



## A COMPARISON STUDY BETWEEN NATURE AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN KAZUO ISHIGURO'S *KLARA AND THE SUN*

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### Abstract

The objective of the paper is to analyze the novel *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro through elements of artificial intelligence and nature. This study aims to explore the relationship between nature and artificial intelligence in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*. The study examines how Ishiguro portrays the intersection of these two seemingly disparate concepts and the implications of this intersection for our understanding of what it means to be 'natural' or 'artificial'. The protagonist of the story, Klara, is an artificial friend who charges up with the aid of the sun, hence the book is about artificial intelligence. The Sun has a divine role in the narrative, standing for both the inner fortitude that comes from trusting in something bigger than oneself and how society has disconnected from nature. Since Klara is solar-powered, the Sun actually nurtures her; when she doesn't get enough sunlight, she becomes lethargic. Even though she is from a civilization that has become increasingly industrialized, Klara cherishes nature more than many individuals in her neighbourhood. There is the blending of human and artificial intelligence. The novel's consideration of these topics' calls into question our traditional notions of what it signifies to be 'natural' or 'artificial', and forces us to reassess our connection with technology and the natural environment.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Klara, Nature, Sun, Postmodernism Theory.

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### Introduction

Kazuo Ishiguro, a British author was born in Japan and is well known for his beautiful, slightly optimistic tales of regret. On November 8, 1954, he was born in Nagasaki, Japan. Ishiguro attended the Universities of Kent (B.A., 1978) and East Anglia after his family relocated to the UK in 1960. He began writing in his spare time after working for an organisation that helped the poor after receiving his degree. His three short story contributions to the 1981 book *Introduction 7: Stories by Developing Authors* are what first brought

him literary acclaim. *A Pale Vision of Hills*, Ishiguro's debut book, was published in 1982. It details the post-war recollections of Etsuko, a Japanese woman grappling with her daughter Keiko's suicide. Ishiguro's 1989 Booker Prize-winning novel *The Remains of the Day*, which was made into a film in 1993, is a first-person narrative narrated via the recollections of Stevens, an elderly English butler whose severe formality has prevented him from understanding and loving. Ishiguro, who was only 35 years old when *The Remains of the Day* was released, for which he received

a prize in 2017. After that he became one of the most well-known authors in Europe very rapidly. Ishiguro has recently been recognised with awards that are indicative of lifetime achievement, including the Peggy V. Helmrich Award (2013), the New York Public Library's Library Lion Medal (2014), the Sunday Times Distinguished Author Award (2014), and the American Academy of Achievement's Golden Plate (2017).

The protagonist in Ishiguro's well-known book *Klara and the Sun* is a robot who serves as an 'Artificial Friend' to a lonely kid. In a bleak future, some children are genetically lifted to have superior intellectual abilities. The story is set in a future in which political fascism and tribalism have ripped the United States apart. Technology has made many individuals "post employed," and it has also created a rudimentary caste system where the "lifted" are at the top. This serves as the novel's overarching sociological background, however Klara, our first-person narrator, typically provides us a more specialised viewpoint. The AFs were developed as companions for the children of this daring new civilization because, for whatever reason, they do not venture out much. Loneliness is one of the key emotions that Ishiguro explores in his writings, and in her new role, Klara has numerous opportunities to look at the strategies people employ to deal with it and conceal their frailty. Klara certainly seems to be a loving person. In the excruciating sections of the novel, as Josie deteriorates, Klara, who is also solar-powered, implores the "kind" Sun to provide "special sustenance" for Josie before bravely attempting to make a present to the Sun. Our limited human grasp of, well, everything is called into question by Klara's conviction that the Sun is a good divinity. Like Klara, who occasionally sees the world through errant grids, people can only see weakly through a glass, similar to how Klara perceives the world. Both nature and artificial intelligence are significant in the

story since Klara relies on the sun for energy and feels powerless without it. Sun energy is also used by the other Artificial Mates.

