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Transhumanistic Aspects In Kazuo Ishikguro's Klara And The Sun.

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ABSTRACT

The ninth novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, Klara and the Sun, is set in the future and is narrated by a robot. Through the use of a post-humanistic scenario, Ishiguro tells a story about mankind. Essential questions, such as the following, are considered in Klara and the Sun: What are the characteristics of humans? And do non-human "others" such as machines, robots, and cyborgs exhibit human characteristics? What lessons can we learn from our environment and any non-human variables that will help us live a more fulfilled life? How should non-human "others" be treated? The novel Klara and the Sun is examined through the lenses of humanism, postmodernism, and posthumanism in order to answer the aforementioned problems. Ishiguro uses the environment as a metaphor to communicate with his audience his emotional message.

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

INTRODUCTION

Humans are slowing upgrading themselves. It is not an evolutionary upgrade as hoped, but a radical upgrade with the aid of the material world. They consume psychostimulants referred to as "coffee," and they wear carbon-based body alterations referred to as "tattoos," replace worn out joints with ceramic alloy counterparts, and even enhance brains with cellphones and data clouds. Some would argue that these technologies indicate that humans have not only improved, but they have become transhuman. Transhumanists assert that to be transhuman is to be in transition to the next evolutionary phase of what it is to be human, which is characterized by extreme technological bodily modifications. Thus, transhumanism is a cultural movement that promotes a worldview based on the notion that humans should surpass the limitations imposed by their biological history. In this way, the fact that humans can and do improve themselves becomes evidence for the existence of transhumans.

POSTHUMANISM

The term "posthumanism" itself appears to have entered modern critical discourse in the humanities and social sciences around the middle of the 1990s, but its origins can be traced at least as far back as the 1960s and statements like the one made famous by Foucault in the final sentence of The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, where he claims that the historical appearance of this thing called "man" was not the result of a biological process but rather of a social process.

It was the transition into luminous consciousness of an age-old concern, the entry into objectivity of something that had long remained trapped within beliefs and philosophies; it was the effect of a change in the fundamental arrangements of knowledge. As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one, perhaps nearing its end. If those arrangements were to disappear as they appeared, if some event of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility—without knowing either what its form will be or what it promises—were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of Classical thought did at the end of the eighteenth century, then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.

Posthumanism may be traced to the Macy conferences on cybernetics from 1946 to 1953 and the invention of systems theory involving Gregory Bateson, Warren McCulloch, Norbert Wiener, John von Neumann, and many other figures from a range of fields who converged on a new theoretical model for biological, mechanical, and communicational processes that removed the human and Homo sapiens from any particularly privileged position in relation to matters of meaning, information, and cognition.

Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985), which, as the title suggests, engages science-fictional thematics of hybridity, perversity, and irony.

Arguably the best-known inheritor of the "cyborg" strand of posthumanism is what is now being called "transhumanism"—a movement that is dedicated, as the journalist and writer Joel Garreau puts it, to "the enhancement of human intellectual, physical, and emotional capabilities; the elimination of disease and unnecessary suffering; and the dramatic extension of the life span."

TRANSHUMANISM

Transhumanist theory can be challenging to discuss on at least two fronts. First, transhumanists realize that there is no united voice that represents all those who profess transhumanist beliefs. As technology alters human existence at an ever-increasing rate, alternative ideas about how convergent technical equipment should be utilised for self-redesign develop (and fade) with equal rapidity. Nevertheless, it is feasible to identify a number of recurring themes in transhumanist discourse. These themes are: Second, transhumanists take it as an article of faith that humans will eventually develop the technology to substantially upgrade not only the human body but also tap into the great reserves of the brain. Consequently, the persistence of ageing should be combated by increasing access to end-of-life health care and developing a broad range of anti-aging medical technology.

Bostrom offers the following definition: Transhumanism is an outgrowth of secular humanism and the Enlightenment. It holds that current human nature is improvable through the use of applied science and other rational methods, which may make it possible to increase the human life-span, extend our intellectual and physical capacities, and give us increased control over our own mental states and moods."

