

POSTHUMANISM IN ISHIGURO'S *KLARA AND THE SUN*: AN ANALYSIS OF SPECULATIVE FUTURES OF HUMANITY

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Abstract

Posthumanism is a theory that questions the belief that humans are the most important beings, showing instead how humans, machines, and nature are closely connected. The purpose of this paper is to study how the novel presents Posthumanism and how it expands the idea of what it means to be human. Kazuo Ishiguro, a British novelist and Nobel Prize winner, explores these ideas in his novel *Klara and the Sun*. The story is set in future where artificial friends are built to care for children. Klara, is one such artificial friend who shows emotions like love, kindness, and faith. The novel also deals with genetic engineering and human dependence on technology, which are central issues in posthumanism. Scholars such as Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, and Rosi Braidotti argue that the boundary between humans and machines are increasingly blurred, and Ishiguro's novel illustrates this concept. This paper aims to explore how the novel represents posthumanism and how it broadens the idea of humanity by including non-human forms of life.

Keywords: Artificial friends, human-machine boundary, non-human integration, posthumanism, redefining humanity.

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* shows a posthuman world where the line between human and nonhuman is blurred. The story makes it clear that robots cannot fully feel human emotions, but at the same time it challenges the idea that humans are always at the center of importance. Klara, as the narrator and careful observer, reveals both the weaknesses of humans such as their struggles with love and faith that a limits of machines that cannot truly feel. In this way, Ishiguro shows that while technology changes, ideas of being human, real human experience and emotion cannot be replaced. The novel also imagines a possible future shaped by artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, and social change. Klara, sold as a child's companion, lives in a world where humanoid machines are a normal part of families. From her place in the store window and later in Josie's home, she observes how technology changes childhood, love, and human relationships. The story asks readers to think about a future where hope, faith, and love are tested in a world guided by machines. By using Klara as a unique narrator, Ishiguro gives the readers a new way to see human values and the meaning of love. Thus, the novel not only reflects current fears about AI but also looks ahead to the moral and emotional questions that may shape our future.

Rosi Braidotti explains posthuman subjectivity shows that how we should think about people in the posthuman world. She says the subject or identity is not fixed or universal, but can take many different forms shaped by history, culture, and context. She criticizes the old humanist idea of the subject as neutral, independent, and superior, which treated other identities as less valuable. Instead, she sees the subject as connected and shaped by many forces, never standing alone. For Braidotti, the idea of the subject is central and must be considered in cultural, political, moral, and scientific debates. Donna Haraway argues that all knowledge is situated; it comes from a particular place, time, and perspective. Because knowledge is never neutral, different voices and experiences can challenge dominant ideas.

In posthumanism and speculative futures, this idea shows that humans are not separate from technology, nature, or society. Who we are, how we think, and what we know is shaped by these relationships. It encourages thinking about multiple possibilities for the future, where humans, machines, and the environment interact in new ways, rather than assuming one fixed or correct path. This approach helps us imagine futures that are more inclusive, connected, and aware of the ethical and material consequences of our actions. Katherine Hayles, says we should stop thinking only in terms of human vs. non-human. Instead, she uses cognizers vs. non cognizers, those that can think, choose, and adapt versus those that cannot.

She explains that a lot of thinking happens unconsciously without us even noticing. This nonconscious cognition happens in humans, machines (like algorithms), and even bacteria. But humans can think in more complex ways than bacteria or machines. In a posthuman future, thinking and action are shared between humans, machines, and other systems. This idea helps us imagine futures where humans are part of a bigger network, not the center of everything. In *Klara and the Sun*, posthumanism is shown through Klara, an AI who can feel, think, and make ethical choices. She mixes logic and emotion, showing that technology can share human-like experiences. Klara's actions are selfless, caring for Josie rather than herself, proving that ethics are not only for humans. The story shows a speculative future where humans and AI live together, share emotions, and shape moral life together.

"The kitchen was especially difficult to navigate because so many of its elements would change their relationship to one another moment by moment. I now appreciated how in the store surely out of consideration for us Manager had carefully kept all the items" (49). Klara finds the kitchen confusing because objects keep moving around. In the store, the Manager kept everything neat and fixed, so it was easy for her to read and understand. This shows how Klara, as an artificial friend, sees and processes the world differently from humans. Posthumanism asks us to think beyond just the human perspective. Here, we see the world through Klara's non-human perception and she notices stability and order differently than we do. It shows that machines have their own way of experiencing reality, not less valid, just different. The novel imagines a future where AI like Klara live with humans and interpret spaces in unique ways. "Okay, Josie. So tell me how you'll get well." "There's special help coming. Something no one's thought of yet. Then I'll be well again" (105). This shows that help might come from more than just humans like machines, AI, or new technology. It blurs the line between human and non-human care. It looks forward with hope, imagining a future invention or idea that could make her well again. Humans have emotions, bodies, personal experiences, and social bonds. But technologies work with logic, data, speed, and precision, but they don't feel or live in the same way as humans. Machines can care, assist, or replace some human jobs like teaching, healing, or giving companionship (e.g., Klara as Josie's friend). They can analyse problems faster than humans and suggest solutions humans might miss. New cures, longer lives, help for lonely people, less human suffering. Risk of losing human touch, over-dependence on machines, or questions about identity.

"Well, Klara. Since you appear to know so much about it. Will you please reproduce for me Josie's walk? Will you do That for me? Right now? My daughter's

walk?” (44). Klara, an AI, is asked to copy Josie’s walk shows human–machine boundary blurring. It imagines a future where machines can replace humans in personal roles. Brings both hope, keeping Josie alive and fear, loss of human uniqueness.

“You know, Klara. I don’t even know what this is about. But I want what’s best for Josie” (22). A human (the father) and an AI (Klara) both want the best for Josie. This shows how machines are seen as partners, not just tools. Care is shared between human and non-human, blurring their roles. It imagines a future where families depend on AI for hope and healing. Trust is placed in new, uncertain methods like mixing technology with human love.

AI can give support, new ideas, and hope for healing. Families and machines work together. Depending too much on machines may reduce human uniqueness and emotional care Klara and the Sun shows that AI like Klara is not only a machine but also a being capable of emotions, care, and ethical choices. From a posthumanist view, the novel challenges the belief that only humans can feel or act morally, and instead shows technology as a possible partner in life. From the side of speculative futures, it imagines a world where families may rely on AI for love, healing, and even survival, while also raising fears about losing human uniqueness. The novel suggests that the future will bring a close partnership between humans and machines, full of both hope (new care, support, survival) and challenges (identity, ethics, dependence). She gives care, love, and companionship to Josie. She shows empathy and ethical thinking, proving AI can support humans emotionally and socially. She offers hope when humans feel powerless. Relying on machines for love and care may weaken real human connections. Replacing humans with AI raises fears about identity, uniqueness, and authenticity. It may lead to dependence on technology for deeply human roles.

Klara is both good and bad. she helps humans in powerful ways, but her presence also

forces society to ask hard questions about what it means to be human. Klara is good because she cares and supports, but risky because she might replace real human bonds. People may rely too much on AI, reducing human skill and independence. Some traditional roles may disappear, causing economic and social adjustments. How we treat AI, and how AI influences human choices, raises moral questions. AI can stimulate feelings, but it doesn’t experience them the way humans do. Machines do not have self-awareness or personal experiences. Humans live, grow, and age but inventions do not. AI follows programming and data but humans think, imagine, and decide in more flexible, unpredictable ways.

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