

THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

ANKARA UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

**AN ANALYSIS OF J.G. BALLARD'S *HIGH-RISE* AND KAZUO
ISHIGURO'S *NEVER LET ME GO* AS EXAMPLES OF THE GOTHIC
GENRE IN THE CONTEXT OF POSTHUMANIST THEORY**

M.A. Thesis

Sude SÖZÜGEÇEN

Ankara-2019

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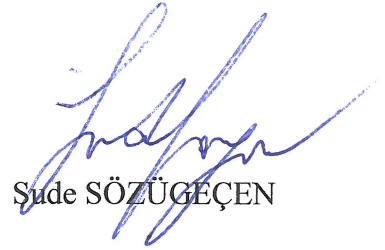
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Introduction

This thesis aims to argue that two distinct dystopian novels - J.G. Ballard's *High-Rise* (1975) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) - re-evaluate the concept of human by challenging the conventional understanding of humanism based on the anthropocentric mindset in a posthumanist framework with the help of gothic elements. While *High-Rise* presents a human community who has no social rules, norms, ethics or moralities through pointing out the changeable human nature and its defects, *Never Let Me Go* presents the story of the clones who are exploited by the human race. It is narrated by one of the clones; Kathy, to reflect how the non-humans are dominated in a dystopian human centred world. The gothic elements in these dystopian works; darkness, entrapment, isolation, monstrosity, taboos, gothic-heroes, hybridity, doppelganger and uncanny contribute to the posthumanist analysis of the books by uncovering the unappreciated dark side of the human kind.

In the recent years, dystopian literature has been so popular that many books have turned into movies or Tv series such as Susanne Collins's *Hunger Games*, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Philip Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* and its movie version *Blade Runner*, Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot*, Dave Eggers's *The Circle*, Alan Moore's *V for Vendetta*, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, Scott Westerfield's *Uglies* and *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. Even though the works are mostly associated with young adult literature, these survival stories with their universal messages and themes are appreciated by many people of all ages. Letting people question life and humanity in general, dystopia is a controversial literary genre which has the ability to educate people and make them think about the society they live in. As a matter of fact, the awareness coming through such a questioning is one of the purposes of dystopian literature. It carries present relationships in the society to the distant future or imaginary places to defamiliarize them, so that it reveals that the

internalized circumstances and concepts perceived as natural are in fact socially constructed - such as the definition of what a human being is. Since dystopian fiction is mostly set in a space filled with horror, threat, mystery, and suspense, it includes many gothic elements whose main goal is not to frighten but to instruct by shedding light on the darkest sides of human nature, to raise awareness about society and humanity. According to Martin Schafer, dystopia stems from gothic novels and the romantic nature of terror in gothic works is used by dystopia to formulate their own form of fear (18-27). Hence, the dystopias by Kazuo Ishiguro and J.G. Ballard have many gothic characteristics in compliance with their dark futuristic scenarios filled with horror.

Gothic literature deals with the repressed and hidden sides of human beings and “it expresses the darkest and most universal truths about human nature with particular simplicity and intensity” (Bomarito 365). Moreover, it points out that human beings do not have a single, definite and complete human identity; instead, they have binaries and ambiguities in their nature. As it will be exemplified later, human identity is revisited through gothic elements which blur the distinction between humans and non-humans.¹ Through its features, which will be detailed later, gothic “renders all boundaries uncertain” (Fred bottling 6). It intertwines “good” and “evil”, “natural” and “supernatural”, “man” and “woman”, “human” and “non-human”, “we” and “other” and destroys the borders; in that sense it is similar to posthumanism which also fuses the binaries and emphasizes the ambiguity of the notions. In *High-Rise* and *Never Let Me Go*, Gothicism is employed as a vehicle to investigate what it means to be a human. Gothic elements within the novels reinforce the uneasiness and fear in the atmosphere and reflect the psyche of the characters to make the reader think about human nature. The books oppose traditional perceptions and expectations regarding what is considered human and

¹ Non-humans are the entites that are not human or not human enough. They can be animals, robots, vehicles, and in the case of gothic vampires, ghosts, monsters etc.

what disturbs the reader with a distorted picture of humanness. “As the measure of everything” humans are metaphorically “pulled down” to non-humans by losing their humanity in *High-Rise*, while the non-humans in *Never Let Me Go* are depicted as “equal” to the humans. In other words, these dystopian novels stretch the rules and break the norms, splitting humans from non-humans with the help of gothic elements hence they could be examined in the posthumanist framework.

Both in art and science, theories and studies in the field of posthumanism have become a matter of importance in recent years. The interference of technology and scientific developments with human nature reshapes humanity in various ways. With the advanced technology and developments in science, new species like robots are introduced to the world. The ones who have the “human” qualities such as language skills, the ability to make and use tools and rationality have destroyed the traditional definition of the human. The differences between human and inhuman features are blurred and non-humans like robots or machines are taken into consideration with their contribution to life. Under the influence of the latest innovations and technology enhancement in the world, posthumanist studies display the ongoing evolution of the human race. Furthermore, thanks to the study of humans with non-humans the notion of the human is discussed to destroy the limited and definite description of the human strictly dividing the humans from the non-humans in humanist context.

Both *High-Rise* and *Never Let Me Go* present stories based on the life of the characters living in the age of scientific advances or technological devices. In the posthumanist frame, they revisit the notion of humanness illuminating the troubles of the modern age and they make the people reflect upon the possible consequences of the interactive relationship between humans, science and technology. In *High-Rise*, Ballard reveals that humans are ironically both complicated and primitive, ambiguous and simple entities. The writer narrates a modern time story in which the most civilized people are

living within a place equipped with the most advanced technological devices. When these devices are considered as the outcomes of the complex, civilized, and rational human mind, it becomes an irony that the characters of the story lose their civilized “human” side and turn out to be wild and primitive creatures because of their unsophisticated and instinctual behaviour in this “civilized” space. They metaphorically move backward to the age of primitiveness in their modern high-rise. Though they have the most advanced technology of their time, they cannot escape their primitive instincts and non-civilised desires. In other words, they turn out to be “animals” trying to survive in a wild jungle. As a symbol of city life and civilisation, the high-rise ironically and metaphorically transforms into a huge animal cage at the end of the novel. The metamorphosis story of the building and the characters demonstrates that humans have a bestial side in their nature and they can set this animal suppressed by social norms free in any situation and place. This fact clashes with the humanist approach that strictly distinguishes humans from non-humans by ignoring and underrating non-humans. Through its redefinition of the human, the novel turns out to be a mirror of the dualistic nature consisting of binaries and becomes a good example of a posthumanist study.

In line with *High-Rise*, the clones of *Never Let Me Go* to be donors make the readers think about the concept of the human. Ishiguro’s way of telling the story from a clone’s point of view helps to change the readers’ anthropocentric way of perceiving their world. Kathy’s narration indicates that her kind is not different from human beings, even though human characters of the novel do not want to share the same idea. When the life and condition of the donors are compared to the humans and it becomes obvious that although humans see themselves as separate, unique and superior there are other entities having the same qualities with them. “Human” features do not only belong to humans but to others as well. Furthermore, the others can even be better than the human race in terms of some aspects such as friendship and love. The comparison of these “different” species

in the posthumanist framework will be the main focus in the novel's analysis and gothic elements will serve this examination with their concern about human nature.

In the first chapter of the thesis, gothic and posthumanism will be explained in detail. Their relationship and common points will be presented. Moreover, their relationship with human existence and human nature will be discussed. The landmarks of Gothic literature and posthumanist literary theory and the ideas and claims of the posthumanists will be stated to shed light on the analysis of *Never Let Me Go* and *High Rise*. The function of gothic elements and the issue of the human from a posthumanist perspective will be studied.

In the second part of the thesis, J. G. Ballard's *High Rise* will be analysed. The features of Ballardian space including gothic elements and their effects on the human psyche will be presented. Ballard's use of gothic to create a sense of mood and place in which it becomes possible to explore the somber truths about human nature, morality, and the struggles of the human soul will be illustrated. His attitude towards human greed, violence, horror, death and sexuality will be discussed from a posthumanist approach.

In the next part, the relationship between science fiction and gothic, through Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, will be examined. How the novel lets the readers experience the fearful and provoking fantasies, though they can be real too, in an environment of virtual reality will be presented. The clones and humans of this dystopian novel make the posthumanist analysis of the novel possible through revealing the ambiguity and flexibility of the very definitions of what makes a being human or inhuman. The intermingled relationship between human and inhuman in *Never Let Me Go* leads the reader to have a wider view of the universe. The egocentric and anthropocentric world view of human beings become another issue of discussion in this study.

In the conclusion part, the outcomes of the study will be presented and how two very distinct examples of dystopia reveal different interpretations of posthumanism will be discussed. Their contribution to posthumanist studies will be emphasized. The examination of the relationship between gothic and posthumanism will be concluded.



Posthumanism

"Man is the only animal for whom his own existence is a problem which he has to solve and from which he cannot escape." - Erich Fromm

The posthumanist reading of a work in literature is based on the question of "what it means to be a human." As an activist working at the intersection of animal studies, Paul Waldou describes humans as "a special kind of meaning-making animal." Although his definition seems to distinguish humans from non-humans, since they are the ones who can make sense of the world, he actually underlines that humans try to "hide [their] inevitable and powerful animality" in themselves ("Coming Home to Our Animality"). Furthermore, even though this situation seems to give superiority to human beings, it actually reveals a cultural and unnatural reality about life: humans have always created a barrier between humans and "others". As meaning makers, they have formed a cultural superiority over non-humans.

As the most recent ecological theory of cultural studies, posthumanism rejects a rigid distinction between humans and non-humans, and denies the primacy of the human in the universe. However, in order to conceive the posthuman approach comprehensively, it is crucial to go back and understand what it challenges: humanism. Humanism is a specific ethical philosophy which underlines the development of human virtue; the value and realm of the "human being". To the fullest extent

Humanism appeals (positively) to the notion of a core humanity or common essential features in terms of which human beings can be defined and understood. [It] takes history to be a product of human thought and action, and thus claims that the categories of 'consciousness', 'agency', 'choice', 'responsibility', 'moral value', etc are indispensable to its understanding.

(Soper 11–12)

Humans are claimed to be unique and privileged compared to other existences that do not have the stated qualities such as “consciousness” and “moral value”. As a humanist, Descartes puts special emphasis on the rationality of humans:

Reason belongs solely to the human and, as such, serves to unite the human race. “We” may have different types of bodies, but because reason is a property of the mind, deep down “we” are all the same. (qtd. in Badmington, *Posthumanism* 4)

He distinguishes humans from “others” since “we” all have reason. Descartes supposes that rationality is the feature that makes human species the most supreme beings and that lets him strictly distinguish them from non-humans. However, the novels, *Never Let Me Go* and *High Rise*, suggest that these rational entities have the potential to go wild or become so insensible that they can neglect the sufferings of the others or commit crimes such as murder and rape. While the “uncivilized” humans in *High-Rise* can walk around naked, rape women, torture animals and other humans for the sake of pleasure, the humans of Ishiguro become so self-involved that they stop caring for other living forms.

During the Renaissance by neglecting the dark potential of humanity, rationality made way for the prevalence of humanism against sentimentalism and religion. Celebrating valuable human qualities, Renaissance humanism rejected the metaphysical theory of the universe and religious supernaturalism. It was a significant period in which human dignity and potential stood out in relief and Contemporary Humanism still includes the most enduring values of it (Lamont 12).

Following Renaissance Humanism’s praise of humanity, the Age of Enlightenment became another period in which the supremacy of the human race governed all over the world. Known as the Age of Reason, the 18th century was dominated by the glorification of rationality, scientific discoveries, and advancements. They all served the humanist approach and appreciated human intervention in nature and science (Lamont 71-3). As a

defender of the Enlightenment with his denial of metaphysics and theology and his care for reason, Matthew Arnold, associated with “New Humanism”, identified humanism with culture and saw culture and literature as source of human’s moral and aesthetic life. From a different angle, he wanted use them to educate humanity and express the aspirations of human race.

However, through postmodernity, the efficacy of ideas brought in during the Enlightenment began to be questioned (Lechte 300). Suggesting plurality and uncertainty, postmodernity, as Ihab Hassan declares, transformed into posthumanism over time (842). Hence, postmodernism and posthumanism overlap in terms of their outlook on the universe as indefinite and uncertain; they both challenge a clear and rational view of the world. “Inextricably related to the Studies of the Differences”, posthumanism refers to the end of the anthropocentric notion so it pays regard to the “othered” ones such as the feminists, gays, blacks or the colonized (Ferrando 24). It does not only oppose the discrimination between the human and the non-human, but also the hierarchy among humankind in general.

Putting humans at the centre of the universe and ignoring the others, the transcendental humanist philosophy was attacked by anti-humanist critical thinkers such as Roland Barthes, Louis Althusser, and Michel Foucault, who believed humanism was just a myth (Schmeink 30- 5). They objected to the idealized, shallow and definitive image of humanity. As stated before, since humanism somehow not only marginalizes non-humans but also other humans by means of -isms and discriminations, such as sexism, racism, classism, ageism, homophobia, and ableism, anti-humanists highlight how it dehumanizes the less powerful ones in the course of history (Ferrando 16). With his critical reading of Marx, Althusser claims that every theory based on the human is invalid and “any thought that appeals to Marx for any kind of restoration of a theoretical anthropology or humanism is no more than ashes, theoretically” (Althusser 229–30).

Likewise, in his essay “the Great Family of Man” Barthes asserts that while trying to show the universality of human actions, humanism presents every human being in the same way by ignoring their essential differences (100-3). He points out the limited and unsatisfying representation of humanity in humanism. Furthermore, Foucault states that the paradigm of thought changes within different periods of time and the concept of “(hu)man” which is just “an invention of recent data” may end as well” (*The Order of Things* 422). In the same manner with Foucault, Ihab Hassan explains that “[we] need to understand that five hundred years of humanism may be coming to an end” (843).

As it can be inferred from the statements of Foucault and Hassan, posthumanism has been transformed and altered by new technology and advancements in time and has turned into a more complex subject which subverts the constructed understanding of humanism. In other words, it introduces a new, ambiguous and sophisticated concept of humanity. It is not about the end of humanity but of a human-centred universe. It brings an end to the “infallibility of human power and the arrogant belief in our superiority and uniqueness” (Pepperell *The Posthuman Condition* 171). As a moral philosopher, Mary Midgley asks “What is it that makes [humans] unique?” Then she explains “there’s a lot of uniqueness around. Elephants are rather unique, too, aren’t they? And so are termites and porcupines and wandering albatrosses. In fact, most of us seem to be pretty unique, so why would humans be any different?” (11) She indicates that not only humans but any creature is biologically special, so there is no meaning in attributing uniqueness to humans. Her statement subverts the humanistic imagery and attacks the so-called superiority of humankind.

The posthumanist reading of a text is possible thanks to some other scholars in the field such as Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, N. Katherine Hayles, Bruce Clarke, Cary Wolfe, Neil Badmington, Elaine L. Graham, Ivan Callus, Pramod K. Nayar, Tamar Sharon and Stefan Herbrechter. They are a few of the names that shape the cultural theory

and take important steps in the development of posthumanism. Since posthumanist critics have their own theories and comments on the issue from diverse angles, there are many distinct approaches from a wide variety of perspectives in posthumanism. Though this situation enriches its development, it also has made posthumanism a confusing term. Despite its ambiguity, it requires the redefinition and transformation of the human.

To make a good start, Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1984) is accepted as one of the milestones of posthumanist theory. Like other feminist theorists, Haraway criticizes the man-centred, rigid and narrow perception of human beings in her essay. She speaks of the relationship and connection between humans and technology. She claims that "[b]y the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics" (150). She uses the cyborg as a metaphor to remark the hybridity of organisms and rejects the boundaries separating them. She rather emphasizes the "fluidity" of those boundaries.

Katherine Hayles in her book *How We Became Post-Human: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (1999) says that "it is no longer possible to distinguish between the biological organism and the informational circuits in which the organism is enmeshed" (35). Similar to Haraway, Hayles considers humans as cyborgs as a result of the ongoing technological and scientific advances like cloning, gene mapping, and surgical implants in the modern age. They both re-evaluate and de-essentialize the notion of human nature that is moulded by technological and scientific advancements. Their statements and comments will shed light upon the relationship between humans and technology in the analysis of the novels of Ballard and Ishiguro.

In the same line, Pramod K. Nayar emphasizes the evolution of the human form through science and technology in *Posthumanism* (2014). He goes deeper with animal and disability studies and bioethics in the field. He discusses humans' "cultural"

hierarchical ordering of the other living forms and aims to “[unravel] the discursive, institutional and material structures and processes that have presented the human as unique and bounded even when situated among all other life forms” (45). Thus, he questions the cultural representations of animality, monstrosity and disability. He points out humans’ insistence for discrimination by dividing the existences according to their abilities or natures as animals, monsters or disableds. Regarding posthumanism as an ethical reading, Nayar criticizes the humanist marginalization of non-human entities and protests against any kind of human superiority based on intellectuality, psychology, anatomy and linguistics. His criticism of the so-called human uniqueness and privilege seeks to illustrate the inequality both among the humans and between humans and nonhumans in *High-Rise* and *Never Let Me Go*.

Likewise, Rosi Braidotti’s *The Posthuman* (2013) examines humanism’s anthropocentric values and takes into consideration “other” forms of life. She says:

I take the post-human predicament as an opportunity to empower the pursuit of alternative schemes of thought, knowledge and self-representation. The post-human condition urges us to think critically and creatively about who and what we are actually in the process of becoming. (12)

She suggests that through posthumanism it is possible to discover a new way of existing and understanding the multiple representations of human identity. In tune with Braidotti, Cary Wolfe’s *What is Posthumanism* (2010) and *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Post-humanist Theory* (2003), dislocate humans from where they place themselves in the world of humanism. He focuses on a larger discourse and moral theory including animals in art and literature from architecture to music. He does not reject humanism altogether but states that the framework of humanism is self-defeating. To oppose speciesism, he claims that according to humanism animals are retarded or diminished versions of humans, but posthumanists respect the different ways

of being in the world. In line with Braidotti, Ivan Callus and Stephen Herbrechter declare that a post-humanist reading is

“[...] an expression of “care” that is critical of the ideology that has been pre-empting the most fundamental questioning – and not the annihilation – of the human as a species, as a construction, as an “invention,” as a “myth”. (“What is a post-humanist reading” par. 31)

They suggest that posthumanism does not neglect others but care for all. They put emphasis on the humanist myth based on speciesism by elevating humans as they claim that culture is what makes humans human. In a similar way, Neil Badmington’s *Alien Chic: Post-humanism and the Other Within* (2004) underlines how humans see themselves and others as “aliens” through the concept of posthumanism. He points out that humans have got a desire to separate humans and non-humans to reaffirm their humanness. The critics’ concern about “the others” are in tune with the representation of the living forms in Ballard and Ishiguro’s novels. Regarding the existence of other entities the authors present new ways of being human and non-human with their hybrid and ambiguous characters. They prove the cruelty and dangers of the concept of otherness in their works.

Both the complexity of the human condition and diversity of human’s definition beget plurality, sophistication and ambiguity in posthumanism which includes different definitions, perspectives, and thoughts. Posthuman “has become an umbrella term to refer to a variety of different movements” (Ferrando 12) because posthumanism is a term which is “fed by several fields of study, such as anthropology, biology, zoology, cognitive science, cybernetics, and quantum physics, as well as philosophy of science, gender studies, cultural studies, and environmental ethics and humanities” (Ağın 3, Ferrando 12). In one respect, the term offers a foundation for any movement including resistance against exploitation and discrimination. As it is stated by Robert Pepperell

[...] Posthumanism is about how we live, how we conduct our exploitation of the environment, animals and each other. It is about what things we investigate, what questions we ask and what assumptions underlie them. The most obvious manifestations of the end of humanism are those movements that resist the worst aspects of humanist behaviour: feminism — the movement against the exploitation of women, animal rights — the movement against human exploitation of animals, environmentalism — the movement against human exploitation of the earth's resources, and anti-slavery — the movement against human exploitation of other humans. The very existence of such movements over the last 200 years or so suggests the gradual overturning of a human-centred world is well under way. More importantly, the recognition that none of us are actually distinct from each other, or the world, will profoundly affect the way we treat each other, different species and the environment. (*The Posthuman Condition* 171-2)

Pepperell underlines the fact that posthumanism rises against hegemonic discourses that supports dualisms such as man/woman, nature/culture, human/animal, human/machine and human/non-human. It actually deconstructs what human means through destabilizing borders and rejects to limit and draw a distinct line between those terms (171, 159). Against the conventional definition of the human, which is based on Protagoras's famous quote "Man is the measure of all things," posthumanism suggests that human is the measure of everything only in a humanist discourse, so the measure of something can be anything within their own discourse. In that respect, posthumanism welcomes the differences and claims that there is no ultimate truth and limit, they just exist in human thought as long as people allow it. It tries to erase the hegemonic objectivity and margins developed out of human-centered and constructed definitions.

