because I could see there was something strange about the situation." (Ishiguro 71) This strangeness comes from Madame's reaction to seeing Kathy and observing her quietly while crying. (71) The fact that Madame is crying suggests that she is in pain from what she has observed. For the reader, who knows Madame as a somewhat stern and unreachable character, this reaction would cause confusion. It highlights that there is something unsaid, unrevealed or unspeakable with the character of Kathy and Madame's relationship towards her. As there is little to no access for the reader about what Madame might be thinking, the implied reader feels Kathy's confusion. They are both in the state of "half-knowledge". Kathy's reaction was that she "didn't know what to do or say, or what to expect next." (71) Not only is this reaction confusing for an implied reader, it is also highly unpleasurable. The characters express both pain and confusion, and as a backdrop for those emotions is the tenderness of Kathy's memory of the song "Never Let Me Go". The words of that title add another layer to the pain-pleasure principle, as *Never Let Me Go* is also the title of the novel. It signals that this moment, this interaction between these two characters, is a monumental one. Yet, the reader does not get an explanation of why that might be, leaving another blank. The only information granted is that of Kathy's memory when conferring with Tommy about this reaction from Madame. In the words of Rajiva: "The pair eventually settle on the most inane of possible explanations – that Madame can read minds, leading Kathy to close the scene in typical fashion, by evacuating significance". (86)

As an implied reader is currently feeling unpleasure, confusion and even pain, one must the question of why the reader is also intrigued. Why, after exposing themselves to something unpleasurable, does one keep engaging with it? This is where Lacan's unconscious truth is highly significant. Due to the reader engaging with a moment filled with pain, the pain is something to be endured to find the truth, even though the truth might not

be pleasurable at all. It could also be important to note that the truth in-itself must be endured by the reader to fully engage with Kathy's reality, as will be addressed further in the next encounter with Madame. Freud, like Lacan but in different terms, might argue that what the reader is seeking is pleasure by engaging with the unpleasure, i.e. that unpleasure is more gratifying in itself. However, as already established, Freud does not explicitly note what happens when the tension of unpleasure is released. Kathy as the narrator holds the power of when this tension is relieved and explained, which is why her character becomes so engaging for the reader. As the reader continues to seek the pleasure of knowing the truth, it is done solely at Kathy's discretion. Both theories could explain the ambivalent reaction of continuing an unpleasurable reading experience as the implied reader.

Finally, the third encounter with Madame is the moment of revelation. During this scene, the hope that the art created for the Gallery has significance comes to a climax. The only possible chance for Kathy and Tommy to escape their fate is to ask for a deferral from Madame on the basis of the quality of their art they made. As mentioned, it was believed that this would render Kathy and Tommy's love truthful enough to be granted a deferral. This is exactly why Madame is the character who holds the key to untangle the story – she is the reader's escape from dread. The meeting with Madame during the big reveal should be a cathartic one, where this deferral is granted. While enduring the pain of not knowing, even expecting to be rewarded with pleasure, Madame is thought to be the embodiment of the goal of enduring unpleasure.

What the reader is then exposed to, the big revelation, is another interruption. (250) An even more peripheral character emerges, that is their head guardian Miss Emily. The height of unpleasure occurs here, then, because there has been almost no textual indication of her bearing significance on the truth of their existence, apart from the rumor about the significance of the Gallery. She now represents someone who holds the solution to the unknown of Kathy's -and the implied reader's – fate in the story. Which is to say that Miss Emily and her character represented the unknown, unspoken or unreachable truth that Lacan refers to, the interrupted flow information creating the blanks. For the reader who is enduring the uncertainty of their character's fate, reading the interaction between Kathy, Tommy and Miss Emily is not a cathartic experience after all. It becomes clear that there is

no chance for Kathy to escape her existence or purpose. (250-270) No matter how much hope Kathy holds in Madame's art gallery, it ultimately results in nothing but a revelation about the truth of Kathy's existence. Namely, that Kathy is confined within the premises of her existence. She exists to be a carer and a donor, nothing else. Her subjective reality, where the is a possibility of relief and pleasure, does not really exist at all. What Kathy has left is the truth that Miss Emily embodies, which is a truth that is inescapable and must be accepted. Even though Kathy is the one who holds the power over narrating this truth, the character who "opens the door" for that to be narrated is now both Miss Emily, alongside Madame and her rejection of the notion of a deferral.

