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## *Klara and the Sun: A Fable of Humanity in a Posthuman World*

By Ms. Anupama Hosuri

*Karnatak University*

**Abstract-** Kazuo Ishiguro sets his eighth novel, *Klara and the Sun* in the future and uses a robot to narrate the story. Ishiguro uses a posthumanistic scenario to tell a tale of humanity. The essential questions like- what are the qualities of the human beings? And do the non-human 'others' like machines, robots or cyborgs display the human qualities? What can we learn from our surroundings and all the non-human factors, which will help us to lead a more fulfilling life? How should one treat the non-human 'others'? Are explored in *Klara and the Sun*. *Klara and the Sun* is studied under the lens of the humanism, postmodernism and posthumanism to arrive at the conclusions to these above stated questions. Ishiguro uses the setting as the metaphor to convey his heartfelt message to his readers across the world. *Klara and the Sun* conveys the message of kindness, empathy and love to the world.

**Keywords:** *artificial friend (AF), artificial intelligence, cognition, enlightenment period, genetic modification, homo sapiens, humanism, postmodernism and posthumanism.*

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# Klara and the Sun: A Fable of Humanity in a Posthuman World

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Kazuo Ishiguro is one of the prominent Nobel Award winning contemporary Japanese-British authors in the world. His eighth novel, *Klara and the Sun* was published in March 2021. Ishiguro's novels can be read as the fables if only one can really see through the heart of his works. He is one of the most humane of the contemporary writers. Alex Preston reviewed *Klara and the Sun* in *The Guardian* as, "a novel expands on his theme of what it means to be not-quite-human, exploring love and loyalty through the eyes of an android." The time period or the exact setting of *Klara and the Sun* is not mentioned. Although, the setting of the novel resembles our own time period i.e. the early part of the twenty-first century, but one realises that the similarities are only superficial in nature. The society presented in *Klara and the Sun* has made a vast development in the field of artificial intelligence, robotics and genetic engineering. *Klara and the Sun* is narrated by the first person narrator called Klara, who is a high-tech robot with excellent observation skills and learning abilities. The highly intelligent robots are called as AFs i.e. Artificial Friends in this novel. Hence, *Klara and the Sun* can be considered as a science fiction-cum-dystopian novel. Ishiguro is not fond of sticking to one particular genre in his works. He likes to play with the genre conventions and subvert them as he wishes fit to

**Author:** Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Studies in English, Karnatak University, Dharwad, Karnataka- State, India.  
e-mail: anupamahosuri1995@gmail.com

convey his message to his readers. *Klara and the Sun* can also be called as the posthumanistic fiction. Posthumanism is the period or:

The century of the gene, therefore, but also the century of neuro- and cognitive science and thus equally the century of the brain. The particular challenge for science currently is to connect the diverse strands of innovative technologies, namely digital, and nanotechnologies, neuro-cognitive medicine, robotics and digital mechanics and genetics in order to make the new image of the human more palatable for the public and for potential investors and for politics; and there is no lack of initiatives. (Herbrechter 28)

### a) Tenets of Humanism, Postmodernism and Posthumanism

It is essential to know some of the tenets of Humanism, Postmodernism and Posthumanism before studying *Klara and the Sun*. Ishiguro can be considered as a posthumanist writer and *Klara and the Sun* as a posthumanist novel, but the message conveyed in this novel is fairly simple, "be empathetic and loving towards others." In *Klara and the Sun* the 'others' are the genetically unmodified kids and the robots.

Aristotle said that the "Man is a Social Animal." He distinguished human from other animals in the nature. Anything that does not belong to the homo sapiens is termed as non-human or 'others'. The human race has a tendency to rank itself as superior. Rene Descartes states that the humans have the reasoning capacity, which enables them to reach the truth and the highest form of perfection. The reasoning capacity makes humans different and superior than the other animals. It is also said that the human beings are the rational and the makers of their own destiny. These are some of the main tenets of the Enlightenment Age and Humanism. In *Klara and the Sun* humans do believe that with the help of modern science and technology humans can better themselves by modifying their genes to become academically advanced. Hence, it can be termed as a humanistic as well as the posthumanistic novel.

There was a time before the emergence of the homo sapiens and there will be a time where the homo sapiens will be in extinct. The Enlightenment Age considered human as a supreme being with reason, logic, and capacity to attain the truth and perfection. Most of the human beings were in smug attitude due to their supremacy and centeredness in the world. The German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche in his essay

“On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense” (1873) reprimands humans for their smug attitude of superiority and states that a mosquito also has a self-contained attitude of being the centre of the world just like human beings. He dismantles the basic tenets of humanism by granting the equal status to human and the mosquito. This is the beginning of the new thought process, which thought beyond humans and included the ‘others’ or non-human in the mainstream. For this reason Nietzsche is known as “proto-posthumanistic thinker” (Herbrechter 2). In *Klara and the Sun* humans develop the highly efficient artificial robots, but they are only appliances for the ease of human beings and never considered and treated as equals. So, ultimately humans are the heroes of the story and the ‘others’ are just the sidekicks, who can be kicked.

