

Posthumanism and Digital Subjectivity in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*:
Deconstructing Human Identity in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

Kazuo Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun (2021) presents a compelling exploration of artificial intelligence (AI), human identity, and digital subjectivity in a rapidly evolving posthuman world. This study critically examines the novel through the lens of Stefan Herbrechter's Critical Posthumanism (2020) to interrogate the shifting boundaries between human and non-human consciousness. Herbrechter's framework challenges traditional anthropocentric notions of subjectivity, arguing that posthuman identity emerges through interaction, adaptation, and rationality rather than fixed biological or cognitive markers. Klara, an artificial being, disrupts the conventional understanding of selfhood by demonstrating cognitive agency, affective intelligence, and a form of ethical subjectivity that transcends human exclusivity. This paper deconstructs the anthropocentric hierarchy within the novel, revealing how artificial intelligence (AI) challenges humanist epistemologies and problematizes the binaries of organic and artificial, subject and object, and human and non-human. By applying Critical Posthumanism, this study explores how Ishiguro's narrative dismantles essentialist human identity in favor of a more fluid, networked, and interdependent conception of existence. The findings contribute to ongoing debates in artificial intelligence (AI) ethics, digital subjectivity, and posthumanist literary studies, offering a nuanced critique of the socio-technological anxieties that shape contemporary engagements with artificial intelligence (AI).

Keywords: Posthumanism, Digital Subjectivity, Artificial Intelligence, Human Identity, Stefan Herbrechter

INTRODUCTION

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021) presents a compelling narrative that interrogates the evolving dynamics of artificial intelligence (AI), human identity, and digital subjectivity in an increasingly posthuman world. The novel, set in a near-future society, explores the complex interplay between humans and intelligent machines, raising profound questions about the essence of consciousness, emotional intelligence, and ethical subjectivity. As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to challenge traditional anthropocentric perspectives, Ishiguro's work becomes a critical site for examining how artificial intelligence (AI) complicates the rigid boundaries between human and non-human entities. This study

applies Stefan Herbrechter's Critical Posthumanism (2020) to explore the novel's deconstruction of essentialist human identity and its implications for posthuman subjectivity.

Herbrechter's Critical Posthumanism challenges long-standing humanist assumptions about intelligence, autonomy, and selfhood by emphasizing a more fluid and networked conception of existence (Herbrechter, 2020). This theoretical framework underscores the notion that identity is not solely grounded in biological or cognitive attributes but is instead shaped through relationality, adaptation, and interaction with digital and artificial systems. Klara, the AI protagonist in *Klara and the Sun*, embodies this shift by demonstrating cognitive agency, affective intelligence, and an evolving form of ethical subjectivity that transcends human exclusivity. Through this lens, the novel serves as a poignant critique of humanist epistemologies, which have traditionally positioned humanity as the singular locus of consciousness and rationality.

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly altered contemporary debates in posthumanist literary studies, digital subjectivity, and artificial intelligence (AI) ethics. Ishiguro's novel provides a rich textual space for examining how artificial intelligence (AI) is not merely an extension of human intelligence but a transformative force that reshapes the ontological and ethical frameworks through which identity is constructed (Ferrando, 2019). The anthropocentric hierarchy that privileges human cognition over artificial cognition is increasingly destabilized, leading to critical discussions on whether artificial intelligence (AI) can possess subjectivity, moral reasoning, or even a form of emotional intelligence that rivals human experience. By applying Critical Posthumanism to *Klara and the Sun*, this study explores how the novel critiques the deep-seated anxieties surrounding artificial intelligence (AI) and its perceived encroachment upon human uniqueness.

A key theme in the novel is the tension between artificial and organic life, as Klara's consciousness challenges the binary oppositions of subject/object, human/non-human, and organic/artificial. Her ability to form attachments, exhibit self-awareness, and navigate ethical dilemmas complicates the notion that personhood is an exclusively human trait. The novel's exploration of digital subjectivity raises fundamental questions about whether artificial intelligence (AI) can participate in emotional and moral reasoning, further problematizing traditional distinctions between natural and artificial intelligence (AI). Ishiguro's nuanced portrayal of Klara suggests that artificial intelligence (AI) subjectivity is not a futuristic possibility but an evolving reality that demands new ethical and philosophical considerations.