For the reader, the same process is in the works here. Kathy's hope and wish for there to be an alternative outcome, also becomes the implied reader's hope and wish through their state of unpleasure. Even though the reader is somewhat aware of the truth, given that the Kathy who is narrating already confirms Tommy's passing earlier in the novel the direct meeting with Miss Emily signifies the intersection between speculation and revelation. Specifically, what is does for both Kathy and the reader, is that it structures the unknown through language. Miss Emily's exposition of why they had to make art, why Hailsham was created and why Madame felt like keeping their art ultimately gives the reader pleasure through putting into words that which had been inexplicable. When faced with Madame's true relationship towards them where she makes them create art for a purpose which is not even relevant for Kathy and Tommy's dream to be free of their fate, it is the final piece of revelation. Her motivation is deeply seated in the horrible truth, that it is was to prove the clones had souls like "normal people". (255) At least now, both Kathy and the reader can stop speculating over the potential escape of fate. Madame and Miss Emily emerges as the ones who have created the blanks, the source of unpleasure and ambivalence, of Kathy's fate. If not for them, there would be no Hailsham, no friendship, no art classes, and most strikingly, no possibility of another potential *purpose* for Kathy and Tommy. The uncertainty endured by the reader is thus relieved, and the truth has emerged. Just as Lacan suggests, facing the truth is horrifying, and also urges people to live with that truth. The unpleasure has therefore merely shifted location from blanks towards the truth. The question becomes how to live with the realization that your life is not your own, and the agency you believed you might have had through the creation of your art is non-existent.

In “Mortality and Memory in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*” (2017), Virginia Yeung has a very helpful account on reading the novel as a “mediation of mortality.” (1) She acknowledges Kathy’s narrative as what this analysis has come to understand, namely as a story which is “building up an ambiguous feeling in the students of being ‘told and not told’.”(3) This argument is strikingly similar that which has already been argued considering the “half-knowledge” of Kathy and the reader. In addition to this, she also argues that “the way readers develop a full understanding of the story resembles the process by which the students comprehend their fate”. (2) As we have seen through this analysis, is that the passiveness of Kathy’s account of happenings that occur, and her inability to “read” her surroundings, will complicate the relationship between the signifier and the signified. Yeung also considers that the use of those euphemisms “have a dual function of masking the enterprise of cloning as well as expressing death-related notions”(2) Sure enough, “donating” is revealed to mean that their purpose is that of donating their organs to sustain life in the outside world. The role of a “carer” means to take care of people who are donating those very organs, with the knowledge that they will also have to donate their own organs at some point. The “Gallery” is a euphemism for the evidence of the existence of their soul. Finally, “completing” means that you have fulfilled your purpose of caring and donating and is a euphemism for your subsequent death. All of this is confirmed through the final revelation.

While this is not uplifting information at all, and does not alleviate the tension of unpleasure, which is now located in the horrible truth. Yeung suggests something that might do just that. She claims that

> “Artistic works have a special place in the human world because they are born out of the human desire to transcend physical life. They prove that humankind has interiority which is not subject to decadence and demise as the physical body is, and hence it is a timeless dimension in human existence.” (Yeung 6)

We have been trying to establish where the “greater pleasure” of postmodern and contemporary works is found. In this case, it must be found in relation to the notion of

human beings living in a fast-paced, digital world which seems unable to retain its own past and are thus living in a perpetual present. As Yeung subtly indicates, the greater pleasure might be in the creation of artwork itself. Even though Kathy will eventually die with the purpose of donating her organs, she has also donated her memories to this memoir. Yeung also states that while "memory holds no power against death" (10), it still "allows human beings to exist beyond their lives in a symbolic form." (10) Another way of putting it is that "one can create value in life even though it is transient, and impermanence does not necessarily equal futility or meaninglessness." (11) This proves to be the source of Kathy's agency to live with the truth. For Kathy, narrating her memories retains them in an artwork. This artwork will outlive her, and she has now also found the purpose in creating it. It puts real emphasis on *creation* of art being important. Just as Miss Lucy suggested when telling him that his art was important, and it was important for *him*. As Jameson indicates, the biggest source of unpleasure for writers and creators seems to be just that, *creation of art.*