### Post Modernism Theory

The word 'post-modernism' is used to denote a response to modernism in the latter half of the 20th century. Hence, only in light of Modernism can Postmodernism be understood. Postmodernism fundamentally rejects the ideas that Modernism supports. Although postmodernism shares many characteristics with modernism, it differs from modernism in how it views many of these movements. *Jacques Lacan*, a well-known French psychotherapist and thinker, lived from 1901 until 1981. His theories significantly influenced critical theory in the 20th century, having a particular impact on post-structuralist philosophy and the emergence of postmodernism.

### Comparison between Modernism and Postmodernism

Modernism frequently gives a fragmented vision of human subjectivity and history, but it portrays that fragmentation as tragic and a loss that should be lamented. Contrarily, postmodernism embraces the notion of fragmentation, provisionally, and incoherence rather than bemoans it. It was a term used in literature to describe various post-World War II literary traits, such as fragmentation, contradiction, dubious narrators, etc., as well as a backlash against Enlightenment concepts that were latent in Modernist writing.

It would be more beneficial if we compared and contrasted the traits of postmodernism to those of modernism. Postmodernism shares with modernism the conviction that there is no objective truth and that truth is relative. According to postmodernism, truth is not reflected in how humans see it, but rather is created as the mind strives to make sense of its own unique world. Facts and lies can thus be

used interchangeably. For instance, there is only one truth in classical literature, which is "obey your fate" in works like *King Oedipus*. There is no such thing as absolute truth in postmodern literature, in contrast to classical literature like *Waiting for Godot*. Here, everything is relative.

In contrast to Modernism, which places faith in Western culture, norms, values, and aspirations, Postmodernism criticises Western values and beliefs as being a tiny component of the human experience and frequently rejects such concepts, beliefs, culture, and conventions. As opposed to modern authors who lead and control the reader's response to their work, postmodern writers create 'open' works that require the reader to find his or her own connections, come up with alternative meanings, and offer his or her own (unguided) interpretation.

*Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro can be interpreted through a postmodern view, as it explores themes such as identity, reality, and the relationship between language and power. One of the key aspects of postmodernism is the idea that reality is constructed and subjective, rather than objective and absolute. In the novel, this is evident through Klara's experiences and perceptions. Klara's understanding of the world around her is based on her programming and her observations, and she is limited by her lack of free will and subjective experience. Her understanding of reality is therefore always mediated through language and human perception.

Another postmodern theme in the novel is the idea of the fragmented self. Klara's identity is complex and multifaceted, as she is both a machine and a conscious being with emotions and desires. Her identity is also constructed through her interactions with others, particularly her human companion, Josie. Klara's understanding of herself is constantly evolving and shifting, highlighting the idea that the self is not a fixed or stable entity.

Finally, the novel also explores the relationship between language and power, which is a common postmodern theme. The characters in the novel use language to manipulate and control others, and language is also used to create and shape reality. The power dynamics between humans and machines are also evident in the novel, as humans have the ability to control and manipulate AI technology for their own purposes. Overall, *Klara and the Sun* can be read through a postmodern aspect, as it raises important questions about the nature of reality, identity, and power in a world increasingly shaped by technology.

### Science Fiction

Science fiction is a type of literature that primarily explores how real or made-up science affects society or individuals. The American publisher Hugo Gernsback, who was one of the genre's leading proponents, popularised, if not actually originated, the phrase science fiction during that time. He is honoured with the Hugo Awards, which have been presented by the International Science Fiction Society every year since 1953. Traditionally, Jules Verne (1828–1905) is recognised as the founder of science fiction. Space travel, robots, alien life, and time travel are just a few of the common science fiction settings that had emerged by the turn of the 20th century.