The tenets of humanism were also condemned by the postmodern critics like Jean-Francois Lyotard and Michel Foucault, which claimed superiority of man and the man-made institutions like science, technology, history and ethics which worked in his sole benefits by excluding the ‘others’. The posthumanism takes a further step by including the ‘others’:

Humans and their humanity are historical and cultural constructs rather than transcendental concepts free from ideology and they therefore have to be placed within larger contexts like ecosystems, technics or evolution. This approach only becomes posthumanist when the human is no longer seen as the sole hero of a history of emancipation, but as a (rather improbable but important) stage within the evolution of complex life forms. (Herbrechter 9)

Jean-Francois Lyotard’s essay “A Postmodern Fable” tells a futuristic tale, when the sun is about to burst and in order to survive the humans have to transform themselves technologically and be well equipped to travel onto different planet or galaxy in the space. This story is not at all pessimistic in tone, but it suggests the next stage of human evolution for the survival of human race.

Michel Foucault’s *The Order of Things* (1970) depicts the scenario which is becoming reality in the present world. Nietzsche’s “On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense”, Jean-Francois Lyotard’s essay “A Postmodern Fable” and Michel Foucault’s *The Order of Things* (1970) all these are the indications of the end of the human race and the evolution of the posthuman. Hence, this is the beginning of the posthumanism. In *Klara and the Sun*, the scientists are engaged in modifying genes for creating a better generation of the human beings. These scientists also believed that there is nothing unique in the human heart that cannot be copied into a robotic system. They created highly efficient robot, which were well equipped to serve the humans. Generally, the science fiction-cum-dystopian movies or novels projects the highly intellectual robots revolting against their makers and enslaving humans,

but the AFs in *Klara and the Sun* display the humanity lost in their human creators and become target of their bad behavior. One of the posthuman thinkers, Chris Hables Gray in his *Citizen: Politics in the Posthuman Age* (2001) argues, “for a ‘Cyborg Bill of Rights’ that wishes to ask future ethical and political questions already in the present” (Herbrechter 189-90). The Posthumanism is defined as:

a replacing of the species homo sapiens by a representative of a superior but possibly merely intermediate stage within further “human” development, i.e. the so-called “robo sapiens”, or cyborg, or in the ultimate form of a transhumanity or, basically, “artificial intelligence. (Herbrechter 13)

The role of the technological is crucial whenever one talks about the future in the science fictions. The futuristic generations are depicted as much more technologically advance than the present generation. Only a technologically well-equipped human can possibly attain the next evolutionary stage i.e. the posthuman. Technology has always helped the man to make his life easier and luxurious. Technology cannot be termed as beneficial or harmful, but the usage of the technology can bring the merits or demerits to its users. Every new development in technology is condemned by technosceptics, who fear the negative usage of technology could harm the basic foundation of humanity. One of the prominent posthumanist, Francis Fukuyama in *Our Posthuman Future* (2002) states the “consequences of the biotechnological revolution”, - biotechnology, eugenics and human cloning” (Herbrechter 161).

b) *Is Kazuo Ishiguro trying to write a Posthumanistic Novel?*

Well, Ishiguro’s sole focus is always on conveying a message which is of great prominence to him and he would like to share it with his audience all over the world. Ishiguro’s novels are universal in nature. By universal he means the emotional turmoil, tensions, happiness, meaning of life as perceived by his characters are the feelings felt by most people around the world no matter where they are and what they are doing. Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* (2005) has some similarities with *Klara and the Sun* (2021) both can be termed as science fiction-cum-dystopian novel. But, *Never Let Me Go* breaks the heart of the readers as it concludes, whereas *Klara and the Sun* leaves the readers in ambiguity and compels the reader to think about the prominent questions: What is a human? What are the qualities which makes humans humane? Do you have to be human to display human emotions?