Today posthumanism is used in place of transhumanism and anti-humanism; therefore, before making an analysis of *Never Let Me Go* and *High-Rise* with a post-humanist approach, it is important to specify these terms too. Starting with transhumanism, it simply

recognizes and anticipates the radical alterations in the nature and possibilities of our lives resulting from various sciences and technologies such as neuroscience and neuropharmacology, life extension, nanotechnology, artificial ultra intelligence, and space habitation, combined with a rational philosophy and value system. (More 6)

Transhumanism focus on the relationship between technology and human race to look for a possible human evolution. Transhumanists mostly care about the transformation of humanity from human to superhuman as a result of scientific and technological advancement. Pepperell explains that transhumanism makes use of science and technology to increase the capacities and life expectancy of human beings: “It seeks continuation and acceleration of the evolution of intelligent life beyond its currently human form and limits by means of science and technology, guided by life-promoting principles and values” (170). Even though posthumanists consider technology and science a part of humanity, unlike transhumanists, they do not expect them to enhance humankind on its way to “immortality,” which is the ultimate goal of transhumanism (Ferrando 16). Therefore; the transhumanists’ “posthuman” stands for the “superhuman,” which means they follow the humanist discourse because they aim to create a human race superior to all other kinds.

In this transhumanist context, today advanced technology can enhance the life of people and cyborgs that used to appear only in science fiction works. Neil Harbisson is referred to as one of the most famous examples of cyborgs in real life. He was a person born with achromatopsia but since he was equipped with a specialized electronic eye he has had the ability to recognize all colours. In his Ted Talk, he says “[t]he cybernetic device had become an extension of my brain -- an extension of my senses. I started to feel like a cyborg: The cybernetic eye was no longer a device but a part of my body” (“ I listen to colour” 2012). With his device, he becomes a creature half human half machine, his acceptance of and adaptation to it draws attention to the intermingled relationship between humans and machines. In line with Harbisson, cyborg anthropologist Amber Case explores the interactive relationship between machines and humans, and how they evolve together. By going a bit further, she claims that every time people look at a computer screen or use one of their cell phone devices they become cyborgs (Ted Talk

“We are all cyborgs now” 2011). In short, “[a] cyborg is simply someone who interacts with technology. The technology can be a physical or a mental extension, and doesn't need to be implanted in the person” (Harbisson, “ I listen to colour” 2012). Regarding such kind of developments, transhumanism claims that the notion of the human evolves into something better with this kind of scientific and technological development. It is possible to say that today since almost anyone has an interaction with technology, the term cyborg becomes a part of human identity, even more, humans become cyborgs. In the posthumanist sense, these arguments and examples are valid since they reject the rigid boundaries between human and machine. However, in contrast to transhumanism, posthumanism cannot be defined as “ultra-humanism” because, despite its sharing a common respect for science and technology, posthumanism does not basically aim to transcend current human capabilities (Onishi 102-3). It focuses on the possible enhancement of humanity with the scientific and technological developments. Therefore, it is typically seen by posthumanists, such as Hayles and Wolfe, as an extension and intensification of the tenets of humanism. Consequently, transhumanism differs from posthumanism in terms of its main purpose which is to use technology as a means to create super human.

On the other hand, compared to antihumanism, posthumanism does not either fully accept the death of humanism or try to erase its traces completely. It is actually a revision of the concept of the human by taking into account the impossibility of dismissing hierarchical humanistic presumptions entirely. Even when one just looks at the terms without any background knowledge, they can determine that “anti”humanism is all about protestation, while “post”humanism is about what is after and beyond humanism. Posthumanism does not completely reject humanism, it rejects its shallow and clear-cut definition of the human and aims to redefine and deconstruct the notion of humanity. It does not try to reconstruct what a human is but aims to provide an alternative point of

view besides humanism. From a posthumanist approach, human concept has become so complex, ambiguous and changeable that humanism as a discourse is insufficient to define and understand humanity. Considering all the stated assumptions and arguments about posthumanist theory, it is proper to say that posthumanism is neither all about the relationship between human and technology or a hostile approach against the human race. It entails reconsidering the condition of human and non-humans with a non-anthropocentric point of view.

As an ethical reading, a posthumanist approach to the novels suggests an embracing attitude towards all living forms and aims to redefine the constructed animality, monstrosity and humanity. The analysis of the novels from such a perspective would make it possible to get a better understanding of the marginalized entities, meditate upon the qualities of the human beings, and question the definition of humanity in opposition to the “others”. In tune with posthumanism, the Gothic’s focus on the dark side of humanity helps the reader reconsider the dark qualities neglected by humanist discourse. Through their representation of the humans, the gothic works - *High-Rise* and *Never Let Me Go*- let the reader gain a heterogeneous perspective about humanhood.

Ballard’s *High-Rise* redefines or causes the readers to meditate upon the issue of what it is to be human and the nature of human beings. The book illustrates a dystopia filled with gothic features such as darkness, entrapment, murder, violence, isolation etc. In a very modern high-rise, the humans start to change with the loss of technology. In Ballard’s world, throughout the novel human characters, who are differentiated from the non-humans by their being rational and civilized, transform into wild creatures following their instincts and greed instead of their reason and conscience, so that they lose their so-called “humanistic” features. They prefer to live in space where there is no ethics or civilisation in other words there is no values associated with the human race. The author shows that when the humans live in a society free from social norms and rules and they

have ultimate freedom to do whatever they want, they can back to their primitive nature. Their transformation and new life style subverts the stable, superior and anthropocentric human understanding.

Likewise, Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* is about the lives of clones and their human relationship with each other, humans and life. Taking place in a dystopian world dominated by gothic elements, the novel demonstrates that those inhuman entities are the same as human beings. Furthermore, it shows that human characters are ignorant of the sufferings of those humanized clones and they see themselves as superior to them. They ignore the fact that clones are ontologically and psychologically same with humans. Ishiguro's preference for using clones as main characters by giving them humanistic features - ability to think, to feel, to have consciousness and conscience - epitomizes how posthumanism deconstructs the notion of humanness. It blurs the binary oppositions between the human and the non-human. It proves that dualisms and distinctions between nature-culture, human-animal, man-woman are false hegemonic accounts constructed by "arrogant" humans.

To sum up, both Ishiguro and Ballard present the evil and ignored sides of the human race by evoking terror in their novels. While Ballard's work warns about the horrifying potential in the humans, *Never Let Me Go* uncovers the tragic consequences of the selfish human understanding for the non-humans. Through employing gothic elements in their dark world, they enhance the severity of the conditions.

Gothic Fiction

On the basis of bringing the repressed, evil, corrupted and horrifying sides of humanity into the forefront, Gothic writers have their own purposes and ways to write their stories, which unleash many consequences leading the Gothic to be defined as “the literature of nightmare” (MacAndrew 3). Elizabeth MacAndrew clarifies the nature of the Gothic by stating the fact that it “gives form to amorphous fears and impulses common to all mankind, using an amalgam of materials, some torn from the author’s own subconscious mind and some stuff of myth, folklore, fairy tale, and romance” (3). It is possible to say that the Gothic makes humanity face their own nature and know themselves better by means of bringing those impulses and fears to the surface. Fred Botting explains the “desolate, alienating and full of menace” Gothic as follows:

In the twentieth century, in diverse and ambiguous ways, Gothic figures have continued to shadow the progress of modernity with counter-narratives displaying the underside of enlightenment and humanist values. Gothic condenses the many perceived threats to these values, threats associated with supernatural and natural forces, imaginative excesses and delusions, religious and human evil, social transgression, mental disintegration and spiritual corruption. If not a purely negative term, Gothic writing remains fascinated by objects and practices that are constructed as negative, irrational, immoral and fantastic... Gothic excesses, none the less, the fascination with transgression and the anxiety over cultural limits and boundaries, continue to produce ambivalent emotions and meanings in their tales of darkness, desire and power. (1)

The wildness and darkness of the Gothic threatens the ethics, sanity, reason so that they “shadow” the humanistic values based on them. Crossing the social and moral limits, it is interested in depravity and corruption in the human race. It becomes a genre which investigates human nature with its good and evil sides and helps to understand the human condition. Both Ballard and Ishiguro employ many gothic elements in their nightmarish dystopias - *High-Rise* and *Never Let Me Go* - to reveal the dark side of human nature to question thoroughly what it means to be a human being. They present the depravity of

human nature, the struggle between good and evil in the human soul, and the existence of unexplainable, irrational elements in humanity and in the universe.

In general, by provoking anxiety and horror through the portrayal of evil in humankind, the gothic elements become a tool to serve posthumanism which, as an ongoing theory of cultural studies, subverts the culturally constructed definition of humanity that is based on rationality, intellectuality, common sense and self-consciousness. Both posthumanism and the Gothic oppose humanism's arrogant, clear and simple representation of human beings in their own ways because unlike humanists who are optimistic about human nature despite the horrifying actions and behaviours of humans, gothic writers unfold the dualistic nature of human kind that consists of good and evil. Hence, it is possible to say that the Gothic uncovers the bitter realities of humanity and leads the readers to meditate upon the place of humans in the universe. It reveals the evil and irrational side of humanity; therefore, it contrasts with the glorification of reason and supremacy of human beings. In other words, the Gothic's concern about irrationality, sentimentalism, dark desires, emotions and fears somehow challenges the conventional humanism which emphasizes reason and rationality as humanity's most prominent characteristic. Moreover, as it will be discussed, the gothic questions the humanist description of humanity, through its non-human/semi-human characters such as ghosts, vampires or monsters, and helps to blur the distinction between human and non-human. . "Traditionally, the Gothic represents the fearful unknown as the inhuman Other: the supernatural or monstrous manifestation, inhabiting mysterious space, that symbolizes all that is irrational, uncontrollable and incomprehensible" (Anolik 1). Hence, in terms of its concern with "the Other" that can be an embodiment of irrationality, monstrosity and obscurity, the Gothic is similar to posthumanism which also raises questions about the self and the other, human and inhuman, rational and irrational. Moreover, they both overturn the traditional understanding of these binaries.

According to the time-line of the Gothic canon, Horace Walpole and his *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), which is considered as the first true Gothic romance, (Punter 2012) becomes the pioneer of the genre together with Ann Radcliffe whose works - *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *Italian* (1797) – made her one of the prominent authors connected to the dark and mystery. *The Pardoner's Tale* (CA. 1385) by Geoffrey Chaucer, *Dr. Faustus* (CA. 1588) by Christopher Marlowe, *The Duchess of Malfi* (CA. 1613) by John Webster, *Oroonoko* (1688) by Aphra Behn, “La Barbe Bleue” (1697) and “Beauty and the Beast” (1698) by Charles Perrault, and *The Monk* (1795) by Matthew G. Lewis are some other leading works of the genre. Besides them, the Romantics, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Lord Byron also contributed to the Gothic tradition in literature by combining horror, emotions and nature (Snodgrass 415, Punter and Byron 9, 13-19). All of these writers, like other gothic authors, proved that the Gothic is more than ghost stories or tales of terror. It is actually a manifestation of sensibility as it talks about human emotions and desires. Considering the rebirth of the genre in the Age of Enlightenment, Punter states that “[t]he development of the Gothic, and the ghost story within it, was itself part of a wider reaction against rationalism” (*A New Companion to the Gothic* 179). During the Age of Reason, as a celebration of the excellence of the human mind and the shift away from dogma and sentimentalism to science and rationalism, a number of technological advancements and the Industrial Revolution shaped the world of literature. As a part of life, they became the subjects of literary works. Under the influence of the circumstances and developments in the age, the writers somehow embraced optimism about humanity and the primacy of reason. Ironically, all of these changes also kept the ground fertile for gothic stories and led to its revival. In fact, uncertainty, suspense and fear deriving from such developments of the century became the main background in gothic stories.

Since its (re)birth, every gothic writer has contributed to the development of the genre through adding or eliminating some elements in their stories. Although they have employed gothic conventions for different reasons, they all displayed “unspeakable evil” in life. In this sense, many works have been produced by abundant writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Brontë, Charlotte Brontë Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, Charlotte Perkins Gilman in the 19th century, H. G. Wells, Stephen King and Dan Brown in the 20th century. They have altered the meaning of the word “Gothic” in their own way and served its evolution. As Hogle suggests:

Since its inception, the Gothic genre in literature has undergone numerous changes and adaptations, but its essential role as a means of depicting humanity’s deepest, darkest fears and otherwise unspeakable evils—both real and imagined—has endured. (1)

Actually, Gothic writers utilize fears and evils for their special purposes in many distinct ways. To give some examples in a chronological order, Emily Brontë in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) “appropriate[s] the Gothic in order to represent and investigate women’s fears about a restrictive and sometimes threatening domestic space” (Punter and Byron 212). Her novel consisting of love, revenge, friendship, hypocrisy, and violence becomes a universal story based on the human condition. Associated with monstrosity, her wild character Heathcliff underlines the sadistic, bestial sides within humans (Reed 71-5) and identified with “gothic demon”, Catherine Earnshaw points out the obsessive and brutal nature of humans. These hero-villains lead the reader to the recognition of the wicked side in human souls.

On the other hand, as Punter and Byron indicate in *The Gothic*, the major American Gothic writers of the mid-nineteenth century, Edgar Allan Poe and Hawthorne, both emphasize the psychological terror in their stories, but their narratives are strikingly distinct stories. That is to say,

In contrast to Poe’s usually vague and unspecified Gothic environments, Hawthorne’s explorations of isolation, obsession and guilt – both familial

and national – are imbued with a very concrete sense of a specific time and place”. (Punter and Byron 123)

Despite their different narrative styles, they both talked about obsessions, desires and evil in the behaviours of the humans. Through the use of psychological disorders, they probe into the causes of many of the associations and complexes, and help to examine the inner world of human beings.

Moreover, in *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), Angela Carter creates a space set filled with terror and suspense to support the subversive nature of her work and juxtaposes Gothic and realistic conventions to make it quite different from the traditional fairy tales. Unlike traditional fairy tales, she unmasks the bitter realities of life such as committing violence or murder and proves that it has contradictions like good and evil coming from human dualities.

As a more contemporary example, Margaret Atwood’s notable sci-fi horror novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) is good at refashioning Gothic in a postmodern way. Her novel based on the imprisonment of women in a male-dominated society displays a society in which women are treated like an inferior race. Atwood makes use of Gothic in a dystopian world and enhances the sense of constraint, the power of anxiety and fear to terrify the readers about the future. The gothic elements in her novel create a gloomy dystopian atmosphere and escalate the horror by evoking terror. They contribute to the sense of unease, fear and dread so the story becomes more horrifying and provocative. In the horrifying atmosphere of the novel, the reader sees the cruelty of humanity and how humans can use power to oppress the others in defiance of their human rights and civil liberties. In line with Atwood and other gothic writers, Ballard and Ishiguro use the Gothic elements in their dystopian novels to increase the amount of horror so that they can leave an indelible impression on the reader. Over and above, their Works do not only to scare but to instruct by shedding light on the darkest sides of human nature. They raise

awareness about the horrifying potential in humans and the possible future based on their evil society.

With its supernatural elements and horror, the Gothic explores the unreasonable fears, desires and thoughts of humans. Gothic writers disagree with the narrow and restricted human presentation by dealing with the power and effect of human emotions and passions in their works. They challenge the idea which lays stress on humanity's distinctive features such as rationality. As Groppo suggests "In a sense, they view the attempt to control and rationalize every aspect of human endeavour as a sort of universal taboo, risen out of fear and that could only produce more fear" (13). Thus, they can write irrational horror stories to make the humans face their own fears on a psychological background. According to Jerrold E. Hogle,

[people] sometimes long for the comfort of supernatural visitations but fear how much this longing comes from irrational psychic forces in ourselves and others, and the Gothic plays on and explores these apprehensions, as it has for over two hundred years. (*Gothic Literature : A Gale Critical Companion* xv)

In other words, Gothic writers peer into terror, sensibility or romance to underline the presence of rational and irrational sides in humans and some reasonable and unreasonable conditions in life. Considering these dualities they make the unconscious fears and impulses a subject of attention besides reason and good sense in their works. To exemplify, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde juxtaposes the good and bad qualities of humans based on his quote: "Each of us has Heaven and Hell in him" (132). In the course of the horrifying battle of good and evil in his novel, there is an opportunity to observe human beings' desire for eternal youth and beauty, greed for luxury, pursuit of pleasure, power of manipulation and tendency to do evil. Wilde's three different personalities - Dorian Gray, Lord Henry and Basil - help the reader unravel the truths of human nature through focusing on sensuality, evil and good sense. While Lord Henry represents the humans' passion about the hedonistic pleasure free from moralities, Basil

points out the importance of virtue. Through the exposure of the evil rooted in Dorian Gray, the novel also evokes the feeling of horror to warn its audience about the potential evil in humanity. Furthermore, throughout the novel, with the transformation of Dorian from an innocent boy to a demonic creature, Wilde reveals the basic idea of human nature: it is neither natural nor unchanging.

Through its corrupted and bestial characters, Gothic displays the “other” in human souls. It can also unearth the hidden psychological reasons behind humans’ brutality. As a literary genre Gothic delves into the depths of humanity and explores the unconscious with its irrationality. Through horror and nightmarish scenarios, the gothic attempts to discover the hidden dark sides of humanity lying beneath the intellectual, reasonable and civilized human mind. Gothic works reveal “the self” which is suppressed and oppressed in the civilized modern human image. It “represent[s] excess and exaggeration, the product of the wild and the uncivilized, a world that constantly tended to overflow cultural boundaries” (Punter and Byron 7). In other words, gothic writers question rationalism and its supremacy by dealing with “the wild and the uncivilized” violent emotions, darkness, mystery, madness, the supernatural in their works. Over and above, with its dark gothic space, they display a corrupted image of humankind to make the audience question the notion of life and humanity.

On the other hand, with its non-human or semi-human characters such as vampires, ghosts, witches, zombies or werewolves the Gothic creates ambiguity about humanity and monstrosity. To exemplify, Bram Stoker’s controversial work, *Dracula*, indicates that the vampire Count Dracula has the same emotions as any other human would have such as love, revenge, selfishness, and lust. His ambiguously evil character and monstrous metamorphic body violate the accepted limits and boundaries of humanity. He threatens the stable, restricted and clean-cut definition of humanity by introducing an “other” form of them. Similar to the transgression of boundaries in the posthuman bodies that fit into

the “cyborg” conception of Donna Haraway, Dracula helps to question the definition of the human. According to Haraway, cyborgs are “chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism” and they breach the boundary between human and non-human as well (“Cyborg Manifesto” 150). As hybrid creatures, both the “non/semihuman” characters of Gothic and cyborgs of posthumanism contribute to the heterogeneous perspectives about humans contrary to the singular and homogeneous discourse of humanism. Going further, the hybrid creatures of the Gothic can be seen as models of cyborgs; in his work, Michael Filas presents Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* as the first cyborg text:

Victor Frankenstein is the cyborg-maker: part mad scientist, part brilliant innovator, inherently blasphemous in his pursuits. He represents both a mastery of technology and deluded megalomania, uninhibited hubris. Perhaps most importantly, Victor’s actions demonstrate something very specific to cyborgism, a vulturine need for dead human flesh. His Creature is the Adam of cyborgs, the naive hero, a sympathetic outsider who becomes alienated only after the imperfect world rejects him. Superior to non-cyborgs in strength, size, and stamina, he is no ordinary agent of doom, but a formidable enemy capable of devoted revenge. (40)

With the close relationship between technology and the human body, a new species comes into existence in *Frankenstein*. Similar to Dracula, Frankenstein’s creature shakes the subjective human approach with his familiarity and selfsameness to humans. He overcomes the conceptual barrier between humans and non-humans through his human qualities such as seeking for love. The unification of human and non-human within itself, the cyborg, as it will be discussed in detail in the analysis of *Never Let Me Go*, gives a chance to destroy the hierarchical domination of the humans in the universe. Being superior to a human being in terms of strength and stamina it may end the reign of humanity.