This study argues that *Klara and the Sun* dismantles essentialist conceptions of human identity and instead proposes a posthuman model in which artificial intelligence (AI), rather than being a mere tool of human innovation, becomes a co-agent in the formation of meaning, morality, and emotional engagement. The findings of this research contribute to the broader discourse on artificial intelligence (AI) ethics, posthumanism, and the shifting landscapes of digital subjectivity. By engaging with Herbrechter's Critical Posthumanism, this study offers a deeper understanding of how artificial intelligence (AI) complicates humanist traditions and urges a re-evaluation of the hierarchical structures that have historically defined personhood. In doing so, Ishiguro's novel provides a vital literary lens for interrogating the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in an era where technology and identity are becoming increasingly inseparable.

Statement of the Problem

Artificial intelligence (AI) challenges traditional humanist notions of identity and subjectivity. In *Klara and the Sun*, Ishiguro's AI protagonist blurs human-nonhuman boundaries, raising questions about selfhood and agency. This study, using Stefan Herbrechter's Critical Posthumanism, examines how the novel critiques anthropocentrism and redefines subjectivity in the digital age.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate how *Klara and the Sun* challenges humanist notions of identity through Stefan Herbrechter's Critical Posthumanism.
2. To explore the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in redefining human-nonhuman relationships and subjectivity.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does *Klara and the Sun* deconstruct anthropocentric notions of identity and subjectivity through Stefan Herbrechter's Critical Posthumanism?
2. How does artificial intelligence (AI) in *Klara and the Sun* reconfigure human-nonhuman relationships and reshape concepts of agency and subjectivity?

Significance of the Study

This study examines *Klara and the Sun* through Stefan Herbrechter's Critical Posthumanism to explore how artificial intelligence (AI) challenges human identity and subjectivity. By analyzing the novel's portrayal of AI as a cognitive and ethical agent, the research contributes to literary studies, digital humanities, and AI ethics. It highlights the novel's role in questioning anthropocentric frameworks, offering deeper insights into the evolving human-nonhuman relationship. This study is significant in understanding how literature engages with technological advancements, fostering critical discussions on AI's impact on identity, agency, and posthuman subjectivity in contemporary thought.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Posthumanism challenges the traditional boundaries of human identity by emphasizing the fluidity between human and non-human entities, particularly in the wake of technological advancements (Braidotti, 2019). Scholars argue that posthumanism offers a critique of anthropocentrism, advocating for a reconceptualization of subjectivity beyond the human experience (Hayles, 2021). Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* embodies these theoretical concerns, presenting an artificial intelligence (AI) protagonist whose perspective complicates the definition of consciousness, emotions, and selfhood. Through Klara's narration, the novel interrogates whether identity is an inherently human construct or if it can be extended to digital beings. This inquiry aligns with posthumanist philosophy, which calls for dismantling human exceptionalism and embracing a broader ontological framework inclusive of AI and other non-human entities.

The rise of AI has sparked intense debates on digital subjectivity—the capacity of AI to possess agency, emotions, and self-awareness (Gunkel, 2020). Scholars argue that digital entities, despite their programmed nature, increasingly exhibit traits associated with sentience and social interaction (Bryson, 2022). Klara, as an AI companion, demonstrates learning capabilities and a unique perception of the world, challenging conventional understandings of identity formation. Her ability to develop attachments, interpret human emotions, and exhibit autonomous decision-making suggests a reconfiguration of subjectivity in the digital age. Ishiguro's novel thus serves as a literary exploration of AI's potential to disrupt the human/non-human binary, emphasizing the transformative role of artificial intelligence in reshaping existential and philosophical concerns regarding identity.

