Concept of Humanity in Never Let me Go and Blade Runner: Critical Analysis

Kazuo Ishiguro's book "Never Let me Go" and Ridley Scott's "Blade Runner" Film both explore a dystopian world which features its main characters as clones/replicants of real humans. But what does it mean to be human? Is it to obtain the characteristics of human features; skin, hair, eyes, a heartbeat? Or is it to show emotions of kindness, love, forgiveness? This concept of humanity will be challenged in Kazuo Ishiguro's book "Never Let me Go" and the film "Blade Runner" through analysing the depth of characters in both texts. Demonstrated by the emotions of the characters in the Book "Never Let me Go" and the film "Blade Runner", it is clear the concept of humanity is established through the direct relationships displayed. In both texts the concept of humanity has been reflected through the replicants/clones emotional characteristics of love, hate, guilt, sympathy and compassion. This is supported by the development of romantic relations between characters such as Kathy and Tommy in "Never let me go" and "Deckard and Rachel" in Blade Runner. Although the concept of humanity amongst the replicants will be analysed, this discussion will determine to what extent of "humanness" the characters have displayed. During this, the concept will be determined through the critical human experiences, symbolism and scene descriptions evidence in both texts.

Throughout both the film and novel, we explore the relation between replicants and what it means to be human. The norm of being a clone/replicant shaped by society is normally to lack possession of any sort of human emotion. However is perfectly capable in Ishiguro's novel and is seen in Kathy and Tommy's relationship when he is "pleased" she found the tape, but wished "he had found it" for her. Throughout the novel, Kathy describes this tape in depth, implying that it was very important to her. The song "Never let me go" in the tape, where the title of the novel originated from symbolises the depth of human love and the fear of losing loved ones based off Kathy's interpretation of lyrics. Love and the fear of letting go loved ones are all apart of human emotions. The theme of 'Never let me go' occurs frequently in the novel, especially at the end when Kathy awaits for Tommy by the fence over the horizon, suggesting she never wants to 'let him go'. This signifies the depth Kathy's humanness through her genuine love for Tommy. Like Ishiguro, Scott portrays the love between Deckard and Rachel in the film, not to add a touching love story but to help communicate their human emotions and feelings for one another. In the film, Deckard was commanded to kill all replicants including Rachel. However recognised her human like qualities and fell in love with her instead. However not only were Rachel's emotions recognised as her humanity, the novel hints Deckard being a replicant himself. This theory is shown when Gaffe leaves an origami unicorn outside his apartment after Deckard had dreamt about a unicorn earlier in the film. This suggests that Gaffe had access to Deckard's dreams which further suggests he is not human. Although Deckard was given the false hope of being human, he still managed to accept Rachel for the way she is and recognised her worth by letting her live. We learn from this that if we strip society's influences on the impression of clones and replicants in our in-just society, there is still a soul capable of loving just like any other normal human being.

So what is it that makes someone human? Based in Ishiguro's novel, it is the ability to show and feel emotions. Whether that is love, hate, jealousy, sympathy or even happiness. The

coming of age narrative style in “Never let me Go” allows the readers to watch the protagonist’s character development grow throughout the novel. Arguably, the replicants show more “human” emotions than the real humans do throughout both texts as they are experiencing everything for the first time, they are more likely prone to their emotions. This is demonstrated in the novel by Tommy’s hot headed temper and struggle to let go of anger, which he comes to terms with for his relationship with Kathy. His transformation from his anger temper reflects as growth as a person of maturity. Tommy also demonstrates frustration with his lack of ability of creative artistic drawings in Hailsham, making him-self-conscious and embarrassed of his drawings. Although others mock Tommy, it is Kathy who still loves Tommy for his flaws, this is shown from the very start of the when she approaches him on the football field about his muddy shirt in attempt to calm him down. From the novel title “Never Let me Go”, this book reflects a deeply human need to hold onto, and be held onto by loved ones. Emotional attachment is the most significant sign of humanity one can possibly experience. Revolved around the complication of a love triangle and friendship between Kathy, Ruth and Tommy, we see their true humanity and emotions such as heartache, jealousy and compassion that they experience in Hailsham. At the start of the novel, Ruth is jealous of Kathy’s and Tommy’s relationship but later admits that she was in the way them perusing their true feeling for each other. It is clear that as replicants, they experience the depth of human emotions that any other normal being would. This is also demonstrated in the film by Roy Batty’s character growth of compassion and his humanity. Roy demonstrates fear of death when he drives a nail through his hand, which may symbolically represent the suffering and frustration he has experienced through his life as he accepts his fate and shows mercy upon Deckard, saving him from death. Ultimately, from being a crazy maniac throughout the film, Roy has fulfilled his humanity to its fullest. He has become more human than human.