
KÖNIGS ERLÄUTERUNGEN

Band 355

Textanalyse und Interpretation zu

Kazuo Ishiguro

NEVER LET ME GO

Stefan Munaretto

Alle erforderlichen Infos für Abitur, Matura, Klausur und Referat
plus Musteraufgaben mit Lösungsansätzen



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1. DAS WICHTIGSTE AUF EINEN BLICK – SCHNELLÜBERSICHT

Biography:

⇒ S. 11 ff.

- Kazuo Ishiguro was born in 1954 in Nagasaki, Japan. His family moved to England in 1960.
- He studied English and Philosophy at the University of Kent from 1974–1978 and then Creative Writing from 1979–1980 at the University of East Anglia.
- He has lived in London since 1981. His first novel, *A Pale View of Hills*, was published in 1982.

Historical context:

⇒ S. 15 ff.

- Reproductive cloning means making a genetic copy of an existing living being.
- The technology has been used for some species of mammals but never for human beings. Reproductive human cloning is prohibited almost everywhere in the world.
- *Never Let Me Go* is part of a long tradition of literature and film about the post-human condition, i. e. human life taken beyond its natural limitations with the help of technology.
- The novel is also one of the most important examples of dystopian fiction about oppressive systems that control people and deny them individual autonomy.

Details and explanations of important works:

⇒ S. 28 ff.

- Kazuo Ishiguro has published seven novels which all focus on similar themes: memory, loss, grief and regret. Most of them have an unreliable first person-narrator revisiting his past.

- He is best known for his third novel, *The Remains of the Day* (1989). Its protagonist Stevens is an English butler who dedicated his life to the service of an aristocrat.

Origin and sources:

- Beginning in 1990, Ishiguro thought about writing a story about a strange group of young people living somewhere in rural England. But only in 2001 he had the idea that they are clones and finally started writing the novel which took another three years. ⇒ S. 33 ff.
- Ishiguro does not consider himself as a British or British-Japanese author but aims at a global audience. That is why he avoids settings and themes of mainly local concern.

Summary:

Kathy, Ruth and Tommy are clones who have been created as organ donors for the “normal” population. At a secluded boarding school, they are conditioned to accept their predestined fate. When they are teenagers Kathy falls in love with Tommy but he begins a relationship with Ruth. After finishing school the three friends spend two years at another place in the countryside. Here the tensions between Kathy and Ruth culminate until Kathy leaves. The three then go their separate ways and only meet again when they are about 30 years old. Ruth and Tommy have already begun donating their organs while Kathy is still a “carer” for other clones. Shortly before she dies, Ruth apologizes for having kept the other two apart in the past. She tries to pave the way for Kathy and Tommy to become lovers and be happy at long last. They soon have to realize, however, that their hope to get a “deferral” and have a few more years together is illusory. Tommy soon dies after another donation and finally Kathy becomes a donor, too. ⇒ S. 38 ff.

Structure:

- ⇒ S. 56 ff.
 - Kathy H. is the 31-year-old first-person narrator who retrospectively tells the story of her life in flashbacks starting and ending at the same point in time.
 - The narrative is divided into three parts each with a different setting.
 - Kathy is an unreliable narrator. Her ability to discover and communicate the truth is limited.
 - She is obsessed with her “unlived life”, i. e. the opportunities she missed.

The characters and their constellations:

- ⇒ S. 65 ff.
 - The authoritarian state dehumanizes the clones to justify their enslavement.
 - The clones are brought up in isolation from society. Their whole life is managed by the non-clones.
 - In school they are under constant surveillance and conditioned to see their fate as “the natural course to follow” (201).
- ⇒ S. 75
 - Kathy, Ruth and Tommy are a troubled love triangle.
 - All three are torn between adapting to the system and their yearning for a normal life and freedom.
- ⇒ S. 76 f.
 - Kathy passively accepts her situation and settles for the role of friend and adviser and then later as carer for Ruth and Tommy.
- ⇒ S. 77 ff.
 - Ruth is talented and a natural leader but also manipulative and egocentric.
- ⇒ S. 80 f.
 - Tommy is an outsider at school with a tendency to temper tantrums.

