

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF LETTERS AND ENGLISH
LANGUAGE

N°:.....



DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES
STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE
OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

**Under Artificial Eyes: AI and the Irreplaceable
Essence of Human Consciousness in Kazuo
Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun***

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Master's Degree**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled; “Under Artificial Eyes: AI and the Irreplaceable Essence of Human Consciousness in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Klara and the Sun*” is my work and all the sources I have quoted have been acknowledged by means of references.

Dedication

In Memory of my beloved Father, Mr. Hadjazi Laid, whose love is carved too deeply into my heart ever to be replaced! You didn't get to see this, but I hope you'd be proud.

To my beautiful Mother, for all the times you carried the weight I never saw. You were my strength when I had none left. I owe more to you than this page can hold. Thank you for supporting and loving me through it all.

To my lovely sisters Hadjer and Allaa, my constants, my joy. Thank you for the laughter and the endless support. You made this journey brighter!

With gratitude to my dear family and friends who stood behind every word of this work. Thank you for all the help and support.

Acknowledgments

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. First and foremost, all praise be to Allah the Almighty, the source of all knowledge and strength, for granting me patience, and perseverance to complete this work despite its challenges. Without His support, mercy, and guidance none of this would have been achievable.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Sahed Bachir for his scholarly supervision and insightful instruction. I am sincerely thankful for his patience, critical feedback, and encouragement which not only contributed to this dissertation but supported my growth as a researcher.

I am profoundly grateful to Miss Amel Benia, whose expertise and innovative suggestions greatly enriched this work. Her generosity, constant support and belief in my abilities were invaluable sources of motivation and inspiration.

Finally, I extend my gratitude to the esteemed members of the board of jury for accepting to read and evaluate my dissertation, as well as for dedicating their time and expertise to providing thoughtful feedback that will support the refinement of this work.

Abstract

The present study examines how literature imagines the ontological boundaries between humans and artificial forms of life through Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021). Hence, it aims to explore the depiction of AI's limitations in Ishiguro's work, with a special focus on demonstrating the irreplaceable essence of human consciousness. In order to accomplish this aim, Ishiguro's narrative is analysed through a multidisciplinary framework. It engages with posthumanist theoretical concepts such as Fukuyama's Factor X and the human emotional gamut, phenomenological notions of the subjective experience and qualia, and key theoretical distinctions in the philosophy of mind including Chalmers and Block's hybrid conceptualisation of Consciousness. The study scrutinizes the complex and mysterious nature of the human consciousness to provide a critical foundation for distinguishing genuine human essence from artificial simulation. The research argues that while Klara demonstrates sophisticated observational and functional abilities as part of her functional consciousness, it remains devoid of the irreducible elements of human consciousness including free will, the emotional gamut and the subjective experience and its qualitative dimension. Through this comprehensive analysis, the study aims to contribute to broader critical discussions on the techno-scientific advances of AI and the posthuman discourse. The study concludes that while AI may simulate behaviour and emotions, the essence of human dignity remains unachievable and inimitable.

Keywords: Consciousness, Subjective experience, AI, Emotional gamut, Functional consciousness, Qualia, Free will.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI: Artificial Intelligence

AF: Artificial Friend

P-conscious: Phenomenal conscious

A-conscious: Access conscious

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General Introduction

Posthumanism emerged as a reaction to the shifting boundaries of human identity in the face of technological as well as cultural transformations. Its genealogies trace back to the philosophical tradition of postmodernism. Initially, introduced and coined by Ihab Hassan in his essay “Prometheus as Performer: Towards a Posthumanist Culture?” in 1977, the term signifies a growing fascination with the notion of transcending the ontological boundaries and human limitations using artificial means. As technology and artificial intelligence rapidly progress, the idea of blurring the boundaries between flesh and silicon has captured the attention of many posthumanist scholars, computational scientists, and AI enthusiasts leading to what is often referred to by William Lombardo as the transhumanist dream of applauding the human consciousness in a machine.

Furthermore, this transformational vision challenges the traditional definition of the notion of human in Greek as “Anthropos” as well as that of “Humanity as Symbolic Species” in Terrence Deacon’s work, and as such contributes to the deconstruction and the decentring of the human. The rapid progression in the field of AI fuelled the posthuman aspirations. Posthumanism as described by Neil Badmington is “the best of times, it is the worst of times” (1344). He is emphasizing its paradoxical nature in essence that signifies both opportunity and challenge. In this regard, dystopian or speculative fiction provides an open portal into some of the ongoing debates about AI and speculates the potential changes that the near future may bring about.