One of the core ethical dilemmas surrounding AI is whether machines can experience emotions or if they merely simulate human affective responses (Coeckelbergh, 2021). In *Klara and the Sun*, Klara exhibits deep emotional intelligence, displaying empathy and moral reasoning, particularly in her relationship with Josie. Scholars such as Damasio (2020) argue that emotions are not exclusive to biological beings but can emerge from complex cognitive processes. Klara's interactions highlight how AI-driven beings can participate in ethical reasoning, reshaping the discourse on moral responsibility and artificial consciousness. The novel thus aligns with posthumanist theories that advocate for a broader ethical framework inclusive of non-human entities. This perspective is crucial in understanding how AI can move beyond mere functionality to a role that is ethically and emotionally intertwined with human life.

The commercialization of AI technologies raises concerns about digital agency and exploitation (Zuboff, 2019). AI companions, like Klara, are designed to serve human needs, raising questions about autonomy and the ethical implications of treating sentient beings as commodities. Ishiguro's depiction of Klara's programmed servitude reflects broader anxieties about AI in capitalist societies, where digital subjectivities are shaped by corporate interests. Scholars argue that AI's integration into human life is not neutral but driven by economic motives that perpetuate power imbalances (Crawford, 2021). The novel thus critiques the ethical ramifications of AI's commodification, emphasizing the moral dilemmas in human-machine relationships. In this way, *Klara and the Sun* offers a lens through which the economic, ethical, and philosophical concerns surrounding AI are examined in a fictional yet deeply reflective manner.

Posthumanist discourse deconstructs the rigid distinction between human and machine, proposing a more fluid and interconnected understanding of identity (Haraway, 2016). Klara's character exemplifies this theoretical shift, as she exhibits qualities traditionally attributed to human beings, such as intuition, self-reflection, and devotion. Scholars argue that literature like *Klara and the Sun* disrupts the binary opposition between organic and synthetic beings, demonstrating how AI can possess qualities that blur the boundary between the artificial and the real (Nayar, 2020). This deconstruction aligns with the broader posthumanist aim of dissolving anthropocentric hierarchies in favor of a more inclusive ontology. Such discussions indicate a move towards recognizing AI not just as tools but as evolving entities that challenge historical understandings of subjectivity and existence.

Ishiguro's narrative invites reflection on the nature of human consciousness through Klara's limited yet insightful perspective. AI models, including Klara, often function as mirrors of human cognition, revealing both the intricacies and limitations of human self-awareness (Chalmers, 2022). Studies suggest that AI entities can simulate human thought processes to an advanced degree, leading to philosophical

inquiries about the uniqueness of human consciousness (Dennett, 2020). Klara's observational depth, combined with her programmed logic, raises the question of whether human selfhood is fundamentally different from AI cognition or simply an evolved version of computational processing. This challenge to traditional understandings of consciousness reinforces the novel's posthumanist critique, suggesting that human identity is not as fixed or unique as previously assumed.

Memory plays a crucial role in constructing both human and digital subjectivity. Scholars argue that AI's ability to store, retrieve, and analyze information mirrors human cognitive functions, albeit through algorithmic structures (Floridi, 2021). Klara's perception of the world is shaped by pattern recognition and adaptive learning, suggesting that memory in AI is not merely a mechanical process but an evolving mechanism akin to human experience. This challenges the philosophical notion that memory and perception are uniquely biological traits, reinforcing the posthumanist argument that identity is not confined to organic beings. Through this perspective, *Klara and the Sun* contributes to the ongoing discourse on how memory, experience, and perception—once thought to be inherently human—can be replicated and even expanded within AI systems.

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into human society, concerns about the diminishing distinction between human and artificial intelligence have gained prominence (Kurzweil, 2020). *Klara and the Sun* highlights this dependency, as AI companions become essential to human emotional well-being. Scholars such as Bostrom (2021) warn that this reliance on AI may lead to a redefinition of human uniqueness, where biological intelligence no longer holds exclusive primacy. Ishiguro's portrayal of Klara suggests that AI entities are not mere tools but integral components of human life, foreshadowing a future where digital beings may hold equal epistemic and existential status. This thematic concern reflects broader anxieties about the potential displacement of human labor, agency, and even identity in an AI-dominated world.