- Chrissie and Rodney are clones, too. They are a couple and jealous of the clones who went to more privileged schools like Hailsham. ⇒ S. 81
- Miss Emily, Madame and Miss Lucy are the only important non-clones in the novel. ⇒ S. 82 ff.

Style and language:

- The narrator's style works on two levels. ⇒ S. 88 ff.
- Chattiness and a spiralling narrative technique determine the reader's first impression.
- Kathy's true inner drama is played out on another level beneath the shallow surface.
- Here everything is connected with Kathy's unconscious.
- On the second level the narrative is highly metaphorical which is a typical feature of the literary parable.
- Defamiliarization is another characteristic of the parabolic style. It is achieved by presenting a familiar world in a strange and uncanny way.

Approaches to interpretation:

- As a highly metaphorical text *Never Let Me Go* is specifically open to interpretation. ⇒ S. 100 ff.
- Even though the novel can be read as a cautionary tale about the dangers of biotechnology, human cloning turns out to be only a secondary theme.
- It is often seen as a meditation on the human condition. It addresses essentials of our existence like friendship, love, freedom, mortality and death.
- *Never Let Me Go* contains a critique of various features of modern civilization, especially of the society of control.

- The novel presents a society in which reality in people's minds has been replaced by mass replicated media images. The clone is the most powerful symbol of such a world.
- The novel predicted already in 2005 today's post-truth politics with their disregard for facts.
- Some critics consider it as "Post-Holocaust literature" because "the public secret" is one of its main themes.

Film version:

⇒ S. 110ff.

- *Never Let Me Go* was adapted to film by director Mark Romanek and released in 2010.
- The film tries to be faithful to its source but explores its themes much more superficially than the novel.
- It has an excellent cast, great cinematography and a haunting musical score, but the characters are less complex and credibly motivated than in the novel.

2.1 Biografie

2. KAZUO ISHIGURO: LEBEN UND WERK

2.1 Biografie

JAHR	ORT	EREIGNIS	ALTER
1954	Nagasaki (Japan)	Geburt am 8. 11. als Sohn von Shizuo und Shizuko Ishiguro. Kazuo hat eine ältere Schwester.	
1960	Guildford in der englischen Grafschaft Surrey	Die Familie zieht nach England um, wo Ishiguros Vater eine Stellung am National Institute of Oceanography annimmt. Der Aufenthalt ist ursprünglich auf eine Dauer von zwei Jahren ausgerichtet. Eine zweite Tochter wird geboren. In Guildford besucht Kazuo die Stoughton Primary School.	6
1966	Woking (Surrey)	Eintritt in die Woking County Grammar School.	12
1970	Woking (Surrey)	Nach mittlerweile zehn Jahren im Land beschließt die Familie, sich dauerhaft in Großbritannien niederzulassen. Ishiguro folgt seiner Leidenschaft für Musik: Bis 1976 tritt er regelmäßig als Singer-Songwriter in kleinen Clubs auf und versucht sich als Straßenmusiker in Paris.	16
1973	Wechselnde Orte in Großbritannien	Nach dem Schulabschluss nimmt sich Ishiguro ein Jahr Auszeit. Er arbeitet zunächst in verschiedenen Jobs, u. a. als Helfer bei der Jagd auf Moorhühner beim königlichen Balmoral Castle in Schottland.	19
1974	Nordamerika	Er bereist die Westküste der USA und Kanadas als Backpacker mit Gitarre. Unterwegs führt er ein Reisejournal, schreibt Erzählungen und schickt Demobänder an Plattenfirmen.	20



Kazuo Ishiguro
(* 1954)
© picture alliance /
Photoshot

2.2 Zeitgeschichtlicher Hintergrund

2.2 Zeitgeschichtlicher Hintergrund

- Reproductive cloning means making a genetic copy of an existing living being.
- The novel is set in an alternative version of late 20th-century England where humans are cloned.
- In real life the technology has been used for some species of mammals but never for human beings. Reproductive human cloning is prohibited almost everywhere in the world.
- Most contemporary philosophers think that every human being has a right to an individual genetic identity which can only be ensured through sexual reproduction.
- *Never Let Me Go* is part of a long tradition of literature and film about the post-human condition, i. e. human life taken beyond its natural limitations with the help of technology.
- Usually such stories about clones, cyborgs and entirely synthetic human beings warn of the consequences of science without ethical principles.
- The novel is also one of the most important examples of dystopian fiction about oppressive systems that control people and deny them individual autonomy.