Kazuo Ishiguro is considered to be one of the most popular novelists of the present time. His fictional narratives cover a myriad of posthuman themes in a dystopian futuristic world where the human species and computational media are in deep symbioses. The narrative that is going to be examined in this study is Ishiguro’s *Klara and the Sun* in which he explored a variety of themes including human enhancement and class struggle, and

dedicated his works to criticize the arising Transhumanist dream that threatens the essence of humanity. In his essay “Artificial Intelligence, Humanistic Ethics”, John Tasioulas claims that “The optimizing mindset prevalent among computer scientists and economists, among other powerful actors, has led to an approach focused on maximizing the fulfilment of human preferences” (2). Tasioulas emphasizes that the irresponsible misuse of AI is justified by the aim of fulfilling human needs and desire which endangers the future of humanity. Drawing on this notion, this study claims that Ishiguro uses Klara, the artificial protagonist, as a vehicle to spark debates and caution against this transhumanist dream by highlighting AI’s limitations as well as the ontological boundaries between humans and AI.

The motivation behind undertaking this comprehensive study is the growing scholarly and cultural interest in AI, particularly in its attempt to replicate the human essence. As these technologies are progressively designed to be an imitation of life, there is a growing need to investigate whether these artificial beings can genuinely embody the human consciousness or merely simulate it. In the light of the above, this research responds to that need by analysing Ishiguro’s portrayal of AI’s limitations of *Klara and the Sun*. Its significance lies in its contribution to the broader discussions on AI in the posthuman discourse. By highlighting the existential gap that is often overlooked in utopian narratives, it further explores the constructed nature of artificial emotions and the attempt to bypass the ontological limitations.

This study aims to explore the portrayal of AI in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Klara and the Sun*, with a special focus on demonstrating the irreplaceable essence of human consciousness. To this end, it addresses the limitations of Klara’s attempt to mimic the aspects of this essence beyond her programming and external observations. Through a literary analysis supported by theoretical frameworks of posthumanist discourse, phenomenology and the philosophy of mind, this study aim to critically examine the complexity of human consciousness, and how Ishiguro presents it through Klara’s interactions with the world. Moreover, it is of great

significance to highlight the key distinctions between human consciousness and Klara's limited functional consciousness. It is intended that the research findings will provide an insight into Ishiguro's critique of AI's attempts to mimic and embody the conscious experience as a transhumanist model of the immortal continuity of the human species.

This dissertation seeks to provide answers to the following main question: How does Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* demonstrate the limitations of AI in replicating human consciousness and its aspects? In order to answer this question, this study will attempt to answer to the following sub-questions: What aspects of human consciousness are portrayed as irreplaceable in the novel? How does Ishiguro contrast Klara's programmed nature with Rick's genuine human consciousness to critique AI's inability to fully capture the depth of the subjective felt experience? How does *Klara and the Sun* divulge Klara's mechanistic approach and limited understanding?

The depiction of AI's limitations is a central theme in contemporary fiction mirroring the increasing concerns of this deep symbiosis of the human species and computational media. Furthermore, AI is a major area of interest within the field of humanities; it has received considerable scholarly attention in the recent years as it offers a rich field for analysing various literary works and a unique perspective on philosophical debates.

Among the researchers who have attempted to investigate the representation of AI's limitations in the dystopian narrative of Kazuo Ishiguro are Adam Parkes and Shang Biwu. Both scholars examine *Klara and the Sun* emphasizing the ethical limitations of AI and the notion of obsolescence. On the one hand, Parkes in his article "Nothing New under the Sun: Planned obsolescence in Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*", argues that the novel critiques capitalist systems that create obsolescence on purpose. On the other hand, Shang Biwu in "Can Machines Replace Humans?: Robotic Narratives and Ethical Choices in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and The Sun*" focuses on Klara's ability to ethically decide not to replicate

Josie and realize that the irreplaceable essence of human affection lies in the human heart which AI lacks. While Parks emphasizes the societal forces that aim to commodify humans and robots, Biwu focuses on the moral responsibility that AI possesses.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on class struggle in *Klara and the Sun* including Pinar Süt Güngör's article "A Eugenic Attempt to Create 'Upper Class': *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro". She utilizes the eugenic discourse of the modern world to address the unethical attempts of such dystopian society in enhancing the humans and therefore uncover its results. Süt Güngör's study emphasizes the struggle imposed by the laws of human enhancement which are compared to the survival laws of jungle. The latter results in the division of society into two hierarchies: the privileged "lifted" and the wretched "unlifted" who are subject to discrimination. In addition, she reinforces her argument by mainly contrasting Rick and Josie along with other characters in the story, which highlights the eugenic centred society that forces people to modify their genes under the slogan of purifying the society.

Other scholars shifted their research focus to a very extreme perspective on AI's risks of potential singularity and surpassing human qualities challenging traditional ideas of the ontological boundaries between the human species and AI. Nick Bostrom in his book *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies* emphasizes the potential risks for AI to surpass human intelligence and its ethical amplification. In this regard, he acknowledges the potentially dangerous amplifications of the scientific and technological advancement, describing it as "the gravest existential risks facing us [humanity] in the coming decades" emphasizing that it "will be of our own making" (Bostrom 22). Lastly, Bostrom argues that AI's singularity is a result of its ability to fully replicate the humans' traits ignoring the present limitations of AI.