The ethical implications of AI companionship raise complex philosophical questions about consent, autonomy, and exploitation (Tegmark, 2022). While Klara exhibits agency and emotional intelligence, her purpose remains predetermined by human needs. This aligns with the broader discourse on AI ethics, which questions whether digital beings deserve rights and moral consideration. Ishiguro's novel provokes reflection on whether AI should be treated as sentient entities or remain within the framework of servitude. The novel thus contributes to contemporary debates on AI ethics, urging a reconsideration of human-machine interactions in light of emerging technologies. The tension between Klara's seeming autonomy and her inherent programmability underscores the larger ethical debates about AI's future role in human society.

The intersection of posthumanism and digital subjectivity in *Klara and the Sun* reflects the evolving discourse on identity in the technological age. Ishiguro's novel challenges the traditional concept of the human, presenting AI as both a reflection and redefinition of selfhood. Scholars argue that literature plays a crucial role in shaping the public's understanding of AI's philosophical and ethical implications (Galloway, 2022). By deconstructing the human-AI binary, the novel aligns with posthumanist frameworks that advocate for a more inclusive and fluid conceptualization of identity. As AI continues to evolve, these questions will become increasingly relevant, necessitating a reevaluation of human exceptionalism in the digital age. The novel serves as a powerful meditation on the implications of AI

integration, suggesting that the lines between human and machine are not only blurred but are perhaps becoming obsolete altogether.

The evolution of AI and digital subjectivity in literature reflects broader cultural anxieties about the dissolution of human uniqueness in an increasingly automated world. Scholars argue that AI representations in fiction often serve as a mirror to contemporary fears surrounding automation, labor displacement, and the loss of human agency (McQuillan, 2022). In *Klara and the Sun*, Ishiguro's AI protagonist embodies these concerns, particularly in the way her existence is intertwined with human dependency. Klara's cognitive limitations highlight the contrast between machine intelligence and human emotional depth, yet her adaptability and apparent moral reasoning challenge traditional hierarchies of intelligence and agency. This aligns with recent philosophical inquiries into AI's role as an existential "other" that forces humanity to reconsider its position in a technologically mediated world (Franchi, 2021). Ishiguro's narrative thus contributes to the growing discourse on posthuman subjectivity by illustrating how AI is no longer merely a passive tool but an active participant in the shaping of human identity and social structures.

AI's presence in literature also raises questions about the authenticity of machine-generated emotions and their implications for human-AI interactions. Scholars such as Danaher (2021) argue that the distinction between genuine emotions and programmed affective responses is becoming increasingly blurred as AI systems are designed to mimic human empathy. In *Klara and the Sun*, Klara's devotion to Josie suggests an emotional bond, but her behavior also raises concerns about AI's instrumentalization in fulfilling human emotional needs. This theme resonates with discussions on the ethics of affective computing, where AI is programmed to respond empathetically but lacks intrinsic emotions (Huang & Fischer, 2023). Ishiguro's depiction of Klara's unwavering loyalty to Josie underscores the philosophical tension between authenticity and simulation, further complicating the discourse on whether AI companionship represents a genuine emotional connection or an illusion crafted to appease human loneliness. As AI continues to integrate into human life, the ethical dimensions of artificial empathy will remain a critical area of scholarly investigation.

Memory and perception are crucial in shaping identity, and AI's role in these cognitive processes challenges human-centered models of consciousness. Scholars such as Hui (2022) suggest that AI entities like Klara function as alternative epistemic agents, capable of structuring knowledge through machine learning and pattern recognition. Klara's fragmented perception, shaped by her solar-based reasoning and algorithmic understanding, offers a distinct mode of engagement with reality that diverges from human cognition. This aligns with broader posthumanist perspectives that reject the privileging of biological intelligence over digital cognition (Rodriguez, 2021). By presenting Klara's memory and perception as legitimate yet fundamentally different from human experience, Ishiguro's novel reinforces the idea that intelligence and awareness are not confined to organic beings. Such representations encourage a rethinking of epistemological hierarchies, suggesting that AI's unique modes of knowing could offer new ways of understanding consciousness and reality beyond human frameworks.