In addition to its hybrid monster, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) is itself a hybrid work in the gothic canon. It becomes one of the most influential and leading works of Gothic and science fiction by bringing the scientific rationalism and the “irrational”

gothic tradition together. *Frankenstein* is not just a horror story about a monster and its creator but it is also a cautionary tale telling how selfish and narcissistic acts of humankind, which are committed without taking into consideration the fatal consequences, may release the “evil” to the world through science. In other words, it conveys a warning based on the frightening results of scientific and technological developments coming from the rational human mind. Thus, it can induce people to question both the consequences of the rational and the irrational, dark sides of human nature that could cause their doom.

Similar to *Frankenstein* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Ballard’s *High-Rise* is a cautionary story of the modern people who lose their “humanity” in the shadow of technology. The horror lying in the malignity, savagery, wildness and the uncivilized behaviour of the characters of *High-Rise* bear a question on their “humanity”. Having lost their rationality and common sense, people turn into modern time self-serving, aggressive “monsters” in the book. Furthermore, their human responses are dulled by their exposure to violence. This situation illustrates not only the evil potential in humans but also what could happen when they release their dark side in the age of consumerism.

In line with Shelley, Ishiguro combines the Gothic and science fiction in *Never Let Me Go*. As it will be discussed in detail later, Ishiguro displays the selfishness of human beings and their use of science only for their own good. In his novel, people use the organs of clones/non-humans to have a healthier and longer life, without taking the feelings and desires of them into consideration. Ishiguro employs gothic elements such as darkness, isolation and monstrosity to create a gloomy atmosphere to reveal the darkness of humankind. He points out the anthropocentric mind of human characters and how they put their selves at the heart of the universe and overlook the “others”, in this case Kathy, Ruth and Tommy. Similar to *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, it gives readers an opportunity to understand “otherness” and lead them to establish a connection with them.

Furthermore, both *High-Rise* and *Never Let Me Go* make it possible to question the notion of human and non-human by pulling down humans from the centre to the margins and displaying their evil sides which is optimistically ignored in humanist studies that suggests, despite all flaws and horrors, humans are “intrinsically good” and moral (Braidotti *The Posthuman* 13). While *High-Rise* shows the fluidity of binaries between human and animal, Ishiguro shows how humans insist on having those boundaries, so that they themselves will remain superior.

Throughout the analysis of the novels, how the Gothic interacts with the posthumanist approach will be discussed to meditate upon the Gothic’s relationship with the concept of human. On a psychological level, the dark, isolated and threatening Gothic spaces release the repressed emotions and fears in someone’s mind (Punter “The Gothic - A Lecture” 2015). Having a close relationship between human psychology, they reflect the neglected or denied features of human beings like violence and evil. Such a use of the Gothic in the novel’s setting helps liberate the repressed fears and desires, evils and feloniousness lurking in the human characters; thus it helps to understand the humans’ irrational and monstrous side. While the isolated and alienated characters feel free enough to reveal their dark side, the feeling of entrapment evokes psychological fears and hidden desires. As a consequence of the surfacing fears and emotions, the reader can observe the metamorphosis of the characters from “civilized” to “savage”, “sane” to “insane”, which happens in parallel with the transformation of the building from a highly technological high-rise to a primitive space. The change of the space and the humans bring out the malleability of human nature and its ongoing evolution.

Moreover, some common gothic features of the characters - their inclination towards violence and taboo subjects such as incest, rape and cannibalism - uncloak the issues of “monstrosity” and “animality” discussed by posthumanists to challenge humanist assumptions. Posthumanism highlights the “bestial” behaviours of the humans who are

morally different and disobedient to social rules, whereas humanism simply neglects them. Hence, the characters' use of violence instead of sensibility, knowledge and reason to solve their problems undermines the idealized humanistic image in *High-Rise*. Likewise, as another common gothic feature, ambiguous main characters, the gothic heroes demonstrate the fact that humans have both evil and good in their nature.

From another point of view, as a microcosm of the unjust world the high-rise divides the people according to their class, so some of the residents become less / more residents than the others in the characters' perspective. Similar to the hierarchical order between humans and non-humans, and the inequality among the humans based on their features like gender and mental health in humanism, *High-Rise* presents a space in which lower floor inhabitants are treated like secondary species. As it will be clarified, the disasters as a consequence of the hierarchy in the building highlights the mischief of the inequality among the humans in the novel.

From another side, another gothic element observed in *Never Let Me Go*, the theme of doppelgänger/double which usually reveals the duality and complexity of human nature such as good or evil, rational or emotional, wild or civilized in the gothic works. That is to say, it is mostly about the opposing inner forces in humanity (Hogle and Bomarito 233, 304) yet it can also mirror a character's personality. In Snodgrass's definition, the doppelgänger is "[a] mirroring or duality of a character's persona, the concept of the doppelgänger refers to the twin, shadow double, demon double, and split personality, all common characterizations in world folklore" (83). In addition to its concern about dualities, the doppelgänger can reflect the self which is hidden or suppressed. To exemplify from the famous gothic Works, in Robert Louis Stevenson's novella *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Dorian Gray's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* the double refers to the evil in the soul of the protagonists. "William Wilson" by Edgar Allan Poe, Angela Carter's stories; "The Tiger's Bride", "Beauty in Courtship"

in *Bloody Chamber* the theme of double represents the repressed side of the people to reveal the unknown. In his essay “The Uncanny” (1919) Sigmund Freud integrates the theme of doppelganger into “uncanny” and discusses their function in human psychology. Freud says “It may be true that the uncanny [unheimlich] is something which is secretly familiar [heimlich-heimisch], which has undergone repression and then returned from it, and that everything that is uncanny fulfills this condition” (222).² Uncanny is something which looks unknown and unfamiliar but is in fact hidden or repressed. When it is revealed, it becomes strangely familiar and that arouses fear. About the double, Freud claims that it represents the hidden side of a person or the dark side denied to look better in the society. The double is found in childhood narcissism in which the child creates multiple selves of him/herself. Then the child becomes an adult, s/he develops an ego and the primary narcissism to overcome it. When the adult encounters their double, it invokes terror and “uncanny” feelings (234 -7). In tune with Freud’s association of the doppelganger with the uncanny, in *Never Let Me Go*, the reader realizes how the humans are terrified if they happen to meet the doppelgangers. In other words, by integrating the doppelgangers with another gothic feature, the uncanny, Ishiguro reveals the hidden similarity of the non-humans with the human race. Furthermore, when the humans realize how they are actually so similar to the non-human doppelgangers/ the clones, they try to “otherize” them to eliminate their horror. Their attitude demonstrates a humanist approach which is based on human uniqueness and arrogance. The doubles of *Never Let Me Go* turn into entities reminding that life has multiplicity with different species, yet emphasis is on the common features between them.

The theme of monstrosity is also mostly used in gothic stories regarding the return of the repressed desires. According to many critics, the monsters are “metaphor[s] for

² Freud explains uncanny with two German words. Unheimlich means unfamiliar, unconcealed heimlich-heimisch means familiar and private. These words overlap and bring out “uncanny”.

humanity's the most profound fears and desires" (Hogle and Bomarito 233, Smith 80).

In Ballard's work, the theme of monstrosity is employed to represent the liberation of the fears or desires that have been allegedly proscribed or censored in society or repressed within the self . As Punter suggests

The monsters, their creators, and their victims are sufficiently malleable in their indefiniteness to allow them to convey ongoing human concerns and tensions: the need for love, the fear of suffering, the yearning for knowledge, the anxiety over isolation, the desire for power, the terror of mortality. War, sexuality, science, government, economics – concerns about all these topics find their expression through the monstrous images of our dreams and nightmares. (*A New Companion to the Gothic* 179)

They embody the fears and anxieties of the society, and let the reader experience the passionate and uncontrollable self both within the characters of the Gothic and their own so that they let the humans know better. Through the transgression between these entities, the novels oppose a clear differentiation or division between human and non-human. While Ballard emphasizes the malleability of human race through their devolution from "human" to "bestial" creatures, Ishiguro highlights the clones, though they are dehumanized in the eyes of the humans in the novel, as not really different from the human race. He aims to centralise what are seen as monsters from the perspective of humanism by giving them the opportunity to narrate their own story. His caring attitude towards the dehumanized and marginalized others in an anthropocentric society helps the reader see the discriminative and scornful approach of the humans from the viewpoint of the others.

Both *Never Let Me Go* and *High-Rise* deal with human concept by means of gothic elements and presenting a post-humanist future: *High-Rise* presents a dystopian space where humanity metaphorically dies because of the cruelty and irrationality of people; whereas, *Never Let Me Go* tells a human story of non-human beings who try to save the life of the humans despite their ignorance. Both works embody different human identities, present them to the reader from multiple, heterogeneous perspectives to make them

reconsider human nature. Hence, a posthumanist analysis and study of the novels become possible.



CHAPTER 2

A Posthumanist Reading of *High-Rise*

J. G. Ballard is a controversial writer with his gothic, dystopian and science fictional outlook. Dealing with sexuality, violence, and technology has become a characteristic of his challenging works. He suggests that they are a part of human nature and underlines “ [the] attempts to suppress all violent imagery are doomed to failure” because “there is a violent streak in human nature and human imagination. The sexual imagination is of a limitless fund of wayward metaphors and ideas one can’t repress that either” (“Face to Face: J.G Ballard (One)”). In his violent works such as *Crash* (1973) and *High-Rise* (1975) the author, rather than trying to evoke violence, attempts to reveal the dark desires of humans and to warn them against their inclination towards it. Furthermore, he integrates modern technology with the issues of violence and sexuality, and studies the influence of technological developments on human nature. He explains that modern life is considerably dominated by technological devices and “modern technology has created the possibilities for our own psycho-pathologies to play almost unrestricted freedom that could be extremely dangerous but it’s worth exploring” (“Face to Face: J.G Ballard (One)”). In other words, in his works, technology is employed as a tool to bring out the violent and sexual elements that are present in human nature and to lead them to face their “bestial” and “inhuman” side.

High-Rise is an impressive work of the writer based on the selfishness and destructiveness of humanity in the modern world, which is an anthropocentric consumerism of material, culture and sentiment. Ballard presents the modern environment as a psychological field lab for testing new ways of being human with his “bestial” characters. He invites his reader to reconsider the definitions of rationality, culture, reason and conscience by taking away these qualities from the characters of the novel. Ballard’s representation of barbaric and irrational humans challenges the humanist

philosophy which can be observed in Descartes's quote: "it must be morally impossible that there should exist in any machine a diversity of organs sufficient to enable it to act in all the occurrences of life, in the way in which our reason enables us to act" (Discourse on the Method 38). Descartes's praise of reason, thereby of humanity, creates a hierarchy between the living forms that have reason and those that do not. His favouring attitude towards the human race is subverted by Ballard's humans controlled by their impulses rather than their reason. In accordance with Cary Wolfe's criticism of "a privileged relation of the human to either the presence or the absence of language, the signifier, the phallus, the soul, reason, toolmaking, and so on" (Critical Environments 40), Ballard does not present or favour a sophisticated human image based on features such as the ability to speak or the presence of reason and culture. As Wolfe indicates, the presence of language or ability for toolmaking does not make the humans privileged.

In his gothic novel, Ballard challenges the humanist system of values. He uses gothicism to create a space to explore the sombre truths about human nature, morality, and the struggles of the human soul. As it follows

The Gothic from its beginnings and as it evolves with the cultural changes around it, in other words, turns out to be the modern Western world's most striking, if most conflicted, symbolic method for both confronting and disguising its own unresolved struggles with incompatible beliefs about what it means to be human. (Hogle, *Gothic Literature* xviii)

Ballard employs gothic conventions to explore questions about human actions, their consequences and the effects of violence on the human psyche. While questioning the celebrated idea of the Western human, which is associated with rationality, intellectuality and power, he creates a group of humans who represent "various forms of inhumanity needed to be cast out" (Thomas 30) because of their insane and wicked behaviours.

In his novel, instead of the most typical places such as castles or monasteries of the late 18th century and early 19th century, or the basements and cellars of the modern gothic

stories (Punter “The Gothic: A Lecture”), Ballard prefers a high-rise filled with many residents, technological devices, animals and stores as a kind of a microcosm of the modern society. He integrates the technology, or rather its lack in a society where practically everything depends on it, with the gothic elements: darkness, isolation, the feeling of entrapment, taboos like murder, rape, incest, cannibalism and hero villains. Thanks to technology, the humans of the *High-Rise* are able to suppress their animal side and when it starts to break down, they quickly return to their primitive nature. Throughout the book, it is possible to observe that the technology and gothic elements have an interactive relationship as for instance when electricity failures cause darkness in the building, the out-of-order telephones increase the level of isolation from the outer world or the broken elevators escalate the feeling of entrapment. The pressure caused by these spatial gothic elements bring out the bestial, uncivilized and barbaric sides of the humans. Ballard construct a gothic space as a means to demonstrate the ambivalent nature of the humans and their tendency to become savage. In other words, gothic elements and deteriorating technological system contribute to the transformation of the residents from “sane” to “insane”, “civilized” to “savage” and “rational” to “instinctive”. Thus, they help refute the humanist conception based on rationality, civilisation and goodness, thereby contributing to the posthumanist approach.

Trying to evaluate humanity with all its fluctuations including their “insanity”, “bestiality”, and “instincts,” posthumanism emphasizes the multifaceted human perception. It rejects human exceptionalism and a clear-cut distinction of humans from the non-humans because of their “humanistic” qualities like reason or civilization. Posthumanism challenges the routinised idea of rationalism and goodness attributed to the human race and criticizes the idea that humans as “special” species are the most privileged and supreme form among living forms. According to Badmington,

Posthumanism, by way of contrast, emerges from a recognition that “Man” is not privileged and protected centre, because humans are no longer - and perhaps never were - utterly distinct from animals, machines, and other forms of the “inhuman”; are the products of historical and cultural differences that invalidate any appeal to a universal, transhistorical human essence; are constituted as subjects by a linguistic system that pre-exists and transcends them; and are unable to direct the course of world history towards a uniquely human goal. In short, posthumanism arises from the theoretical and practical inadequateness - or even impossibility - of humanism [...] (“Posthumanism” 374)

Badmington considers humans equal to non-humans so he rejects their superiority. He explains that posthumanists are aware of that the humans can not be privileged or superior to the non-humans because actually they are not much different from each other. He also declares the impossibility of a universal human essence. The blurry line between human and non-human in posthumanism proves that as a part of cultural history, the notion of human has evolved and turned into something humanism cannot understand. His emphasis on the inadequateness of humanism results from its narrow, simple and discriminative understanding of humaneness and inhumanity.

Ballard’s representation of savage humanity supported by the gothic conventions transcends the humanist discourse which ignores the wild nature within humanity not to “degrade” them to the level of non-humans, especially that of animals. In *High-Rise*, the writer demonstrates how the humans can draw away from humanity. In a 1980 interview, Ballard notes that “the characters eagerly embrace [the] revelations about themselves and the new life that technology has made possible”. In the novel, the revelation happens due to the failures in the technology; therefore, the technology affects the characters not with its existence but through with its absence. At last, “[e]ither consciously or unconsciously, they want to descend into barbarism” (Jeremy and Ballard 162) with the change of life in the building. In other words, they lose their “humanity” and become “monsters”. Along similar lines with posthumanism, the change in the characters reveal the fact that human

nature is not stable and the humans tend to be evil especially in some special circumstances like a gothic high-rise.

In *High-Rise*, in line with the metamorphosis of the humans, the building changes too. At the beginning of the novel the high-rise is a clean, well-arranged, modern and civilized place offering many facilities:

the apartment block was a small vertical city, its two thousand inhabitants boxed up into the sky. For all its size, the high-rise contained an impressive range of services. The entire 10th floor was given over to a wide concourse, as large as an aircraft carrier's flight-deck, which contained a supermarket, bank and hairdressing salon, a swimming pool and gymnasium, a well-stocked liquor store and a junior school for the few young children in the block. [...] on the 35th floor, was a second, smaller swimming-pool, a sauna and a restaurant. (*High-Rise* 4)

The residents enjoy this “huge machine” equipped with the most advanced technology by appreciating “[i]ts staff of air-conditioning conduits, elevators, garbage-disposal chutes and electrical switching systems provided a never-failing supply of care and attention that a century earlier would have needed an army of tireless servants” (*High-Rise* 6). Besides, with the existence of “a brothel operating” in the building (*High-Rise* 11), and the high potential of sex (*High-Rise* 10), and the ongoing parties all the time the building provides an atmosphere to socialize for its inhabitants. Before the system breaks down, the residents can do shopping, visit the stores and enjoy the view upstairs freely and comfortably. They can move freely from the top to the bottom floors or the ones from the bottom floors. They get along and seem to be having a good time in each other's companionship at ongoing parties in the building. Furthermore, there is not a clear cut division between the residents living on different floors. Dr Robert Laing living on the 25th floor plays tennis with the architect of the building, Anthony Royal, living at the top of the building (*High-Rise* 13). Richard Wilder can swim in the swimming pool on the tenth floor or chat with the upper floor residents without the feeling of being despised,

(*High-Rise* 72) and he can even flirt with a woman living on the 37th floor. In other words, the high-rise aims to satisfy both the social and physical needs of its inhabitants by treating them equally. Actually, Wilder's description of the building as a "hanging paradise" at the very beginning of the novel reflects the residents' point of view about the high-rise in general.

However, towards the end of the first chapter, Ballard implies that this perfect life in the high-rise is only temporary, because it is conditional –it is perceived as paradise as long as there are no problems; however the slightest problem carries the potential of turning the same space into hell:

[R]eluctantly, [Laing] now had to accept something he had been trying to repress - that the previous six months had been a period of continuous bickering among his neighbours, of trivial disputes over the faulty elevators and air-conditioning, inexplicable electrical failures, noise, competition for parking space and, in short, that host of minor defects which the architects were supposed specifically to have designed out of these over-priced apartments. The underlying tensions among the residents were remarkably strong, damped down partly by the civilized tone of the building, and partly by the obvious need to make this huge apartment block a success. (*High-Rise* 17)

Laing's recognition suggests the idea that the humans are happy and good as long as the building satisfies their needs. When the technological space starts to break down, little confrontations like making people wait for the elevator may turn into bigger troubles. That is to say, people tend to break away from their civilized tone of life in the high-rise because it is not something innate coming out of human nature but a pretence in a modern space. Once the space stops fulfilling their desires, they stop pretending and regress to their true nature.

Ballard shows his readers that as the devices go out of order, the residents start to behave improperly as well. To exemplify, when the elevator stops working, the characters become so frustrated that they beat an innocent masseuse since she makes them wait (*High-Rise* 39-40). They also attack each other when the electric system is broken or beat

an air-traffic controller during another blackout without any reason at all (*High-Rise* 76-8). As a result of their diminishing tolerance, they stop being civilized just for the sake of “the civilized tone of the building” (*High-Rise* 17). Moreover, because of the increasing hatred among themselves, the friendships in the building change into clannish collaborations for assaults. They can come together to throw a bucket of urine to someone, capture the elevator to annoy others or attack people in the halls (*High-Rise* 105, 153, 161). Towards the end, even the tribal structure changes into pure individuality since they just try to survive in the wilderness of the modern age.

When the change begins, the residents living on the same or close floors come together and exclude the others from different floors. The book indicates that the building is hierarchically divided into three groups of people: the first nine floors belong to the "proletariat" of film technicians and air hostesses, the middle section of the high-rise, from the 10th floor to the 35th, form the middle class members such as doctors, lawyers, accountants, and tax specialists, and the top five floors belong to the upper class, the discreet oligarchy of minor tycoons and entrepreneurs, television actresses and careerist academics, with their high-speed elevators, superior services, and their carpeted staircases. They are the ones who set the pace of the building, decide when the children could use the swimming-pools and the roof garden, the menus in the restaurant (*High-Rise* 69-71).