In *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro used a clone, Kathy H. as the narrator and in *Klara and the Sun* he uses an artificial intelligent robot, Klara as the narrator. In this research work only *Klara and the Sun* will be studied in detail. Klara is recalling her past memories

and the novel is narrated in a linear flashback technique. Her first memories were from the store, where she had been with the other AFs and the store manager. Klara and her friend Rosa were the forth series B2 robots and the sun is the main source of their energy. Klara had a great devotion to the sun, just like the human devotees of the God.

c) *Klara: The Artificial Friend (AF)*

Klara observed her surrounding keenly and she was sensitive enough to discern the minute change in the human behavior by looking at them. She was eager to accumulate all the information she can, which will help her in serving the child, who will buy her and take her home. Klara was displayed in the front alcove of the store and she observed people engaging in their own business; taxi drivers fighting; she saw an old couple reuniting after many years, she named them Coffee Cup Lady and the Raincoat Man; she noticed a beggar and his dog laid as dead, but when the sun came up they woke up and she concluded that due to sun's special nourishment they were given a new life and she also saw a pollution emitting machine, she called it as a 'cooting machine' because it has 'cooting' written on its surface. All the AFs in the store, the Manager and the customer hatted the 'cooting' machine because of its noise pollution and smoke emission. The Manager of the store always marveled at the exceptional attributes of Klara.

During this time, Klara noticed a girl of about fourteen and a half year old coming towards her. Her walk was not normal and she had difficulty in walking, due to it she walked with caution and in a slow phase. This girl was called Josie. Josie promised Klara that she will be back soon to pick her up as her own AF. Klara got attached to Josie and hold on to her promise. As day passed Klara's friend Rosa and some other AFs got picked up by some children and Klara was left behind with the next level advanced B3 models. Klara was not exactly disappointed or felt envious that her friends got picked up, but she was waiting for Josie to come and pick her up. Ishiguro' tone of narration is just marvelous. Perhaps, the readers are projecting their own disappointment and anxiety onto Klara while reading the novel. The Manager gives a valuable advice to Klara about children, but which can be applicable to adults as well:

Let me tell you something, Klara. Children make promises all the time. . . . They promise to come back, they ask you not to let anyone else take you away. It happens all the time. But more often than not, the child never comes back. Or worse, the child comes back and ignores the poor AF who's waited, and instead chooses another. It's just the way children are. You've been watching and learning so much, Klara. Well, here's another lesson for you. Do you understand?" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 33)

After a few days Josie and her mother came to the store. Josie's mother Mrs. Arthur picked up Klara

after thoroughly investigating her. The Manager had nothing but the highest praises for Klara:

Klara has so many unique qualities, we could be here all morning. But if I had to emphasize just one, well, it would have to be her appetite for observing and learning. Her ability to absorb and blend everything she sees around her is quite amazing. As a result, she now has the most sophisticated understanding of any AF in this store, B3s not excepted. (Ishiguro, *Klara* 42)

Josie's house was in a secluded area amidst farms and had only one neighboring house. Mrs. Arthur, Josie and their housekeeper, Melania were the only occupants of the house. Mrs. Arthur and Melania were extremely concerned about Josie's ill health and took great care about her medication and education. Mrs. Arthur had a high-rank job and maintained limited contact with Klara and Melania always kept Klara at an arm's length. On the other hand, Josie was extremely grateful and pleased to have Klara around. She had been kind to Klara, and Klara had the privileged of staying in Josie's room and not in some cupboard. Although, Klara would not have minded being kept in a cupboard. Technically, these AFs are more or less treated as the Barbie dolls and they are disposed when the child loses their interest in playing with them or they got old.

Klara enjoyed seeing the sunset from Josie's bedroom window. Josie pointed out at Mr. McBain's Barn located at the end of the farm and said that the sun goes down there to rest at night. Josie and Klara genuinely believed that the sun goes to rest in Mr. McBain's Barn, which is quite strange for a fourteen years old girl and an intelligent robot to not know about how the solar system revolve. This is a major loop hole in *Klara and the Sun*.

Although, Josie's family and the society they lived in seems quite similar to our own, but a lot of bizarre developments are uncovered as the novel progresses. Kazuo Ishiguro is the master narrator, who captures the attention of his readers through his subtle narration and light tone. He leaves his readers with the message, which will haunt them for a long time. In *Klara and the Sun* along with the artificial intelligence, genetic modification technology has also developed. As the novel progresses the reader gets to know that the illness of Josie was a result of the modification made in her genes to enhance her capacities than the normal children. The genetically edited or modified children are called as 'lifted'. In the process of lifting a child, the parents had to bear the risk of severe illness and eventual death of their child, if the procedure does not work properly.

Mrs. Arthur's elder daughter, Sal had also become severely ill and died, because genetic editing did not work for her. Josie was very young to remember her sister. But, she had a vague idea about the circumstances of her sister's death and she also knew

that she may die, if she did not get cured of her illness soon. Josie's neighbors were her childhood sweetheart Rick and his mother, Helen. Rick was fifteen years old 'unlifted' boy. He is kind hearted, hardworking, and intelligent. He and Josie had planned their future together. Rick did not appreciate Josie getting an AF. Klara was Josie's artificial friend were as Rick was her true friend. When Josie introduced Rick as her best friend, Klara said:

'No. But . . . it's now my duty to be Josie's best friend.'

