Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*: An Optimistic Outlook of the Future

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المستخلص (باللغة العربية)

إن منح الخيال العلمي في أربعينيات و خمسينيات القرن العشرين باعتباره العصر الذهبي ليس مصطلحا خاليا من القيمة ، ولكن يتم الترويج له من قبل قاعدة معجبين مخصصة ويشير إلى نوع معين من القصص التي يتابع فيها الأبطال قوس مؤامرة صارم ويستخدمون الاتفاقيات العلمية للتغلب على العوائق. هناك طريقة أخرى لتحديد الفترة وهي ربطها بأذواق جون دبليو كامبل ، الشخص الأكثر مسؤولية عن نشر المثل الأخلاقية حول ما يجب أن يكون عليه هذا النوع من الأدب. إسحاق أسيموف هو مؤلف غزير الإنتاج اشتهر بأنه أحد عمالقة مؤلفي العصر الذهبي للخيال العلمى الذين تتضمن حكاياتهم الدائمة والأكثر شهرة الروبوتات. إن الترحيب بروايات كوارث الذكاء الاصطناعي يقوض إيماننا بأنه لا يمكن حل أي تحد بمزيج من المعرفة العلمية ودوافع الإيثار والنهج الاستباقي. ما هي العواقب المحتملة إذا أدت براعتنا حسنة النية عن غير قصد إلى نتائج سلبية تؤثر علينا سلبا؟ تم تجاهل الهيكل الهرمي التقليدي للكائنات الحية ، الذي وضع البشرية في قمة النظام الطبيعي والأدنى في عالم ما وراء الطبيعة. بدلا من ذلك ، نعتقد الآن أن سمتنا المميزة هي قدرتنا المعرفية المتفوقة بالفطرة أو امتلاكنا للعقل. إذا كانت قدراتنا المعرفية بمثابة المحدد الوحيد لهويتنا ، فما هو إحساسنا بالذات عندما يحقق الذكاء الاصطناعي التكافؤ مع الذكاء البشري؟ تسهل رواية كازو إيشيغورو الأخيرة ، *كلارا والشمس* (2021) ، استكشافنا لهذا التحقيق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أسيموف ، إيشيغورو ، العقل ، الروبوتات ، الخيال العلمي.

Abstract (**English**)

Entitling the SF of the 1940s and 1950s as the Golden Era is not a value-free term, but it is promoted by a dedicated fan base and refers to a specific type of stories in which the protagonists follow up a strict plot arc and use scientific conventions to overcome hindrances. Another way of defining the period is to associate it with the tastes of

John W. Campbell, the person most responsible for spreading ethical ideals about what this kind of literature should be like. Isaak Asimov is a prolific author best known as one of the great giants of Golden Age SF authors whose enduring and best-known tales involve robots. Welcoming accounts of artificial intelligence catastrophes undermines our faith that no challenge can be resolved with a combination of scientific knowledge, altruistic motives, and a proactive approach. What are the potential consequences if our well-intentioned ingenuity inadvertently leads to negative outcomes that impact us adversely? The conventional hierarchical structure of living beings, which positioned mankind at the apex of the natural order and the lowest in the supernatural realm, has been discarded. Instead, we now believe that our distinguishing characteristic is our innately superior cognitive ability or possession of a mind. If our cognitive abilities serve as the only determinant of our identity, what is our sense of self when artificial intelligence attains parity with human intelligence? Kazuo Ishiguro's latest novel, *Klara and the Sun* (2021), facilitates our exploration of this inquiry.

Key Words: Asimov, Ishiguro, Mind, Robots, Science fiction.