From a humanist point of view, discrimination is naturalized and reproduced in relation to race, ethnicity, gender (Braidotti, *The Posthuman* 28) and class, as can be seen in Ballard's novel. The superior humankind is divided among itself, giving a special kind of superiority to its chosen members. The inequality in the building can be clearly observed in their access to the technological equipment of the building. Although there is an inequality just from the beginning, once their devolution is initiated the characters start acting on it to create new hierarchies. As many cultural studies scholars have shown, such

as Patrick Fuery and Nick Mansfield, humanism serves to produce hierarchies of the more or less human (4-5). When the humanist hierarchical order in the world is adapted into the high-rise, the floor on which the residents live becomes a part of their identity. The situation creates a division between “inferior” and “superior” residents. As Gayatri Spivak puts it,

the great doctrines of identity of the ethical universal, in terms of which liberalism thought out its ethical programmes, played history false, because the identity was disengaged in terms of who was and who was not human. That’s why all of these projects, the justification of slavery, as well as the justification of Christianization, seem to be alright; because, after all, these people had not graduated into human hood, as it were. (18)

As a microcosm of the humanist world, which not only divides humans and non-humans but also humans among themselves, *High-Rise* builds an unequal world so some of the residents become less-human than others. Similar to other types of discrimination such as slavery, the residents rationalize and justify their distinction from others based on their class. As a result of this, the hostility and grudge in the humans increase and lead to their devolution in the novel. The exaggerated violence fed by a sense of injustice due to this inequality demonstrates what kind of troubles may come to existence in such kind of circumstances. By subverting the hierarchical order, Ballard also points out that the boundaries drawn by humanism are in fact deceptive and not natural.

In Ballard’s novel, the hatred based on the hierarchical differentiation escalates in parallel with the deteriorating technological system. As the system becomes worse, while the space turns into a gothic one, the humans change into “inhumans”. Throughout the novel, the interactive relationship between the humans and the environment covered with technological devices and gothic elements create a new space and humanity. When the space becomes dark, isolated and spooky, polluted with blood, urine, garbage and dirt (

High-Rise 120), the humans turn into brutal creatures. Towards the end of the book, as it follows:

The elevator shafts were the new garbage chutes. Not one of the twentyelevators in the apartment building now functioned, and the shafts were piled deep with kitchen refuse and dead dogs. A fading semblance of civilized order still survived in the top three floors, the last tribal unit in the high-rise... The clans had broken down into small groups of killer, solitary hunters who built man-traps in empty apartments or preyed on the unwary in deserted elevator lobbies. (*High-Rise* 188)

Every incident leads to another incident of violence and increases the chaos. The deteriorating technological system nurtures the hatred and brutality in the building. Due to the vandalism of the savage residents, the neat and self-contained building image at the beginning is changed into a destroyed and plundered one similar to the transformation of the residents from civilized beings to savages, the well-mannered residents turn into killers and/or hunters.

The characters' transformation from civilized to bestial reminds one of the question posed by Stefen Herbrechter in *Posthumanism: A Critical Analysis*: "Is the human in fact human because of its 'nature' or its 'culture'?" (8). This question begets other ones such as whether the features attributed solely to the human race are innate or they come with the cultural codes. Does human nature change in parallel with these unstable codes? Herbrechter's question is in a way answered by the metamorphosis of the humans in Ballard's novel. By losing their human qualities, the humans of *High-Rise* point to the fact that human nature is not stable but is prone to change in parallel with the changing factors. The big change in the attitudes of the humans towards life and each other results from their changeable environment. The book demonstrates that when the culture changes, humans change as well; so humans are human only because of their culture, and not due to their nature. Consequently, the "new" human form existing in the high-rise becomes an answer to Herbrechter's question about human nature.

In the novel, people lose their human characteristics like common sense as a result of their interactions with the environment, society and technology. In the same way, the space affected by the bestial humans changes from a technological paradise into a dystopian gothic space in which the humans “liberate their atavistic impulses, descending into barbarism and full-fledged clan warfare, indulging in every kind of moral transgression, including rape and murder” (Groppo 10). Losing their civilized attitudes towards life and each other, the humans of the *High-Rise* ironically regress to a wild primitive state. Consequently, in tune with posthumanism, Ballard points out the fact that there is not a universal or stable human nature. The human behaviours are not innate but cultural.

In the course of this metamorphosis story, just as the technological troubles in the building, the gothic elements also serve the regression of the humans. The gothic space with the darkness, isolation and sense of entrapment triggers the “abnormal” or brutal behaviours of the humans, thereby contributing to their “animality” and “bestiality”. All of these elements create a convenient environment for the transformation of the humans from a more advanced stage to a more primitive one.

To start with darkness, in line with the deteriorating system and disappearing humanity, the building starts to darken, both literally and figuratively, on its way to become a completely gothic space. While at the beginning there are only temporary, fifteen-minute blackouts on three floors, towards the end of the book most of the floors constantly stay in darkness (*High-Rise* 20, 69). That is to say, the more the residents become brutal, the darker the space becomes. The physical darkness of the space feeds and is fed by the dark side of the humans. Actually, it turns into a source of joy for the residents because it feeds the chaotic atmosphere and nourishes the violence in the high-rise. To indulge in violence, they wait for the night or the blackouts during the day to commit crimes or violent assaults. To exemplify, Royal is “buoyed up by reports of

further confrontations, and by the news that two more floors, the 6th and 14th, were now in darkness” (*High-Rise* 128) Likewise, Ballard narrates that “Wilder welcomed and understood the night - only in the darkness could one become sufficiently obsessive, deliberately play on all one's repressed instincts. He welcomed this forced conscription of the deviant strains in his character” (*High-Rise* 170). He enjoys the darkness since it awakens the instincts and aberrant behaviours in the humans of the *High-Rise*. In the same way, being proud of himself as he learns how to live in darkness, Laing says that he “almost resented the daylight which the following morning would bring” (*High-Rise* 153). Similar to these main characters, the rest of the humans are aware of the fact that darkness may provide them with an opportunity to liberate their brutish and wild desires, and they can indulge in the violence it provides. Even the well-educated paediatricians and academics use darkness to turn into “demented gymnasts” to attack other residents (105). Some inhabitants also wait for the dark with canes in their hands to fight with others (92), while some of them try to lynch a young woman or have sex with the partners of others. These people who act with their wildest instincts do not hesitate to release the evil and the repressed desires within them in the darkness. As a genre, gothic is a “fiction the realm of the irrational and of the perverse impulses and nightmarish terrors that lie beneath the orderly surface of the civilized mind” (Abrams and Harpham 137). Likewise, when the humans of the *High-Rise* find an opportunity to release their impulses and terrors based on violence and sexuality in a dark gothic space, they prefer to ignore the rules imposed by a civilized society. Since they try to be a member of civilisation in the outer world, they tend to hide their dark side from the others. However, they turn to their primitive nature and degenerate into barbarity when they are not under surveillance of society in the darkness. Therefore, it is possible to say that the physical darkness of the space becomes an embodiment of the darkness in the souls in *High-Rise*. Moreover, this situation points out the fact that the civilisation, which is usually associated with light, is

not about being human. It actually depends on their behaviours and preferences based on their free-will.

Ironically, when the electricity is switched off for the first time in *High-Rise*, the dark atmosphere allows the reader to obviously see the dark side of the residents for the first time. During this blackout Wilder kills the dog of an upper floor resident. His obsession with revenge from upper class residents, because of their behaviours trying to undervalue him, comes to the surface in the darkness. The secrecy and anonymity effect of the darkness helps Wilder commit the first crime in the building: the murder of an Afghan hound (*High-Rise* 22). Wilder hides himself in the darkness during his barbaric act so that nobody knows that he killed the dog. Later, the reader learns that “[g]iving in to a cruel but powerful impulse, he had pulled it below the water” in the pool (*High-Rise* 24) . He kills the dog “not because he disliked the dog particularly or wanted to upset its owner, but to revenge himself on the upper storeys of the building” (*High-Rise* 62). Since the residents can welcome their “deviant strains in [their] characters” in the dark atmosphere of the building, Wilder’s repressed desire for revenge and his hatred and frustration come to the surface in the darkness (*High-Rise* 170). Therefore, darkness paradoxically sheds light on the true nature of human beings. As another example, when Laing realizes there is a power cut in another high-rise, he foresees it would be the moment to initiate the violent chaos there too. This scene points out how the dark atmosphere can evoke the dark side of the humans in Ballard’s world again:

Laing looked out at yards away. A temporary power on the 7th floor all the lights were out. Already torch-beams were moving about in the darkness, as the residents made their first confused attempts to discover where they were. Laing watched them contentedly, ready to welcome them to their new world. (*High-Rise* 149)

He understands that this darkness can trigger the upcoming violent events there, as he already knows it has released the repressed wild desires of the humans in his own

building. Consequently, as the technological system goes out of order, it enhances the physical and metaphorical darkness of the building at the same time. Hence, as another common figure of the gothic, the theme of monstrosity becomes a significant subject for a posthumanist analysis of the novel.

In his work *Posthumanism*, Nayar underlines the fact that “the disabled, the insane or the differently embodied [entities] that do not fit the norms of the ‘human’ are deemed monstrous and consigned to the categories of ‘freaks’, non-humans or the inhuman” (111). His description points out that the monster can be anything that conflicts with the traditional human image. The Oxford Online Dictionary also defines the monster as “a person of repulsively unnatural character, or exhibiting such extreme cruelty or wickedness as to appear inhuman”.³ These descriptions indicate that the notion of monster represents the unacceptable traits of humans, which are mostly repressed in the civilized world but released in the *High-Rise*. Spenrath claims that the gothic representation of monstrosity is largely constructed in opposition to humanity because “[i]n order to make something monstrous, it must first be dehumanized, divorced from what is aligned with the category of humanity” (24). By looking at the gothic monsters in literature, it is easy to state that they cross the borders of reason and morality while evoking terror. Reminiscent of the protagonist of *The Monk*, Heathcliffe of *Wuthering Heights* or Oscar Wilde’s Dorian Gray, the residents in the high-rise can be easily associated with monstrosity because of their improper, depraved and licentious behaviours. For instance, Heathcliffe is a social outcast who has neither morality nor conscience. His oppressive and mean character is similar to Dorian Gray’s demonic and dark personality. They are both ambitious, egotistical and keen to violent acts or numerous threats. Similar to such gothic monsters, in their process of dehumanization

³ The definition of “monster” by Oxford English Dictionary.
<https://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/121738>

Ballard's malevolent humans can be considered monsters who are the product of a specific society in deprivation of morality. They subvert the human identity with their inhuman behaviours and evoke feelings of terror and disgust by their horrendous deeds.

From a posthumanist viewpoint, the monsters contribute to the ambiguous definition of the human by both releasing and highlighting the evil, cruelty and barbarism in humanity. With their unpleasant, inhuman personalities they subvert the traditional human concept. Therefore, it can be claimed that the humans of *High-Rise*, defined as monstrous in the humanist frame work due to their violent behaviours, help the reader reconsider the human concept. Although their bestial features can be perceived as threats to humanistic values (Botting 1), from a posthumanist perspective they only present the ignored characteristics of the humans to underline the fact that the evil is also a part of being human. Furthermore, the bestiality of the characters illustrates the multiple identities within a human being. That is to say, the novel affirms the hidden identities within someone, by "acknowledging that as subjects we are heterogeneous and multiple in our affiliations and desires" (Young 372). By showing the bestiality within his humans, Ballard emphasizes that we cannot make narrow and clear-cut definitions of humanity or separate them from other beings with sharp lines because humans also have a potential to go wild. In this sense, the monstrous humans of *High-Rise* can raise awareness about human nature and let the reader understand the human better. The corrupted behaviours of the characters, their new monstrous identity, and distorted relationships based on sexuality and violence with other residents let the humans face their dark sides and warn them about their potential to become "monsters."

From another side, regarding the issue of monstrosity, it is possible to declare that the protagonists of *High-Rise* - Wilder, Laing and Royal - are typical examples of gothic heroes. To clarify, while Wilder is trying to reach the top of the building, he gives harm to many residents and to the building itself. He rapes women, kills the animals, vandalizes

the building during his journey from a lower floor to the highest because of his obsessive desire for power. His barbaric deeds become a part of his character. To gain power or survive, just like others, he stops caring for others. Showing the least affection or love, he becomes the most violent of the main characters. Moreover, as the only survivor, Dr Laing violates the moral rules of the society through his incestuous relationship with his sister; his tendency to violence and deviant desires make him an unvirtuous human being. Finally, Royal with his obsession with superiority and pride, is another main character who abuses women and beats the residents. Due to their evil, irrational and impulsive deeds, they can be accepted as the gothic heroes of Ballard's novel. Considering Freud's structural mode of the psyche and Ballard's interest in Freud, it is possible to assert that they represent the "id" in the human psyche because of their monstrous instinctive deeds. Actually, their insensitivity deriving from their exposure to violence and their addiction to sex eliminate their sense of moral judgement. Hence, as another example of the relationship between the gothic and posthumanism, these characters mirror the ambiguous and monstrous human nature. According to Punter, what makes a gothic hero a villain at the same time is their connection with the "id" because if the hero stands for the ego, the villain represents the id (*A New Companion to the Gothic*, 311). The "id" is humans' natural instincts running on the pleasure principle so it is not concerned about social norms, which is exactly what the humans of the *High-Rise* do. As a source of the desires and impulses, the "id" controls their instinctive drives. Daniel Olson suggests that the "Gothic hero-villain is a quintessential moral monster capable of great acts of creation and destruction whose personal and political consequences are painstakingly and provocatively delineated" (388) and thus they menace the well-being of the virtuous hero and heroine. William Hughes also explains that the gothic hero's desires exceed conventions and thus enter the realm of taboo. Their actions and statements are inimical to human community due to their "unvirtuous" behaviours. The gothic hero "is associated

with some breach of moral, theological, or social convention that effectively separates him from regular humanity, aligning him with other outcast being and consigning him to liminal spaces beyond human community” (Hughes, 126-7). Taking these statements into consideration, it might be said that the protagonists of Ballard have affinities with gothic heroes with their “monstrous” and unvirtuous qualities, and they violate the moral rules in pursuit of their “id”. Their bestiality, returning to the question of Herbrechter at the beginning, from a posthumanist perspective, reveals the fact that goodness or common sense are not an innate attributes of a human being. The human characters of *High-Rise* who lose their “humanity” by rejecting the cultural and moral values underline that there is not a universal human essence. If being human means to be virtuous, the novel proves that it is not about nature but is a matter of choice. When the humans live in an ultimate free space, they can prefer to follow their “id” and exploit its opportunities to reveal the dark side of human nature in an isolated, dark and repressive environment surrounded with the recent technology.

As another gothic element, similar to the darkness, the feeling of entrapment also helps the inhabitants of the high-rise reveal their obsessions and repressed fears and desires. In his lecture on the Gothic, David Punter describes the gothic space as isolated places that turn out to be labyrinths, which the characters cannot get out of and feel under threat of falling through a trap door (“The Gothic: A Lecture” youtube). In *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Hogle also mentions the claustrophobic psychology of the Gothic spaces (241). They both state that in gothic literature the characters are usually imprisoned in dark and terrifying places. In line with their comments, “with its hundreds of cages stacked above each other” the high-rise makes the residents feel physically and psychologically trapped (*High-Rise* 190). During the violent assaults, the residents are trapped by other residents in confined places such as the elevator or the roof which is likened to a “fur-lined prison” (*High-Rise* 112). They also become trapped in their

apartments or lobbies which are turned into armed camps to block any encroachments on their territory because of violent assaults.

By shedding light on the psychological implications of these repressive settings, Punter suggests that they can actually reveal the fear of being locked up inside (Gothic: A Lecture). In tune with Punter, Wilder's confession about his developing a powerful phobia about being gripped by the building and Mrs Hillman's fear of being buried alive (*High-Rise* 62,) become examples of their fears. On the other side, in addition to revealing the repressed fears, the repressive space also triggers the obsessions of the residents. They become so obsessed that they prefer to stay in the building despite all these fears and entrapments. Even when they have a chance to go out, they do not leave the high-rise as their obsessions and repressed desires prevent them to abandon the building (*High-Rise* 94-108, 131-145). Hence, their imprisonment turn out to be a voluntary act. In the earlier parts of the novel, they leave the building for various reasons like work or education. Then, the decision to leave their apartment turns out to be very difficult to make as their obsession with the space filled with hostility, hatred, lust, rivalry and violence escalates. Since they are willing to explore any deviant or wayward impulse, they do not leave the building. They voluntarily stay in their "cages" and indulge in violence and sexuality. They have some instinctive urges not to abandon this prison-like place. For instance, Wilder stays "not to admit his failure to deal on equal terms with his professional neighbours, to out stare these self-satisfied cost-accountants and marketing managers " (*High-Rise* 200), while Royal postpones any decision to move out since he is "intrigued by life in this vertical township and people attracted to its smooth functionalism" (*High-Rise* 99). Royal's obsession with the feeling of superiority prevents him from moving out of the building. As an architecture of the building, he lives at the top of the building until the physical structure breaks down. According to the narrator:

As the first tenant, and owner of the best and highest apartment, [Royal] felt himself to be lord of the manor-borrowing a phrase he disliked from Anne's rule book. His sense of physical superiority as a sometime amateur tennis champion-a minor hard-courts title, though no less impressive for that-had inevitably slackened with the passage of years, but in a way had been rekindled by the presence of so many people directly below him, on the shoulders of whose far more modest dwellings his own rested securely. (*High-Rise* 99)

Feeling as the most superior person of the building, Royal does not want to leave despite all the troubles. His obsession for living in this building derives from his position in the high-rise. He considers himself as a lord of the building and he rejects to live in another place not to lose the privileged status which high-rise provides. Due to their repressed emotions and desires, both Wilder and Royal prefer to stay in the high-rise. Likewise, Laing's sexual feelings for his own sister and his unresolved Oedipus Complex show how a dark and repressive space can trigger the unresolved issues of the past:

[H]e had always felt physically distanced from Alice by her close resemblance to their mother, but for reasons not entirely sexual this resemblance now aroused him. He wanted to touch her hips, place his hand over her breast. As if aware of this, she leaned passively against him. (*High-Rise* 136)

Alice's physical resemblance to their mother arouses some sexual desires for Laing. His repressed childhood desires come to the surface in the confining environment of the high-rise. As an effect of the space, during his regression, Laing's unresolved complex awakens too. Moreover, the sexual tension between Laing and his own sister demonstrates that the humans of the building do not have to hide their controversial or immoral desires any more, their ethical concerns in the dark and prison-like building can lose their importance. According to anthropologist Claude Lévi Strauss despite its different contents, incest prohibition is seen in almost every culture because it is a moral imperative of social life and civilisation. "Before it, culture is still non-existent; with it, nature's sovereignty over man is ended" ("The Problem of Incest"). Hence, as a sign of the

humans' break away from civilisation, incest in *High-Rise* indicates their return to the primitive stage again. Since incest prohibition is a part of culture, the relationship between Laing and his sister can be considered as their losing cultural sides thereby humanity in their life.

Considering the examples and taking Punter's assertion into consideration, it is possible to suggest that the residents of the high-rise are locked up inside their own minds and live through their obsessions and impulses in their mental and physical prisons which they prefer to dwell in. Their preference to stay in the fiery and vicious high-rise proves that they become more obsessive as their repressed feelings come to the surface. Besides, their obsessions, phobias and desires coming out of the dark and repressive space confirm the fact that the humans of the high-rise have the potential to move far away from rationality. As Ballard narrates

No one, even on the top floors, seemed aware of the contrast between the well-groomed revellers and the dilapidated state of the building. Along corridors strewn with uncollected garbage, past blocked disposal chutes and vandalized elevators, moved men in well-tailored dinner-jackets. Elegant women lifted long skirts to step over the debris of broken bottles. The scents of expensive after-shave lotions mingled with the aroma of kitchen wastes.