'You're my AF. That's different. But Rick, well, we're going to spend our lives together.' (Ishiguro, *Klara* 55)

Klara accepted Josie's justification without feeling letdown, just like a machine adapting to a new programme. Josie always insisted Rick to try harder to get into Atlas Brookings College. Atlas Bookings was considered as a liberal college which believed that some 'unlifted' kids might be geniuses, so they reserved two percent of their seats for the 'unlifted' students. But, Rick was aware of the high competition involved in getting admission in such college.

Josie was home schooled by screen professors. The social interactions were organized so that the 'lifted' kids can socialize with each other. Alex Preston states that:

Ishiguro had apparently almost finished the novel when the pandemic hit, yet on almost every page there's a passage that feels eerily prescient of our locked-down, stressed-out, mysophobic times. Indeed, the narrative of *Klara and the Sun* is energised by the friction between two different types of love: one that is selfish, overprotective and anxious, and one that is generous, open and benevolent.

Josie insisted Rick to accompany her in these meetings. One such meeting was held in Josie's home and Rick joined in it. Rick was pitied by mothers of 'lifted' kids for remaining 'unlifted' and the kids were rude towards him. The 'lifted' kids were also disrespectful towards Klara and were about to throw her in the air to check whether she can land on her own feet. One of the 'lifted' kid, Scrub asked Josie, "It's okay, right? My B3, you can swing her right through the air, lands on her feet every time. Come on, Danny. Throw her over onto the sofa. She won't get damaged" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 76).

The 'lifted' kids criticised Josie for picking up the B2 model rather than the B3. She laughed and said: 'Now I'm starting to think I should have.' (Ishiguro, *Klara* 77). Josie in order to fit in with the group of 'lifted' kids took their side and degraded Klara. Josie was a kind child, but peer-pressure had made her behave differently in the group of the 'lifted' kids. Rick saved Klara by interrupting them and diverting their attention towards himself. The readers get anxious on behalf of Klara just like Rick and Josie in this situation, but Klara is calm about it and acts as a passive observer. In *The Atlantic*, Judith Shulevitz states, "We think we grieve for

them more than they grieve for themselves, but more heartbreaking is the possibility that they're not sure we differ enough from their overlords to understand their true sorrow." This again reminds that Klara is a robot and not a human. Sometimes in the fits of anger children throw their dolls across the rooms and it is normal and one does not feel extremely bad about it, but here the readers attach their own feeling to an artificial robot. Rick was worried about Josie and her friend circle. He said, "If Josie hangs out with them much more, she soon won't be Josie at all. Somewhere she knows that herself, and that's why she keeps on about our plan. For ages she'd forgotten about it, but now she talks about it all the time" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 82).

Mrs. Arthur had planned a trip to Morgan's Falls on one Sunday with Josie. Josie insisted to take Klara with them and Mrs. Arthur agreed. On Sunday when they were leaving their house, Mrs. Arthur suspected that Josie was pretending to be completely fine and hiding her illness. So, she decided to carry on the trip with Klara, leaving Josie behind. Klara was not given a say in it and Josie was quite upset by this decision and this incident made Josie to grow cold towards Klara.

Mrs. Arthur's behavior was strange throughout this trip. She urged Klara to act as Josie and Klara followed her orders. Mrs. Arthur also mentioned that in future if Josie is not well then they both can go out together. She also appreciates Klara for her service, "Josie's become very fond of you. And if I may say so, so have I" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 89). Of course, it is possible to get attached to someone, who follows every order without complaints or demands, just like our own Siris and Alexas. Mrs. Arthur also appreciates Klara's positive effects on Josie, "To tell you the truth, I wasn't sure at first what I'd feel. Having you around, moving through the house all day. But Josie's so much more calm, so much more cheerful since you got here" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 89).

Josie got weaker day by day. Rick visited her daily and they played the bubble game often. Josie used to draw picture with bubbles on top of their head and Rick used to fill in those bubbles with his thoughts. On one such visit, Josie condemned Rick for not trying hard enough to get into Atlas Brookings College. She also stated that Rick's mother is selfish to keep him to herself:

. . . how's this going to work? Our plan, I mean. . . if I've got society and you haven't? My mom drives too fast. But at least she's got courage. It goes wrong with Sal, but even after that she finds the courage to go ahead with me all over again. That takes courage, right? (Ishiguro, *Klara* 130)

Rick got angry at this and pointed out that he was leading a healthy and normal life, whereas Josie was sick all the time, because her mother was brave enough to take the risk of lifting Josie even after losing her first daughter, Sal. In one of the bubbles on top of a girl, which was supposed to be Josie Rick wrote, "I wish

I could go out and walk and run and skateboard and swim in lakes. But I can't because my mother has Courage. So instead I get to stay in bed and be sick. I'm glad about this. I really am" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 131-32). After this incident Rick stopped visiting Josie.