The novel *Klara and the Sun* deals with the element of Science Fiction where the character is a robot (Artificial Friend). It is a science fiction dystopian tale. The story is recounted from the perspective of Klara, a solar-powered AF (Artificial Friend) who is chosen by Josie, a sickly kid, to be her companion in the novel, which is set in the United States in an uncertain future. The novel can be classified as science fiction due to its exploration of speculative technologies, such as artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, and robotics. The novel presents a future world where these technologies are prevalent and

have a significant impact on society. Furthermore, the novel presents a future world that is different from our own, with advanced technologies and societal structures that are different from what we currently know. This is a common element of science fiction, where writers imagine future worlds and explore the implications of new technologies.

### Literature Review

Bavetra Swaminathan and R. Ravi in his article "Hope, Faith, Love, Human and Humanoid: A Study of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*" states that the novel, *Klara and the Sun*, an artificial friend, a humanoid, a robot, engages in such an exploration in search of solutions to some troubling questions relating to the role of Hope, Faith, and Love in human beings' lives. This represents a newer level of his commitment to the cause of understanding human beings through their memories and emotions. According to them, one wonders if the fallible human being is capable of building a living, feeling, and thinking machine that equals perfection in all it does as an observer, friend, nurse, and as someone who sees Klara as being so wonderful in everything she does. The purpose of this article is to examine how Hope, Faith, and Love affect human lives as perceived by a humanoid.

Divya Shikhar and Kasturi Sinha Ray in their article "Role of 'Artificial' Hope at the Failure of Medical Science: A Study of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*", talks about the children who are genetically "uplifted" in *Klara and the Sun*, an urban neighbourhood in a made-up city in the United States (a market for French goods), where they are escorted by AI-enabled Artificial companions (AFs). A marginalised rebel organisation that does not follow this society's model. Ishiguro creates a speculative image of a civilization in the future that is dominated by automated machines and artificial intelligence— aspects of sci-fi that are frequently featured

in modern DC and Marvel Universes. A fascinating evaluation would be conducted to try to understand what drives such behaviour in people and why Ishiguro raises the prospect. Ishiguro goes to working with optional-humans (NLMG) and human-like point-of-view with Klara after experimenting with the human mind and memory.

O.P. Sahu and M. Karmakar in their article "Disposable culture, post human affect, and artificial human in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*", addresses how literature can serve as a useful tool to consider the inadequacies of programmed robots to understand the enigmatic nature of the human mind, which resists the one-to-one relationship between words, their various connotations, and their underlying emotions. Based on them, the study highlights how the idea of the social robot—which was intended to provide empathy, care, and companionship—turns into a failing endeavour through the lenses of the fictional story. The paper highlights the noncodified aspect of affective experientialities that arise as a result of the contact between humans and nonanimated entities by drawing on critical perspectives from disposability theory, posthuman effect, and immaterial bodies.

Eileen Ying in his paper "Family Matters: A Review of *Klara and the Sun*" discusses about its unsettling extras, such as Klara's unfixable difference, Josie's unusual disease, the eugenic fads of their dystopian near future, and the vanishing line between care and service, the novel would pass for a fable about the wonders of companionship. It's tempting to interpret Klara as a benchmark for technical progress. The book's theoretical surface hides a recognisable picture of racialized work. But most of the cruelty in the book takes on kinder forms.

### Research Gap

Besides the widespread critical acclaim accorded to Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Klara and the Sun*, there are many research gaps

in the novel's analysis of the connection between nature and artificial intelligence. In the story, the Sun plays a divine role, representing both how civilization has gotten detached from nature and the inner power that comes from trusting in something higher than oneself. Klara, as a solar-powered entity, is fed by the Sun; if she doesn't get enough of it, she becomes sluggish. Despite falling from a more industrialised background, Klara cherishes nature more than others in her neighbourhood. The Sun is one of the main subjects that Klara and the merger of artificial and human intelligence are known for. Klara is raised from birth to be aware, attentive, and receptive to those around her because she is an artificially intelligent entity meant to keep the firm running as a profit.