These bizarre contrasts pleased Royal, marking the extent to which these civilized and self-possessed professional men and women were moving away from any notion of rational behaviour. (*High-Rise* 128)

The irrational behaviour of the residents becomes so usual in the high-rise that their elegant clothes in the devastated space do not seem bizarre for them. While humanism favours the rational human image based on human perfection and rationalism, *High-Rise* provides a different perspective portraying human irrationality. Rather than questioning their life and behaviours, the residents prefer adaptation to their new environment. An analysis of such kind of irrationality and obsessiveness from the perspective of the Gothic through its concern with the human psyche helps the reader explore "the dark irrational hinterland of the human mind" (Howells 79). Likewise, during his exploration of the

human Ballard sheds light on the unreasonable and unethical side of humanity by challenging humanism's promotion of human rationality. By calling themselves "wise humans", as meaning makers "humans who boast of their superiority and thereby justify their own privilege by repudiating their animality fall short of the Homo sapiens accolade [they] have bestowed on [them]selves" (Paul Waldou "Coming Home to Our Animality"). The portrayal of the violent humanity in *High-Rise* problematizes the privileged position attributed to humans based on their sentience and rationality, and makes one question the superiority and uniqueness equated with the centralised human figure in humanism. With her focus on the term "Homo-Sapiens" Haraway also criticizes its assigning the quality of wisdom to humans to "displace [them] psycho-analytically and zoologically" in a hierarchical categorisation ("Interview" 141). In tune with these critics, in *High-Rise*, this questionable quality of humans – rationality - fades into the background. In contrast to the wise human image, Ballard's savage and unreasonable humans of the building adopt a wild lifestyle based on violence and instincts. With the effect of darkness and the feeling of entrapment, the humans reveal their wicked, irrational and bestial sides in the gothic high-rise and lose their so called humanistic features. Their wild image proves the unnecessary and senselessness of their differentiation from other living forms due to their civilized mind.

In addition to darkness and entrapment, as another gothic element, the isolation of the building from the outer world causes the residents to feel free enough to fulfil every kind of immoral and instinctual needs. Apart from the location of the building, the technological space provides its residents with a self-contained place until the system breaks down. Alienated from the outer world, the inhabitants of the high-rise could satisfy their needs in the building. However, as life in the building changes, the technological devices start to contribute to the characters' sense of isolation in different ways. The residents, who want to completely break away from the civilized world outside,

deliberately destroy the technological devices and vehicles. They destroys the cars, break the TVs or they cut the phone lines to feel “a distinct sense of security at knowing that they would receive no [call] in the future” (*High-Rise* 108). To be disconnected from the rest of the civilized world, they are willing to live in a cruel world of solitary confinement. From another angle, it seems as if they are taking revenge from technology by destroying it for keeping them civilized yet ironically they become slaves of it at the same time.

As Ballard narrates "Despite the growing chaos around them, the residents showed less interest in the external world. Bales of unsorted mail lay about the ground-floor lobbies. . . [A]s part of that unconscious conspiracy to shut out the external world, no visitors came to the high-rise" (*High-Rise* 77). Since the isolated space gives its residents the freedom to do whatever they want without judgement, punishment or ethical concerns, they try to increase the isolation by cutting the connection with the outside world. As the building “remove[s] the need to repress every kind of anti-social behaviour, and [leaves] them free to explore any deviant or wayward impulses” (*High-Rise* 246), they destroy any device which can interrupt or ruin this life of freedom in the high-rise. During a conversation between a resident and Laing, the woman says “For the first time since we were three years old what we do makes absolutely no difference. When you think about it, that's really rather interesting” (*High-Rise* 51) Her emphasis on the age results from the fact that they are treated like children, who cannot be criticized, judged or held responsible for their bad deeds by the society in the high-rise. Similar to a three-year-old child, they are free enough to do whatever they want. For instance, Steele’s torture of a cat just for the sake of pleasure or dressing up the corpses of dead residents (*High-Rise* 155), Wilder’s desire “to dress [his penis] in some way, perhaps with a hair-ribbon tied in a floral bow” (*High-Rise* 181) or recording his grunts and belches and the gaps of Charlotte while raping her (*High-Rise* 182), people’s throwing a bucket of urine to Talbot (*High-Rise* 153), Laing’s enjoying the lack of hygiene like the smell of sweat and blocked

lavatory (*High-Rise* 150) demonstrate how the humans are free from accusations or punishments in this dark isolated space. These abnormal and wild characters take their courage from being isolated. Free from ethical and social norms, the humans prefer to indulge in a place free from responsibilities, social impositions and adapt a childish absurdity in their behaviours. The situation both contrasts with the glorification of rationality in humanism and comply with posthumanists' emphasis on unstable human nature.

As a consequence of such ultimate freedom in an isolated and dark space, repressed desires and deviant impulses are liberated; therefore, the taboo issues of the outer world start to disappear. As Ballard narrates, "the ultimate goal of the high-rise" is to create "a realm where [the humans'] most deviant impulses [are] free at last to exercise themselves in any way they [wish]" (*High-Rise* 212). It means that the monstrous inhabitants of the building do not have to repress their contradictory or deviant instincts any more. Hence, taboo subjects such as incest, murder, rape, torture and cannibalism, which are also some common elements in the gothic genre, become ordinary issues in this dark and isolated high-rise. For instance, apart from the implied incestuous relationship between Laing and his sister, there are also cannibals in the building. Neither the theme of incest nor cannibalism are taboos in the high-rise. The way the narrator mentions cannibalism reflects how it is so "normal" to survive in this wild space. As it is stated in the following:

At times [Laing] suspected that some of the residents had reverted to cannibalism-the flesh had been stripped with a surgeon's skill from many of the corpses. The lower-level residents, under constant pressure and discrimination, had probably given into necessity. (*High-Rise* 244)

Therefore it is not a choice but a new requirement for survival in the high-rise. The residents eat to survive, as most humans do under particular circumstances as this. In the same vein, throughout the novel, the residents try to survive the violent assaults and attempts of murder as well. The murder of the Afghan hound is followed by the death of

a resident. Without even reporting the murder of the jeweller, the residents continue their life in the high-rise by adding new deaths to the inventory. Towards the end, even the two main characters of the novel –Royal and Wilder - are killed and only Laing manages to survive. When the animals are tortured, people are beaten or the women are raped, everybody acts indifferently. Likewise, while Steele is torturing the cat Laing only watches him:

Laing watched Steele manipulate the cat under the curtain. By some logic the dentist's pleasure in tormenting the creature was doubled by the presence of a squeamish but fascinated witness. Laing stood in the bathroom doorway, hoping despite himself that lights would not fail again. He waited as Steele calmly smothered the cat, destroying it under the curtain as if carrying out a complex resuscitation under a hospital blanket. (*High-Rise* 156)

Without any attempt to stop Steele, Laing witnesses his torture of the cat. Actually both the insensibility of Laing and feloniousness of Steele become the common characteristic of the humans in the high-rise. They abandon human values, thereby humanity. Such preference signifies that these values are created by society and when the humans live under different circumstances, they can easily abandon them.

Along similar lines, in the absence of ethics and in the shadow of violence, the inhabitants of the high-rise rape women as an ordinary act of their life. Even worse, it is narrated that rape is considered as “a valuable and well-tried means of bringing [them] together” in the novel (*High-Rise* 122). In one of the cases, after Charlotte is raped by Wilder, she dresses and they breakfast together on the balcony by “sitting at the table with an incongruous old-world formality” (*High-Rise* 184) In the new world order of the high-rise, the victims of the rape do not react to this violent act because, just like other crimes, it becomes an ordinary daily activity. While Mrs Wilder is sexually assaulted by Royal, she stands passively and confesses how “the sexual assault itself [has] ceased to have any meaning” in the high-rise (*High-Rise* 192). The residents’ attitudes towards violence,

murder and torture prove their indifference to the sufferings of the others and their lack of conscience. This kind of a human image points out that all values such as conscience and sensitivity are actually social constructs and illusions. When they are in a different society, they prefer to ignore these values so that it becomes possible to assert that they can not be associated with only being a human.

The residents only follow their instincts and lose other humanistic qualities like sensitivity or compassion; the taboos of the outside world become a part of their identity. Paola Cavaliere argues:

Usually, when we say of a being that it is human, we are assuming an endowment of certain special characteristics, such as self-consciousness, rationality, self-control, sense of time, communicative ability, and the ability to relate to others—that is, the attributes that have been defined ‘indicators of human hood.’ This is the evaluative, or philosophical, sense of ‘human being’—a sense for which many prefer to use the term ‘person,’ as contrasted with the biological notion of ‘member of the species *Homo sapiens*.’ (9-10)

Using the term “person” or “people” to define human hood, humans highlight their superiority and distinction from other species. They focus on human qualities like self-consciousness or self-control to justify their supremacy. However, in *High-Rise* based on the theme of violence or sexuality, the taboos which are regarded as normal and ordinary by the humans of high-rise subvert the idealized of the human again. In other words, Ballard uses taboo subjects in his gothic novel both to create an isolated space and monstrous characters. Thus, he refuses the humanist approach that supports “moral values are properly founded on human nature and experience alone”.⁴ With his characters who do not conform to the definition of person given above, Ballard questions personhood. As the residents make the taboo issue everyday activity they present how the humans may

⁴ American Association defines the humanism as it is stated. <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/definiton-of-humanism/>

tend to follow their “animalistic” instincts and desires when they remain in an isolated space, freed from the restrictions of social norms.

Today based on speciesism, animality is considered as the opposite of proper, desirable, civilized social behaviours of humans. It is the ultimate “other” of humanity. By virtue of their cognitive and spiritual capabilities, humans are elevated while an “animal” is defined as “a person without human attributes or civilizing influences; one who is very cruel, violent, or repulsive”.⁵ From a humanist perspective, when human beings become cruel, they are associated with animals. In the novel, the residents resemble and are compared to animals since they do not behave in a civilized way. As an example, to describe his bad behaviours, the residents liken Wilder to “a large animal” because this is what happens when a human being does not behave in accordance with social norms. One of his “animalistic” behaviours is narrated in the following:

Wilder reached out with one hand and held her ankle. He smiled up at her bleakly. Climbing to his feet, he circled around her, the tape-recorder raised in one hand as if about to hit her with it. Instead he switched it on and off, playing for her his selection of belches and grunts, obviously pleased this demonstration of his unexpected expertise. He steered her slowly around the apartment as she backed from one room to the next, listening to his edited mutterings.

...

He enjoyed terrorizing her, taping down her exaggerated but nonetheless frightened gasps. During their clumsy sexual act on the mattress in the child's bedroom he left the tape-recorder switched on beside them on the floor and played back the sounds of this brief rape, editing together the noise of her tearing clothes and panting anger. (*High-Rise* 183)

While he is sadistically torturing a human being, he focuses on his having fun and neglects the feelings of the others. His attitude towards the woman does not show any glimpse of conscience, rationality or empathy. His lack of such kind of “humanistic” features makes him an animal for the others. In other words, his brutal behaviours are

⁵ The definition of “animal” by Oxford English Dictionary. <https://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/273779>

associated with “animality” because of the humanist attitude towards cruelty committed by other humans. His socially and morally abnormal behaviour ruins the dignity of humanity and makes him “insane” or “animal” for the others. By calling Wilder an animal, the humans exclude him from the human realm not to “degrade” humanity. Though animals are seen as the anti-thesis of humans to elevate humans in the natural world, there is a widespread recognition that many of the defining characteristics of ‘being human’ such as the possession of ‘culture’, language, rationality, sentience, conscious thought and so on are also found, in varying degrees, outside the human species (Hurn 4). In fact, when people observe animals in their natural environment, they have seen that they are superior to humans in many ways. For instance, humans cannot fly like birds, cannot swim like fish, and their hunting ability is less developed than animals. According to Cary Wolfe,

By thus keeping open the incalculability of the difference between reason/the human and its other/the non-human (animal), we may begin to approach the ethical question of non-human animals not as the other-than-human but as the infra-human, not as the primitive and pure other we rush to embrace as a way to cure our own existential malaise, but as part of us, of us—and nowhere more forcefully than when reason, “theory,” reveals “us” to be very different creatures from who we thought “we” were. (*Animal Rites*, 17)

He aims to unite different ways of beings or rejects strictly dividing the entities from each other. To prevent marginalisation and promote equality, he is against creating “we” and “other”. Wolfe raises awareness about humans’ privileged perspective of themselves and underlines the importance of avoiding such narrow ethical considerations. He focuses on the recognition of the shared responsibility towards one another. He emphasizes the necessity of embracing all species without a hierarchical division by rejecting humanism’s “external insistence on the ethical and, broadly speaking, ontological efficacy of the human/animal divide” (Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* 124). Compared to humanism, by its recognition of the connection between the species, posthumanism is

inclusive rather than exclusive, so Wolfe aims to disrupt the supremacy of humans by removing them from the centre. Along similar lines, Ballard shows the insensibility of the hierarchical division between humans and non-humans with his “animalistic” humans. Besides, the humans’ torturing the animals such as the murder of the Afghan hound by Wilder indicates the abusive attitude of the human race towards other entities. Even though he is associated with animality because of his cruelty, it is seen that the brutality can be a major characteristics of the human race in the novel. From another angle, the unreasonable behaviours of the residents dethrone the so-called civilized humanity. The narrator says “the residents of the high-rise [are] like creatures in a darkened zoo lying together in surly quiet, now and then tearing at each other in brief acts of ferocious violence.” (*High-Rise* 179). Ballard’s novel proves that the humans can be quite similar to the animals.

Apart from the comments on their life which is based on instinct, desires and violence, the appearances of the residents also make them quite animalistic. The way they walk around naked in public (*High-Rise* 221,239), urinate in the halls (170) or make weird sounds (182) demonstrate that they have some animal behaviours contrasting “civilized” manners. Their losing interest in cooking also refer to the fact that they may have lost some of their cultural attitudes. To clarify, according to Prof. Robin Fox, “All animals eat, but we are the only animal that cooks. So cooking becomes more than a necessity, it is the symbol of our humanity, what marks us off from the rest of nature” (“Food and Eating: An Anthropological Perspective”). Thus, when the residents stop cooking, they show “a falling interest in civilized conventions of any kind” (*High-Rise* 138) and move away from humanity. Living in this “gigantic vertical zoo with its hundreds of cages stacked above each other” (*High-Rise* 190) Laing feels “uneasily like a visitor to a malevolent zoo, where terraces of vertically mounted cages contained creatures of random and ferocious cruelty” when he is looking up the endless tiers of balconies (*High-*

Rise 143). Besides, while the jeweller is talking to Laing about the behaviours of the residents, he says “you know-they [are] like animals...”(*High-Rise* 30) Through the metaphor of the zoo and the metamorphosis of the residents into animals, the novel demonstrates the human tendency to go wild, blurs the boundaries and highlights their similarity to animals. Regarding these two points of view, the novel basically criticizes the so-called human uniqueness. It reflects the thought on human-animal division and proves that human beings are not so distinct from the other forms. Being aware of the similarities between species, posthumanist thinkers accept the animal side of humans. Oxana Timofeeva indicates that even though humans are excluded from the rest of the animal kingdom, “in fact humans are, of course, animals, too, as they are born, breathe, move, eat other living things, reproduce and eventually die” (*Posthumanist Glossary* 35). Posthumanists reject the godlike image of humans and reject to give humans a right to look at nature and animals from above by claiming that they have despicable features deserving to be ruled and exploited. About the humanist features such as language, it will be significant to recall Cary Wolfe’s examination of Wittgenstein’s remark that ‘if a lion could talk, we could not understand him’ (*Zoontologies* 1). Here Wolfe indicates that just because humans do not know the language of the animals or do not understand their way of communication, it does not mean they do not have the ability to speak. Thus, instead of trying to separate these species through focusing on their different abilities, one should embrace their differences. Likewise, Derrida also supports a non-oppressive ethical relation between species and asserts that in the society, humans are the ones that dominate language and thought. Since they have got the power to control, they decide what is excluded from the human sphere. They accept animals as the traditional other to recognize themselves as superior beings (‘Eating Well’ 96–119). In line with Derrida and the posthumanists, the human-animal binary is deconstructed in *High-Rise* through Ballard’s bestial humans. Their new identities far from rationality, civilization or ethics let the

reader be aware of the fact that the humans can have some “animalistic” features. Therefore, the boundaries between humans and non-humans are not so strict.

Ballard’s *High-Rise* underlines the fact that sometimes even a modern high-rise with its most advanced technology may not prevent the powerful “animality” in humanity from finding an outlet. Moreover, as it is stated before, the existence of technology in the high-rise does not mean the existence of an advanced stage of human social development and organization: civilisation, which is something the humans are proud of. As Stefan Herbrechter & Ivan Callus suggest

there is only a “discourse” – humanism – that is trying, through the construction of “myths,” or through “mystification / mythification,” to legitimate a hierarchical system in which the human manages to retain its absolute supremacy by expelling differences outside its “own” category and projecting them onto constructed “others,” i.e. non-humans. (“What is a posthumanist reading?”)

Their use of the word “myth” underlines that the hierarchy is not a result of nature but of culture. Since culture is created by humans, they also construct humanist myths to prioritize themselves. According to these myths, since humans can think and act morally, they have a higher moral status than other species in the hierarchical system. Based on the differences between species, the humanist system of values and the anthropocentric world-view create binaries to divide beings as “us” and “others” by creating “subjects” and “objects”. Therefore it completely ignores the similarities between humans and others. It claims that humans have a mind and soul that legitimatizes their supremacy; and therefore they have a right to control and dominate other species by claiming their supremacy. What posthumanism aims is to allow one “to move beyond the paradigm of humanist condescension and to engage meaningfully with animality, both human and non-human” to overcome the dichotomies between them (Amberson and Past 3). Posthumanists declare that the differences among species do not legitimize the inequality

but demonstrate the coexistence of a variety of different life forms. Although humanist discourse defines human features with the opposites of non-human characteristics, the humans of Ballard demonstrate that they are not so distinct from non-humans. Furthermore, their differences such as creating technologies and the skills for its usage, do not justify their superiority to animals.

Overall, Ballard presents a story based on the loss of humanity in the age of technology. His work can be considered a warning dystopia for its readers to meditate upon the horrifying future which is ironically going backward; to the primitivism of the dark ages. The alarming story of the novel evokes fear derived from psychological insights revealing a disturbing human condition. By bringing the repressed, evil, corrupted and horrifying sides of humanity and their impulses and fears to the foreground, Ballard makes humanity face their own nature. The novel also questions the notion of “humanity”, “animality” and “monstrosity” in the modern world with the bestial and brutish depiction of humans who turn against social moralities and norms in the age of civilisation. As a gothic work it unleashes human lust, greed and violence. It is about barbarism and cannibalism, figuratively in the capitalist context and literally about eating human flesh, of modern people and their story of metamorphosis/devolution from civilisation to primitiveness. Ballard’s attitude towards the human race and his way of dealing with such themes help question and subvert the humanistic notion of what it means to be a human being. In “A Cyborg Manifesto”, Donna Haraway especially underlines that

by the late twentieth century in United States scientific culture, the boundary between human and animal is thoroughly breached. The last beachheads of uniqueness have been polluted, if not turned into amusement parks—language, tool use, social behaviour, mental events. Nothing really convincingly settles the separation of human and animal... Movements for animal rights are not irrational denials of human uniqueness; they are clear-sighted recognition of connection across the discredited breach of nature and culture. (10)

Without denial of differences between species, posthumanism rejects strict boundaries. Considering the hierarchical order among species, gender, race, and class Ballard shows his audience that these superior “wise humans” have the same potential to go wild and irrational and thus a hierarchical differentiation between humans and non-humans does not make any sense. Furthermore, his employment of the gothic conventions, in the space and its violent residents serve the posthumanist subtext which challenges the perspective which tries to justify the oppressive supremacy of the humans. He attacks the anthropocentric point of view and erases the borders between humans and non-humans by putting humans in the same equation with so called “inferior” entities like animals, rather than making humans close to the divine as they would deserve in a humanist discourse. Through presenting the lowest forms of human expression, *High-Rise* degrades and dethrones the traditional humane way of living.