**ZUSAMMEN-
FASSUNG**

Die Technik des Klonens

Anders als in der alternativen Realität von *Never Let Me Go* gibt es im wirklichen Leben keine menschlichen Klone. Befürchtungen, dass es aber in nicht allzu ferner Zukunft einmal dazu kommen könnte, werden in der Öffentlichkeit regelmäßig wach. Das war auch der Fall, als im Januar 2018 gemeldet wurde, dass Forscher in Shang-

2.3 Angaben und Erläuterungen zu wesentlichen Werken

2.3 Angaben und Erläuterungen
zu wesentlichen WerkenZUSAMMEN-
FASSUNG

- Kazuo Ishiguro has published seven novels which all focus on similar themes: memory, loss, grief and regret. Most of them have an unreliable first person-narrator revisiting his past.
- He is best known for his third novel *The Remains of the Day* (1989). Its protagonist Stevens is an English butler who dedicated his life to the service of an aristocrat.
- The most recent book is *The Buried Giant* (2015), which is inspired by medieval epic traditions and mixes fantasy and historical novel.

Kazuo Ishiguro schreibt im Prinzip immer wieder den gleichen Roman, nur jeweils in einem anderen unverwechselbaren Gewand, denn alle sieben sind sich zwar ähnlich hinsichtlich Themen und Aufbau, weisen jedoch in Bezug auf Schauplätze, historischen Hintergrund, soziale Milieus, Geschlecht und Alter der Hauptfiguren sowie Genre eine große Variationsbreite auf. Zwei Titel ragen dabei deutlich aus dem Gesamtwerk heraus. Der bereits 1989 veröffentlichte Roman *The Remains of the Day* ist der mit Abstand bekannteste des Autors. Nur *Never Let Me Go* (2005) erzeugte später noch einmal ein vergleichbar großes Interesse bei Publikum und Kritik.

Ishiguro ist fasziniert von historischen Übergangsphasen, in denen vertraute Traditionen und Lebensweisen zerfallen und Neues an ihre Stelle tritt. Seine Protagonisten sind oft gewöhnliche Menschen, denen es schwerfällt, sich inmitten der Umwälzungen neu zu orientieren. In vier Romanen spielt die Handlung in der Zeit vor,

Verhalten des
Menschen in
historischen
Übergangsphasen

2.3 Angaben und Erläuterungen zu wesentlichen Werken

***The Buried Giant* (2015)**

Nach *Never Let Me Go* dauerte es zehn Jahre, bis wieder ein Roman von Ishiguro erschien. *The Buried Giant* greift im gewohnt melancholischen Ton erneut die Themen Erinnerung, Liebe, Verdrängung, Verlust und Selbsttäuschung auf. Das Überraschende ist diesmal die Genre-Mischung aus Fantasy und historischem Roman mit Anklängen an das frühmittelalterliche Heldenepos *Beowulf* und die König-Artus-Legenden. Wirkliches und Übernatürliches sind hier ineinander verwoben, denn in dem Britannien um das Jahr

Anthony Hopkins
als Butler Stevens
und Emma
Thompson als
Miss Kenton in
der Verfilmung
von *The Remains
of the Day* (1993)
© picture alliance

3. TEXTANALYSE UND -INTERPRETATION

3.1 Entstehung und Quellen

- Beginning in 1990, Ishiguro thought about writing a story about a strange group of young people living somewhere in rural England but found it difficult to decide what the strange fate was that was hanging over them.
- He found the missing piece (cloning) in 2001 when he heard a radio discussion about biotechnological research.
- Ishiguro worked on the novel for three years. It was published by Faber & Faber in 2005.
- He does not consider himself as a British or British-Japanese author but aims at a global audience. That is why he avoids settings and themes of mainly local concern.

