



# Blurring of Human Boundaries in the World of Technology; A Posthuman Analysis of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*

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**Abstract:** Technology is the very word used for communication purposes in earlier times and now it has become an indispensable part of human existence. With the use of technology, humans can reach beyond their borders; they can extend their intellectual power, consciousness, body, etc. The concept of man as the centre of the world shatters with the emergence of technological advancement. Post-humanism, the new coinage, describes a person or entity that exists in a state beyond being human. It questions the hierarchies of human/non-human, human/machine, and human/inhuman notions and evokes the possibility of a serious decentring of man, the former measure of all things. Science fictions are one of the most powerful critical tools to create a new cultural identity and definition of humans. And they are more or less framed to chase the latest technological developments to reproduce new modes of techno reality. Ishiguro's eighth novel, *Klara and the Sun*, speaks of the story of Klara, a companion robot to Josie. Josie's mother chose Klara from a shop, and she tried her best to become a companion to Josie. As time passes, Klara shows an outward perspective of humanity and similar thoughts of human beings, which raises the question of what a human is. The present paper analyses the concept of human values, emotions, and feelings that blurs amid technological advancement. It also deconstructs the age-old notion of what a human is and its limitations.

**Key Words:** Post-humanism, Consciousness, Human, Artificial Intelligence, Technology.

## Introduction

Without technology, the existence of humans is impossible to imagine. It plays a vital role in the present society. Technology has extended human intelligence exponentially. Technologies such as mobile phones and the virtual presence through the internet, robotic technologies, etc are in some ways the extensions of the human mind. It paves new meanings to the human-machine and human-non-human concepts. Kazuo Ishiguro's eighth novel *Klara and the Sun* turns out from the regular novel style that depicts new patterns of themes in the technologically advanced world. It is a dystopian science fiction that revolves around the story of Klara, an Artificial Friend (AF). The novel is a typical Ishiguroian style with first-person narration where the characters are radically disconnected from the conventional literary wisdom of linear chronology, brief description, and objective narration. The novel raises several questions about the existence of human beings in the world of machines and machines in the world of humans. The story moves through the eyes of Klara, a humanoid bought by an

affluent lady as her daughter's companion. Klara, the humanoid, gets easily adapted to the new family. Like an understanding companion and caretaker, Klara stays with Josie till she no longer requires her. Her faith and hope in the power of the sun made a miraculous healing in Josie. When we move through the post-human world the novel opens up the notion that a machine could be a human with all consciousness. Is it possible to blend human consciousness with a machine's AI? Whether a humanoid could resolve the problems of the human mind? Whether it could be a human itself?

### **Blurring of Boundaries; A Posthuman Analysis**

Kazuo Ishiguro's one of the masterpieces *Klara and the Sun*, depicts multiple human lives in this altering technologically advanced world. The dystopian science fiction moves through the eyes of Klara, the humanoid machine. Klara, Rosa, and Rex are the robots belonging to the Lady Manager's shop. Klara is different from others through her observational and learning skills. She is designed to function as an artificial friend to genetically upgraded children. Apart from the other companion robots, she observes and understands human feelings. Also, Klara shows empathy towards humans which her fellow beings fail to understand. The transformation due to technological advancement is evident here. Humans are creating artificial models with human consciousness to slow down their workloads in every area without concerning the consequences. The substitution of Josie's father and other men from the work firms reveals the impact of the artificial world of robotic technology.

