



# Stripped of Humanity. Dehumanization in Kazuo Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go"

*Kinga Gmiat*

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**Stripped of Humanity. Dehumanization in Kazuo Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go"** Kinga Gmiat  
Seminar paper from the year 2014 in the subject English - Literature, Works, grade: 1,7, University of Dusseldorf "Heinrich Heine" (English and American Studies), course: Narrating the (dis)eased body, language: English, abstract: The meaning of humanity and dignity becomes more and more essential nowadays and a key concept in our ethical thinking in the world of modern biopolitics, possible future cloning and organ donations. The topic addresses every single one of us, since it deals with our lives and basic human rights. The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben deals with the concept of those, whose human rights are taken away. In his work entitled *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life* he presents the concept of a dehumanized protagonist figuring as "homo sacer", a bad and impure man, whose life is considered to be unworthy. He proposes an idea of this figure, which is still applicable in our modern times. He links this idea ultimately to the concept of sovereignty, to whom homo sacer corresponds and with whom he correlates. The depiction of this figure and his counterpart, the sovereignty, will be closely looked at and after that Michel Foucault's definition of biopolitics and the relation to life and death will be given. Afterwards, we will look at Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*, in which these concepts take shape. The novel deals with young students, who are destined to donate their vital organs before they reach middle age. We will analyze the relationship between these students and the figure of homo sacer. The character of sovereignty that comes into existence with the help of the guardians who accompany these students, will also be elaborated. We will focus on these concepts related to biopolitics and figure out, how the characters in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel are stripped of humanity.

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