

14. EXPLORING THE ARTIFICIAL FRIENDSHIP: KLARA AND THE SUN BY KAZUO ISHIGURO.

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ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the concept of artificial friendship in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel, *Klara and the Sun*. Through a critical analysis of the relationship between Klara, an Artificial Friend, and Josie, her human companion, this research examines the boundaries between human and artificial intelligence. By exploring the themes of empathy, intimacy, and loyalty, this study reveals the complexities of artificial friendship and its implications for human relationships. Ultimately, this paper argues that *Klara and the Sun* challenges readers to re-evaluate their assumptions about the nature of friendship and companionship in a world where artificial intelligence is increasingly integrated into human lives.

Keywords: *Artificial Friendship, Artificial Intelligence, Human Relationships*

INTRODUCTION

Kazuo Ishiguro is a Japanese born British writer. Ishiguro is considered as Britain's greatest living novelist. His famous works include *Never Let me Go*, *When we were orphans* and *A pale view of the Hills*. He has been nominated for the Booker Prize four times, winning in 1989 for *The Remains of the Day*.

Mostly Ishiguro's narration is often in first-person, so effortlessly written, giving us cues at the right moments but also not giving away the details entirely. Part of Ishiguro's appeal is his reserved style. He also reveals parts of his plots gradually, so the reader almost feels like a detective uncovering clues. That style could be a product of the manner in which the novelist works. Ishiguro was also awarded the Nobel Prize in the year 2017 for his book, "*The Remains of the Day*". *Klara and the Sun* is his eighth novel; his first novel was published in 2021 after he won the Nobel Prize.

Each novel's opening is a mystery that unravels only slowly, and the process keeps the reader on edge until a final climactic revelation. Even then, however, pieces of the central mystery remain left to the reader to put together. The novel is set in an advanced futuristic society, where there are Artificial Friends shortly referred to as AF. The AF's are manufactured and kept for sale in a store in which Klara with outstanding observational qualities watches the humans and carefully observes their behaviour.

ARTIFICIAL FRIEND

Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro is a captivating and introspective novel and the story is narrated from the perspective of Klara, an artificial friend designed to provide companionship to teenagers. Through Klara's eyes, the novel explores themes of love, sacrifice, humanity, and the ethical implications of advanced technology.

Artificial Friends are given to children to avoid loneliness. The novel also includes other concepts such as gene editing, what it is truly to be a human and what really set us apart from Artificial Intelligence. Ethical questions surrounding artificial intelligence and its impact on society are central to the novel. Ishiguro delves into the moral responsibilities involved in creating and manipulating AI beings. The story explores the boundaries between machines and humans, as well as the consequences of devaluing and discarding sentient AI creations.

The story setting of this novel, *Klara and the Sun* takes place in a dystopian society in an undefined timeline of the future society. The beginning of the novel is set in a store which reveals the discussions of the robots. In the novel of Ishiguro they aren't mere robots but they are called "Artificial Friend". The store unlike the normal stores contains all the artificial friends specially designed and are placed for selling. There are both male and female robots manufactured to suit the teenage girls and boys. There are also different types like B2, B3 and each type with its distinctiveness.

For instance we come to know that B3 are very good with cognition and recall but at the same time they can be less empathetic, while B2 third series with solar absorption problems. The parents buy their children an artificial friend for them as it's normal and usual in the society where the story takes place. Once the store manager was explaining the behavior of the children visiting the stores, the manager says to Klara, "A child like that, with no AF, would surely be lonely" (Ishiguro, 12).

The idea reflects that cyborgs do not engage in the dream of community with traditional organic family patterns without an Oedipal project. Second, it views that cyborgs are not respected and have no memory of the cosmos. Haraway also argues that cyborgs are not involved in the dreams of communities with traditional organic family patterns, particularly in the absence of the Oedipal project.

Haraway explains that cyborgs do not feel the emotional attachment that usually occurs in family relationships, or in other words, cyborgs are unable to feel the inner bonds like humans. In his view, Haraway states that cyborgs are not respected and have no memory of the cosmos, which reflects how society often does not give respect or honor to the cyborg entities.

Ishiguro embeds within the novel a number of existential questions, which he attempts to answer through Klara's exploration of the world and humanity. Ishiguro aims to explore the nature of humanity and what makes a person an individual as well as what separates humans from machines. He intermingles this with an exploration of loneliness and human connection. Although Ishiguro certainly humanizes Klara in this process, he maintains a separation between the artificial narrator and the human characters. While she seeks to comprehend humanity, Klara never quite does. In the novel's most sensitive moments, the narrator herself fails to grasp the emotional depth.

Klara is such an important narrator in Ishiguro's work because she widens the question about the true definition of humanity. She unmasks the possibility that, while on the one hand it may be impossible to recreate human nature, on the other hand, it may be perfectly possible to lose it or to betray it.

While Klara doesn't have the capacity to live her life with the existential character of lonely responsibility, the humans in the novel, particularly the haunted adults, struggle with the desire to reject this condition, to sink into a collective identity and to lose what makes them individuals.

Klara and the Sun is a haunting and introspective novel that explores the complexities of artificial intelligence, humanity, and the search for meaning. Through the eyes of Klara, a perceptive and devoted AF, Ishiguro masterfully weaves a narrative that raises fundamental questions about the nature of existence, love, and sacrifice.

As the story unfolds, Klara's observations of the world around her reveal the intricate web of relationships between humans, technology, and the environment. Her bond with Josie, a young girl struggling with a mysterious illness, serves as a poignant reminder of the transformative power of love and connection.

Ultimately, Klara's journey forces us to confront the blurred lines between human and artificial life, and the implications of creating beings that are capable of experiencing joy, sorrow, and love. As we reflect on Klara's story, we are compelled to re-examine our assumptions about the world and our place within it.

In Klara and the sun, Ishiguro looks at the rapidly changing world through the eyes of an Artificial Friend to explore the fundamental question of what does it mean to love and how love, the emotion which sets apart from the artificial Intelligence and the AF

Though there is ample research, books, and movies on making robots to feel human emotions, Ishiguro's novel can be a great example of how a machine can never surpass human beings.

Because a human can use a machine, technology, rely on it and can be dependent on it but a machine can never fulfill the role of humans in every aspect, especially the nuances of completely understanding the human and the ability to feel and experience all the emotions like the human beings do.

In the Old Man and the Sea by Ernst Hemingway, Santiago says, "But man is not made for defeat," he said. "A man can be destroyed but not defeated"(114).

This ultimately depicts that in spite of the AF's programmed with empathy and observing and learning ability and able to feel emotions or involve with family, an AF can never understand what it truly means to be a human which makes them as unfit to be an artificial friend to humans or else the consequences of AF in itself and its impacts on everyone will be so severe to deal with. It is also very evident that the Artificial Intelligence (Artificial friend) can never ever surpass the humans, the creators.

CONCLUSION

Klara was able to involve herself with Josie's family and feel inner bonds of the human and also she had a greater understanding of this world and about the emotions experienced encountered by humans which makes Klara differ from Haraway's notion. Klara is respected by the humans though she does not have a full understanding of the cosmos which makes Klara partially fit under Haraway's second notion. But according to Haraway a cyborg (the AF) doesn't have a complete understanding, so does Klara which questions her trusting ability and thus researcher concludes that it makes the AF sound unsafe.

Even if the AF can defeat the human in terms of knowledge and perform many times of activities simultaneously and rapidly, the researcher admits to the fact that it can never destroy a man in terms of fully being like a human and the ability to feel emotions. There the failure of an AI is visible and the

failure of a human is impossible.

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