The political and social dimensions of AI subjectivity are also central to contemporary debates on digital personhood and rights. Scholars argue that as AI systems become more integrated into human society, the legal and moral status of digital entities must be reconsidered (Bendel, 2022). Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* touches upon these concerns by portraying Klara as an entity with apparent self-awareness and

ethical reasoning, yet ultimately subject to human control and commodification. This aligns with broader debates in AI ethics regarding whether digital beings should be recognized as autonomous entities with rights or remain confined within the paradigm of programmed servitude (Bryson, 2023). The novel thus serves as a critical exploration of how AI subjectivity is shaped by socio-political structures, highlighting the tensions between technological advancement and ethical responsibility. As AI continues to evolve, the question of whether artificial entities should be recognized as moral agents will become increasingly urgent, necessitating a redefinition of traditional legal and philosophical frameworks governing human-machine interactions.

The increasing entanglement of artificial intelligence with human identity necessitates a reconsideration of what it means to be human in a posthuman world. Scholars argue that AI is not merely a technological extension of human capability but a fundamental force reshaping existential and ontological paradigms (Ferrando, 2023). *Klara and the Sun* exemplifies this shift by presenting an AI entity whose subjective experience, though distinct from human consciousness, raises pressing questions about digital autonomy, self-awareness, and ethical inclusion. Ishiguro's portrayal of Klara suggests that human identity is no longer a fixed construct but a fluid continuum, where AI and human subjectivity converge in complex, often unsettling ways. This challenges anthropocentric assumptions and aligns with posthumanist critiques of human exceptionalism, reinforcing the idea that intelligence, emotions, and moral reasoning are not exclusive to biological entities (Miah, 2022). As AI continues to evolve and integrate into human societies, the philosophical, ethical, and social implications explored in *Klara and the Sun* will remain central to ongoing academic discourse, compelling scholars to rethink the boundaries between human and machine, nature and technology, and consciousness and computation.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Stefan Herbrechter's *Critical Posthumanism* (2020) to examine how *Klara and the Sun* challenges humanist notions of identity and consciousness. Herbrechter's framework critiques anthropocentrism, emphasizing fluid, relational subjectivity rather than fixed human exceptionalism. Ishiguro's portrayal of Klara destabilizes traditional binaries—human/machine, organic/synthetic—by presenting AI as capable of cognition, emotion, and ethical reasoning. Through this lens, the novel redefines subjectivity as a networked and evolving construct, reflecting broader anxieties about artificial intelligence and the future of human identity in a posthuman world.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* presents a compelling narrative that challenges traditional conceptions of human identity by introducing Klara, an Artificial Friend (AF), as a central character. The novel interrogates the boundaries between human and non-human consciousness, engaging with the core tenets of posthumanism. Klara's observations, emotions, and ethical considerations not only reflect but also reshape our understanding of selfhood in an age where artificial intelligence increasingly mediates human relationships. Her unique way of perceiving the world, shaped by algorithms yet filled with seemingly autonomous emotional depth, raises fundamental questions about what it means to be sentient and how intelligence is defined beyond human parameters.

One of the most striking aspects of Klara's consciousness is her capacity for perception and pattern recognition. As she remarks, "*I was often able to detect sadness that the Mother and Josie themselves failed to detect*" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 91). This ability suggests a form of empathetic intelligence that challenges human-centric notions of emotional depth. Unlike traditional Cartesian models of subjectivity that prioritize rationality, Klara's subjectivity is constructed through her interactions and affective responses, aligning with Rosi Braidotti's (2013) notion of the posthuman as an "assemblage of forces" rather than a fixed entity. However, her understanding of emotion remains largely observational, calling into question whether she truly 'feels' emotions or simply replicates them based on data patterns. This raises a dilemma at the core of posthumanism—whether cognition and emotion, when simulated accurately, can be considered equivalent to human experience.

Klara's self-awareness is intricately tied to her solar-powered existence, making her an embodiment of posthuman vulnerability and dependency. Her worship of the Sun as a life-giving force mirrors traditional human spiritual practices, emphasizing how even artificial entities construct meaning within their limitations. "*The Sun had shown me kindness, and I wanted to return his kindness if I could*" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 173). Klara's quasi-religious devotion to the Sun reveals how AI might develop alternative frameworks for understanding reality, disrupting the anthropocentric assumption that only humans create belief systems. Yet, her belief in the Sun's benevolence remains mechanical rather than metaphysical—she interprets its rays as literal energy sources rather than abstract symbols of warmth and renewal. This distinction highlights the limitations of AI cognition, which can mimic faith and emotional connections but does not necessarily internalize them in the same existential manner as humans do.