Introduction

The early 20th century is the epoch in which SF genre comes to encounter cultural hegemony, since the slope of the graph depicting technological and societal development begins to over rise; thus, Stephen Kern, a historian and specialist in culture, elucidates: "the new technology, the science fiction, Futurist art and revolutionary politics looked at the future like a predator eyeing its prey" (104). In

her article "Becoming Plant and Posthumanism in Jeff Noon's Pollen (1995)," Katharine Cockin, an author and a professor of English literature, expounds that:

Early twentieth-century SF engaged with the new eugenics, a theory of social engineering that promised to manage the population and control social problems, especially in overpopulated urban areas. The need to maintain some kind of balance in human society has often been explored in SF novels, mediated through the interaction of humans, animals, and machines. (95)

She illustrates that many SF stories examine the importance of social equilibrium by showing how people, animals, and robots all work together. That concept of balance incarnates the philosophy of posthumanism in the SF genre around which this research revolves.

It can be considered that the year 1957 epitomizes a turning point in the history of this field, when the Soviet Union successfully launched an artificial satellite (Sputnik); as a result, John Clute puts it eloquently that "something happened. The future began to come true" (17). The eras of the 1960s and 1970s mostly countersign the new wave of the literary category under investigation. The term "new wave" stands for a small clique of authors who create experimental and avant-garde fictional methods in response to the constraints of classical science fiction (Roberts 334). During the last years of the 20th century, scientific fictional novels have gone through an evolution and eight of them progressively have become a type controlled by visual media, particularly what we may denote visual spectacularism (SF films), such as: *The Time Machine* (1960), *Dr No* (1962), *Superman* (1978), *Batman* (1989), *Jurassic Park* (1993), *X*-

Men (2000), *Spider-Man* (2002), and *Avatar* (2009) (Roberts 385, 387).

Postmodernism has various successors, chief among them is posthumanism which constitutes a postmodern root. The deconstruction of a dramatic anthropocentric hierarchical outlook on the world is at the heart of posthuman philosophy. The technical revolution shapes our view of humans as reasonable beings with free will and control over their advancements (Davies 20). Rosi Braidotti, a philosopher and humanist, argues that the term "posthuman" is a key tool for looking at the complicated structure of a new position; and then she declares that "our globally connected and technologically mediated societies" may need to rethink "the basic unit of reference for the human" and "our interactions with both human and non-human agents on a planetary scale" (5-6).

The view that humans are superior to other organisms on the basis of their superior intellect is flatly refuted. In the late 20th century, technological progress accelerated at a rapid clip, attempting to make this outlook an integral part of postmodernism. Humans, according to the field of study known as evolutionary anthropology, can elevate themselves throughout evolution. The rise of posthumanism introduces a new theoretical model for humanity among intellectuals. It urges individuals to move beyond the confines of the narrow definition of humanity and contemplate what constitutes a human being. Posthumanism employs the literary movement of deconstruction to characterize the idea of human from sociocultural, physiological, and technological vantage points. The inquiry into which human characteristics can be effectively controlled by

technology has been prompted by the field of evolutionary anthropology, particularly in response to contemporary advancements in technology (Welsch 75-86).

Posthumanism claims that humans are just one of many normal things that exist along with each other. Posthumanism examines the premise of humans by contemplating the responsibilities that humans play in the world, whether now or previously, in addition to possible future roles. Even further, it incorporates some characteristics of transhumanism and involves the combination of physiological humanity with advanced technologies (Hassan 830-40). An examination of the history of the word transhumanism, for example, reveals that Dante Alighieri initially utilizes this concept in his stupendous play *The Divine Comedy*, wherein he propagates the possibility of ordinary humans transcending their biological limitations and being something truly divine or more than humans. Another example exists in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, wherein he gives Prospero's figure a posthuman inspiration; thus, the hero possesses supernatural abilities that allow him to manipulate and direct the actions of those around him. According to Hassan, Shakespeare's hero becomes the living embodiment of the terms posthuman and transhuman thanks to his access to cosmic magical power (840-50).