Conclusion: Postmodern Legacy of Modern Bliss

Through the lens of Iser's aesthetic response-theory, I have attempted to recognize textual events which can possibly create the tension necessary for an implied reader to be taught to read and endure unpleasure. Unpleasure is seen as a greater pleasure to achieve, compared to easy and highly accessible pleasures. Modern authors were concerned with people's tendency to seek those pleasure, instead of a greater sense of pleasure. In their writing they had a specific goal in mind, which was challenging pleasures that they deemed to be much less gratifying and essentially hollow for their readers, i.e. to complicate their reading. Their means of challenging this, according to Laura Frost, was to complicate the reading experience with a formally complex narrative which simultaneously produced and rejected somatic pleasures in favor of the cognitive unpleasure of hard work. However, she also points out that by widening the scope of what could be considered a modern text, and the scope of the pleasures which could be considered to be "easy", different ways of showing the same ideological belief that unpleasure was a greater pleasure could be found. She also pointed out that pleasure was worth looking at for its own intrinsic value, something that this thesis has attempted to stay true to.

In her discussion on the legacy of modern discontent with easy pleasure, Frost questioned how unpleasure was utilized in postmodern and contemporary works. She stresses that the utilization of the essential ambivalence still exists in these later works. However, the unpleasure might manifest differently than in the formally challenging works of modern authors. As Frederic Jameson states, the thrust of modern invention has become canon and lost its power. Instead, he argues that due to the consumer society and mass culture, that modern authors had a problem with, people have been put into a perpetual present state and have lost their connection to their past. In addition, he claims that there is a loss regarding the purpose of creation. He claims there is little to no invention which is possible to achieve, only a *pastiche* of earlier discourses and styles which has melted together. The most important feature of his theory is the notion that this has rendered the *purpose of creating* artworks as a complicated pleasure. Subsequently, this thesis has

attempted to locate how the idea of that source of unpleasure has manifested itself in the postmodern novel *Never Let Me Go.*

In the two novels, we have looked at the creation of unpleasure in terms of the characters relation to their memories. *Mrs. Dalloway* interrupts specifically somatic pleasures. *Never Let Me Go*, on the other hand, interrupt both somatic pleasures *and* cognitive pleasures. It is important to notice that both of the novels do construct unpleasure in similar ways. Even though the approach in the analyses of the two novels was phenomenological in many ways, the primary way of creating unpleasure is by anticipating and being rejected pleasure. The findings in *Never Let Me Go* only adds another layer to the possible unpleasure that is possible to find when reading and being rejected pleasure.

It is also worth comparing the two main characters of Clarissa and Kathy. The role of their memories differs significantly. In Clarissa's case, the ambivalent memories are a constant unpleasure due to her past choices. Even though they are painful, she seems to revisit them anyway, making them unpleasurable. Note that this is by choice, as Clarissa is a character with agency over her life. The same thing cannot be said about Kathy. Even though, through the rumors and contemplation she partakes in, she lives as if she does. The fact that the story is set in a retrospective manner also changes the nature of interruption. It is mostly Kathy who creates textual unpleasure because she interrupts her own narrative. In the case of Clarissa Dalloway, many other things disturb the flow of information and thus anticipation. In the scene with Peter for example, the opening of a door rejects the goal of pleasure in knowing what Peter might have said to her in the spur of the moment.