Bioconservatives describe those who oppose transhumanist concepts, including bioethicist Leon Kass, campaigner Bill McKibben, and political scientist Francis Fukuyama. Transhumanism has been labelled by (Fasting and Fukuyama) as "the most hazardous ideology in the world." The hazards might be categorised as social-political and metaphysical. Regarding the social-political example, it is doubtful if radical technology produced inside a capitalist framework could ever be dispersed equitably across the population.

Examples of metaphysical risks include the impact of transhumanist technology on problems of human identity and significance. Nonetheless, both groups point to a single cause for concern: transhumanists aspire to hasten the end of the age of humans as we know them. To best understand the origins and present status of transhumanism, it may be helpful to consider these two seemingly conflicting perspectives. Steve Fuller says that at present, humans are in Humanity 1.0, and even though, due to transhuman ideas and implementation, the present humans will become humanity 2.0.

Transhumanism certainly advocates some progress in scientific research and also in technological development. As Max More points out, "Extropy entails strongly affirming the value of science and technology" (More 2003). Transhumanists acknowledge that scientific and technological reason could produce frightening outcomes; "the gravest existential risks facing us in the coming decades," the FAQ says, "will be of our own making" (Bostrom 22). The other important technological concept is posthumanism.

The novel under consideration is Klara and the Sun. In the not-too-distant future, a sick girl named Josie purchases the solar-powered companion robot Klara. Klara undertakes a mission to petition the sun to heal Josie. Josie's parents had a hidden plot to replace her with Klara if she passed away, but she recovers instead, and in this paper, this novel is seen through the eyes of a posthuman.

Ishiguro's only concern is delivering a message that is of utmost importance to him and he wants to communicate it with his global audience. Ishiguro's works are global in nature. By universal, he implies that the emotional anguish, tensions, joys, and purpose of life as seen by his characters are shared by the majority of individuals around the world, regardless of location or activity. Both Never Let Me Go (2005) by Ishiguro and Klara and the Sun (2021) may be classified as science fiction-dystopian novels. Never Let Me Go, however, tears the reader's heart as it finishes, but Klara and the Sun leaves the reader uncertain and pushes the reader to speculate.

Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go, together with many other novels of the dystopian genre, attacks the reader through metaphorical words and syntax. In Never Let Me Go, Ishiguro uses 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. Through this technique, she is able to show the world that she might have been a human like them. Her first memories are from the store, where she had been with the other AFs and the store manager. Klara and her friend Rosa were the fourth series B2 robots, and the sun was the main source of their energy. Klara had a great devotion to the sun, just like the human devotees of God.

Klara attentively watches her surroundings and is perceptive enough to detect even the most subtle changes in human behavior just by observing them. She is eager to gather any and all information that would aid her in serving the child who would purchase and adopt her. Just like the way the present algorithms study the way humans use smartphones. She observes people going about their own business; taxi drivers fighting; she sees an old couple reuniting after many years; she names them Coffee Cup Lady and the Raincoat Man; she observes a beggar and his dog lying as if they were dead; when the sun rises, they awake; she concludes that due to the sun's special nourishment, they are given a second chance at life; and she sees a taxi driver fight with another driver. The way artificial intelligence works is cleverly illustrated in the novel.

The manager of the store always marvels at the exceptional attributes of Klara. During this time, Klara notices a girl of about fourteen and a half years old coming towards her. Her walk is not normal and she has difficulty walking. Due to this, she walks with caution and in a slow pace. This girl is called Josie. Josie promised Klara that she would be back soon to pick her up as her own AF. Klara gets attached to Josie and holds on to her promise. Here, one can notice how this artificial intelligence is getting attached to a human. As the day passes, Klara's friend Rosa and some other AFs get picked up by some children, and

Klara is left behind with the next level of advanced B3 models. Klara is not exactly disappointed or feeling envious that her friends get picked up, but she is waiting for Josie to come and pick her up. It must be noted, that robots can not have petty feelings like humans. Ishiguro's narration has a magnificent tone. While reading the novel, perhaps the readers project their own disappointment and anxiety onto Klara. The manager gives Klara sound advice regarding children, which is also applicable to adults. Ishiguro attempts to leave some ambiguity and concludes with a number of unanswered questions so that the reader can explore them further.