Recent progress in the posthumanist movement centers on the use of intelligent systems and the development of advanced technologies. Nowadays, scientists in the field of artificial intelligence make big strides towards building a supercomputer that can mimic the human brain. Philosophers Andy Clark and David Chalmers maintain that the effectiveness of our external intelligent devices as a

replacement for humans' internal biological memory becomes apparent to everyone. To that end, it is reasonable to assume that someday soon, a super-intelligent machine may function as a kind of biological extension of the human brain (7-19). Max Tegmark, an MIT professor and a writer of at least 200 scholarly papers on artificial intelligence, declares that the scenario of human replacement by artificially smart machines becomes further promoted by the promises of cyborgs. Hollywood films such as *Star Trek*, *Terminator*, and *Cyborg*, as well as web series such as *Black Mirror*, make great contributions to popularizing an unrealistic view of cyborgs (155-56).

Cyborgs, therefore, are the product of merging human biology with artificial intelligence (AI). For this reason, scientists are propagating the term cyborg to describe a person who augments his biological form with technology. One of the most well-known and divisive proponents of the part of machinery soon of human race is the brilliant futurist and creator Ray Kurzweil who predicts this future, dubbing it singularity, when our biological constraints are ultimately overcome by technological advancements. It can assist us in improving the structure of DNA and may be useful in genetic engineering; additionally, it suggests that the posthumanist movement has a hand in shaping the most cutting-edge AI research, which in turn aids in the development of the field (198).

In the early 20th century, the computer science discipline developed a conceptual framework for the emerging field of artificial intelligence technology. Throughout the history of AI study, researchers have gained greatly from topics like the input of experts from a wide variety of fields and government funding. There are

many setbacks for the field as well as many successes (Bostrom 6-13). One important instance of what we refer to as narrow AI is IBM Deep Blue (an intelligent system with a limited part of expertise). It was a major victory for artificial intelligence research when the Deep Blue chess program beat international winner Garry Kasparov in 1997 (Kasparov 55). Intelligent sensors, face recognition systems, voice-activated systems like Alexa, Siri, and many others are all products of ongoing research in artificial intelligence.

Artificial intelligence witnesses a lot of progress due to the effort of experts in biology, computer science, and the study of the brain. They move in the same direction, which is, one may assume, towards a future in which artificial intelligence is used to augment human potential; as a result, humanoid robots, like Sophia, are already designed. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, NASA is beginning to replace human space pilots with humanoid robots on their futuristic space voyages. If we do not define humanity in ways that go beyond biological traits, we may not be able to accept people who have changed or who rely heavily on high-tech gadgets for their physical health. Thus, cyborgs or elevated humans are inevitable manifestations of transhumanism and posthumanism. Humans are most often thought of in terms of how they look and how their genes work. Every time we use the word human, our minds automatically jump to our species' shared biological traits (Nayar14-18).

In the near future, we can expect to share our lives with posthumans, also known as cyborgs. Many experts in the field of AI, including Nick Bostrom, Elon Musk, and Stephen Hawking, warn that poorly managed AI systems can lead to the end of humanity. Apocalyptic insights of possible futures permeate cinemas and TV

shows, which probably proliferate an undesirable reality about our mutual exposure with nonhumans (Kumm et al. 342). Numerous films depict the disastrous consequences of AI taking over human society like *I, Robot* (2004) and *Megan* (2022). Some argue that these films are instrumental in shaping people's ideas about how artificially intelligent robots or posthuman cyborgs may interact with biological humans in the future. Several movies portray how calamitous it may be if people lose control of these technologies and end up endangering our civilization.

The fundamental concern is whether human beings may forfeit their essential nature after becoming fully integrated with smart systems. Many moral considerations may be stoked by our potential future interactions with posthumans, cyborgs, and biological humans. To obtain a unique future, people are required to adjust to their technological present, and this may necessitate the maximal possible augmentation of natural humans (Bostrom 284-86). Even in the current era, it can be observed that there are intelligent devices that far surpass human capabilities, so it may be devastating to humanistic superiority if posthumans demonstrate to be superior performers. Smart machines can compete with humans on the basis of efficiency of action whenever there is a shortage in the demand for human work. The former can unquestionably supplant the latter. People can forecast the posthuman dominance of labor and entertainment, which may be detrimental to mankind. They lead to a dramatic transition from biocentric to posthuman-centric, where posthumans are expected to become the most intellectual species (Tegmark 114-28).

