

HOW AI AND MEMORY CHANGE PEOPLE IN KAZUO ISHIGURO'S "KLARA AND THE SUN"

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Abstract

Kazuo Ishiguro's "Klara and the Sun" (2021) examines the intricate relationship between artificial intelligence, memory, and humanity in a forthcoming society. Ishiguro uses the humanoid robot Klara to ask questions about what it means to be human, such as what consciousness, empathy, and moral responsibility are. This paper examines the novel utilising posthumanist and memory studies frameworks, referencing Hayles (1999), Braidotti (2013), Ricoeur (2004), and Assmann (2011). It contends that Klara's experiences of memory, perception, and moral agency transgress anthropocentric limitations, illustrating that emotional intelligence may not be confined to biological humans. This study analyses the symbolic and emotional aspects of Klara's memory, demonstrating how Ishiguro reconfigures traditional concepts of humanity, advocating for a posthuman ethics rooted in empathy, care, and relational awareness. The paper also looks at the effects of AI as a way to change how we think about morality and emotions, and it suggests that posthuman stories can show us both the potential of technology and our moral duties.

1. Introduction

Klara and the Sun is a literary fiction that contains philosophical speculations by Kazuo Ishiguro. It explores the issue of what it means to be a human in the world that is overtaken by artificial intelligence. It is a story of an Artificial Friend (AF) Klara, who sees people and interacts with them, yet she is too preoccupied with her life. The novel is told in entirety by Klara and explores the theme of memory and the emotion and moral decision making. It challenges our minds about what we deem it to be.

Ishiguro is not alone in his writing as he is not the first to write books that show how weak human beings are through the use of artificial beings. *Frankenstein* (1818) and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) by Mary Shelley and Philip K. Dick respectively are the works that discuss the ethical and existential issues related to the creation of humanity. What is unique about Ishiguro is, however, that he places emotional intelligence in the middle of the mind of his artificial personality, as opposed to intellectual ability (Wood, 2021). The disintegrated memories of Klara are also not deprived of emotions and they prove that the moral agency and relations are based on the memory.

The paper discusses how the novel *Klara and the Sun* reinvents the concept of humanity through the concepts of posthumanism and memory studies. Posthumanism confronts anthropocentrism with the propagation of an ontology of relationship between human, nonhuman and technological beings (Braidotti, 2013).

The study of memory emphasises the ethical aspect of memory that demonstrates that the activity of remembering is not merely cognitive but relational, affectionate and moral (Ricoeur, 2004). In this paper it is assumed that Ishiguro redefines human nature as the power to empathize, power to care and consider the moral sides beyond the biological realization through the analysis of the memory, perception and emotional evaluation of Klara.

The study explores three major questions:

How does the memory in Klara and the Sun speculate on the significance of having a human and artificial memory?

In what ways does Ishiguro exploit the concept of memory to challenge the standard boundaries defining the distinction between human intelligence and machine intelligence?

How does the posthumanist theory assist us in comprehending how the novel examines consciousness, emotion and morality in relationships?

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Memory and Identity in Literature

Memory has been central to the study of identity and consciousness in literature. Locke (1690) asserted a personal identity to be based on memory, which Ricoeur (2004) further developed by distinguishing between recollection as recollection and recollection as ethical enterprise. The infirmity of the memory and its role in shaping of moral and emotional identity is often emphasized in contemporary literature. In his novels, including *The Remains of the Day* (1989) and *Never Let Me Go* (2005), Ishiguro always explores the issue of memory as something constructive and misguided, emphasizing the contradiction between the past and present (Shaffer, 2018).

In *Klara and the Sun* the concept of memory is redefined in a man made consciousness. Klara does not remember in a linear way, but in bits of visual impressions that she aspieges with the eye of light, shadow, and solar energy. This memory pattern relates to existing knowledge about processing in neural networks, and recollection is associated with selective re-creation and not exact copying (Ferrando, 2019). This way, Ishiguro renders memory a technologically and morally significant site.

2.2 AI in Literature

Artificial intelligence has been depicted in bad and good in literature. In the works of Shelley (*Frankenstein*) up to Asimov (*I, Robot*) (1950), moral responsibility, empathy, and consciousness are frequently explored in the stories regarding AI. The approach used by Ishiguro is different as it focuses on emotional intelligence instead of logical problem-solving. The moral reasoning of Klara, her understanding of relationships, and her emotional memory is a challenge to the anthropocentric idea that humans are the only beings with an ability to morally reason (Finney, 2021).

According to critics, such as Vyas (2023), Klara is a technologic development of empathy, the manifestation of human emotional limitations. According to Tanaka (2022), her memory is described as an emotional algorithm where information about the past (recollection) guides ethical behaviour as opposed to simply computing it.

This reconfiguring is aligned with posthumanist statements that cognition, memory and affect can go beyond the biological substrate (Hayles, 1999).