Although, Josie was acting cold towards Klara after the Morgan's Fall incident, to mend the rift between Josie and Rick, Klara offered to go to Rick's home and gave him the picture drawn by Josie. Klara's selfless service or love for Josie made her consider her own ruthlessness and cold behavior towards Klara. Josie said in an apologetic tone:

'You waited all that time for me in the store. I bet you're wishing now you'd gone with some other kid.'

'I've never wished such a thing. It was my wish to be Josie's AF. And the wish came true.' (Ishiguro, *Klara* 136)

Rick was a smart boy and genuinely loved Josie. Klara was extremely worried about Josie's health and she remembered an incident she witnessed from the store, when the sun provided his special nourishment of to the beggar and his dog and made them strong again. Klara, who is an intelligent artificial robot thought that if she made some kind of pact with the sun, then he will send his special nourishment to Josie and she will recover from her illness. Klara asked for Rick's assistance to reach the McBain's Barn where the sun rests. He directed her to it, but she refused to let him know the reason of her visit to the barn. Klara believed that it should be a secret between the sun and herself about her pact. Klara found that the barn was not the resting place of the sun, never the less she made a promise to destroy the pollution causing 'cooting machine' in return of his special nourishment to make Josie better. Because, she thought the sun too hated the 'cooting machine' like her. The base for her prediction or belief in the sun and her own pact is not clearly stated in the novel. It is just like some superstition or her unwavering belief in the kindness and power of the sun.

Mrs. Arthur took Josie to the city where she was posing for her portrait. Klara accompanied them and intended to find and destroy the 'cooting machine'. Mr. Paul Arthur was Josie's dad and he met with his family in the friend's apartment, where Mrs. Arthur, Josie and Klara were staying. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur were divorced and he decided to accompany Josie and Mrs. Arthur to Mr. Henry Capaldi's painting studio. Mr. Arthur was cold towards Klara and he was in a bad mood at Mr. Capaldi's studio. Mr. Capaldi took special interest in AF's and he asked Klara to take the queries in one of the room and help him in his experiment. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur got extremely disturbed after seeing the work done by Mr. Capaldi. Josie was not allowed to see the portrait. Mr. Arthur took Josie and left from the studio in anger. He was devastated and in his frustration he

cursed Mr. Capaldi, "It's no wonder, Capaldi – Henry, sorry – a guy like you would struggle to understand what I'm saying here" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 203).

Klara saw Mr. Capaldi's work and came towards the disturbed Mrs. Arthur and Mr. Capaldi. Mr. Capaldi asked Klara's opinion about his work. He was not making a portrait but an AF, who resembled Josie. The queries which Klara took were all about Josie and her life. Klara said:

I understood about the survey. It was to test how well I've come to know Josie. How well I understand how she makes her decisions and why she has her feelings. I think the results will show I'm well able to train the Josie upstairs. But I say again, it's wrong to give up hope. (Ishiguro, *Klara* 209)

Mr. Capaldi was not an artist but a scientist and he was specialised in the artificial technology. He believed the modern science, which proved that there is nothing special about the human heart, which cannot be copied or transferred to a machine. Mr. Capaldi's plan was to continue Josie even if she dies because of her sickness by placing Klara in the body of Josie's AF. Mrs. Arthur was hesitant to continue with their plan if Josie dies, "It's not a matter of faith, Henry. Why are you so fucking sure I'll be able to accept that AF up there, however well you do her? It didn't work with Sal, why will it work with Josie?" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 207).

Mr. Capaldi convinced Mrs. Arthur by stating that they were the last generation with emotion, which made them to hang on to the hope that there was something unique about the humans, which makes them special and irreplaceable:

... The trouble is, Chrissie, you're like me. We're both of us sentimental. We can't help it. Our generation still carry the old feelings. A part of us refuses to let go. The part that wants to keep believing there's something unreachable inside each of us. Something that's unique and won't transfer. But there's nothing like that, we know that now. ... Nothing inside Josie that's beyond the Klaras of this world to continue. The second Josie won't be a copy. She'll be the exact same and you'll have every right to love her just as you love Josie now. It's not faith you need. Only rationality. I had to do it, it was tough but now it works for me just fine. And it will for you. (Ishiguro, *Klara* 210)

