
KÖNIGS ERLÄUTERUNGEN

Band 355

Kazuo Ishiguro, **NEVER LET ME GO**

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PRÜFUNGSAUFGABEN MIT MUSTERLÖSUNGEN

In Ergänzung zu den Aufgaben im Buch (Kapitel 6) finden Sie hier zwei weitere Aufgaben mit Musterlösungen. Die Zahl der Sternchen bezeichnet das Anforderungsniveau der jeweiligen Aufgabe.

Aufgabe 5 ***

In Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go* the issue of cloning is only of minor importance. Please discuss this statement.

DISCUSSION

Mögliche Lösung in knapper Fassung:

Never Let Me Go may be read as a tale which conveys a warning against the dangers of cloning. But quite clearly that was not among the author's main concerns when writing the novel. Themes like the cloning of human beings are usually associated with Science Fiction. However, two key features of the genre are missing here: familiarity with current trends in science and technology and the wish to convincingly extrapolate these trends into the future. But Ishiguro does not seem to have even the slightest interest in the technical details of cloning or organ donation. Actually, in the whole novel there is hardly any science at all. Furthermore, events are not set in the future but in an alternative England of the 1970s to 1990s. That place generally comes across as technologically backward compared to the real country at the time with the one exception that the cloning of people (which even nowadays still appears futuristic) has already been fully developed. It is also worth noticing that well into her report Kathy, the unreliable narrator, keeps the reader (and partly even herself) in the dark about the fact that she and her friends are clones. Only on page 171 it is mentioned directly for the first time. For most of the time, she tells her story in a way which makes us forget that we are confronted with clones and leads us to consider the characters as regular human beings. Like many other things in this "hall of mirrors" (26) of a story, the clone is partly there to puzzle the readers and keep them active and involved.

So even though the whole business of cloning certainly has some significance in itself in the context of *Never Let Me Go*, on the whole it is not the essential theme. Instead it is an extremely complex metaphor which the author uses to explore the question of what it means to be human in today's world. Kathy deals with friendship, love, loss, memory, mortality and death like everyone else. Being a clone means that she needs to do so under extremely aggravated circumstances. Amongst other things, the slave-like clones are representative of all kinds of groups that society marginalizes by pushing them to the edges and denying them an active voice and an identity of their own or by even dehumanizing them. Thus the novel enables readers to better empathize with people who in real life feel powerless and are discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age or religion. Even young and insecure people who just feel overwhelmed by the pressure of social media and the unattainable body and life ideals they project may identify with Kathy and the other clones. The protagonists experience the whole spectrum of emotional responses to marginalization and situations of powerlessness: anger, fear, self-blame, sadness, stress etc.

There is a whole wealth of interconnected themes in *Never Let Me Go* and with every aspect the clone serves as central image. One of the most important themes is the society of control. The novel portrays a world in which the state tries to gain complete power over people's bodies and minds using technology like cloning as well as sophisticated methods of manipulation, brainwashing and surveillance. The cultural landscape in *Never Let Me Go* is also dominated by cheap mass-replicated media images like in the porn magazines that can be found in the Cottages and by mass-produced consumer goods like the ones the students can buy at the Woolworth's in Norfolk. Everything is only a copy of something else and people have never learnt how to make their own genuine experiences. Clones as copies, i. e. genetically identical twins, of human beings, are the most powerful symbol of this capitalist mass culture taken to extremes.

Aufgabe 6 *

A glossary is an alphabetical list of terms or phrases in a special field of knowledge with definitions. Please explain the meanings of the following words for a glossary of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*:

Carer – collections – complete – the Cottages – courses – Culture Briefing – donor – Exchange – the Gallery – guardian – possible – recovery centres – Sales – token

Mögliche Lösung in knapper Fassung:

carer	Before starting to donate their organs, the clones work for some years as carers for donors; "carer" in this case is a euphemism for hospice worker, i.e. someone who looks after terminally ill patients.
collections	The Sales make it possible for the Hailsham students to build up collections of personal items; Kathy keeps hers in a chest and feeling a strong emotional bond with her possessions even keeps them while staying at the Cottages.
complete	A euphemism for "die". The clones and their guardians avoid speaking directly about death.
The Cottages	A disused farm where after leaving Hailsham the clones live rather freely together with clones from other schools before they become carers.
courses	After leaving the Cottages the clones receive training which qualifies them as carers.
Culture Briefing	In Hailsham the students are isolated from the outside world. That is why they have classes where they role-play situations they will later experience, for example ordering in a restaurant or dealing with a police officer.
donor	The clones were only designed so that their organs can be harvested once they reach a certain age. Since they did not choose this purpose of life themselves, it is actually wrong to say that they donate their organs. In reality, they are used as reservoirs of hearts, livers, eyes etc. They usually die after three or four organs have been extracted.
Exchange	Together with the Sales, the Exchanges are the only opportunities for the Hailsham students to buy, swap or sell things. Exchanges are exhibitions organized every three months where they can trade their creative work.
The Gallery	The best creative works by the students are reserved for a mysterious outside Gallery organized by Madame who regularly pays Hailsham short visits. Being selected for the Gallery is considered a great honour. But only much later in life does Kathy learn what the whole point of it was. Madame and Miss Emily wanted to demonstrate to the general public that the clones had souls.
guardian	Term for the teachers at Hailsham who also serve as trusted persons for the parentless children. With the exception of Miss Lucy the guardians betray the trust placed in them by manipulating and supervising the clones.
possible	A term used in the Cottages for the "normal" human being that a clone was copied from. Theoretically the clones should be able to find the persons they were modelled on when travelling across the country.
recovery centres	The institutions where the clones stay between donations; the word is another euphemism which obscures the exploitation of the clones. The "donors" are not kept there to recover fully and then leave the place and live a normal life but only to restore them to a state that enables doctors to extract the next organ.
Sales	Monthly events where students can buy toys, clothes and other objects which are brought to Hailsham from the outside world in a van.
token	The currency that is given to the Hailsham students by the guardians and that they can use to buy other students' work.