Post-humanism is the new philosophical concept that decentres the subjectivity of man. It focuses on the progress of man physically as well as mentally. Through biological and technological advancement, it creates clones and copies of humans with artificial consciousness. Klara, the humanoid, is powered by the Sun and is regarded as all-healing. She respected the Sun and genuinely aspired for contact with the Sun. The Sun, which is worshiped by humans as God, is also worshiped by these Robotic friends. The author has used the Sun as a driving force in the novel. Klara and other AFs are machines tuned and trained to understand human beings and to act accordingly to please them. Their ability to react to human emotions makes them more human than their intellectual power. Klara keenly observes her surroundings and tries to understand the feelings of the people around her. The shop Manager even advised her not to make eye contact with the people around her. Once her companion robot AF Rex called her the greedy one for utilizing much power from the floorboard. Here Ishiguro reveals the blurring of human and machine quality. It raises the idea that a machine can be a human with all consciousness and intelligence. Being greedy is a human quality and in the post-human world, a robot is conscious about such things. The AF Rex is aware of his solar absorption problems. Also, Rex considers Klara as a girl AF which shows the gender identification. Gender is a human construct and machines also consider this human construct. This shows perfect examples of anthropomorphism. Attributing human characters to a robot is strange to human society. Here the AF Klara is more human even it is a non-human entity.

Klara joins the family as her companion and caretaker. There Klara met Josie's best friend Rick and their housemaid. The housemaid was indifferent to Klara. She never accepts her even though she does all the good things in the house. On their supposed journey towards Morgan Hills, Klara found out about the death of Josie's elder sister Sal. Josie's adamant mother made genetic lifting in Sal which results in death. After genetic upgradation when Josie too shows an illness similar to her sister her mother is a bit nervous. She fears that Josie will die soon. But Klara believes in the Sun. Klara hopes the sun would pour out his special energy as it did to the beggar man in the street. She connects the illness of Josie to the lack of appropriate attention from the sun. She was very confident that her Sun knows his time and would not

delay unnecessarily. Klara waits with hope and faith. Her faith in the magic of the Sun keeps her in the swim. She was bent upon winning the attention of the Sun through sincere prayers. The Robot, the epitome of technological advancement, trusts the oldest God of the Universe, the Sun. Whereas intelligent humans did not show faith in it. When a human interacts with a robot, the limitations of the robot are expected to come to the surface. But every interaction between the human and the robot only reveals the insufficiency and inadequacy of the human.

The fear of her only daughter's death made the mother create an artificial humanoid. When her sister Sal got lifted, she died, and they made a bereavement doll of Sal. And out of less or more technological advancement, the experiment failed. At last, they kept the doll inside the home. Again, in the case of Josie, they made a portrait and advised Klara to imitate the mannerisms of Josie. And Klara offers help to train the new AF Josie. In this artificial world, they do not even consider Klara as a programmed machine, and she could not be her daughter. And there is no value for human emotions. Ishiguro points this out clearly through Klara. People are not willing to socialize with their fellow beings. They always need machines to do their deeds. They don't even consider it as an inanimate object programmed by humans that will easily destroy. After the miraculous recovery of Josie, they dump Klara in their storehouse near the barn. Everything ends and Josie moves towards a better life and Klara becomes a mere damaged object for them. Klara and the Sun are as good, as moving, as enthralling as Ishiguro at his best, but the return to sunshine at the very end makes a nonsense of all that.

## Conclusion

Technology is a needy tool in human life. It has its own merits and demerits. With this technology, our life comes as super stressed and shatters our behaviour, rising aspirations, and a fear of becoming unconnected to this new world. It has changed our preferences from talking to texting. Technology itself is often developed for enhancing lives, but we tend to misuse it for our own physical, mental, and emotional benefit. It interferes with our ability to recognize and comprehend our own emotions, social skills, and other life skills. Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* reveals such a theme of technological advancement in the twenty-first century. It is a perfect tool to explain the post-human character in a social world. The post-human identities supersede the human identity in every part of the novel. It clearly explains that a humanoid with consciousness could comprehend and behave more perfectly than a human. Thus, it blurs the human-machine boundary. Being a human is just a construct in the post-human world. There are no limitations on the body and brain in the post-human scenario. The creation of an artificial Josie and the artificial friend Klara shows these nuances Ishiguro portrays that a machine could easily be a human and it is not a philosophical idea of post-human it is a reality

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