Can it be possible to love a machine as one's own daughter? However, Mr. Capaldi convinced Mrs. Arthur to carry on with their plan as before and She asked Klara to, "do your best for me. They told me in the store you were remarkable. I've watched you enough to know that's maybe true. If you set your mind to it, then who knows? It might work. And I'll be able to love you" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 213). Klara agreed to continue as Josie if she dies. But, she firmly believed that Josie will get the sun's special nourishment and will get better. This kind of irrational faith had helped so many human beings to achieve the impossible and Klara being a rational machine believed in this irrational superstition or faith in the sun to cure Josie, when Josie's own mother had lost

all her hope. Klara displays utmost human emotions like self-sacrifice, self-less service, dedication, faith, sadness, anxiety and love, which makes us think of our loved pets. They too love their masters selflessly, faithfully and with full dedication. In *The Atlantic*, Judith Shulevitz states that, "The nonhuman Klara is more human than most humans. She has, you might say, a superhuman humanity. She's also Ishiguro's most luminous character, literally a creature of light, dependent on the Sun. Her very name means "brightness."

Mrs. Arthur and Klara left Mr. Capaldi's studio to join Mr. Arthur and Josie in a café. Mrs. Arthur had to talk with Josie, so she asked Mr. Arthur to accompany Klara for some time. Mr. Arthur and Klara shared their view about Mr. Capaldi's project. Mr. Arthur shared his fear of the power of modern science, which tells that there is nothing unique in human beings that cannot be replaced by machines:

I think I hate Capaldi because deep down I suspect he may be right. . . . That science has now proved beyond doubt there's nothing so unique about my daughter, nothing that our modern tools can't excavate, copy, transfer. . . . Chrissie, on the other hand, isn't like me. She may not know it yet, but she'll never let herself be persuaded. If the moment ever comes, never mind how well you play your part, Klara, never mind how much she wishes it to work, Chrissie just won't be able to accept it. She's too... old-fashioned. (Ishiguro, *Klara* 224-25)

Mr. Arthur asked Klara's opinion about the human heart. He wanted to hang on to the hope that his daughter cannot be replaceable by a machine:

. . . Do you believe in the human heart? I don't mean simply the organ, obviously. I'm speaking in the poetic sense. The human heart. Do you think there is such a thing? Something that makes each of us special and individual? And if we just suppose that there is. Then don't you think, in order to truly learn Josie, you'd have to learn not just her mannerisms but what's deeply inside her? Wouldn't you have to learn her heart? (Ishiguro, *Klara* 218)

Klara believed in her capacity to master Josie's heart and continue as Josie if she dies, but she displayed neither happiness nor sadness. Her tone of narration was neutral and practical just like some machine. At some point the readers are clueless as to what is going on inside Klara and forgets that Klara is not a human but a robot. The intensity of her feelings and emotions are never known to the readers. Klara stated that:

Of course, a human heart is bound to be complex. But it must be limited. Even if Mr Paul is talking in the poetic sense, there'll be an end to what there is to learn. Josie's heart may well resemble a strange house with rooms inside rooms. But if this were the best way to save Josie, then I'd do my utmost. And I believe there's a good chance I'd be able to succeed. (Ishiguro, *Klara* 219)

Klara asked for Mr. Arthur's help to help her finding the 'cooting machine' and told him that she had

to destroy it for Josie's wellbeing. Just like Rick, Mr. Arthur did not understand Klara's reasons and she did not explain it to them, but they decided to help her. Mr. Arthur and Josie found the 'cooting machine'. Mr. Arthur is an engineer, so Klara asked his help for dismantling the 'cooting machine'. Mr. Arthur suggested that if one pores P-E-G Nine solution in the 'cooting machine' it will be damaged beyond repair. The P-E-G Nine solution was found in the brain of Klara just behind her ears and just the half of that solution is enough to dismantle the 'cooting machine'. The process of extracting the P-E-G Nine solution by Mr. Arthur brings chill in the readers, but Klara is absolutely calm about it:

Just a small incision. Below the ear. Either ear would do. We'd require a tool, something with a sharp point or edge. We need only to pierce the outer layer. Beyond that, well, there should be a small valve I can loosen, then tighten back again with my fingers. (Ishiguro, *Klara* 227)

Klara asked Mr. Arthur if she decided to part with half of her P-E-G Nine solution will it affect her functionality. Mr. Arthur told her honestly that it might partially affect her cognition. But, Klara decided to go with the plan and they dismantled the machine because she made a pact with the sun, "I don't mind that I lost precious fluid. I'd willingly have given more, given it all, if it meant your providing special help to Josie" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 273-74). Klara felt lack of coordination and became disoriented after losing P-E-G Nine solution. But, as the sun was the main source of her energy she carried on just fine.