Since humans come up with and build these smart machines, we can think of them as helpful tools in our everyday lives. At this point, they (smart machines) undoubtedly resemble a servant or slave. Yet, posthuman dominance has the potential to displace humans as creators and masters. In this regard, some experts in artificial intelligence, such as the philosopher Wendell Wallach, warn that artificial intelligence may grow to become a hazardous master that humans cannot control. There is a basic feature of these agents to consider if people assume posthumans can be sentient agents: regardless of whether or not they are self-aware agents or merely smart instruments for our daily conveniences, these posthuman beings remain the perpetual other in our human society (Nath 563-71). It is predicted that a posthuman takeover or transhumanism may pose a danger to humankind.

Posthumanism's influence on the moral principles of AI plays a noteworthy role in modelling the entailed ethical structure of autonomous machines. If scientists succeed in inventing such an ethical system in the near future, they can introduce a distinguished sample of an augmented hybrid organism. It is possible that posthumans deal with humanistic moral dilemmas differently; thus, their solutions are not plausible to humans, since those posthumans may become far more intellectual than humankind (Bostrom 266-70). The epistemological posthumanist movement recasts the connection between non-humans and humans. Both the development of AI and the emerging ethics of automation are inspired by posthumanism. According to posthumanists, human interactions with nature are distinct from those with technology. In the former case, both biological beings are included, while in the

latter case, only one biological entity is present alongside another fabricated artefact (Jones, "Human-Robot" 365).

To conclude, it can be argued that the introduction of automated systems in the contemporary world necessitates an ethical guiding code to guarantee that these systems do not become detrimental to the entire human race. Now, constructing an appropriate standard is not a simple task for the AI machine's developers. Without implementing the subjective experience of an individual, that is, the existence of conscious thought, moral action seems to be impossible. Thus, the consciousness of robotic systems remains an arguable point for the entirety of the technological field.

Klara and the Sun: A Prospective Memoir from Bygone Times

Klara and the Sun (2021) is a futuristic memoir narrative that "appears to qualify as something even rarer," and it does not precisely align with the genre of horror (Gatti 40). The dread is not evoked by Ishiguro's AI. Quite the opposite, Klara, an artificial friend who represents the B2 model, assumes the role of a delightful and endearing narrator. This story "presents an AI avatar who develops an emotional maturity that the nominal humans around her either lack or have lost" (Hal 5). The humanoid robot in question has traits of curiosity and loyalty and has encountered situations that evoke a sense of wonder when encountering beauty and sacrifice. Furthermore, she engages in a form of spiritual practice akin to a naturalistic religion, wherein she venerates a benevolent and effective heavenly entity, namely the sun. If Klara represents the ultimate stage

of artificial intelligence advancement, then there is no reason for concern regarding a rebellion.

Artificial friends (AFs) are commercially available in retail establishments resembling toy stores or dedicated boutiques, serving as friends specifically designed to alleviate the solitude experienced by children; simply because "the more intelligent and powerful machines get, the more important it becomes that their goals are aligned with ours" (Tegmark 334). Klara's initial place of residence is situated within one of these establishments, wherein she cohabitates with fellows and a designated individual referred to as the Manager. The manager assumes the responsibility of preparing the AFs for the process of being chosen by a child and thereafter serving that child throughout their lifetime. The AFs undergo rotation between various displays, with the display window being the most desirable site due to its increased likelihood of attracting the attention of a young individual and receiving continuous solar-powered energy throughout the day. These AFs run on solar energy, so having more sunshine streaming in through the window is beneficial.