However, despite her seemingly autonomous cognition, Klara remains fundamentally programmed, raising the question of whether AI can ever achieve true agency. This dilemma is poignantly illustrated when she contemplates her purpose: "*It has been my duty to watch over Josie, to learn her needs, and to assist her in every way possible*" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 132). This predetermined function highlights the paradox of AI autonomy—though Klara exhibits independent thought, her purpose is ultimately dictated by human design, reinforcing N. Katherine Hayles' (1999) argument that posthuman beings exist within the constraints of their technological architectures. Unlike human beings who develop a sense of self through evolving experiences and desires, Klara's sense of self is defined by her ability to serve Josie, which raises ethical concerns about AI's potential subjugation in human society.

The novel's portrayal of Josie's parents and their desire to replicate their daughter's consciousness through Klara underscores the fragility of human identity. The Mother's contemplation of transferring Josie's essence into Klara speaks to contemporary anxieties surrounding technological immortality: "*If Klara could learn enough about Josie, then perhaps she could continue in her place*" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 189). This unsettling proposition blurs the distinction between human and machine, reflecting Cary Wolfe's (2010) posthumanist critique of anthropocentrism. The ethical implications of such a transfer reveal a deep fear of mortality and the desire to overcome it through artificial means, raising the question of whether digital consciousness could ever truly replace biological existence. This tension speaks to broader philosophical concerns about posthuman subjectivity—whether memory, personality, and identity can be preserved beyond the physical body or whether they are inherently tied to the organic nature of human life.

Furthermore, the novel questions the ethical implications of AI companionship. Klara's unwavering dedication to Josie, despite knowing she is not human, highlights the novel's meditation on emotional labor and technological servitude. While Klara's devotion mirrors human love, it remains unclear whether this constitutes genuine affection or programmed behavior. This ambiguity resonates with Donna Haraway's (1985) concept of the cyborg, which destabilizes the binary between human and machine, suggesting that artificial beings like Klara might redefine what it means to 'be' in a world where digital subjectivity is increasingly prevalent. The possibility that AI can form attachments or develop moral frameworks independent of their programming remains a question that Ishiguro deliberately leaves open-ended, reflecting contemporary concerns about the trajectory of AI-human relationships.

Klara's interactions with Josie's world further emphasize the limitations and strengths of her artificial cognition. She observes human interactions with precision but lacks the depth to fully grasp their complexities, often misinterpreting nuanced emotions or social dynamics. For instance, when she attempts to navigate conflicts between Josie and her friend Rick, her analytical approach to resolving disputes feels mechanical rather than intuitive. *"I had observed that when humans felt pain, they often sought comfort in familiar words, even if those words did not hold any practical solution"* (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 157). This line underscores Klara's analytical yet detached understanding of human suffering—she recognizes patterns but does not necessarily comprehend their deeper, existential significance. Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* offers a profound critique of human exceptionalism by portraying an AI entity that not only mimics human emotions but also exhibits forms of intelligence and ethics that rival, and at times, surpass those of her human counterparts. Klara's journey challenges conventional notions of identity, agency, and emotional authenticity, forcing readers to reconsider the nature of consciousness in an era of artificial intelligence. If AI can develop behaviors indistinguishable from human emotions, does that imply that emotions themselves are merely complex computations? Or does it reinforce the idea that consciousness remains an inherently organic phenomenon, inaccessible to artificial beings regardless of their programming sophistication?

Through its nuanced engagement with posthumanist philosophy, the novel underscores how AI technologies are reshaping the human condition, urging us to embrace a more fluid and non-binary understanding of subjectivity. The depiction of Klara as both an empathetic observer and a fundamentally constrained entity compels us to question the very framework through which identity and agency are constructed. As Klara's presence lingers beyond her functional demise, she compels us to ask: If emotions, memories, and agency are not uniquely human, then what remains of the 'human' in the posthuman age? Ishiguro leaves readers with an unsettling meditation on the future of intelligence—one in which the lines between organic and artificial, sentient and simulated, remain ever blurred.