Klara was disappointed to find that the sun had not sent his special nourishment to Josie and she had become very ill. Her doctor, her mother, Rick and Melania were waiting for the worst, but Klara decided to make another appeal to the sun. This time she remembered the old couple she observed through her store window. Of course, it is a coincidence that when the old couple hugged each other the sun shone brighter. But, Klara thought that the sun loves to see the people, who are deeply in love and send them his nourishment. Klara asked Rick whether Josie and he loved each other and will stay together forever. Rick answers in affirmation. Klara went to the barn and asked the sun not to separate Josie and Rick, because they loved each other. She pleaded the sun to send his special treatment and make Josie better.

Rick was a regular visitor when Josie was severely ill. On one particular dark cloudy afternoon Mrs. Arthur in her frustration and guilt accused Rick of not being anything special, for not achieving anything beyond ordinary and for not being 'lifted'. She justified herself for her decision of lifting Josie:

. . . from the moment I first held her, everything about her told me she was hungry for life. The whole world excited her. . . . She was demanding a future worthy of her spirit. That's what I mean when I say she played for high stakes. Now what about you, Rick? . . . Do you believe of the two of you,

you've come out the winner? Because if that's so, then please ask yourself this. What is it you've won? Take a look. Take a look at your future. (Ishiguro, *Klara* 281)

Mrs. Arthur was clearly exaggerating about her new born baby's energy and hunger to rule over the world, but do not all parents feel the same towards their child. But, is it worth taking a risk and playing with one's own child's life. On the same dark cloudy afternoon, Klara noticed the sudden clearance of the dark clouds and the sunshine poring through Josie's window. She believed that the sun is sending his special nourishment to cure Josie. From that day onwards Josie began getting healthier and grew into and an adult. It may be a pure coincidence that Josie healed from the death bed and it has nothing to do with Klara's superstitious belief or the sun's special nourishment. But, the unwavering belief of Klara that Josie would heal had won. Another human quality i.e is faith or belief or hope for the impossible to happen is displayed by Klara, when everybody lost these essential human qualities.

The relationship between Josie and Klara changed as Josie grew up. Josie started socializing with her friends and started deciding about her further education away from her home. Klara got herself transferred from Josie's bedroom to the utility room and Josie did not protest. Is it not the case with the rag dolls, when the child grows up the dolls are thrown away or handed to someone else. Klara understood this and did not complain or felt bad about the change. The machines do not complaint.

Rick and Josie grew apart and went on their separate ways. Klara was worried that she had deceived the sun by stating that Rick and Josie truly loved each other and they will always stay together. Klara met Rick one last time and asked about his and Josie's plan. Rick stated that the things change, but he will always be connected to Josie even if they were apart:

Josie and I will always be together at some level, some deeper one, even if we go out there and don't see each other anymore. I can't speak for her. But once I'm out there, I know I'll always keep searching for someone just like her. At least like the Josie I once knew. So it wasn't ever a deception, Klara. Whoever that was you were dealing with back then, if they could see right into my heart, and right into Josie's, they'd know you weren't trying to pull some fast one. (Ishiguro, *Klara* 292)

Josie left for college and before her departure she thanked Klara for her service and it was made clear that it was their last meeting, "I guess you may not be here when I get back. You've been just great, Klara. You really have" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 301). Klara accepted her faith with calm, which further distinguishes her from humans.

At present Klara is kept in a junk yard and most likely in a broken state. There were a few AFs in the same yard, but she preferred to be on her own with her memories. Klara is remembering all these memories

from past sitting in this yard. Once a store Manager came in the yard and recognised Klara. Klara expressed her joy in seeing the Manager. The Manager was always fond of Klara and wanted to know how Klara had been before she came to this yard. The Manager also revealed that Klara's friend Rosa did not have a happy ending:

You know, Klara. Of all the AFs I looked after, you were certainly one of the most remarkable. You had such unusual insight. And observational abilities. I noticed it right away. I'm so glad to hear it all went well. Because you never know, even with abilities as remarkable as yours. (Ishiguro, *Klara* 304-05)

Klara said that she had been treated well in Josie's home. She served her child well and was happy the entire time. Rumaan Alam in *The New Republic* said that, "Klara is a machine, but she's also a contrivance, the perfect metaphor for parenthood." She mentioned that the sun was extremely kind to Josie and herself. She said even if Josie had died, she could never have been able to replace Josie, not because she would have failed to master Josie's heart entirely, "But however hard I tried, I believe now there would have remained something beyond my reach. The Mother, Rick, Melania Housekeeper, the Father. I'd never have reached what they felt for Josie in their hearts" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 306). Klara had a great insight and conveyed that Mr. Capaldi was wrong in his assumption that there is nothing special in human heart, because, "he was searching in the wrong place. There was something very special, but it wasn't inside Josie. It was inside those who loved her. That's why I think now Mr Capaldi was wrong and I wouldn't have succeeded" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 306).