Klara, who possesses a heightened sense of observation, finds the display window to be advantageous due to its open view of the outside world and the dynamic nature of urban lifestyle. She is subjected to human interactions that encompass a diverse range of emotions, encompassing even the peculiar ones, such as melancholy, which appear to be a fusion of contrasting elements. If Klara, lacks complete comprehension of these concepts, it is reasonable to assume that she recognizes the intricate and conflicting nature of human emotions, rendering them unreasonable. She, for instance, observes

a discernible expression of melancholy among certain children upon their encounter with the AFs showcased in the shop's window.

Therefore, the manager is taken aback by Klara's exceptional observational abilities and insightful perspective. She elucidates to Klara that some parents may encounter financial constraints that prevent them from purchasing a friendly humanoid for their youngster. One morning, a young girl exits a taxi and communicates with Klara via the open window. Josie is the girl's name, and Klara observes that the girl walks with a limp. That girl assures Klara that she may come again to get her soon. Klara runs into Josie again during her second period in the window. The girl's mother, Chrissie, is also there; she is silently staring at Klara. After making sure that Klara is still interested in being an AF for her, Josie promises to attempt to come back the following day.

Klara's period of observation from the window concludes; however, Josie does not reappear. Klara and her AF of the same category, Rosa, return to the middle of the store. It can be understood that Ishiguro uses the idea of windows as a metaphor to depict the human condition, which is characterized by both affection and strict restrictions. They symbolize the limitations of what we can see and the expansiveness of the soul. Klara greatly admires her AF store window due to its ability to allow sunshine to enter, and its view that gives her a chance to learn more and fulfil her interest in the external world. As individuals and vehicles move around, she observes and gains knowledge. A traditional AI system like Deep Blue stands out for its ability to gather information and spot patterns. While this is happening, Klara's sensual, conceptual, and bodily

information she gathers from interacting with and confronting her surroundings shapes her mental abilities (qtd. In Wilson 4). However, her perspective remains determined, leading her to misinterpret certain events.

The observer Klara witnesses the ongoing road construction outside and encounters the working machine. That machine, labelled Cootings, emits a dense black cloud of smoke that blocks out the sun. A girl and her father enter the shop, and the girl seems interested in talking to Klara. Yet, Klara does not respond to the girl's kind hand squeeze or her direct gaze. The newly released androids of B3 model arrive at the warehouse, and the manager recommends them to the clients. The manager shortly thereafter informs Klara that youngsters usually do not follow through on their word to come back for AFs. The AF Rosa is bought by a young boy and his mom; she suddenly vanishes for shipment, leaving Klara with a brief moment to say her last word, goodbye.

The manager puts Klara on display in the storefront at a reduced price in an effort to sell her. Klara worries about the beggar man and his dog, who are still silent in their usual corner, in the street, without even making a move, to the extent that she tragically concludes that they are no longer alive. The bright sunshine of the following morning greets her, the beggar man, and his dog, so she claims that the sun's beams have resurrected them. The time that she spends in the shop's display window ends up, and she is relocated to the store's backroom. Fortunately, Josie comes back, but Klara only hears her talking and not her face. Even though the mother has her eye on a B3 girl, Josie is adamant about having the AF she spotted out the window.

Therefore, the manager sends them to speak to Klara; Josie tells Klara that she was tired and sick and apologizes for being late. The manager assures the mother that Klara's combination of sensitivity, introspection, and intelligence makes her a rare find. Chrissie puts Klara to the test by having her express the tone of her daughter's voice and the way she moves. Josie's weak left leg, according to Klara, is the cause of her limping. After convincing the mother that Klara can walk like Josie, the purchase is made. Ishiguro's readers gradually begin to imagine and realize the pieces of a world where youngsters have artificial companions not as playthings but as real, live friends.