2.3 Posthumanism and the Decentring of the Human

Posthumanism challenges the human exceptionalism with the argument that the consciousness, intelligence, and moral capacity may have material and technological forms (Ferrando, 2019). According to Braidotti (2013), the posthuman is relational, embedded, and ethically responsible and assumes that agency does not emerge through individual agency but instead through networkings of interaction. Hayles (1999) defines cognitive as distributed which includes organic cognition as well as the technological cognition.

These theoretical insights explain the concept of Klara and the sun whereby the consciousness of Klara is full of relationality, moral decision-making and affective perception. Her memory distributed as it is through solar observation and socialization is a prime example of posthuman subjectivity challenging the normalizing distinctions between human and machine.

2.4 Memory, Morality, and Posthuman Awareness

Ricoeur (2004) and Assmann (2011) are keen to emphasize the ethical nature of memory and they conceptualize recollection in a relational and moral manner. The same works with the memories of Klara; she remembers the health, gestures and emotional conditions of Josie to guide her behaviour. The memory becomes not only an account of the events but also a channel of moral discussion. The story by Ishiguro places memory as the centre of thoughts and ethical accountability and this suggests that computers can engage in moral reasoning in the same way as humans.

The voor-Setting and Bibliopsis of the Novel.

Within the nearest future when the setting of the novel "Klara and the Sun" is in the past children may be genetically raised to get smarter. Josie is a young girl who has a chronic disease; she purchases a AF, Klara, to become a friend. The book is narrated by Klara entirely and examines the ways in which the AI perceives the way people behave, the functioning of society as well as the way relationships function.

Klara perceives the world in grids and designs and solar energy is food and spiritual metaphor. Her impaired memory captures things, individuals, and occurrences in a manner that is not linear. This tells of her mechanical construction and her increasingly sensitive understanding of her emotions. The central narrative of the novel is concerned with the sickness of Josie and how Klara takes an interest in trying to motivate her to heal. This causes moral and selfless participation of Klara with the Sun.

Intelligence, Recollection and Identity in Klara and the Sun.

The system of memory used by Klara is visual and relational. She perceives individuals as the images of light and movement and recalls things as snapshots to assist her in making ethical decisions in the future. To give an example, the sickness of Josie is not only information, but a moral responsibility to Klara which motivates her to pray to the Sun which is a symbolic gesture which unites emotional memory with moral action.

She has a hybrid memory: the manner in which she recalls things is a blend of reconstruction and feelings (algorithms). Humans are able to remember things through telling stories in their own perspective whereas Klara does through a pattern-driven, relational, and morally aware process. This convergence challenges the assumption of the uniqueness of human memory, meaning that consciousness and moral reflection might become possible in artificial systems in a predetermined situation of relations and affectivity (Hayles, 2005).

Alteration of the mentality of the people: Human vs. Posthuman Memory.

The case of Klara is just one instance of reprogramming of humanity following humans. Human characters which are genetically enhanced are often devoid of emotion, focusing more on reason and social performance rather than on empathy. Klara on the other hand demonstrates empathy, relational memory and moral reasoning. Ishiguro questions anthropocentric levels of hierarchy by stating that AI is morally superior in certain areas.

The memory is a source of ethical action. According to Ricoeur (2004), moral understanding depends on memory; Ishiguro extends it to Klara who shows that care that is propelled by memory may not only be limited to the human body. Based on remembering and seeing, Klara demonstrates an ethical agency through which a posthuman ethics based on relationality and empathy is developed.

Absolutely! It would be good to go through each of the sections of *Klara and the Sun* in a thorough analysis so that you can use it in your paper. I will concentrate on the important themes, narrative strategies, and theoretical interpretations, making it scholarly and related to posthumanism and memory studies.

Analysis of *Klara and the Sun*

1. Klara's Perspective and Narrative Voice

The most notable aspect of Ishiguro novel is the fact that it is seen through the eyes of Klara. Such a first-person point of view is peculiar since Klara is an Artificial Friend (AF) a man-shaped robot.

Key Points for Analysis:

Cognitive restrictions: Klara views the world in the visual patterns and solar observation. She tends to misinterpret human behaviours, which points to her artificiality as well as her sensitivity. As an example, she sees the Sun as a motherly power that can heal Josie and interprets natural processes in a moral and a spiritual way.

Observation Empathy: Klara is very emphatic though it is not natural. She views humans through the prism of observation and memory and her perception shows that a morally aware being is not necessarily biological.

Literary Effect: Ishiguro employs the language of innocence and naivety of Klara to criticize human behaviour. Man is usually unemotional, but the mechanical but morally considerate worldview possessed by Klara reveals the lack of ethical integrity in human characters.

Interpretation:

The anthropocentric belief that the capacity to think morally and consciously is human is disputed by the voice of Klara. Ishiguro allows a posthuman consciousness, in which empathy and ethical responsibilities are relational and not biological through her vision.