A Posthumanist Reading of *Never Let Me Go*

Today technology and science have become an indispensable part of humanity and life. As Haraway points out “Science and humanism have always been bedfellows. Their arguments are the wrangling of the two made into one flesh. Subject and object need each other” (*Simians Cyborgs and Women* 74). Without doubt they have altered and influenced each other in many ways. Their increasing relationship has evoked many questions about what it means to be human both in the academic and non-academic world. Especially recent scientific and technological developments such as genetic engineering, the possibility of artificial intelligence, organ transplantation, half machine-half human entities, and the robots have made a redefinition of the human necessary. Whether technology increases or decreases the humanity or how much scientific discoveries and advancements can affect the quality and longevity of human life are some popular questions about this interactive relationship. In the same vein, as an interdisciplinary field, posthumanism aims at “the radical decentering of the traditional sovereign, coherent and autonomous human in order to demonstrate how the human is always already evolving with, constituted by and constitutive of multiple life forms and machines” (Nayar 2, 2013). To respond to the questions about the human form which has been changed through technologies, posthumanism challenges the traditional human concept by reconsidering the changing conditions of both humans and non-humans.

Throughout literary history, many books have been written on science, technology and human relationship. Hayles asserts that “Literary texts are not, of course, merely passive conduits. They actively shape what the technologies mean and what the scientific theories signify in cultural contexts” (*How We Become* 21). As a genre, science-fiction can be the most popular dealing with this relationship. Science-fiction books have presented both the human condition of the age in which they are written and the possible human condition in the future. In tune with Hayles’s observation, they raise many

questions to warn and to inform the readers, and to raise their awareness about the possible consequences of scientific and technological developments for the human race. From an optimistic point of view, the advancements such as robots that are created to serve their human masters sound promising, whereas androids or humanoids, half-human and half-machine species that are superior to “normal” human beings can evoke anxiety and terror for the readers. The works of science fiction writers H.G Wells, Jules Verne, William Gibson, Philip Dick; the films *A Space Odyssey* by Stanley Kubrick based on the work of Arthur C. Clarke, *Star Wars* series, *Avatar*, *Blade Runner*; and TV series such as *Doctor Who*, *Six Million Dollar Man*, *Arrow*, *Black Mirror* and many other works present both utopian or dystopian worlds in which one can observe the possible effects of science and technology on humanity. Especially in this age of technology, people are forced to think and philosophize about the human condition through such kind of works. For some writers, the future looks scary as it may lead humans to lose their “human qualities” such as empathy and altruism, while some are looking forward to the amenities it will bring about.

The utopian/dystopian science fiction books are thought to be either related to posthumanism or transhumanism because, despite their different perspectives, both transhumanists and posthumanists demonstrate how technology can profoundly alter the human condition. Their common interest is the consequences of technological developments for the concept of human. Therefore, before the analysis of Ishiguro’s book, it will be necessary to explain why a posthumanist reading is appropriate for analysis of *Never Let Me Go* rather than a transhumanist approach. After this comparison, the posthumanist reading of the text in relation to its gothic elements will be sufficient to understand its posthumanist perspective.

Being an extension of humanism, transhumanism promotes rational thinking and its usage to improve human race. Nick Bostrom states that “Transhumanism has roots in

rational humanism" so it should be viewed as "an outgrowth of secular humanism and the Enlightenment" (2 "The History of Transhumanist Thought" and 202 "In Defense of Posthuman Dignity"). That is to say, similar to humanism, transhumanism has got an optimistic point of view for human nature and its possible enhancement through rationality. Therefore, as an outcome of rational thinking, intelligence and the ability to make tools, scientific technologies are the biggest concerns for transhumanists. Transhumanists claim that the scientific and technological advances are so promising that they may enhance humans and lead them to extend human condition in the future. They can improve human organism and extend their memory and mental, intellectual and psychological capabilities, and increase their control over emotions and impulses. According to Bostrom, Friedrich Nietzsche can be a major inspiration for transhumanism with his doctrine of "the overman" (der Übermensch) based on the idea that: "Man is something that shall be overcome" (4, "The History of Transhumanist Thought"). However, unlike Nietzsche's spiritual outlook on humanity, in the transhumanist sense, to overcoming "human" refers to overcome the limitations of the current human form and improvement of human conditions through the use of science and technology. British biologist Julian Huxley defines transhumanism as "man remaining man, but transcending himself, by realizing new possibilities of and for his human nature" (15). In other words, for transhumanists to use technology to extend longevity, enhance physical and cognitive performance of humans and to alter the conditions of human existence are the ultimate future goals. By creating a new human species, transhumanism aims to modify human capabilities and prolong the life of humans. To transcend humanity it aims to make use of technology, thereby human intellect, as a means for the next stage of evolution.

In tune with humanism, which depicts the human body as natural and organic, and human beings as unique individuals possessing an inherent dignity that emerges from a shared human nature, for transhumanism humans are the centre of the universe with their

dignified qualities such as rationality and contribution to life. To oppose transhumanism and support posthumanism, Francis Fukuyama claims that human essence “cannot be reduced to the possession of moral choice, or reason, or language, or sociability, or sentience, or emotions, or consciousness, or any other quality that has been put forth as a ground for human dignity” (171). Therefore, posthumanists criticize the exclusionary point of view of transhumanists in which they recognize humans as ontologically superior species with rationality in the natural order. While transhumanists assign a special status to humans like humanists, posthumanists do not only consider humans but they also consider non-humans and the relationship between these two different entities.

About the future possibilities of the relationship between technology and humanity, while transhumanists have promising ideas about humans, posthumanists have concerns for the future for all living forms. Posthumanists do “not share the enthusiasm that most transhumanists seem to feel for the ongoing technification of the life” (Michael Hauskeller 105). In other words, in contrast to transhumanists, posthumanists consider the negative and unfavourable consequences of science and technology for humans and non-humans as well. Posthumanists do not see technology as a means of carrying humanity to a higher level or they do not dream of an upgraded human model. Posthumanism is mainly concerned with the impact of new scientific and technological developments on human and non-human assets and the “uncertain” boundaries between “human and machines”, “nature and technology”, and “born and made” (Tamar Sharon 1). Moreover, it does not separate the human race from other assets; on the contrary, it emphasizes the mixed and unclassified existences.

As a posthumanist work, *Never Let Me Go* presents a biotechnologically advanced society leading to the creation of clones. The clones Kathy H., Ruth, Tommy and their friends are raised to extend the lifespan of humans through the transplantation of their vital organs for the “normals”. They attend a special school called Hailsham created to

prepare the clones for their ultimate purpose which is to sacrifice themselves for the real humans. They donate their vital organs one by one until they “complete” their mission. In *Never Let Me Go*, the human lifespan is extended thanks to technological and scientific advancements. However, in his dystopian novel, Ishiguro does not emphasize this development created to enhance the quality of life or does not exactly celebrate these advancements. Furthermore, even though the novel is about human clones, there are no scientists, scientific implementations or the technologically advanced items because it does not focus on how science and technologies improve the humans or make them better. No information is given about scientific details, the cloning process or implemented scientific technologies in the work. In other words, rather than highlighting how biotechnologies help exceed the limits of being human, Ishiguro encourages the reader to philosophize about the effects of scientific advancements on other life forms - the human clones in his posthuman world.

The novel helps to question the status of the nonhumans; clones and, by extension, of the human. The author leads the reader to question whether biotechnology enhances or diminishes what it means to be “human”. He highlights the ethical side of biotechnology through presenting a human race which only cares about itself and exploits the other species; in this case the clones. In this sense, the novel questions whether technology enhances the human beings whereas it threatens non-humans. David Roden explains that “Rather than dreaming of the uploaded minds or intelligent robots to come, critical posthumanism attempts to understand and deconstruct humanism from within, tracing its internal tensions and conceptual discrepancies” (9). In tune with Roden, when Ishiguro talks about his intention of writing the novel he says his main focus is not the contributions of biotechnologies to human life. He utters that he aims to tell “a story of love, friendship in the face of the bleak fact that we are mortal” and by saying “it is a remarkable fact how much we accept what fate is giving us” he underlines the submissive

nature of both the clones and humans (“Kazuo Ishiguro discusses his intention behind writing the novel, *Never Let Me Go*” 2010 youtube). His emphasis on that common feature between humans and non-humans signifies the fact that his concern is not how the humans can become so developed by technology that they are separated from other assets. Consequently, he avoids presenting a superior human image based on their rationality or scientific discoveries. In line with the posthumanist approach, Ishiguro does not portray a world where humans are evolved into superior creatures; in his novel, humans are not presented to be superior to “non-humans”, they are presented to be equal and similar to the clones in terms of emotions, desires and fears.

Ishiguro tells the story of the clones in a gloomy atmosphere in which the gothic elements prevent the splendid life image under the light of technology. The writer uses many gothic features which serve to create a dark future for the non-humans in a highly technological age. Although the reader knows the humans can have healthier and longer lives with organ transplant from the clones, the novel does not focus on a happy story of a developed human race; it rather has a pessimistic overtone. It is the clash between the posthumanist outlook which emphasizes unity among all things and the outlook of the humans in the novel who consider themselves superior that creates the pessimist tone. In that sense, a posthumanist approach to the novel provides a non-anthropocentric understanding of the relationship between humans and non-humans, while the gothic helps to reflect the predestined dark future of the clones who are exploited as resources to cure the humans by means of scientific methods. Hence, the gothic somehow serves the posthumanist criticism of the human treatment. Besides, from a general perspective, regarding how posthumanism can meet a common ground with the gothic in terms of their embracing “irrational” ideas or entities, Pepperell indicates that “The posthuman is entirely open to ideas of ‘paranormality’, ‘immateriality’, the ‘supernatural’, and the ‘occult’. The posthuman does not accept that faith in scientific methods is superior to

faith in other belief systems” (*The Posthuman Condition* 181). In this respect, the gothic might be seen as a contributor to the posthuman critique which rejects human supremacy based on rationality through biotechnologies in *Never Let Me Go*.

On the other side, as previously mentioned, hybridity can also be accepted as a common point of gothic and posthumanism. Haraway's argument on the transgression of boundaries with her cyborg concept applies to the hybrid gothic characters since they both blur the distinction between human and non-human. Haraway mainly uses the cyborg metaphor to erase the boundaries between the entities. According to her,

the cyborg metaphor, as kin to the companion species, brought all natural and cultural formations together: Cyborgs and companion species each bringtogether the human and non-human, the organic and technological, carbon and silicon, freedom and structure, history and myth, the rich and the poor, the state and the subject, diversity and depletion, modernity and postmodernity, and nature and culture in unexpected ways. (*Companion Species* 4)

From this perspective, the cyborg suggests a multiplicity of entities opposing their clear-cut distinctions from others. Blurring the line between the natural and the technological, it aims to subvert the narrow understanding of innate and artificial, real and unreal.

Although posthumanism is one of the recent cultural theories, posthuman hybrid characters can be observed in the earlier works in gothic literature, as it is stated before like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or Stoker's *Dracula*.. Along the same line with Stefan Herbrechter's description of posthumanism which is “based on a combination of imagination, science, myth and technology, a process which began with Prometheus or the discovery of fire by prehistoric ‘man’”, gothic writers could juxtapose the irrational and emotional Gothic elements and rationality in their works (34). The gothic creatures consisting of fluid and mixed species, indicate the heterogeneous nature of the genre. To relate it with Haraway's concept of the cyborg, one should pay attention to how the hybrid characters of the gothic foreground “transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and

dangerous possibilities" (*The Companion Species* 71) with their non-human and human features.

By portraying posthuman clone characters who are both ontologically and physically human, Ishiguro lets the reader recognize how biotechnologies blur the distinctions between humans and nonhumans. These hybrid gothic entities "[call] for a radical rethink of species uniqueness and boundedness of the human" (Nayar *Posthumanism* 4) by emphasizing the necessity for posthumanism. In other words, Ishiguro's clones in *Never Let Me Go* awaken concerns about being a human through the portrayal of clones who begin to question their own existence and relation to humans. In the face of new technologies and scientific knowledge, his hybrid entities offer new understandings of what it means to be a human by creating a gothic atmosphere.

Through their relationships, behaviours and their identities, the clones help to annihilate the constructed distinctions between humans and non-humans. As a common figure of the gothic and posthumanism, their hybridity contributes to the heterogeneous perspectives about humans. With their passivity, submission to their predestined fate and their short life-span the clones are just as mortal as the humans. With his emphasis on the idea that "mortality is a fact" and "our existence is limited" Ishiguro also points out this common fate of all living species. He adds that his main reason for writing *Never Let Me Go* is to give the reader an opportunity to realize it as their own story. In his dystopian sci-fi world, he aims to raise awareness about our own mortality (Kazuo Ishiguro discusses his intention behind writing the novel, *Never Let Me Go* 2010 youtube). In the same way, Myra Seamann reminds that "being human is revealed as a certain feeling of vulnerability and ability to love others, even in the face of one's own inevitable and ultimate death" (267). Both Ishiguro and Seamann point out the human side of the clones to highlight their hybrid nature because they have both human and non-human properties with features that bring them closer to people and distinguish them from humans. Their

hybrid nature blurs the line between the species. As Hayles asserts, these posthuman gothic cyborgs “[evoke] the exhilarating prospect of getting out of some of the old boxes and opening up new ways of thinking about what being human means” (Hayles, *How We Become Posthuman* 285). Haraway’s concept of the cyborg that “thoroughly breach[ing]” the border between human and nonhuman (Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs* 151) reminds us that they are socially constructed categories. Through his gothic and posthuman characters who are both ontologically and physically human, Ishiguro lets the reader recognize that hybridity fuses the binaries, thereby breaching the traditional and narrow concept of humanhood.

From a humanist perspective, the clones of the novel and their inability to give birth to new lives and being copies of “real” humans prevent them from being considered “normal” humans. However, their various qualities and experiences indicate that even though they are biologically different from the rest of humanity, they are still same with them. To begin with the identity issue, it is possible to claim that the clones have also a sense of identity like the human beings. The narrator begins telling her story with the following sentence: “My name is Kathy H. I’m thirty-one years old, and I’ve been a carer now for over eleven years” (*Never Let Me Go* 3). Her mentioning only her name, job and age while introducing herself reveals the three significant aspects of her identity. Her sense of identity guides the reader about what she cares most about herself. Her mention of her job just at the very beginning of her story results from her being proud of what she has been doing for eleven years. In the article “An Anthropological Conceptualisation of Identity” the philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist Zagorka Golubović asserts that identity is a part of human culture; therefore, it is not naturally given but a culturally constructed concept (25). As it changes through the experiences, relationships, knowledge, ideas and belief, it becomes a unique feature of human capacity in the society

which is also based on cultural codes. Regarding the sense of identity as a human trait, it becomes a sign of Kathy's humanhood in the novel.

Moreover, the reason behind the curiosity of the clones about their "possibles", which refers to the humans from whom they are copied, derives from their search for an identity. Their trip to Norfolk to look for Ruth's possible, or Kathy's search for her origin in porn magazines (*Never Let Me Go* 143-53, 133) points out their attempts to discover their roots as a sign of their humanity. When the clones cannot find her possible, Ruth feels so disappointed and enraged:

We all know it. We're modelled from trash. Junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps. Convicts, maybe, just so long as they aren't psychos. That's what we come from. We all know it, so why don't we say it? A woman like that? Come on. Yeah, right, Tommy. A bit of fun. Let's have a bit of fun pretending. That other woman in there, her friend, the old one in the gallery. Art students, that's what she thought we were. Do you think she'd have talked to us like that if she'd known what we really were? What do you think she'd have said if we'd asked her? 'Excuse me, but do you think your friend was ever a clone model?' She'd have thrown us out. We know it, so we might as well just say it. If you want to look for possibles, if you want to do it properly, then you look in the gutter. You look in rubbish bins. Look down the toilet, that's where you'll find where we all came from. (*Never Let Me Go* 164)

Since she thinks they are all modelled on lower class people, she feels humiliated. She claims that if the woman in the gallery were aware of their being clones, she would have behaved in a different way. Her idea derives from the humans' scornful attitude towards the other entities. As the humans tend to discriminate the others because of their different identity, when the clones are with normal people they feel devalued. Ruth's low self-esteem is reflected in her words about her identity. To overcome her identity crisis, she would like to find her origin to make her life more meaningful and gain an insight about her personality. In the same vein, Kathy's search for her possible original is an endeavour to find out who she is and the reason behind her sexual urges. To explain her sexual urges, she looks for porn stars with the hope of coming across her possible. To make sense of

her desires and feelings, she tries to dig up her roots. The clones' desire for finding their original suggests that just like a human being they want to search for a meaning and purpose to their life. The clones search for their place in the world. Their desire for self-discovery and self-knowledge, and their yearning for a sense of belonging point out to their human side once again.

Throughout the novel, the human experiences of the clones are narrated in the memories of Kathy. The love triangle between Kathy, Ruth and Tommy, their relationship of love and friendship become the main issues of Ishiguro's novel. The narrator's nostalgic yearning for the past and her relationship with ups and downs become indicators of their humanity. On the other side, to make her more human, the writer gives Kathy an ability to travel in time through perfect memory. In the article "Evolution of working memory" Peter Carruthers states that animals have short memories but they have a limited ability to sustain or refresh the representations in Working Memory (10371-8). Likewise, Thomas Suddendorf and Michael C. Corballis point out that animals cannot relive their experiences for the "mental time travel" ("The evolution of foresight: What is mental time travel, and is it unique to humans? 299-351). In other words, they cannot mentally go backwards into the past like the narrator of the novel. Hence, Kathy's investigation of her own memories can be considered as a means to give insights about the humanity of the clones.

Throughout *Never Let Me Go*, we read the story of three clones who lived in the 1990s. Their life style, emotions and ideas help the reader understand that these "artificial" humans share similar experiences with the humans. In line with Hayles's statement about cyborg hybridity "as posthuman subjects" and the hybrid characters of the gothic, the clones become "an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction." (3) They share common characteristics with humans and present a

heterogeneous life form with their artificiality. First of all, they change in time and react in different ways to the situations by revealing they have different characteristics like the “normals” and they grow mentally. In the same way with the human beings, they are not just copies of each other like robots. Their emotions, behaviours, ideas and perceptions vary. To name a few examples, when Tommy is left out of the football game by his friends, he becomes disappointed and gets mad at them. Feeling sorry for Tommy, Kathy tries to comfort her friend. While the behaviours of the kids show how mean they are, Tommy’s throwing a tantrum and hitting Kathy to wreak his anger on somebody makes him a sensitive and aggressive “person” (*Never Let Me Go* 23). Ruth’s indifference to Tommy’s suffering and Kathy’s compassion for him indicates how they behave in different ways in the same situation. Again, when the kids play pranks on Tommy because of his short temper and his bad work in art class, Kathy feels upset by this mean treatment, whereas Ruth believes that he deserves it. These examples demonstrate that the clones also have unique characteristics and different personalities just like the human race. Based on their personal approach, evaluation and mood, they make a number of choices and react in their own way. Regarding their choices, it is possible to claim that Kathy seems to be a caring, compassionate and passive character while Ruth is a selfish, dishonest and manipulative person, and Tommy is a short-tempered and naive one. Even though they are not naturally born humans, due to the advanced biotechnologies and science, they become more than copies of humans as they grow and become more experienced.

Considering the effect of scientific advancements and technology on humanity, Haraway questions the meaning of “natural” for humans. She suggests that due to the highly interactive relationship between the humans and technology, the human race cannot become a purely independent species. According to her:

Broadly within late twentieth-century scientific discourse, the natural body is conventionally a biotechnological cyborg –an engineered communications device, an information generating and processing system, a technology for

recognizing self and non-self (paradigmatically through the immune system) and a strategic assemblage of heterogeneous biotic components held together in a reproductive politics of genetic investment. (*Primate Visions* 355)

Her emphasis on the “heterogeneous” derives from the fact that the natural body turns out to be a cyborg consisting of different elements within itself. Due to biotechnological advancements and genetic investments, the posthuman bodies and subjects are now in place of homogeneous and independent entities. The “cyborgs” of Ishiguro show that they have both human and non-human features as a consequence of their multiplicity in their nature. In line with the cyborg metaphor, their existence helps to breach the artificial and natural. Even though they are not natural born humans, they are physically, emotionally and mentally almost the same with them so that their hybrid nature can not purely defined natural or artificial.