ZUSAMMEN- FASSUNG

Schon 1990 hatte sich bei Kazuo Ishiguro die unbestimmte Idee festgesetzt, eine Geschichte über eine Gruppe von jungen Leuten zu schreiben, die irgendwo in England auf dem Lande leben. Obwohl ihn der Gedanke nicht mehr losließ, kam er damit jahrelang nicht über ein vages Anfangsstadium hinaus:

Idee zum Roman
seit den 1990ern

„I was never quite clear who these people were. They lived in wrecked farmhouses, and though they did a few typically student-like things – argued over books, worked on the occasional essay, fell in and out of love – there was no campus or professor in sight.

3.2 Inhaltsangabe

3.2 Inhaltsangabe

ZUSAMMEN- FASSUNG

Never Let Me Go is set in a parallel universe. On the outside it looks like the real England of the 1970s to 1990s. But the reader soon notices significant differences, the main one being that humans are cloned in this world. Kathy H., the 31-year-old narrator, and the other protagonists are clones, too. They are only bred as sources of organs for the “normal” people. The clones are infertile and their whole life proceeds according to a plan made for them by society. After leaving school, they work for some years as a kind of hospice workers (“carers”) for clones who have already undergone organ removals. Finally they become “donors” themselves. Their organs are harvested and they suffer premature death.

Part One

Kathy has already been a carer for eleven years. In the first of the novel's three parts (Chapters 1–9), she concentrates on memories of her childhood and adolescence which she spent at a boarding school in the countryside. Beneath its focus on artistic and sporting activities, Hailsham has a hidden agenda. It educates the clones for their purpose as organ donors without them ever becoming fully conscious of that. When Kathy is seven, she becomes friends with her classmate Ruth, a fascinating but also egocentric and manipulative girl. She also feels attracted to Tommy who is an outsider among the boys. However, when they turn sixteen, Tommy begins a relationship with Ruth.

3.2 Inhaltsangabe



Ruth (gespielt von Carey Mulligan) und Kathy (Keira Knightly) in den Cottages. Eine Szene aus Mark Romaneks Verfilmung.
© picture alliance / Everett Collection

zwischen den Freundinnen nimmt auch zu, weil Ruth viel stärkere Anstrengungen unternimmt, sich von der Bindung an die Vergangenheit in Hailsham zu lösen. Ihre Sammlung mit persönlichen Erinnerungsstücken hat sie im Gegensatz zu Kathy bereits entsorgt. Für Aufsehen unter den jungen Leuten sorgen die pornografischen Magazine, die in den Cottages immer wieder auftauchen. Auch Kathy blättert sie heimlich durch, wenn sich eine Gelegenheit bietet, wobei Tommy sie zweimal zufällig beobachtet. Ihm fällt auf, dass ihr Blick dabei nicht von Neugier auf den Sex zu sprechen scheint. Vielmehr wirkt sie auf ihn traurig und voller Angst.

3.4 Personenkonstellation und Charakteristiken

3.4 Personenkonstellation und Charakteristiken

ZUSAMMEN- FASSUNG

Masters and slaves:

- The authoritarian state dehumanizes the clones to justify their enslavement.
- The “normals” feel disgust and fear of the clones even though they have all the characteristics of humanity.
- The clones are brought up in isolation from society while their whole life is managed by the non-clones.
- In school they are under constant surveillance.
- They are conditioned to see their fate as “the natural course to follow” (201) which leads them to live a life of make-believe and denial.
- They struggle to make sense of their world which deprives them of individual fulfilment.
- The clones adopt the behaviour of their oppressors because it is the only one they know.

The main characters:

- Kathy, Ruth and Tommy are a troubled love triangle.
- All three are torn between adapting to the system and their yearning for a normal life and freedom.
- They direct their anger not against the system but either repress it or turn it against themselves or other clones.
- Kathy passively accepts her situation and settles for the role of friend and adviser and then later as carer for Ruth and Tommy.
- Ruth is talented and a natural leader but also manipulative and egocentric.

3.4 Personenkonstellation und Charakteristiken

- Tommy is an outsider at school with a tendency to temper tantrums.
- Chrissie and Rodney are clones, too. They are a couple and they are jealous of the clones who went to more privileged schools like Hailsham.
- Miss Emily, Madame and Miss Lucy are the only important non-clones in the novel. They are all connected with Hailsham and are outsiders in the world of the “normals”.