Environmentalism, hope and faith, and the definition of love are other considerations in addition to those already stated. While there has been extensive critical attention to *Klara and the Sun*, there are still several research gaps in the study of the novel's exploration of the relationship between nature and artificial intelligence. The novel suggests that machines are capable of emotional responses to natural stimuli, but there has been little analysis of the implications of this for the development of AI technology. While the novel emphasizes the importance of maintaining a connection to the natural world, there has been little analysis of the implications of this relationship for the future of AI technology.

### **Elements of Nature and Artificial Intelligence in the Novel**

In this book, the Sun serves as a source of natural strength. Klara's connection to the sun is the driving force propelling her forward. The sun is linked to how she spends her time through her thoughts and feelings. The sun looks to be in charge of her and possesses her. The Sun has a god-like role in the novel, representing both

people's separation from nature and the emotional strength that comes from believing in something higher than oneself. Klara is solar-powered; thus, the Sun nourishes her; if she doesn't get enough sunshine, and she falls drowsy.

Perhaps as a result, Klara appears to overestimate the impact that the Sun has on people, at one point assuming that the Sun is what brought Beggar Man back from the brink of death. In order to speak with the sun, Klara creates rituals that give it even more of a heavenly authority. She treats Mr. McBain's barn, where it appears that the Sun is setting, as a site of worship and makes an effort to communicate with the Sun there in her head as if it were a god who can understand what she is thinking. And even though it might just be a coincidence, Josie miraculously recovers on a bright morning after Klara begged the Sun to spare her. As a result, the Sun's role in the story also serves to highlight how disconnected humanity have gotten from nature.

“When we were new, Rosa and I were mid-store, on the magazines table side, and could see through more than half of the window. So, we were able to watch the outside—the office workers hurrying by, the taxis, the runners, the tourists, Beggar Man and his dog, the lower part of the RPO building.” (Ishiguro,3)

“The next morning, the grid went up and it was a most splendid day. The Sun was pouring his nourishment onto the street and into the buildings, and when I looked over to the spot where Beggar Man and the dog had died, I saw they weren't dead at all—that a special kind of nourishment from the Sun had saved them.” (37)

The story is relayed through the eyes of a solar-powered artificial companion named Klara, who also serves as the protagonist and narrator. Artificial friends, a kind of artificial intelligence that was developed to serve as companions and nannies for kids, are described in the book. Their primary objective in life is to stay with kids until they become adults. Her

principal purpose, although being extremely clever and skillful, is to make a teenager feel less lonely. All artificial friends experience what is referred to as a 'slow fade' as their batteries run out.

The title of the book takes on dramatic significance at this point because Klara wants to prevent Josie from passing away too soon, but she can only do it within the bounds of her knowledge and her resources. The sun is a life-giving pagan deity to the AFs since they are solar-powered, and without the sun's beams, they lose energy and vigour. The book paints a vivid picture of a possibly not-so-distant future in which Artificial Friends (AFs) are used to help children and teenagers cope with the icy loneliness of modern life.

Each AF has an own personality to meet the diverse demands of the adolescent child it is charged with accompanying. Because of this, the functions of AFs are sometimes unclear and drastically vary from child to child. While some AFs are viewed as practical tools, fun toys, or unique artificial pets, others assume more dignified and emotionally meaningful roles that encompass the kinds of reciprocal responsibilities and duties typical of enduring human relations. The latter group includes AF Klara, our narrator. Klara's superior observing skills set her apart from the other AFs. The manager of the AF store says the following to a prospective customer during a sales pitch:

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

It is clear from the paragraph that Klara, an AF from the B2 series, is on par with or even superior to a later series of AFs in that she is able to analyse and grasp a complex reality in addition to simply

recording everything like a simple camcorder (the B3). As Klara explores various phenomena in her ever-expanding outer and inner world, she is able to draw conclusions based on her observations (induction), think back on and draw conclusions based on her prior knowledge (deduction), and come up with plausible explanations even when key details are lacking.