> Let me tell you something, Klara. Children make promises all the time. They promised 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)

After a few days, Josie and her mother come to the store. Josie's mother, Mrs. Arthur, picked up Klara after thoroughly investigating her. The manager had nothing but the highest praise for Klara:

> Klara has so many unique qualities, we could be here all morning." But if I had to emphasize just one thing, 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 42).

Technically, the AFs are treated similarly to Barbie dolls in that they are discarded when the child loses interest in playing with them or when they become obsolete. Klara adores witnessing the sunset from Josie's bedroom window. Josie points to Mr. McBain's barn at the end of the property and states that the sun rests there each evening. Josie and Klara really think that the sun is resting in Mr. McBain's barn, which is odd for a fourteen-year-old girl and an intelligent robot that lacks knowledge of the functioning of the solar system. This is a significant flaw in Klara and the Sun. Despite this, Josie's family and the environment in which they lived appear to have been atypical.

Kazuo Ishiguro is a skilled storyteller whose nuanced narrative and light tone captivate his readers. He leaves behind a message that will torment his readers for a long time. Along with artificial intelligence, genetic modification technology has also been dealt with in Klara and the Sun. This could be seen as an introduction to post-humanistic standards. As the narrative unfolds, the reader learns that Josie's condition was caused by the manipulation of her DNA to boost her abilities beyond those of a typical kid. "Lifted" refers to genetically engineered or modified children. During the process of lifting a kid, if the operation does not operate well, the parents run the risk of their child being gravely ill or even dying.

Sal, the eldest daughter of Mrs. Arthur, had also gotten gravely ill and died due to the ineffectiveness of genetic editing. Josie was far too young to recall her sister. However, she has only a limited understanding of the events behind her sister's passing, and she is also aware that she may perish if she is not healed of her condition soon. Josie's neighbors were Rick and Helen, her childhood sweetheart and his mother. Rick was a 15-year-old "unlifted" youngster. He is kind, diligent, and brilliant. He and Josie had jointly planned their future. Rick disapproved of Josie's having an AF. Josie's actual buddy was Rick, whereas Klara was her fake friend, just like teenagers having mobile phones as their companions. This can be seen as an extension of transhuman needs. Upon introducing Rick as her best friend, Josie 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 55).

Klara accepts Josie's reasoning without disappointment, similar to a computer learning new software. Emotional value will become nil as artificial intelligence takes over human life. The small joys and sorrows of life can never be understood by machines. As always, Josie pushes Rick to work harder to gain admission to Atlas Brookings College. Atlas Bookings was a liberal college that felt certain "unlifted" children may

be geniuses, thus they always reserved 2% of their seats for "unlifted" students. However, Rick is aware of the intense competition for admission to such an institution. Josie is educated at home by a group of academics. The social interactions are planned so that "lifted" children might interact with one another.

The "lifted" kids criticize Josie for picking up the B2 model rather than the B3. She laughs and says, "Now I'm starting to think I should have." (Klara77). To blend in with the gang of "uplifted" children, Josie joins their side and degrades Klara. Josie is a sweet youngster, but she behaves differently in the group of "lifted" children due to peer pressure. Rick saves Klara by interrupting them and drawing their focus to himself. Similar to Rick and Josie, the readers get frightened on Klara's behalf, while Klara remains cool and behaves as a passive spectator.

> 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." Klara throws her dolls around the room in fits of rage. This serves as a further reminder that Klara is a robot and not a human. Rick was concerned about Josie and her network of friends, but readers connect their own sentiments to an artificial robot. 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 82).

Mrs. Arthur's peculiar behavior persists throughout the entire trip. She instructs Klara to behave like Josie, and Klara complies. Mrs. Arthur also indicates that if Josie gets ill in the future, they will be able to go out together.

Obviously, it is conceivable to develop romantic feelings for someone who follows every command without protest or demand, much like our Siris and Alexas. Mrs. Arthur is likewise appreciative of Klara's beneficial influence on Josie. Josie becomes weaker by the day. Rick frequently visits her, and they frequently play the bubble game. Rick used to add his ideas to the thinking bubbles that Josie drew on her drawings of people with bubbles on their heads. During one of these visits, Josie criticizes Rick for his lack of effort.