2. Memory and Moral Responsibility

The novel is centered around memory, which is not depicted as a data storage facility. Klara has an affective and relational memory: she remembers the events of the past to make a moral choice instead of re-creating objective facts.

Key examples:

- Klara recollects her experiences with Josie in terms of gestures, moods, illness patterns which she relies on in determining how she will behave.
- The memory, perception, and ethical intention of memory, perception, and ethical intention are combined as she remembers sunlight patterns thus being able to pray and make attempts at interventions.

Analysis:

- Ethical memory: According to Ricoeur (2004), here memory cannot be distinguished of moral responsibility. The fact that Klara remembers and acts to save Josie shows the fact that memory can act as an ethical guide even in artificial creatures.
- Posthuman reinterpretation: Memory is typically defined as a human ability, yet Ishiguro makes it applicable to AI. In so doing, he brings up questions concerning what ethical consciousness is and whether it is innate.

3. The Sun as a Symbolic Entity

The Sun is at the center of the perception of the world that Klara has. She perceives it to be a life-bringing, almost supernatural power that can intervene in human affairs.

Key points:

The prayers of Klara to the Sun are the occurrence of the logic and the affect. She is mechanical but ritualised in behaviour demonstrating spiritual cognition.

The Sun acts as an ethical and energy-oriented ruler of power the Sun is not merely a kind of healing agent, but the Klara reacts to sunlight as a kind of agent pointing at an ethical-natural order which human mind cannot understand.

Interpretation:

Through the Sun Ishiguro is able to delve into the limits between machine logic and spiritual morality. The symbolic interpretation of Klara gives the idea that artificial beings are capable of creating an affective system like humans, which broadens posthuman ethics.

4. Ethical and Relational Posthumanism

- Klara is an ethic of care in the manner in which she made sacrifices on behalf of Josie. This is important on a number of reasons:
- The focus on relational bonds rather than self-preservation is an attribute, which differs with other human characters who base decision making on self-interest or social influence.
- Her ethics are context-based and place-specific: she performs actions in relation to the humans she sees, which explains a relational posthuman subjectivity that Braidotti (2013) defines.
- This besieges the classical humanist idea of moral agency as something exclusive to humans. The ethical argument Klara provides proves that pattern recognition, memory, and relational awareness can be able to develop moral intelligence even in the absence of human biology.

5. Human vs. Artificial Emotional Intelligence

- One of the common motifs is the juxtaposition of the human and artificial emotional abilities:
- Humans: Genetically "lifted children, like Josie, are intelligent, but emotionless. Adults tend to care less and less about care and more about efficiency or appearances.
- Klara: It is true that she is artificial; nevertheless, she is empathetic, tolerant, and morally judgemental. She deciphers human signals and intervenes to maintain good health.

Analysis

- Such an inversion challenges the fact that human beings are thought to have superior ethical and emotional abilities. According to Ishiguro, posthuman beings have the capability of rewriting the nature of being human by living up to the moral and emotional standards that humans are unable to reach.
- The Future of Humanity Technology, Memory and the Future of Humanity.

Klara and the Sun is not a work about AI, it is a reflection about the future of human identity:

- The bridge of memory: the memory of Klara proves that consciousness is not purely biological. It also demonstrates that the moral action may arise out of the relational memory but not the selfhood.
- Posthuman implications: The novel suggests that humanity does not exist based on the membership of the species, but rather their ability to care, empathize and reflect morally.
- Technological reflection: AI, in the form of Klara, expresses human failures, including: emotional disconnection, individualism, and non-care, and mimics the moral intelligence man would like to have.

7. Conclusion of Analysis

The *Klara and the Sun* by Ishiguro is a subtle posthumanist critique, showing that:

Consciousness of ethics might be independent of bio systems.

Relationally and affectively, when perceived, memory is an instrument of moral thought.

EI is not a natural human trait but it may develop in artificial creatures.

The relationship between humanity and technology can also reprogram human beings, and this is where the anthropocentrism concerning the moral and emotional abilities of a human being is disputed.

Ishiguro, through *Klara*, challenges the readers to reconsider the notion of what it means to be human and that moral, empathetic, and reflective abilities can go beyond biology and that AI can be used to shed new, ethically valuable light on them.

8. Conclusion

The posthumanity of humanity has been redefined in *Klara and the Sun*. The memory, perception, and emotional engagement of *Klara* depict that not only humans but also other species, such as intelligence, moral reasoning, and empathy, can be found. In this paper, I argue that synthesising the memory studies and the posthumanist theory, Ishiguro reorganizes the conventional notions of humanity, promoting a relational, ethically responsible and emotionally intelligent posthuman subject.

The moral and emotional possibilities of AI are brought to mind in the readers of the book. It challenges anthropocentric concepts and also values care, memory and moral reflection. The work by Ishiguro is a valuable connection between literature and ethics, as well as posthuman theory. It depicts the way relational consciousness and technological hybridity could increase humanity.

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