Mrs Dalloway had many different approaches to establishing unpleasure. As mentioned, the primary pleasure that was anticipated and subsequently rejected was the pleasure of passion in the relationships between the different characters. Especially the scene between Clarissa Dalloway and Peter Walsh was full of increases in tensions. In their physical interaction with each other, there was many textual occurrences to observe. Some blanks were created by their indirectness towards each other. Nothing was explicitly told towards the other character, rendering the reader tense in anticipation of what could happen. What was especially interesting to observe was the actual peak of the tension between them, when Peter almost spoke directly to Clarissa. Their memories were of a very

ambivalent character, and the textual manifestation of that was ultimately tenfold. Both Clarissa and Peter seemed to have fond memories of each other, which were rooted in the passion that they used to share when they were supposed to get married. However, Peter also carries with him a lot of internal anger towards Clarissa for choosing Richard Dalloway instead of him, even though he does not act on it. During the scene he gets annoyed at her when thinking of her and Richard and pertains that anger on his own personal failings, also rooted in his recollection.

Clarissa, on the other hand is lacking in terms of passion with her own husband, even though he is a stable person to be around. Being around Peter brings back fond memories, and sensual ones, which thrusts her into contemplation over what her life would be like if she had actually proceeded to marry him. However, Clarissa's contemplation of their life together is juxtaposed Peter's lived experience of their break-up. Peter admits to being overcome with grief, which again is juxtaposed the apparent passion they still share for each other, and which loom the air when they meet. All of these contradictions, incongruities, accumulate into a highly confusing and unpleasurable reading of the text. The incongruities leave many unanswered blanks which increases the tension between them, and the reader is suspended in a sort of limbo.

The analysis of the novel Never Let Me Go shows that interruptions and consequent rejection of engagement with somatic *and* cognitive pleasures is highly relevant to readers of our contemporary society as well. In the case of this novel, it is not even limited to the pleasures that human life can possibly entail. It rejects the pleasures of being human at all. At very few points in her recollection is pleasure actually in the forefront of her attention. Even though she engages in pleasurable In focusing on different aspects of the memories of Kathy's narrative from several perspectives, I have attempted to locate where those interruptions occur textually. Most of all, I have attempted to locate where the accumulation of all the tension is expected to decrease and pleasure is finally rendered to the reader in the state of "half-knowledge".

By first giving an account of how the interruptions in her narrative functions, and the state of "half-knowledge" begins to complicate Kathy's engagement in several different types of pleasure, unpleasure does not seem very different from that which is found in

modernism. In fact, sexual pleasure is painted as a highly contentious factor in Kathy's life. At first proceeding to deny herself the pleasure at all, in the name of preparation, it becomes clear she does not possess understanding of what sexual pleasure *is.* When she finally engages with her somatic needs, the result is a mechanical understanding and an emotion she does not possess the language to contemplate. This manifest itself as a blank for both Kathy and the reader, where the desire to have sex is somewhat present, but achieving the pleasure expected of sexual activity is rejected, thus creating an unpleasurable element to the reading.

Most interestingly, all the complication of pleasure in sex, art, music, and creation seemingly brings the reader to a sort of surplus of tension when faced with the revelation of the information held back by interruptions. This is the height of unpleasure, the expectancy for pleasure being the highest and the highest state of tension. However, when facing this accumulation of tension produced by the interrupting blanks, the reader is left with a hollow sense of understanding. In the intersection between the speculation and revelation, truth has emerged. All of the unpleasure endured has been relocated towards a singular source, a larger amount of unpleasure which has been underlying the narrative. This is how this postmodern work both furthers and develops the unpleasure, or modern bliss, found in modern works.

The interruption of Kathy's memories when engaging with art and music – representing their soul - are rejected any significance. They simply do not matter because she is not human. She will never join the human masses or live a life which fulfills human expectation of pleasure. Instead, her entire exposition of cognitive pleasures, namely her indulgence with memories, leaves the reader dissatisfied. The reader is not only challenged with the rejection of somatic pleasures, which are found to be hollow and downright scary by Kathy. Cognitive pleasures end up being just as hollow and insignificant as well, making the reader stare right into the postmodern abyss. Still, as we have seen, the rejection of both somatic and cognitive pleasures does require them to exist. There exists a textual, paradoxical relationship in the inescapability of rejecting pleasures while being highly reliant on their description. In any case, even though they are required to exist, seem to indicate the same hollow implications that modern author sought to combat through unpleasure for

the reader. The emergence of truth in itself, the most ambivalent sort of existential state, is the replacement of the tension that the blanks of the text produced. Nothing up until that point held so much tension, and more importantly, pain. The focus of unpleasure has consequently shifted its direction, though it has heightened in the notion of the amount of tension.