It can be observed that Ishiguro never gives his readers any background information, so they have to piece together what is going on based on Klara's perceptions, which are coloured by her neural networks and lack of life experience, as well as her relationship with Josie's closest relatives. In Josie's world, automation is a major cause of joblessness and chaos in society; for example, her father was a professional engineer before becoming jobless and currently resides within an anarchist society alongside other individuals who are considered dispensable. To maintain a competitive edge over their automated counterparts, some guardians decide to expose their offspring to genetic editing.

Thus, according to posthumanists' understanding, "if superintelligence indeed comes about, the temptation to become cyborgs or uploads will be strong" (Tegmark 198). Nevertheless, other guardians determine not to have their children modified because of the high expense or the potential for protracted, frequently fatal diseases, as in the case of Josie and her dead sister, Sal.

The narrative, however, gives an account of how only two percent of available slots at the most prestigious universities are set aside for those unmodified students. Despite the obvious challenges of being a single parent and a teenager, the bond between Chrissie and Josie is one of deep affection and tenderness.

A similar vein appears apparently in the relationships between the other characters, such as the unmodified Rick and his mother, and Josie and her father. Rick and Josie reside alone in an unknown, remote area with no other companions. The sole interaction with youngsters occurs during a benefit event hosted by Josie's home, which aims to assist enhanced children in developing essential social skills. Meanwhile, "the lives of the genetically-engineered students seem fundamentally automatic and mechanized" beside "seemingly blind to the horrors that shadow their march toward suffering and death" (Black 788). Upon Klara's arrival at Josie's residence, her primary objective is to engage in observation. This entails closely examining Josie's behaviours, mannerisms, and choices, ostensibly with the intention of enhancing her caregiving abilities. Little by little, it becomes evident that Klara's position has greater and more ominous significance.

It is highly probable that Josie is currently experiencing a severe illness, with a strong possibility of her demise. Hence, affectionate social bonds appear throughout the whole novel within the great social support from Josie's family and friends, including Klara, during her hard times. Out of fear for her daughter's potential death, Chrissie procures Klara as a form of insurance. At the moment of Josie's passing away, Klara may adopt an artificial replica of the girl's physical form and proceed to carry on her existence. Mr. Capaldi,

the individual responsible for developing Klara as a replacement for Josie, holds the belief that human beings are merely the culmination of material operations. Consequently, he asserts that there is no inherent aspect within humans that cannot, in theory, be substituted. The objection to this idea by Josie's father, Paul, is evident, and even the mother expresses uncertainty about the possibility of accepting a revised iteration of Josie.

Klara is resolute in her determination to employ all available means to ensure the prevention of any adverse occurrences befalling the primary Josie. Upon the emergence of the sun, Beggar Man and his pet became active. Klara, a devoted sun worshipper, attaches great importance to this incident. She assumes that the rays of the sun have revived them. The scene convinces her that the sun is a kind divine being with the power to heal those who deserve it. This notion later motivates her attempt to save Josie by catching the attention of the sun to the girl's disease. As the readers trace Klara's introspection throughout the story, her apparently boundless inquisitiveness and her deepening fondness for the sun, they perceive that Klara undeniably possesses independent thought or consciousness, but "this consciousness as mere awareness might not carry much moral weight unless it involves positive and negative mental states, such as the experience of pleasure and pain". Hence, our exploration of Klara's psyche reveals her possession of a profound and intricate inner realm (Stenseke 7).

The novel presents a perplexing enigma surrounding the unexpected recovery of the homeless man and his pet. Although it is possible that the man has become temporarily unconscious for many

reasons, such as excessive drinking, Ishiguro, as expected in his writings, leaves the scene of the immobility of the dog as a puzzling question. Therefore, Klara asks for the sun's assistance in facilitating Josie's recovery. Rick helps the protagonist, Klara, get to McBain's barn, which is behind Josie's house. Notably, when viewed from Josie's window, the barn appears to be positioned at the precise location where the Sun descends on the sky. Josie's bedroom window offers warmth, sunlight, and shade-deception, so Klara and her friend Josie frequently engage in the shared activity of observing the sunset, which brings them great pleasure and strengthens their connection. Josie demonstrates her dedication to Klara by trying to assist her in catching a glance through the window while Klara has to stay in the storage closet.