Herren und Sklaven

Der Staat in *Never Let Me Go* bleibt gesichtslos. Aus den wenigen Hinweisen kann man schließen, dass es sich um ein autoritäres kapitalistisches System handelt, in dem sich die Interessen von „corporations“ und „politicians“ decken (264). Dieser Staat teilt die Bevölkerung in zwei getrennte Klassen mit unterschiedlichen Rechten und Freiheiten ein. Rein äußerlich sind die Gruppen – die normalen Menschen und die Klone – nicht voneinander zu unterscheiden. Aber die Klone werden als Wesen zweiter Ordnung behandelt, die nur geschaffen wurden, damit ihre Organe „geerntet“ werden können, wenn die Zeit dafür reif ist. Sie haben einen sklavenähnlichen Status. Die Nicht-Klone legen die Regeln fest, nach denen die anderen sich zu richten haben, und sorgen dafür, dass sie eingehalten werden. Es handelt sich dabei um ein staatlich eingesetztes System des Rassismus, für welches sich der Begriff „biopolitisch“¹⁹

Zwei-Klassen-System: Normale Menschen und Klone

19 Vgl. Stingelin, Martin (Hg.): *Biopolitik und Rassismus*. Frankfurt am M.: Suhrkamp, 2003. Eine Anwendung des Begriffs auf *Never Let Me Go* findet sich bei Kowalski, Andrea: *How to Create Inhumanity: Kazuo Ishiguro's „Never Let Me Go“*. In: „Verso“, An Undergraduate Journal of Literary Criticism, Jg. 2014, S. 9–21; online: <https://ojs.library.dal.ca/verso/article/view/4473/3989> (Stand April 2019).

3.5 Sachliche und sprachliche Erläuterungen

3.5 Sachliche und sprachliche Erläuterungen

73 ff.	Judy Bridgewater	Bridgewater und ihr Album <i>Songs After Dark</i> sind fiktiv. Es gibt aber mindestens zwei Songs mit dem Titel <i>Never Let Me Go</i> . Der erste wurde von Nat King Cole 1957 gesungen. Einen weiteren sangen Joan Baez und Bob Dylan gemeinsam auf der Rolling-Thunder-Tournee 1975. Das entsprechende Lied in Mark Romaneks Verfilmung des Romans (vgl. Kap. 4) schrieb eigens dafür Luther Dixon. Die Sängerin ist Jane Monheit.
76	Sherlock Holmes	Mit der Erwähnung des 1886 von Arthur Conan Doyle geschaffenen Ermittlers spielt der Roman ironisch darauf an, dass er selbst Züge eines Detektivromans hat. Er baut Spannung auf, bis endlich am Ende die letzten Geheimnisse der Klon-Existenz enthüllt werden. Die Erzählerin Kathy kann mit Holmes nicht konkurrieren; sie übersieht selbst die offensichtlichsten Indizien.
94	My Fair Lady	In dem 1956 in New York uraufgeführten Musical nach dem Theaterstück <i>Pygmalion</i> von George Bernard Shaw bringt ein Sprachgelehrter einer einfachen Blumenverkäuferin bei, so zu sprechen und aufzutreten wie eine vornehme Lady. Wie in <i>Never Let Me Go</i> geht es um Manipulation und unsichere Identität. Auch das Motiv Imitation/Kopieren spielt in <i>My Fair Lady</i> eine Rolle.
106	Thomas Hardy	Englischer Schriftsteller (1840–1928). Wie bei Kathy, Tommy und Ruth bleibt die Sehnsucht der Figuren nach Liebe und Glück in Hardys Romanen unerfüllt. Ihre Entscheidungsfreiheit wird durch Vererbung, soziale Stellung, familiäre Konstellation und Schicksal begrenzt. Hardy ist ein Autor des ländlichen Raums; die Landschaft ist metaphorisch aufgeladen und wird zur Seelenlandschaft wie in <i>Never Let Me Go</i> .

3.6 Stil und Sprache

3.6 Stil und Sprache

ZUSAMMEN-
FASSUNG

- The narrator's style works on two levels.
- Chattiness and a spiralling narrative technique determine the reader's first impression.
- However, what at first sight appears to be a lack of imagination really is the result of the manipulation of Kathy's mind during her schooldays.
- Kathy's true inner drama is played out on another level beneath the shallow surface.
- There everything is connected with Kathy's unconscious.
- On the second level the narrative is highly metaphorical which is a typical feature of the literary genre parable.
- Defamiliarization is another characteristic of the parabolic style. It is achieved by presenting a familiar world in a strange and uncanny way.