Klara does not appear to be starting with a blank slate, but rather with a sufficiently extensive vocabulary of the pertinent semantic mappings between words and occurrences that are required in order to articulate her experience through sentences. Moreover, as one might anticipate from an AF, her exceptional observational abilities appear well suited to grasp the nuanced nuances of human social interaction. For better or worse, she interprets social interactions and events more deeply than is obvious from the outside.

### **Comparison Between Nature and Artificial Intelligence**

The humans, like *Klara and the Sun* in 2021, trust in science. Nonetheless, the title character has faith in the Sun. In order to serve as an Artificial Friend to a teen, solar-powered robot Klara must be chosen by one. As she waits impatiently in a store for her chance, Klara says, *"the big thing, silently acknowledged by us all, was the Sun and his food"* (11). Although Klara's objective is to offer happiness to an affluent youngster, her confidence in the Sun's nourishment, goodness, and 'special support' undergirds her perspective and actions.

For instance, she assumes that Beggar Man and his dog have passed away on a cloudy day as she waits in a storefront window, hoping to grab the attention of a teenager. Nevertheless, as the Sun shines on them and she notices their motions once again, she deduces that the Sun has given them a specific kind of sustenance to

resuscitate them. Likewise, when Coffee Cup Woman meets a long-lost friend and Klara notices their happy smiles lit by the Sun, she stores this memory away as proof that the Sun is like a deity who can distinguish between good and bad.

As a result of being driven by her want to see Josie happy and her belief in the Sun, Klara resolves to keep Josie alive for Chrissie while also coming up with another solution to assist the distressed people in her life. While Josie is at her worst, Chrissie purchases a lifelike sculpture of her daughter and makes plans for daily doctor visits, while Klara begs the Sun and bargains with him. In order to convince the Sun to provide his special assistance to Josie, Klara vows that she will break into a Pollution machine.

As it turns out, Josie's sickness worsens just as Klara successfully disables a pollution generator and the Sun shines through her bedroom window. Although to the reader they seem random, both of these things strengthen Klara's trust. She thinks that her act of vandalism and the Sun's subsequent favour were the actual causes of Josie's recovery from her illness.

So, she concludes her life as she reflects on her experiences with the natural world and specifically the sun. Klara perceives the sun as a kind and benevolent entity, treating her with kindness from the moment they met. However, Klara notes that the sun was 'extra nice' to her while she was with Josie, indicating that her relationship with the sun is intertwined with her relationship with her human companion.

This quote is significant because it highlights the ways in which Klara interacts with the natural world and how her perceptions of it are influenced by her programming and experiences. Klara's understanding of the sun as a benevolent force is a product of her programming and her observations, but her connection to Josie also shapes her perception of the world around her. Overall, this quote is a

small but significant moment in Klara's development as a character

## Conclusion

In the novel *Klara and the Sun*, the author Kazuo Ishiguro explores the relationship between nature and artificial intelligence through the perspective of Klara, an advanced AI robot designed to serve as a companion to a human child. Through Klara's interactions with the natural world and her observations of human behaviour, Ishiguro highlights the ways in which technology and nature intersect and affect each other. He also raises questions about the limitations and possibilities of AI, and the ethical considerations that come with creating and interacting with intelligent machines. One of the central themes of the novel is the idea that nature and AI are not mutually exclusive or incompatible, but can instead complement and enhance each other.

For example, Klara's ability to observe and learn from natural phenomena such as the sun and the weather helps her develop a deeper understanding of the world around her and better serve her human companion. At the same time, the novel also explores the potential dangers and ethical concerns surrounding the development and use of AI. Klara's experiences raise questions about the nature of consciousness, free will, and the ethical responsibilities of those who create and control AI technology. Overall, the novel suggests that while AI has the potential to greatly benefit humanity, it is important to approach its development and use it with caution and careful consideration of the ethical implications. At the same time, Ishiguro also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a connection to the natural world and recognizing the beauty and complexity of the world around us.

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