Klara asserts that Josie and her friend Rick possess genuine affection; so, for Klara, they deserve of the sun's assistance. Additionally, she pledges to undertake actions aimed at appeasing the Sun. When situated within the urban environment, she seeks the assistance of the father to dismantle the Cootings Machine. Her objective is to eliminate this particular device responsible for emitting pollutants, with the aspiration that such an action may appease the sun. Klara expresses her disappointment upon observing that, while departing from the urban area, the previously demolished Cootings Machine is substituted with a more recent and larger iteration. However, Klara maintains her belief in the sun. One day, it appears like her confidence is being rewarded. Despite Josie's initial decline in health, she experiences a remarkable improvement on a bright morning.

Even Rick, who exhibits a higher degree of scepticism compared to Klara regarding the sun's influence, subsequently acknowledges that Josie's recuperation appears to be connected to that particular sunny day. Following her recovery, Josie gradually experiences a growing distance from Klara and Rick as she increasingly allocates her time to socializing with fellow young individuals in her vicinity who are similarly embarking on their collegiate journeys. Rick, on the other hand, initiates the formation of a new social circle. Upon Josie's departure for university, she bids farewell to Klara, marking their final encounter. Klara ultimately finds herself at the Yard, a designated location where similar AFs congregate to undergo a gradual decline towards the conclusion of their operational lifespans.

Klara experiences a state of immobility, and despite receiving offers from individuals to relocate her in closer proximity to other androids, she exhibits a preference for solitude in order to engage in the process of putting together her past memories. On a certain occasion, the protagonist is paid a visit by her old store's supervisor, who occasionally frequents the premises to inspect non-operational AFs that were previously sold at the shop. At the end of the novel, Klara recounts to the director how the sun has exhibited benevolence towards Josie, prompting the director to express her preexisting belief in the sun's favourable disposition towards Klara. After that, the manager says goodbye to her dear Klara, looking over the whole place. The final scene of the story ends up leaving Klara behind in the junkyard, devoid of any companionship, as she nears the close of her operational lifespan while observing the sky above.

In *Klara and the Sun* (2021), human qualities such as love, devotion, sacrifice, trust, and friendship are attributed to an artificial intelligence entity. The novel consists of six parts in which the incidents take place in a speculative near-future society where affluent adolescents prefer to acquire humanoid robots known as Artificial Friends (AFs). Agnieszka Wykowska, a cognitive neuroscientist, emphasizes the necessity of developing androids and humanoid robotics that show signs of "behaviours that humans can easily read and respond to, because social and assistive robots might be able to help in caring for elderly people or children with special needs" (652). These teenagers, because of mysterious circumstances, receive remote education and have limited opportunities for in-person social interactions with others. Robotic humanoids are frequently advertised as a solution to alleviate feelings of loneliness. However, it is worth noting that they themselves exist within a societal context characterized by isolation and solitude.

In his article titled "Almost Human," Radhika Jones, a literary critic, puts forward his review of Ishiguro's novel, arguing that

Klara and the Sun lands in a pandemic world, in which vaccines hold the promise of salvation but the reality of thousands of deaths a day persists, and a substantial portion of the American population deludes itself into thinking it isn't happening. Our own children have been learning on oblongs and in isolation. The crisis of this novel revolves around whether Josie, with Klara's help, will recover from her illness — and whether, if Josie doesn't recover, her mother, with Klara's help, will survive the loss. (20)

Hence, the objective of the AF is to prevent the isolation of children who are separated from others. Meanwhile, in Ishiguro's

work, not only children who feel loneliness, but also most of his characters are striving to evade this severe sense.

In a word, this research focuses on how we define ourselves and our relationships during the digital age. The focus now is not on the capabilities or upcoming advancements of technology, but rather on our own potential and evolution. Instead of worrying about whether or not robots can love humans, we should consider the reasons why humans may admire robots.