In one of the bubbles on top of a girl, which was supposed to be Josie, Rick writes, "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. ' (Klara 131-32). After this incident, Rick stopped visiting Josie. Although Josie acts cold towards Klara after the Morgan's Fall incident, to mend the rift between Josie and Rick, Klara offers to go to Rick's home and give him the picture drawn by Josie. Klara's selfless service or love for Josie makes her consider her own ruthlessness and cold behaviour towards Klara. Josie says, 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 for such a thing." It was my wish to be Josie's AF. And the wish came true. " (Ishiguro, Klara 136)

Rick is an intelligent youngster who sincerely cherishes Josie. Klara is exceedingly concerned about Josie's health, and she recalls an episode she sees from the shop in which the sun supplies unique food to a beggar and his dog, restoring their strength. Klara, an artificially intelligent robot, believes that if she struck a bargain with the sun, he would deliver Josie his special sustenance and she would recover from her illness. Klara requests Rick's aid in order to reach McBain's barn, where the sun rests. He guides her there, but she refuses to tell him why she has gone to the barn. Klara feels there must be a secret between the sun and the moon. This is an irrational idea, and this is explored in the novel. Usually humans do not have such wild beliefs, but the robot seems to believe that the sun could make a great difference in their lives. The Transhuman can be conceived from the actions of the robot itself.

We associate Klara's extreme human emotions, such as self-sacrifice, selfless service, devotion, faith, grief, worry, and love, with our beloved dogs. They, too, love their masters unselfishly, loyally, and with total devotion. Judith Shulevitz writes in The Atlantic, "The inhuman Klara is more human than most people." You might say she has a superhuman level of humanity. She is also Ishiguro's most luminous figure, a

creature of light literally reliant on the sun. Her name means "brilliance." One again transhuman concepts are expounded here.

Rick and Melania anticipate the worst, but Klara decides to make a second plea to the sun. This time, she recalled the elderly couple she had seen from her store window. Obviously, it is a coincidence that the sun shines brightly when the elderly couple hug. Klara believes, however, that the sun enjoys seeing people who are passionately in love and sends them his nutrition. Klara asks Rick if he and Josie loved one another and would be together forever. Rick responds in the affirmative. Klara walks to the barn and pleads with the sun not to separate Josie and Rick, who were in love. She prays to the sun to heal Josie with his wonderful cure. Rick is an entrepreneur.

> 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 281)

On the same dreary, dark afternoon, Klara observes the rapid clearing of the clouds and the emergence of the sun through Josie's window. She felt the sun was delivering Josie his unique nutrients to help her recover. From that day on, Josie begins to improve her health and mature into an adult. Josie's recovery from the deathbed may have been a sheer coincidence and had nothing to do with Klara's superstition or the sun's particular sustenance, but Klara's steadfast faith that Josie would recover prevails. Klara demonstrates another fundamental human attribute: faith, belief, or hope for the unattainable, while everyone else has lost these qualities. As Josie gets older, her friendship with Klara evolves. This also has something to do with transhuman understanding. Faith and love will be the only things that really make a human, and in this story, a robot seems to have faith in achieving something in life.

Josie's bedroom is shifted to the utility room without opposition from Josie. Is it not the fact that rag dolls are discarded or given to someone else when the child outgrows them? Klara recognises this and neither complains nor reacts negatively to the shift. The machines are complaint-free. 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 emotion in human voices and faces, but so far they have failed to contrive machines that can simulate emotions convincing

This book subverts the conventional structure of dystopian fiction, and thus paves the way for transhuman ideas.

Conclusion

It may be asserted that Ishiguro excels in subverting well-known genres in his works. He accomplishes this in nearly all of his works, with the intention of conveying an emotional message that is close to his heart and well-known to his readers throughout the world. However, Klara and the Sun is exquisite, haunting, and tight, according to Anita Felicelli of the Los Angeles Review of Books. It is best understood as a perceptive, intriguing investigation of the uniqueness of the human heart. Is there a soul, anything, or anything beyond the reach of technology as it marches toward the annihilation of all we know? Ishiguro provides a response through the novel's drama.

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