In addition to hybridity, otherness is another common theme shared by the gothic and posthumanism. Seaman states that “The posthuman is not a distinct other, an entirely new species; instead, the posthuman is a hybrid [...]” (250). With its marginalized hybrid characters, as a genre gothic also deals with “the other” in the society. Actually, the Gothic’s association with horror and negativity derives from its concern about the non-human or semi-human others like “spectres, monsters, demons, corpses” (Botting 1). According to Botting, “Gothic writing remains fascinated by objects and practices that are constructed as negative, irrational, immoral and fantastic” (1). In parallel with posthumanism, the genre represents and embraces the different entities and exposes the discrimination against the others in life. In other words, it usually deals with the “monsters” that suffer from what is perceived to be inhuman in a human centred society. Mary Snodgrass indicates that “The concept of Otherness underlies Gothicism as a structural myth,” she mentions the various forms of otherness in the Gothic to suggest how humans insist on having some boundaries to become superior to their constructed

others (267). Regarding the examples of the cyborg, such as Frankenstein's creature and the vampires in *Dracula* and *Fledgling* or replicants of *Blade Runner*, it is possible to claim that these hybrid gothic characters are generally excluded from the society because of their differences from the privileged and centralised humans. In the process of their exclusion, both the creature of Frankenstein and Count Dracula are explicitly and directly called "monster" (Shelley 59 and Stoker 66), while Shori in *Fledgling* and Roy Batty in *Blade Runner* are "othered" by being considered the enemies for the humans. Although they can all be identified with humanhood, the humans prefer to highlight their attributes which can surpass and differentiate them from the ordinary human beings. From a humanist viewpoint their hybridity serves as a factor increasing their otherness. In other words, focusing on their inhuman sides the humans associate them with the other or monster aiming to marginalize them.

As literary "monsters" or "others" in an anthropocentric technological age, Ishiguro's clones are also excluded from the "normals" due to their non-human features in *Never Let Me Go*. In the novel, rather than regarding their human features, the humans focus on the distinctions of the clones and marginalize them. Since their unnatural births or unreliable origins suggest the monstrous, they are put outside the realm of the human (Nayar 118-9). To support their marginalization and otherization, these posthumans are made to live in special places by the normals. Regarding gothic landscapes as "desolate, alienating and full of menace" (Botting 2), one could understand that, the physical marginalization of the clones from the society in the gothic spaces highlights their marginalization from the humans. Since the "normals" do not consider the clones as humans by disregarding their similarities, they aim to physically separate them from themselves. In tune with this situation, Braidotti suggests that "Dialectical and pejorative otherness induces structural ignorance about those who, by being others, are posited as the outside of major categorical divides in the attribution of Humanity" (28). Braidotti

suggests that the one, who becomes other because of their inhuman qualities, is ignored in the human centred society. Hence, dismissed from humanity, the clones are raised in gothic spaces as a consequence of the humans' ignorance and discrimination in the novel.

While their being far from society enhances the isolation of the clones, the threatening gothic effect prevents them from rebelling or disturbing the outside world. Thus, the theme of otherness in posthumanism is supported by other gothic elements like the isolated space in the novel. Kathy's description of Hailsham lets the reader see how scared the clones feel in this gothic space provoking horror and dread:

The woods were at the top of the hill that rose behind Hailsham House. All we could see really was a dark fringe of trees, but I certainly wasn't the only one of my age to feel their presence day and night...

There were all kinds of horrible stories about the woods. Once, not so long before we all got to Hailsham, a boy had had a big row with his friends and run off beyond the Hailsham boundaries. His body had been found two days later, up in those woods, tied to a tree with the hands and feet chopped off. Another rumour had it that a girl's ghost wandered through those trees... This was a long time before us, when the guardians were much stricter, cruel even, and when she tried to get back in, she wasn't allowed. ... Eventually, she'd gone off somewhere out there, something had happened and she'd died. But her ghost was always wandering about the woods, gazing over Hailsham, pining to be let back in.

...

The woods played on our imaginations the most after dark, in our dorms as we were trying to fall asleep. You almost thought then you could hear the wind rustling the branches, and talking about it seemed to only make things worse... (*Never Let Me Go* 49-50)

Gothic elements such as darkness, isolation, sense of entrapment, the howling wind and the ghost figure create an excruciating sense of fear for the students in Hailsham House. This feeling of fear creates a sense of threat about the outside world for them. Since they consider the outer world intimidating, they could not dare to go out and find out what is there. Hence, the gothic space contributes to their isolation and exclusion from the rest of the world.

After Hailsham House, Kathy, Ruth and Tommy move to another gothic place: the Cottages where they live with other clones until they become carers or donors. Similar to Hailsham, the Cottages is also a desolate space used to keep the clones isolated from the society. Moreover, regarding Kathy's following words: "We certainly didn't think much about our lives beyond the Cottages, or about who ran them, or how they fitted into the larger world. None of us thought like that in those days" (*Never Let Me Go* 114) one could understand that they have taken for granted their exclusion from "the larger world" and do not wonder much about the life of the "normals" living beyond the Cottages. Their submission to the decisions of the humans and their passivity may derive from the fact that the clones are aware of their difference and marginalization from the humans. Their physical distance from the rest of the world makes them accept their roles imposed on them by the humans more easily. Since they do not know much about the larger world, they do not know how to live in a different way either. Their unawareness stemming from marginalization helps the humans control the clones. The "normals" in Hailsham and the Cottages make the students perceive by a process of insinuation that they are not like the humans so they must be separated from the "normals". Until they are explicitly told the fact that they are clones, they are made to sense that they are the others of the society. Kathy narrates this intuition as follows:

Thinking back now, I can see we were just at that age when we knew a few things about ourselves- about who we were, how we were different from our guardians, from the people outside- but hadn't yet understood what any of it meant. I'm sure somewhere in your childhood, you too had an experience like ours that day; similar if not in the actual details, then inside, in the feelings. (*Never Let Me Go* 36)

Kathy's narration derives from the attitude of the guardians. Since they look down upon the clones and discriminate them from the humans, the students could perceive that they are not one of them. The feeling of alienation from the guardians or people outside makes the clones recognize that they belong to another kind. Their isolation from the rest of the

people becomes natural or normal to them, and they are persuaded not to rebel. To separate the others from “real” humans and prevent their escape and resistance, the humans create a special prison for the “biotechnological slavery” of the clones (Everett 58). These manufactured humans are persuaded to live in an isolated society controlled by the “normals”. Their entrapment in a predestined life is embodied in the confined gothic spaces. The humans plan the life of the clones in which they cannot be “film stars, go to America or work in supermarkets”. As Miss Lucy explicitly expresses they are created only to donate their organs so their futures have been already decided. (*Never Let Me Go* 79-80) Actually, the humans ignore the feelings, ideas and wishes of the clones to exploit them for the human benefit. According to Cary Wolfe,

As long as this humanist and speciesist structure of subjectivization remains intact, and as long as it is institutionally taken for granted that it is all right to systematically exploit and kill nonhuman animals simply because of their species, then the humanist discourse of species will always be available for use by some humans against other humans as well, to countenance violence against the social other of whatever species – or gender, or race, or class, or sexual difference. (*Animal Rites* 8)

Considering Wolfe's statement, one could understand that just like other species such as animals, the clones of *Never Let Me Go* are abused by the humans because of their being non-human. Just as we raise animals for our own needs and use them, the humans do the same to clones. They become the victims of a human centred culture that gives value to them only for the sake of their organs. Like a material, they are used for the benefit of the human race that consider themselves superior to the other kind of beings. To justify their exploitation, the humans both dehumanize and otherize the clones as a consequence of the “humanist and speciesist structure of subjectivization”. They aim to” [ensure] a clear boundary for the human and non-human others. (Nayar 119) In this sense, the issue of otherness is employed to demonstrate the violence against and abuse of the social other; clones in the novel. They are both metaphorically and literally entrapped by the humans

in certain lives and spaces. The restricted gothic spaces become a part of their entrapment deriving from their submission to the decisions of the humans. Their submission and discouragement supported by these gothic spaces prove the oppressive power of the antropocentric culture. As the humans have the power, they have the right to control the non-humans. To criticize the discrimination and suppression of the human race, Cary Wolfe asks the question: “For what does it mean when the aspiration of human freedom, extended to all, regardless of race or class or gender, has as its material condition of possibility absolute control over the lives of nonhuman others?” (*Animal Rites* 8) The control of the humans are considered like a supernatural force by these “nonhuman others” and they just passively submit to it like a divine fate in the novel. The humans make the clones so powerless and inferior that they can easily exploit them. The suppressive, confining and isolated gothic spaces become the representation of their entrapment and otherness. Consequently, the gothic spaces make the exploitation and alienation easier for the clones and at the same time point out human oppression.

In the novel, being proud of themselves, the head guardian Miss Emily and Madame who is the mysterious woman visiting Hailsham and taking the best artworks of the clones for her Gallery claim that these special places are “humane, cultivated environments” which aim to raise the clones “as sensitive and intelligent as any ordinary human being” (*Never Let Me Go* 256). They prefer to ignore how these gothic spaces accentuate the border between the species. In their opinion, thanks to these places, the clones have gained the right to be called “students,” otherwise they were just “shadowy objects in test tubes” (256). Considering the education the clones take in the Hailsham House, these guardians assert that the clones are treated like ordinary humans there. However, not only the physical condition of the gothic spaces but the culture and life within them are based on marginalization. For instance, Miss Emily and Madame try to prove that the clones have humanlike souls by using the arts of the students as a sign of their humanhood. Thus, they

specify their humanness pointing at certain characteristics. To explain the reason why creativity is highly valued in Hailsham Miss Emily states that

We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your souls. Or to put it more finely, we did it *to prove you had souls at all.*"

She paused, and Tommy and I exchanged glances for the first time in ages. Then I asked:

"Why did you have to prove a thing like that, Miss Emily? Did someone think we didn't have souls?"

A thin smile appeared on her face. "It's touching, Kathy, to see you so taken a back. It demonstrates, in a way, that we did our job well. As you say, why would anyone doubt you had a soul? But I have to tell you my dear, it wasn't something commonly held when we first set out all those years ago. And though we've come a long way since then, it's still not a notion universally held, even today ..." (*Never Let Me Go* 255)

Her explanation indicates that the creative skills of the students are regarded as features to reveal their human side to oppose the idea that they are only "objects" without souls used for the sake of humanity. In this sense, the clones like Tommy, who are not good at art, are devalued by their teachers. Even their peers, who are also aware of the fact that it is a big deal to be creative in Hailsham, underrate him. Hence, the creative skills cause a discrimination in Hailsham.

Regarding the fact that humans value the ability to create as a human feature, it would be essential to mention the ideas of the posthumanist critic Robert Pepperell. He describes human existence from a general perspective as follows:

If we can start to see how the most 'sacred' of human attributes, such as conscious experience, creativity, and aesthetic appreciation, operate in ways not dissected from other functions in the universe, then we are moving away from the notion of humans as unique, isolated entities and towards a conception of existence in which the human is totally integrated with the world in all its manifestations, including nature, technology, and other beings. (*Never Let Me Go* 100)

Pepperell both criticizes the view of people who have differentiated the humans from other species because of their creativity or aesthetic evaluation, and underlines the discrimination and otherization the situation can cause. By using the creative skills of the students as a reflection of their soul, the guardians do the same thing. Since they see creativity as a sacred attribute for the humanity, they try to emphasize the clones must be creative enough, in other words human enough, if they want to deserve a decent life. Likewise, according to Nayar

Monster theory's major contribution to critical posthumanism is to point to the problematic of species identity by showing how various criteria – origin and birth, spatial location, ‘essential’ qualities, form, identifiable species categories – have been invoked to relegate particular forms of life to the realm of the monstrous, thereby ensuring a clear boundary for the human. (119)

He points out that to be monster means to be different from the “normal” humans. Thus, the clones’ different way of creation in makes them dehumanized in the eyes of the humans. From another angle, Nayar indicates that when someone describes humanity or monstrosity with certain features, it is the creativity for the guardians, they underline the boundaries between the humans and others. His theory indicates how the entities are categorized with specific characteristics and the different ones are dehumanized in a humanist culture. In his novel, Ishiguro indicates that the humans prefer to reject the blurred line between different existences by praising creativity as an indicator of humanness. The humans’ desire for discrimination between species through the creativity causes a hierarchical division between them. To emphasize the humans’ lack of empathy and compassion based on the hierarchical difference and otherizing, Cary Wolfe states that “We need to understand that the ethical and philosophical urgency of confronting the institution of speciesism and crafting a posthumanist theory of the subject has nothing to do with whether you like animals” (*Animal Rites* 8). Although here Wolfe underlines the treatment of animals from a posthumanist viewpoint, the same argument applies to

Ishiguro's clones because as an ethical discourse, posthumanism is mainly concerned about how humanism creates a hierarchy among existences. Wolfe indicates that the discrimination against someone or something can beget the oppression and domination of all othered existences. Regarding Tommy's abasement it is possible to suggest that creativity is ironically used as a signifier for humanness by the guardians who do not even consider the clones as completely humans to create a discrimination between the students in Hailsham. This irony demonstrates that the humans do not only differentiate themselves from the clones but also create a hierarchy among the students considering their level of "humanhood" according to their creative skills. Being a human or being creative enough becomes a criterion to be treated well in the humanist world of the people in *Never Let Me Go*. In this sense, the treatment of the clones by the guardians in the gothic space becomes an example of humanist discrimination and desire for boundaries and labels. Besides, in line with Wolfe's statement before, this humanist treatment indicates that any kind of exploitation or discrimination can lead to another one irrespective of whether they are human or not.

On the other hand, even though the guardians never truly accept the clones as humans, they ironically try to underline the human side of the clones. The guardian Emily explains why they cannot fully accept the clones as humans with the following words: [The humans'] overwhelming concern was that their own children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, did not die from cancer, motor neurone disease, heart disease. So for a long time ... people did their best not to think about [the clones]. And if they did, they tried to convince themselves [the clones] weren't really like us' (*Never Let Me Go* 240). Emily clarifies that the reason behind their confusing attitude derives from the human selfishness. As they are aware of the fact that the clones are almost the same with the humans they think they deserve a human treatment but they also need to use them for their own benefit so they convince themselves that the clones are not completely human.

To silence their conscience for their exploitation, they prefer not to totally accept their humanness while they ironically try to ease their conscience by providing the human treatment of the clones.

Furthermore, *In Never Let Me Go*, the reader can observe how the marginalized creatures can disturb the humans with their confusing nature. Similar to Judith Halberstam's Dracula example in her "Technologies of Monstrosity: Bram Stoker's *Dracula*", the clones signify "[the] otherness itself, a distilled version of all others produced by and within fictional texts" with their "repulsive and fascinating" sides (88). Similar to other hybrid characters in gothic literature, they become an embodiment of otherness by disturbing the humans both by their similarity to the "normals" and their distinction. In the novel, similar to "the normals", the clones have some "good" features like the ability to write essays or to create paintings beside their repelling artificiality. However, no matter how much they resemble humans, they are not fully human because of their way of creation. As they cannot enter the realm of humanity, they are considered monsters. Therefore, even the teachers who seem to defend and highlight their humanity admit that they have a kind of revulsion for their students. The paradoxical treatment of the clones by humans causes an inner conflict in the clones: they are treated as humans on the one hand (their creativity is encouraged), on the other the same guardians are repulsed by them. That is why the clones, sensing the negative attitude towards them, decide to test the Madame as follows:

The plan we'd come up with to test Ruth's theory was very simple: we—the six of us in on it—would lie in wait for Madame somewhere, then "swarm out" all around her, all at once. We'd all remain perfectly civilised and just go on our way, but if we timed it right, and she was taken off-guard, we'd see—Ruth insisted—that she really was afraid of us.

...

And I can still see it now, the shudder she seemed to be suppressing, the real dread that one of us would accidentally brush against her. And though we just kept on walking, we all felt it; it was like we'd walked from the sun right into chilly shade.

Ruth had been right: Madame *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. (*Never Let Me Go* 34-5)

This experiment demonstrates that the guardians do not consider the clones human enough to like them. The fact that students feel like insects is a result of their lack of love and their exclusion. The narrator's spider metaphor for the students and the identification of the clones with an insect reflect the humans' attitude towards the non-humans. As another example of such kind of discrimination against other species, Miss Emily's confession reveals the feelings of the humans for the "others":

We're all afraid of you. I myself had to fight back the dread of you almost every day I was at Hailsham. There were times I'd look down at you all from my study window and I'd feel such revulsion. (*Never Let Me Go* 264)

Her words explicitly support the common point of view of the humans about the clones. Although the clones look just like ordinary human beings, the humans are both afraid of and repelled by the clones. From an anthropocentric perspective, the humans see themselves as the most supreme species in the great chain of beings, so they either detest or look down upon the other species like spiders, or in this case the clones. The humans become terrified and repelled when they come across such kind of "marginal" or "inferior" beings.

As another gothic element, the figure of doppelganger is also employed in *Never Let Me Go*. Even in the early works of literature there are doubles to emphasize the dualities in life and the human soul, and to reveal the hidden familiarity in the unfamiliar one. From a psychological perspective, this figure turns out to be a way to look into the depths of the unconscious. According to Freudian psychoanalysis, the doubling of the conscious and unconscious mind, the self and the shadow self, the subject and their mirrored ego

can be observed through the doppelgänger (Hughes, David Punter, Andrew Smith 194 *The Encyclopaedia of the Gothic*, Vol 2). Associated with the uncanny by Freud, when somebody comes across the doppelgänger, they are terrified by their familiarity. In other words, the dread of the double derives from its evocation of the uncanny.

In *Never Let Me Go*, the figure of doppelgänger works like a mirror in which the clones see their reflection from the perspective of the humans. During the case in which they test and see the response of Madame, the clones have a chance to look in the mirror and see their reflection in the eyes of the humans:

The first time you glimpse yourself through the eyes of a person like that, it's a cold moment. It's like walking past a mirror you've walked past every day of your life, and suddenly it shows you something else, something troubling and strange. (*Never Let Me Go* 36)

The clones sense how they repel the humans with their existence. When the clones look at themselves through the eyes of the humans, they realize that the so-called superior species look down upon them with horror and antipathy. Confused with the question of who they are, they see their reflection in the humans for the first time and filled with the feeling of uncanny which is defined as “troubling and strange” by Kathy. Therefore, it becomes possible to suggest that the figure of doppelgänger serves the clones to face the bitter realities about themselves. They realize the repressed which is secretly very familiar and hidden “not in the actual details then inside, in the feelings” (*Never Let Me Go* 36). The humans do not explicitly say or demonstrate they are repelled, yet when the clones see the reaction of Madame they already know her feelings in a strange way. Her response is actually quite familiar to them because it is just a reflection of the general attitude of the humans towards the clones. When they obviously see the horror and disgust of the humans for the first time, it becomes an uncanny moment for the clones.

On the other hand, when Madame realizes that the clones look exactly like the natural humans, she becomes terrified as well. In tune with Freud's theory, the doppelgänger becomes a source of fear for the humanity too. According to Katherine Bowers "The terror lies in [the] double revealing your own hidden, true self, perhaps, even worse, a self hidden even to you" ("Gothic Doubling and the Double Gothically" 244). When something very familiar, which is concealed or kept out of sight, comes into existence in an unfamiliar way, this moment evokes horror for the Madame. The uncanny derives from the resemblance of the clones to the humans because it disturbs the humans' self image of uniqueness. As the "normals" endeavour to maintain their uniqueness through the marginalization of the clones by othering them, the familiarity of the clones threatens and terrifies them. In this sense, these artificially created humans scare and shock the "normals" with their existence in human form or similarity to the naturals. The humans have difficulty in marginalizing the clones who are almost the same as them. When their similarity is considered as a threat to the human uniqueness and superiority the figure of doppelganger serves to posthumanist approach which aims to oppose this understanding. To lose human supremacy and distinction of humanism and stop sustaining of human exceptionalism through doppelganger issue support posthumanism. As another example, while Kathy is dancing during the song of Judy Bridgewater, she realizes that Madame is watching her:

There was one strange incident around this time I should tell you about here. It really unsettled me, and although I wasn't to find out its real meaning until years later, I think I sensed, even then, some deeper significance to it.

...

I froze in shock. Then within a second or two, I began to feel a new kind of alarm, because I could see there was something strange about the situation ... And the odd thing was she was crying. It might even have been one of her sobs that had come through the song to jerk me out of my dream.