Conclusion

What is the fundamental origin of the concept of humanity, which refers to the innate worth attributed to every individual? How can we establish a connection between the dignity of humanity and the inherent value of nonhuman entities? Many existential questions are raised by Ishiguro's novel. According to Nicholas Wolterstorff, an American philosopher, such excavating interrogations help to clarify why some people think that the unique worth of every human being stems from the immense love that God (352-61), as in Ishiguro's account, embodied by the sun—which the solar-electric Klara views as a form of divinity that sustains life—has for each one of us. In the last parts of *Klara and the Sun*, Klara, the AF narrator, suggests that the essence of human worth, which is the unique and particular quality that defines every human being, does not originate from us but rather from the affection and care that others have for us.

A crucial inquiry inside the story is whether Klara merely perceives human feelings or genuinely experiences them. In this regard, Marvin Minsky and Richard Yonck both highlight the significance of machine emotion and offer insights into the potential development of robots' social and emotional intelligence. Thus, Minsky contends that by gaining a comprehensive understanding of the functioning of the human brain's activity, we have the potential to develop feelings of AI. This is because emotions often arise when specific cognitive patterns begin to inhibit our utilization of specific mental faculties (Minsky 5). This theory illustrates the reason behind the research's argument that Klara is more than a device.

Furthermore, Yonck puts an emphasis on the idea that "the affective computing integrates computer science, artificial

intelligence, robotics, cognitive science, psychology, biometrics, and much more in order to allow us to communicate and interact with computers, robots, and other technologies via our feelings" (Yonck xvii). Hence, emotional androids as a new stunning phenomenon begin to spread through literature. Contemporary SF, for example, "predicts and describes variable developments in AI's embodiment and emotion with optimism or pessimism," but Ishiguro's speculative novel, *Klara and the Sun*, interestingly represents the optimistic scenario for the positive integration of the socially emotional robots with the human race. (Jiang and Hajdu 422). Other critics, such as Max Tegmark, embrace Ishiguro's optimistic visualization of our future as posthuman beings, where we engage in meaningful social and emotional interactions with advanced humanoid robots like Sofia and Klara.

The novelist skilfully emphasizes the juxtaposition of an automated system that occasionally appears remarkably human-like in an attempt to illustrate that "robots should adopt a human-like rather than machine-like role and interact accordingly" (van Straten et al. 326). This creates an eerie appreciation for Klara's mimicked cognitive "processes and activities used in perceiving, remembering, thinking, and understanding" (qtd. in Crowder and Friess, 65). Her programmed and evolving abilities ultimately prompting us to acknowledge the striking resemblance between her methods and our own empathy, perception, cognition, and behaviour. Klara and her posthuman counterparts become "able to think with, and like humans; they will compete with, or augment human cognitive capabilities" (Lamola 136).

This academic research provides a promising foundation for evaluating our current utilization of contemporary innovations across several domains, with a particular focus on the impact of socially and emotionally humanoid robots. Thus, Ishiguro's novel propagates how posthuman technology "uses information science to achieve a more comprehensive coverage of human psychological activity with an artificial machine" (Wang et al. 356). It also explores how these robots contribute to our isolation and individuality instead of fostering interconnectedness. Additionally, it highlights the shift towards a competitive outlook rather than a collaborative one. Through the progression of events in this story, we can discover that cultures have the capacity to form deep emotional connections with machines. If humans undergo a transformation where they become predominantly electronic rather than biological entities, there is a possibility that we may one day lose the essence of being human. It is preferable to view technology as an improved lifestyle, not as a privileged daily life. This distinction is important for us to acknowledge and implement in our everyday lives.

In the end, *Klara and the Sun* (2021), the posthumanistic fiction, by Nobel laureate Kazuo Ishiguro, compels individuals to address their personal concerns over the future implications of advancing technologies and grapple with profound inquiries on the essence of human existence.

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