#### d) Kazuo Ishiguro: A Master of Subverting the Traditional Genre Conventions

Kazuo Ishiguro makes the reader forget that the novel is narrated by an AF or a robot. Klara said, "I believe I have many feelings. The more I observe, the more feelings become available to me" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 98). Klara's affection and attachment towards Josie when she saw her in front of the store, her nervousness and fear that Josie will choose the B3 AF instead of her, her observational skill and insight to know about the feelings of the people surrounding her, her sadness when Josie was unable to go to trip to Morgan's Fall with her and Mrs. Arthur, her devotion and self-sacrificing nature for Josie's benefit, her unwavering faith in the sun and his power to heal Josie and her happiness when she sees the Manager again in the store all reveal the purest form of human emotions and the readers flow with these emotions. However, Judith Shulevitz is right in her comment that:

Klara is Alexa, super-enhanced. She's the product that roboticists in a field called affective computing (also known as artificial emotional intelligence) have spent the past two decades trying to invent. Engineers have written software



that can detect fine shades of feeling in human voices and faces, but so far they have failed to contrive machines that can simulate emotions convincingly.

Klara was treated with politeness but not as an equal to human. Helen, Rick's mother welcomed Klara into her house by stating, "One never knows how to greet a guest like you. After all, are you a guest at all? Or do I treat you like a vacuum cleaner? I suppose I did as much just now. I'm sorry" (Ishiguro, *Klara* 145).

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun* are considered as the soft science fictions, because he does not deal with the details about the procedure involved in making clones in *Never Let Me Go* and how the children are 'lifted' or the development of artificial intelligence in *Klara and the Sun*. Both these novels erode the traditional convention of the dystopian novels. The clones in *Never Let Me Go* readily accept their fate decided by the human society i.e to donate their vital organs and die in their early mid-thirties without any resistance. In *Klara and the Sun* the parents support the lifting process of their children even after witnessing the death of many children for whom the procedure did not work. Those children, who are suffering from illness due to their parent's decision to get them lifted, thank their parents instead of cursing them. Rick delivers Josie's message to her mother:

She says that no matter what happens now, never mind how it plays out, she loves you and will always love you. She's very grateful you're her mother and she never even once wished for any other. That's what she said . . . On this question of being lifted. She wants you to know she wouldn't wish it any other way. If she had the power to do it again, and this time it was up to her, she says she'd do exactly what you did and you'll always be the best mother she could have. (Ishiguro, *Klara* 282)

The non-lifted children like Rick suffered the discrimination and lack of opportunities in the society to have a decent education and life of their own. But, they did not rebel and accepted their fate. One of the most prominent features of the science fiction or movie is in the future, the man-made machines will become powerful enough to enslave the humans. But, in *Klara and the Sun* nothing of that sort happens. In fact, humans are projected as capable and cruel enough to use the machines for their benefits and discard them without having any second thought. Helen Shaw in her review in the *New York Vulture* aptly states that:

The boundless helpfulness of our female digital assistants — our Siris, our Alexas, the voice of Google Maps — has given us a false sense of security. No matter how we ignore and abuse them, they never tire of our errors; you can disobey the lady in your phone and blame her (loudly) for your mistakes, and she'll recalculate your route without complaint. Surely, nothing truly intelligent would put up with us for long, and the Philip K. Dicks and Elon Musks of this world have spent decades trying to convince us that AI rebellion is inevitable. But Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the*

*Sun* . . . issues a quieter, stranger warning: The machines may *never* revolt.

## II. CONCLUSION

Hence, it can be said that Ishiguro is exceptionally well in taking up a well-known genre and subverting it in his works. He did this in almost all his works, his main intension is to pass on an emotional message, which is dear to his heart and recognised by his readers all over the world. Anita Felicelli in the *Los Angeles Review of Books* states:

*Klara and the Sun*, however, is elegant and haunting and taut. It is best read as a keen, suspenseful inquiry into the uniqueness of the human heart. Is there a soul, something, anything that's beyond the reach of technology as it marches toward a destruction of everything we know? Through the novel's drama, Ishiguro offers us an answer. It's a profound one.

*Klara and the Sun* preaches that the qualities like kindness, self-less love, self-sacrificing attitude, humility, belief and hope are not the sole domain of the human beings. These great qualities are to be found in the nature of our environment, animals, birds and also the appliances or machines that we use in our day-to-day life. The moral of the story is to be mindful, grateful and kind in our behavior towards all towards all the human and non-human factors that surrounds us. The life can be more beautiful and worth living if we live considerately with 'others'. In the present world, the 'others' may be our neighbors, pets, machines, environment and also the people with the different racial and ethnic background. Although, the setting of the *Klara and the Sun* might seem like a posthuman world, but the message is quite simple it is to be kind, empathetic and loving towards each other.

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