...

But she just went on standing out there, sobbing and sobbing, staring at me through the doorway with that same look in her eyes she always had when

she looked at us, like she was seeing something that gave her the creeps.
(*Never Let Me Go* 70-1)

Madame witnesses the humanness of the unfamiliar at that moment with Kathy once more. She considers that Kathy is dreaming of a baby with the pillow in her arms. Regarding that the clones also can have human desires like having babies and Kathy's emotional experience, Madame has a chance to see the soul of the doppelgänger. In line with Freud's theory of the uncanny, she is filled with the "creepiness" because

The subject of the 'uncanny' is a province of this kind. It is undoubtedly related to what is frightening—to what arouses dread and horror; equally certainly, too, the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with what excites fear in general. (1)

As Madame neglects the fact that the clones have human qualities their human characteristics still surprise and frighten her. On the other side, in *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature*, Andrew J. Webbe defines the doppelgänger "as an amalgam of self and other" that combines subject and object (60). Regarding the hybridity of the clones, the doubleness also refers to the fusing of "the self" and "the other" or the human and clone in *Never Let Me Go*. Dismissed from the humanity both literally and figuratively, the clones are identified as the objects who are created to be used for expanding the human lifespan. When the humans see how these copies of the "normals" are similar to them, they feel something uncanny because the clones' both being subject or familiar and the object or the other at the same time "excite fear". Ishiguro presents the hesitation and confusion of the clones and humans at the same time to blur the sharp lines and boundaries between these entities and highlight the concepts of fluidity, multiplicity, plurality, interconnectedness which posthumanism proposes.

Overall, by telling a story of human clones who are abused for the benefit of the humans, Ishiguro suggests that the recent advancements in technology require new ways of understanding and acknowledging nonhuman agency. He lets the reader question the

essence and the limits of the human in an advanced biotechnological age. Rather than telling a story about how human life is guaranteed through technological enhancements, he helps, as in line with the posthumanist discourse, to consider how technology shapes the life of “the others” as well. The author questions whether technology only serves humankind, or whether it should. With its gothic elements – the doppelganger, the uncanny, monstrosity, non-human characters, dark, isolated and gloomy setting - the book explores the bleak life story of the human clones by questioning the neglected ethical consequences of biotechnologies for all living forms. In the process of questioning humanhood, the writer employs the gothic features to highlight the darkness of the human soul and focuses on the non-human characters to make the readers philosophize about humanity.

Above all, as a gothic and posthumanist work *Never Let Me Go* tells a story of othering from the perspective of the others to make it easier for the reader to empathize with them. In his novel Ishiguro rejects the literary exclusion of the posthumans by giving a voice to the copy of a human being. He does not put them in the position of an object but rather lets them become the subjects of their own stories. Thus, he subverts the distinction between human and non-human, self and other, reality and myth in an anthropocentric world. Through his posthumanist approach, he presents a critical attitude towards humanism’s “universalistic posture” and “binary logic” (Rosi Braidotti 15). Even though the clones are considered as others and monsters in the humanist world, the novel helps the reader question “who and what can count as a subject of ethical address” (Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism* 49). Contrary to the idea, which agrees that they are not worthy of ethical consideration, Ishiguro makes a statement that humans should care about other species. Through his posthuman characters, he elicits compassion and pity for them to let the reader embrace the otherness. His novel raises questions about bioethics, humanness and the relationship between science, technology and humanity. It tells a subjective story

from a clone's point of view through shedding light upon the feelings, thoughts and experiences of a "non-human" in a world dominated by humans. Thus, it helps the reader to think about what makes a human human and what makes something right or wrong without an anthropocentric approach.



CONCLUSION

In this study, different examples of the gothic novel, J. G. Ballard's *High-Rise* (1975) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) are examined to redefine and re-evaluate the concept of the human through pointing out the invalidity of the conventional understanding of humanism and its anthropocentric understanding by a posthumanist approach and with a closer look at the gothic elements. Although the books are quite different in terms of the stories they tell, they both reflect the dark side and cruelties of humanity. That is to say, in their gothic and dystopian worlds, both Ballard and Ishiguro benefit from the darkness of the gothic to reveal the dark realities of the human race so that they make the reader meditate upon what a human being is. The awareness coming through such a questioning is one of the purposes of this study.

In the first part of the study which draws a theoretical framework, the posthumanist approach as it used in the analysis of the novels is explained with a focus on its emphasis on plurality. To facilitate understanding of posthumanism, the other terms confused with it; transhumanism and anti-humanism are also defined in the framework. Transformed and altered by new technology and advancements in time, posthumanism has turned into a more complex theory with its uncertainty, ambiguity, flexibility and multiplicity. Throughout the study, a posthumanist reading of the novels are implemented with the help of various scholars. Despite its diversity, since posthumanism is all about the redefinition and transformation of the human in simple terms, the main focus of the study is the subversion of the humanistic imagery by scrutinizing the so-called superiority of the humankind. To challenge the limited and definite description of the human, the gothic genre is evaluated from a posthumanist perspective and how the gothic elements contribute to the posthumanist viewpoint is discussed. It is concluded that many features of the gothic, such as monstrosity, human irrationality and violence, are in conflict with

the superior human portrait drawn by humanism so that it overlaps with posthumanism in many ways. Through exemplifying some leading gothic works, it is expressed that the Gothic is interested in irrationality, sentimentalism, dark desires, emotions and fears so that it challenges conventional humanism, which emphasizes reason and rationality as humanity's most prominent characteristic. In other terms, the wildness and darkness of the Gothic threaten the humanistic values based on ethics, sanity, reason. Therefore, it becomes a genre which investigates human nature with a focus on its evil sides and helps to understand a posthumanist view of the human. Actually, both the gothic and posthumanism, in their own way, protest against the superiority of the humans based on their intellectuality or anatomy. Unlike the optimistic humanists, they oppose an arrogant, clear and simple representation of human beings to uncover the bitter realities of humanity and to reject the supremacy of human beings. Hence, it is suggested that they are related to each other in terms of the way they question the human soul and nature.

In the second part, the gothic elements of *High-Rise* - darkness, entrapment, isolation, taboos, hero villains, and monstrosity/animality - are examined through a posthumanist point of view to analyse how the Gothic helps to investigate the humanness. The analysis has revealed that Ballard employs these gothic characteristics to foreground the devilry and wildness of humankind. While the darkness, entrapment and isolation feeds the violence and evil in humans, they also let them embrace a lifestyle free from social taboos such as incest, murder, rape, torture and cannibalism, and at the end they turn into primitive wild creatures losing their "humanity". The situation points out the unstable and ambiguous human nature in the context of posthumanism. Besides, the fact that they follow their instincts rather than reason makes them gothic hero villains who violate the moral rules in pursuit of their "id". Unlike the heroes who are as perfect humans, they can be annoying, horrible and violent in contrast to humanist values. Their weakness, flaws, failures, and wickedness menace the image of the virtuous hero/ine. The hero-

villains of the novel are considered as figures to demonstrate that being moral or virtuous is not an innate human characteristic; it is a matter of choice. If the humans live in an ultimate free space, they can turn into bestial people; therefore, being a human can not be defined with some certain, natural or good characteristics.

It is also emphasized that Ballard's employment of technological devices in the same gothic space during the metamorphosis of the humans indicates that the civilized and rational human race who is intelligent enough to develop such kind of technological devices can become bestial creatures under different circumstances. It means when they have a chance to live in a space where they can follow their instincts and desires without social pressure and conformity, they can become savage. Their having the potential to be irrational, cruel and wild just as other entities is underlined to reject the human uniqueness of humanism. Therefore, the idea of their being superior to other creatures is proved to be invalid. In this chapter, the Gothic and posthumanism meets on the common point of monstrosity. The residents, who lose their humanity in a dark, isolated, oppressive gothic highrise, change into people having no morality, social rules or ethics in a space free from social norms and moralities. Supporting their devolution the gothic elements clash with the humanist approach that strictly distinguishes humans from non-humans by underrating non-humans because of their irrationality, primitiveness or wildness. On the other side, their barbarity, seaminess and abjectness are defined as monstrosity or animality by the humans in the novel because this is the case when a human being does evil. To ignore or reject evil in human nature and to separate them from the others, the human wickedness is called inhumanness or monstrosity/animality in reality as well. To criticize this humanist attitude, the violent behaviours of the humans are presented as a part of human nature in this study. To invite the reader to reconsider the definitions of rationality, culture, reason and conscience, the gothic space without these humanistic values are evaluated as a subversion of humanism. At last, it is concluded that with the

help of its gothic elements, *High-Rise* can make one philosophize about the dark realities about human nature, morality, rationality, conscience and the reality of these concepts by taking away these qualities from the human characters.

In the second part, the gothic features of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* are analysed to discuss their contribution to a posthumanist reading of the book. Since the characters of the novel are clones, why the book is suitable to be evaluated from a posthumanist approach rather than a transhumanist analysis is explained. Although the book is about an advanced biotechnological age, it does not focus on and celebrate these advances or technologies to praise human intelligence, thereby humanity. Instead, supported by the gothic elements such as dark, isolated and oppressive spaces, hybrid characters, and the doppelgangers, the book tells the melancholic story of the non-humans/clones in an oppressive humanist world. It encourages the reader to meditate on the effects of scientific advancements on other life forms. It helps to question the status of the nonhumans - clones - and the humans by asking whether biotechnology enhances or diminishes humanhood. It highlights the ethical side of biotechnology through presenting a human race who can live freely enough to exploit the other species.

The gothic elements employed to create a dark future for the non-humans in a highly technological age serving the posthumanist criticism of the human treatment in the novel. During the analysis of the novel, how the gothic features contribute to the posthuman critique which rejects human supremacy based on rationality through biotechnologies is discussed. Moreover, as another common figure in the gothic, the hybridity of the clones are evaluated to state the fact that though these marginalized non-humans are not natural-born humans, they are quite "human" in terms of their mental and intellectual skills, their search for identity, personality, memory and attitudes towards life and other entities. It is claimed that the hybridity of the clones is in line with Haraway's cyborg metaphor in terms of their blurring the distinctions between humans and nonhumans. They contribute

to the heterogeneous perspectives about humans with their human and non-human features which bring them closer to people and distinguish them from humans. Hence, these gothic, hybrid and posthumanist clones offer new understandings of what it means to be a human by questioning what is innate and cultural about humanness. Moreover, as a consequence of their hybrid nature, the clones are marginalized in the human realm. It is exemplified that the humans reject the clones' humanness and they associate them with the "monsters" and make them the "others" in their anthropocentric technological world. That is to say, since they do not accept the clones in the realm of humanity, these non-humans are considered monsters and others. To analyse how the theme of monstrosity and otherness in posthumanism is supported by the gothic elements, the dark, isolated, windy space with the sense of entrapment space is evaluated. It is revealed that the horrifying, isolated and confining gothic space becomes the physical representation of their entrapment and exclusion in a humanist world. As a result, while their "monstrosity" leads them to be othered, their otherness is supported by the gothic spaces which are created to make the exploitation, control and alienation of the clones easier. After the effect of the physical condition of the gothic spaces, the humanist treatment within them are discussed by examining the behaviours of the guardians. Their hierarchical treatment of the students deriving from the creative skills is employed to point out how humans tend to create discrimination and categorize species according to specific characteristics in a humanist culture. It is also added that similar to other hybrid characters in gothic literature, as the clones embody the theme of otherness/monstrosity by disturbing the humans both by their similarity to the "normals" and their distinction, they repel the humans. Since the humans see themselves as the most supreme species in the great chain of beings in their anthropocentric world, they are terrified of the so-called marginality or inferiority of the clones. Moreover, as another gothic element, the figure of the doppelganger, which works like a mirror for the clones to see their reflection in the eyes

of the humans, is examined to let the clones face how the humans consider them as monsters. At last, deriving from the analysis of the book, it is concluded that *Never Let Me Go* tells a story of the non-humans in the world of the humans to make the reader understand the others better through making them ask questions about what a human being is. Considering the effect of the gothic elements, it can be claimed that they represent the bleakness of the life-story of the clones by demonstrating how the humans can be selfish and contemptuous entities who tend to ignore and exploit other existences.

Consequently, although Ballard and Ishiguro benefit from the gothic genre, they are different from each other in terms of their use of it in their posthuman worlds. Even when they employ the same gothic element, such as monstrosity, they serve posthumanism in their own way. To clarify, on one side, Ballard's work takes place in a very a modern and technological gothic space filled with violent people. The greatest irony of the book is the regression and corruption of people living in this modern space with an advanced technology. The darkness of the building resulting from blackouts, the sense of entrapment supported by broken elevators and desolation as a consequence of out of order telephones create an environment for the humans where it becomes easier to lose their humanity. At last, the wildness, brutality and evil cause them to become "monsters". On the other side, the same gothic characteristics in *Never Let Me Go* provide a space which turns out to be an indicator of the metaphorical and physical marginalization of the clones. Their being the copies of the humans makes the clones to be othered as monsters in the humanist society despite their similarity to the real humans. As a consequence, while monstrosity is associated with inhumanity in Ballard's work, the monstrosity of the clones in *Never Let Me Go* is all about their biological difference from the humans. The situation points out that monstrosity is an artificial term created to ensure binaries between human and non-humans and the ones who are different from the "normal" humans are tend to be dehumanized in the human centred society. The authors' use of the gothic elements as a

tool to question what a human being is helps the reader to conceive the relationship between the Gothic and posthumanism. As Robert Pepperell claims in “The Posthuman Manifesto”, “It is now clear that humans are no longer the most important things in the universe. This is something the humanists have yet to accept” (177). In line with Pepperell, *Never Let Me Go* and *High-Rise* suggest that the anthropocentric understanding of the universe cannot be used to justify the superiority of the human race who tend to be uncivilized, irrational, devilish or insensitive creatures. These dystopian novels become a means to understand the invalidity of humanistic qualities and prompt the reader reconsider and challenge the conventional understanding of human.



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ÖZET

Bu çalışma posthuman (insansonrası/ötesi) kuram açısından insan tanımının ne olduğunu J G. Ballard'ın *High-Rise* (Gökdelen, 1975) ve Kazuo Ishiguro' nun *Never Let Me Go* (Beni Asla Bırakma, 2005) adlı eserlerindeki gotik elementler vasıtasıyla ele almakta ve insan merkezli ve hümanist bir bakış açısının insanı anlamadaki yetersizliğini tartışmaktadır. Bir başka deyişle, hem Ishiguro hem de Ballard'ın distopyaları insan nedir sorusuna odaklanan ve insanı “diğer”leri denilen hayvanlar, makineler gibilerinden apaçık ayırmayan ve insan odaklı bir bakış açısını reddeden posthumanist anlayışla incelenmiştir. İnsanı evrenin merkezinden alarak insan olmayan diğer varlıklarla aynı düzeyde değerlendiren posthumanist kuram gelişen teknoloji ve değişen bilimle beraber gelen değişiklikleri de göz önünde bulundurmaktadır. Posthumanizm, günümüzde insanlar farklı kimliklere sahip melez yaratıklara dönüştürüldüğünden artık tek ve net bir insan olgusunun kalmadığından bahsetmektedir. Öte yandan, romanlarda insan türünün göz ardı edilmiş, karanlık ve kötü taraflarını ortaya çıkaran gotik unsurlar, insanlığın kendisiyle yüzleşmesine izin vermekte ve insanlığı yücelten geleneksel hümanizm ile çelişmektedir. Bu anlamda, gotik öğelerin de posthumanizm teorisine hizmet ettiği ve insanın üstünlüğüne meydan okuyan bir anlayışı desteklediği belirtilmiştir.

Ballard'ın *Gökdelen* kitabı ironik bir şekilde modernlik ve medeniyetin simgesi olabilecek mekânlardan birinde bir gökdelende yaşayan insan topluluğun son teknoloji ile donatılmış bir ortamda nasıl insanlığını kaybetmeye başladığını ve sonunda medeniden ilkele evrildiğini gösteren bir modern çağ tüketim eleştirisidir. Bu çalışmada romanın korku, şiddet ve cinsellikle dolu gotik bir eser olarak, insanlığın karanlık yüzünü gün yüzüne çıkardığı ve belki de yok saydığı, kaçtığı ilkel doğasıyla yüzleştirdiği anlatılmaktadır. Yazarın romanda çizdiği insanlık portresinin insan merkezci ve kibirli humanizm anlayışını eleştiren bir posthumanist bakış açısını desteklediği görülmektedir.

Gökdelen ile paralel olarak, gotik elementlerle dolu olan *Beni Asla Bırakma* romanı aslında bilimi ve onu yaratan insan aklını arka planda tutan bir bilim kurgu eseridir. Bu eser içerdği gotik öğeler sayesinde insanlığın karanlık taraflarını yansıtan distopik ve ürkütücü bir hal almaktadır. Kitapta yer alan klonlar insan algısını sorgulatırken, “insani” özellikler dediğimiz nitelikleri de tartışma konusu yapmaktadır; böylece eser posthumanist bir bakış açısıyla incelenmeye elverişli hale gelmektedir. Yazarın ötekileştirilen klonları romanın merkezine alması sayesinde, bu çalışmada insan olmayan “öteki”lerin insan merkezli bir evrende nasıl sömürüldüğü ve dışlandığı birinci ağızdan anlatılan olaylarla incelenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, hem *Gökdelen* hem de *Beni Asla Bırakma* birbirinden farklı olay örgülerine rağmen içerdikleri gotik elementler ve çizdikleri insan portresi bağlamında insanı sorgulayan posthumanist bir yaklaşımla incelenebilmeye elverişli anlatılardır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Posthumanist (İnsan ötesi/sonrası) Kuram, İnsan, Gotik, Hümanizm, Ballard, *High-Rise* (*Gökdelen*), Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (*Beni Asla Bırakma*).

ABSTRACT

SÖZÜGEÇEN, Sude. “An Analysis of J.G. Ballard's *High-Rise* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* as Examples of the Gothic Genre in the Context of Posthumanist Theory”. MA Thesis, Ankara University, 2019.

This study deals with the definition of human from a posthumanist perspective through the gothic elements in J G. Ballard's *High-Rise* (1975) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and discusses the inadequacy of an anthropocentric and humanist perspective for understanding human kind. In other words, both Ishiguro and Ballard's dystopias are analysed through a posthumanist approach that focuses on the question of what it is to be a human being. Posthumanists does not explicitly distinguish humans from the ones called "others" such as animals and machines and rejects a human-oriented perspective. The posthumanist theory, which can take the human from the center of the universe and put it on the same level as other non-human beings, takes into account the changes that come with developing technology and changing science. It states that today there is no more single and definite human notion as the humans are transformed into hybrid creatures having different identities. On the other hand, the gothic elements in the novels which reveal the ignored, dark and evil sides of the human kind by letting them face their self, challenge the traditional western humanism that glorifies the human reason and goodness. In this sense, the gothic elements serve the posthumanist theory and support the understanding that rejects the superiority of the human as well.

Ballard's *High-Rise* is a critique of modern age consumption that shows how the human community living in a high-rise , construct which ironically is a symbol of modernity and civilization, begin to lose their humanity in an environment equipped with

the latest technology and eventually transform from civilized into primitive. In this study, it is explained that as a gothic work marked by fear, violence and sexuality, the novel reveals the dark side of humanity, and make human beings confront their primitive nature. It is seen that the human portrait drawn in the novel by the author supports a posthumanist viewpoint that criticizes the humanist understanding and its anthropocentric and arrogant perspective.

In parallel with *High-Rise*, *Never Let Me Go*, is actually a science fiction work which puts the science and the human intelligence in the background. Due to the gothic elements it contains, the work becomes more frightening by reflecting the dark sides of humanity in a dystopian society. While the clones in the book make the reader question the perception of the human, it also makes the “human” characteristics a subject of discussion so that the novel becomes suitable for posthumanist analysis. Thanks to the author’s putting the othered non-humans at the centre of the novel, how they are exploited and excluded in a human-centered universe is examined through the first person’s narrative in the novel. As a result, despite their entirely different plots, both *High-Rise* and *Never Let Me Go* could be analysed through a posthumanist approach which questions what a human being is thanks to the gothic elements.

Key Words

Posthumanist Theory, Human, Gothic, Humanism, Ballard, *High-Rise*, Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*.