The internationally acclaimed author described his influences and writing process at a major event

Prize-winning author Kazuo Ishiguro visited Birkbeck to discuss his most recent novel, *Never Let Me Go*, with more than 1,000 students and alumni.

The popular event was organised under the auspices of the Booker Prize Foundation’s ‘Universities Initiative’, which facilitates visits by highly acclaimed authors to UK universities, in order to introduce students from all disciplines to high-quality contemporary literature. This was the second time that Birkbeck has hosted an author as part of the Universities Initiative, following a visit from award-winning novelist Sarah Waters, in 2011.

In front of a full-capacity audience, Ishiguro, who was born in Japan and lives in Britain, discussed his Man Booker Prize-shortlisted novel, *Never Let Me Go* (2005), as well as earlier works, including *The Remains of the Day*, which won the Booker Prize in 1989.

*Never Let Me Go*, set in a disturbingly skewed version of England in the late 1990s, is a story of love, friendship and memory, charged throughout with a sense of the fragility of life.

Prior to the event, which took place in November 2012, all first-year undergraduate students were offered a free copy of *Never Let Me Go*.

The discussion with Birkbeck’s Professor of Creative Writing Russell Celyn Jones, a former Booker Prize judge, encompassed topics such as: how Ishiguro chooses his narrators and the way that their voices develop; attempts in his early writing to capture the Japan of his childhood; and how the relationships between characters are more important in his writing than individual characters in isolation.

Ishiguro then took questions from an enthusiastic audience and was asked about his writing processes as well as the science behind *Never Let Me Go*.

Professor Hilary Fraser, Executive Dean of Birkbeck’s School of Arts, said: “We were delighted to welcome Kazuo Ishiguro to Birkbeck. Just as the Man Booker Prize opens up the finest contemporary literature to the widest possible audience, so Birkbeck is an elite research university whose mission is to give a broad and diverse spectrum of students the best higher education, and we are pleased to have this opportunity to work together as partners to co-sponsor the Man Booker at Birkbeck. It is wonderful for our students and alumni to have the chance to hear first-hand from distinguished authors such as Ishiguro.”

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