Ebene 1: Die stille Oberfläche

Missverhältnis
zwischen der
Art des Vortrags
und den Vor-
gängen

Der Kritiker James Wood hat den charakteristischen Stil eines Ishiguro-Romans als „sea-level flat, with unseen fathoms below“²² beschrieben. Auch *Never Let Me Go* ist eine stille See mit unerhörten

22 „Kazuo Ishiguro writes a prose of provoking equilibrium – sea-level flat, with unseen fathoms below. He avoids ornament or surplus, and seems to welcome cliché, platitude, episodes as bland as milk, an atmosphere of oddly vacated calm whose mild persistence comes to seem teasingly or menacingly unreal.“ In: Wood, James: *The Uses of Oblivion. Kazuo Ishiguro's „The Buried Giant“*. In: „The New Yorker“ vom 23. 03. 2015; online: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/03/23/the-uses-of-oblivion> (Stand April 2019).

3.7 Interpretationsansätze

3.7 Interpretationsansätze

ZUSAMMEN- FASSUNG

- The metaphor of the “hall of mirrors” used at the beginning (26) illustrates the specific openness of the novel to interpretation.
- Even though *Never Let Me Go* can be read as a cautionary tale about the dangers of biotechnology, human cloning is only a secondary theme. The clones represent various kinds of human beings in situations of extreme powerlessness.
- The novel is often seen as a meditation on the human condition. It addresses essentials of our existence like friendship, love, freedom, mortality and death.
- *Never Let Me Go* contains a critique of various features of modern civilization, especially of the society of control.
- The novel presents a society in which reality in people's minds has been replaced by mass replicated media images. The clone is the most powerful symbol of such a world.
- The novel predicted already in 2005 today's post-truth society.
- Some critics consider it as “Post-Holocaust literature” because “the public secret” is one of its main themes.

Der Roman als Spiegelkabinett

Wer diesen Roman mit seinen verschiedenen Ebenen und der offenen, parabelhaften Erzählweise betritt, befindet sich in einem Spiegelkabinett wie in Ruths Raum im Rehabilitationszentrum mit seinen „gleaming white tiles“. Ishiguro platziert dieses Bild („it's

4. VERFILMUNG

ZUSAMMEN- FASSUNG

- *Never Let Me Go* was adapted to film by director Mark Romanek and released in 2010.
- In spite of its excellent cast, great cinematography and a haunting musical score, the film received only mixed reviews and was a box office failure.
- The script tries to be faithful to its source but comes across as an incoherent mixture of technological dystopia and love story. It explores its themes much more superficially.
- The characters are less complex and credibly motivated than in the novel.

Zurückhaltende Rezeption

Mark Romaneks Verfilmung von *Never Let Me Go* aus dem Jahr 2010 kam mit großen Erwartungen einher. Schließlich war mit *The Remains of the Day* (1993) schon einmal die Adaption eines Ishiguro-Romans für acht Oscars nominiert worden. Dieser Film gilt heute als Klassiker des britischen Kinos. Daran konnte *Never Let Me Go* allerdings überhaupt nicht anknüpfen. Die Reaktion bei Kritik und Publikum war zurückhaltend. Bis heute wurden nicht einmal die Produktionskosten von fünfzehn Millionen Dollar eingespielt. Das mag teilweise an dem düsteren und damit wenig massenkompatiblen Stoff gelegen haben, aber mehr noch daran, dass sich Ishiguros Geschichte vor allem im Kopf einer unzuverlässigen Erzählerin abspielt und deshalb schwer in das Medium des Films übertragen lässt. Andererseits war dies bei *Remains* gelungen, obwohl dabei ebenfalls einer der typischen von der eigenen Vergangenheit besessenen Ishiguro-Erzähler Dreh- und Angelpunkt ist.