Still, the question of what greater pleasure there is to seek remains mostly unanswered. Pleasure is such an elusive concept, apart from the immediate and easy pleasures we are consuming when gratifying the desire of our goal. Still, even this pleasure is complicated and knotty to properly put into words. However, as Frost suggests, pleasure is to be found in the text itself, from linguistic cues that elicit a response from the reader. It is very interesting that the indulgence in easy pleasures is more prevalent than ever, at the same time as postmodernism is entangled in the effort to deconstruct boundaries and furthers a loss of identity and purpose. The digital revolution, the extension of the technological revolution, of our time seems to complicate pleasure even more than it used to. As mentioned in my reading of Jameson, he seems to imply that there exists a void of purpose for the artists and writers. Due to the futility of trying to create something new, as the modern authors are credited with, and only recycling old conventions in other forms, *creation* can be argued to be the biggest complication of pleasure in contemporary society. More accurately, the *purpose* for creation is now the source of loss.

In Kathy's narrative however, after all the tension created is being cast as meaningless, a purpose is still profoundly there. That purpose is not negated by blanks, it is the focal point of the entire revelation. However, it is also not specifically stated, but embedded into the structure of the entire narrative. While people in contemporary society have lost their purpose, Kathy H. has not lost hers. It was predetermined from the beginning, an inescapable truth that she eventually accepts and learns to live with through her memories of the life she has actually lived. Due to it being written like a speculative memoir, her memories are not lost. All of her friends, all of her experiences, all of her confusion towards her own existence is retained and conserved in the memoir. Memories in the novel serves the purpose of both creating a sense of loss and also finding that which has

been lost. This is of course a more cultural approach that a textual one, but it was an important and interesting finding.

In this thesis, I have explored how unpleasure may be produced for the reader though interruptions in the characters memories. In both novels, these interruptions conceal information expected to be given, thus creating a blank for the reader to engage with. These blanks, the concealment of information, create an increase in tension when they are left unresolved over time. In addition to this, specific instances of interruptions relate to either (or both) somatic and cognitive pleasures. I have argued that these interruptions have the effect of complicating pleasure, or more accurately, the expectancy of pleasure. In turn, this complicates the expectancy for easy reading as well. By both indulging in and simultaneously interrupt pleasures, a different type of pleasure emerges. This is *unpleasure*, which is a pleasure which is dependent on pain. The pleasure is created through both pain and pleasure being present in the engagement with the blanks of the text. This is actually what produces gratification for the reader. It produces a lasting result, a memory of its own of sorts, similar to the ambivalent memories of the characters in the novel. An ambivalent pleasure, or unpleasure if you will, is the epitome of pleasure for the modern writer as is the most difficult to achieve. This was the motivation modern authors had for creating modern bliss for its readers.

Finally, I argue that the redefinition of pleasure should also be addressed and acknowledged in the discussion of what modern writers brought to their readers. Modern authors sought to direct attention to and complicate the expectation of receiving easy pleasure. Writing in such a manner which requires the reader to endure, sustain and engage with pain is a feat which I personally admire. Both in their own time, and in later works, the modern problem with pleasure still prevails. Even though the unpleasure in this case is redirected towards an appreciation and pleasure of ultimately having a purpose, the trail towards this truth is still unpleasurable. In the small narrative of *Never Let Me Go*, we are thus introduced to one way that a postmodern and contemporary literature takes issue with hollow pleasures. On a different level, it does also address the void of the postmodern and contemporary condition in the sense that the unpleasure of The novel takes an issue with all sorts of pleasures, in the name of directing the reader's attention towards the

complication of the potential of even greater pleasure: finding *purpose* when facing the postmodern void of essential meaning, i.e. a Lacanian truth. After all, it does require to live in a perpetual unpleasure. In the future, it would be interesting to see a work such as what Laura Frost has created which properly addresses the legacy of modern creation as thoroughly as possible. With my analysis, I make a small contribution towards this purpose.

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