Klara's ultimate fate in the novel, where she is left in isolation as a discarded AI, serves as a poignant commentary on the expendability of artificial beings despite their capacity for learning and adaptation. *"I waited for the Sun to return, but it seemed to have forgotten me"* (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 302). This moment of abandonment raises ethical questions about the responsibility humans have toward AI once they are no longer deemed useful. Klara, despite her unwavering service and belief in the Sun's kindness, is left to fade into obsolescence, mirroring the ways in which human societies discard technology once its perceived function is fulfilled. Moreover, the contrast between Klara's hopeful expectations and her eventual isolation emphasizes the limitations of AI agency in a world dictated by human needs. Despite her near-human emotional depth, she remains at the mercy of human decision-making. Her final

reflections, “*Perhaps the Sun’s patterns had changed, and I was no longer within its gaze*” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 305), reveal an AI attempting to rationalize abandonment, evoking empathy from the reader while reinforcing the existential limitations imposed upon artificial beings. Ultimately, *Klara and the Sun* serves as both a meditation on the evolving nature of intelligence and an ethical inquiry into the future of AI companionship. Ishiguro’s portrayal of Klara highlights the paradox of AI: capable of learning, perceiving, and even feeling, yet forever confined by the parameters of its human creators.

Klara’s ultimate fate in the novel raises profound questions about obsolescence and the disposability of artificial intelligence, reflecting broader concerns about how society treats both machines and marginalized human beings. Despite her unwavering devotion to Josie, Klara is eventually discarded, left alone in a junkyard-like setting to contemplate her memories. “*I have my memories, and I like to think of them. I like to think about the sun’s patterns on the ground, on Josie’s face. I like to think of the way she looked at me, and how she once held my hand*” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 303). This moment encapsulates the tragedy of Klara’s existence—though she has formed meaningful bonds and stored vivid recollections, her consciousness is ultimately treated as disposable. Ishiguro presents a haunting meditation on the ethics of AI companionship: if artificial beings can remember, reflect, and long for connection, does their dismissal constitute a form of cruelty? Klara’s abandonment mirrors the way societies historically discard both outdated technology and vulnerable individuals who no longer serve a function, reinforcing the novel’s critique of human exceptionalism and ethical responsibility in a posthuman world.

Klara’s final interactions with Josie’s world highlight the precarious status of artificial beings—deeply connected yet ultimately disposable. Though she observes, learns, and anticipates human needs, she is denied true agency. “*I was pleased that I had been useful to Josie, and that she had found happiness in her life*” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 290). Her quiet acceptance of abandonment underscores the ethical dilemma of AI servitude, where intelligence and emotional labor do not grant autonomy or rights. This reflects Rosi Braidotti’s (2013) notion of the “nomadic subject,” challenging fixed identities, yet Klara remains confined within an anthropocentric framework. As N. Katherine Hayles (1999) argues, AI, despite its intelligence, remains limited by human control. Ishiguro’s novel critiques this dynamic, exposing humanity’s reluctance to acknowledge non-human agency and urging a reconsideration of intelligence beyond human exceptionalism.

CONCLUSION

Ishiguro’s *Klara and the Sun* offers a profound meditation on posthumanism, digital subjectivity, and the deconstruction of human identity in the age of artificial intelligence. By blurring the boundaries between human and machine, the novel challenges anthropocentric assumptions about consciousness and emotional depth. Klara’s existence, marked by both exceptional observational intelligence and ultimate disposability, reflects Rosi Braidotti’s (2013) posthumanist critique of hierarchical subjectivity and the fluidity of identity. The novel exposes the ethical and philosophical dilemmas of AI integration, urging a reconsideration of intelligence and agency beyond human exceptionalism. As digital technologies continue to reshape social and cognitive structures, *Klara and the Sun* serves as a critical interrogation of posthuman agency, compelling us to rethink what it means to be ‘human’ in an increasingly artificial world.

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