Arzt wegträgt. Die tote Ruth bleibt allein als ausgeweidete Hülle auf dem Operationstisch liegen. Das gestrandete Boot an der einsamen, windigen Küste ist das zentrale Symbol für die Hoffnungslosigkeit der Klone. Auch die eindringliche Musik gehört zu den Stärken des Films. Rachel Portman hat den klassisch inspirierten und von Streichern und Piano dominierten Score komponiert. Er prägt den gesamten Film und verkörpert die tiefe, unerfüllte Sehnsucht nach Glück, für welche die Klone keinen anderen Ausdruck finden.

Keira Knightley
als Ruth, Carey
Mulligan als
Kathy und And-
rew Garfield als
Tommy
© picture alliance /
Everett Collection

Eindringliche
Musik

5. MATERIALIEN

For Real ist ein im Jahr 2000 aufgenommener, aber erst 2019 posthum veröffentlichter Song der amerikanischen Rock-Ikone **Tom Petty** (1950–2017). Der Text ist die Grundlage für die Prüfungsaufgabe 1 im Kapitel 6.

For Real

Oh brother, look what we've become
Oh brother, could we be so dumb?
They set us up like dominoes
I didn't do it for no magazine
Didn't do it for no video
Never did it for no CEO
But I did it for real

Would've done it for free
I did it for me
'Cause it was all that rang true
I did it for real
And I did it for you

Might've done it for my sanity
Maybe done it for my vanity
Could be I did it for my picky goal
But I did it for real

Would've done it for free
Yeah, I did it for me
'Cause it was all that rang true

6. PRÜFUNGSAUFGABEN MIT MUSTERLÖSUNGEN

Unter www.königserläuterungen.de/download finden Sie im Internet zwei weitere Aufgaben mit Musterlösungen.

Die Zahl der Sternchen bezeichnet das Anforderungsniveau der jeweiligen Aufgabe.



Aufgabe 1 **

In Chapter 5 (Materialien) you can find the lyrics of Tom Petty's song *For Real*. Analyse how the singer describes the world he lives in and compare it to the one inhabited by the clones in *Never Let Me Go*.

Mögliche Lösung in knapper Fassung:

It may be assumed that the "I" in Tom Petty's *For Real* is the alter ego of the author of the lyrics while the "it" ("But I did it for real") refers to the song itself. After all, it is a musician who expresses his frustration and anger at the way the music industry and his own career have developed. He addresses a friend and fellow musician ("Oh brother") and deeply regrets having allowed other people "to set us up like dominoes". In retrospect, he realizes that they got trapped by signing contracts which limit their artistic freedom and force them to adapt their output to consumer demand and the preferences of a "CEO", i. e. a record company executive. They also have to waste their time and energy promoting their products via magazines and videos. The singer blames himself and his friend asking him why "could we be so dumb"? On the other hand, he believes that he has been "overrun" by something beyond his control.

ANALYSIS

As a result, he feels that he is just a pawn in a game whose rules were written by other people. But he is now in a defiant mood and refuses to back down because of past mistakes.

The song is an attempt at breaking out and regaining not just control but his “sanity”, too. He wants it to be authentic (“for real”) and personal (“I did it for me / ‘Cause it was all that rang true”), not fake and interchangeable. Instead of aiming at an anonymous mass audience he has made it only for himself and his friend: “And I did it for you”.

COMPARISON

Like many people who feel alienated and powerless, the singer would probably identify with the clones in *Never Let Me Go*. The clones can even be seen as a metaphor for a media-based consumer culture where everything is endlessly copied and mass-produced and individual self-expression is only an illusion anymore. The same binary oppositions that structure *For Real* (authentic/fake, truth/lie, creative/commercial, original/copy, corporate greed/solidarity) can be found in Ishiguro’s novel as well. Like the singer’s music, the works of art which the clones produce at Hailsham is judged by its market value (and compensated for with tokens).

But for Kathy and her friends everything is significantly worse than for the musicians in the song. They cannot reclaim their integrity like the singer because they were never given the opportunity to be whole and undivided. It is not only their art which is treated like a commodity, they were themselves created for a purpose, namely to have their organs removed. They never made the decision to be exploited and give up their freedom. In fact they were born into that kind of life and later conditioned to be content with it while the singer is himself at least partly responsible for his fate and, in all likelihood, has become famous and wealthy that way. He is also far more conscious of the situation he is in and finally manages to put up resistance against it, which is of course more easily