Similarly, Raymond Kurzweil in his book, *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence*, argues for the notion of technological singularity. He speculates a period that of the mid-21st century where the lines between machines and humans are blurred. Kurzweil's work emphasizes that there will be almost no signs of distinction between human abilities and AI Intelligence. Moreover, he states that artificial machines will exceed human's biological intelligence and became part of our social network and relationships serving as teachers, lovers and companions which is indeed what Ishiguro portrayed in Klara's role as an artificial companion in a futuristic world.

Although extensive research has been done on AI's depiction in literature and films, very few studies address its limitations in fully replicating the essence of human consciousness. As such, this indicates a need to examine Ishiguro's portrayal of this concern and understand his critique of the arising transhumanist dream.

Besides, in this hyper-digital age, AI continues to gain popularity and attention in the field of academia as one of the leading areas of interest in research. The existing studies on AI and its portrayal in literature, particularly in *Klara and the Sun*, are limited to exploring the reinforcement of isolation through technology, the morality of artificial friends, the human enhancement, as well as Ishiguro's unique writing style and narrative techniques. However, there remains remarkable gap in highlighting how Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* questions and critiques the transhumanist dream of uploading the human consciousness into technical devices and thereby achieving immortality. That is, no matter how sophisticated AI can be, it cannot fully replicate the irreplaceable essence of human consciousness and its aspects including the subjective experience, emotional gamut, and free will. This topic has not received adequate attention despite addressing a significant concern that resonates with humanity's aspirations and concerns.

Therefore, the present study foregrounds a topic that requires further exploration chiefly by critically analysing how Kazuo Ishiguro's novel demonstrates the limitations of AI in simulating human consciousness and its aspects. As such, the study unveils the distinctions between human consciousness and AI's functional consciousness which is a result of its various attempts to mimic this human essence. Besides, the study explores the so called blurred ontological boundaries between humans and machines emphasizing the impossibility of achieving full replication and embodiment of the human consciousness and its aspects.

Accordingly, this dissertation employs a multidisciplinary approach integrating theoretical concepts from various disciplines. Initially, Posthumanist discourse including Francis Fukuyama's notions on human dignity and essence, particularly in his work *Our Posthuman Future*, provide a theoretical foundation for distinguishing genuine human consciousness and emotions from artificial simulation. Fukuyama stresses that consciousness is not merely the ability to process information or display behavioural complexity, rather a complex and mysterious phenomenon involving emotional depth, inner subjective experience, and free will. He criticizes reductionist models that equate human consciousness with computational outputs. In this regard, the study will use Fukuyama's perspective to emphasize AI's inability to possess human consciousness.

Furthermore, some researchers contend that non-human beings possess an identical form of human consciousness which thereby support their claims of blurring the distinctions between humans and artificial machines. However, this study draws on the perspectives of David Chalmers, Antonio Damasio, Ned Block and David B. Hart to argue that AI possess a functional form of consciousness and remains beyond achieving the qualitative dimension of the subjective experience that shapes the human consciousness. In this respect, the research employs various theoretical concepts including the hard problem of consciousness, access

and phenomenal consciousness, and qualia to emphasise that the phenomenon of consciousness cannot be reduced to mere material functions. It is experienced internally and subjectively which contributes to its resistance of an objective external explanation by the traditional scientific methods.

This theoretical framework stresses that consciousness is not separate from the biological body; rather it is lived through the body. In this regard, Klara's silicon-based structure allows her to observe and interact with the world, yet does not guarantee her access to a rich inner experience. The study's argument is further supported by highlighting the sharp contrast between Klara and Rick who embodies the genuine human essence. It reinforces the distinction between AI functional consciousness and human consciousness.

To provide a comprehensive analysis, the dissertation is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical framework discussed above. It lays the groundwork for understanding the complexity of human consciousness which remains beyond the reach of the mechanistic approach of artificial beings. The first section highlights how consciousness is distinct from other conflated concepts and examines the theory of Factor X as a defence of human dignity. Following that, the chapter delves into the concept of the human emotional gamut which is another key idea proposed by Fukuyama. Furthermore, this theoretical framework draws on a hybrid conceptualization of the human essence including Chalmers' easy and hard problems of consciousness as well as Block's distinction between Access and phenomenal conscious states. It concludes by stressing on the subjective experience and its qualitative dimension as a barrier to human or phenomenal consciousness.

The second chapter is dedicated to analysing how Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* demonstrates the limitations of AI in replicating the human consciousness through the lens of the proposed theoretical concepts. It is initiated by exploring Klara's narration as a tool of defamiliarization which reveals her limitation. The second section sheds light on how

Fukuyama's defence on human dignity manifest itself in the novel through Ishiguro's critique of the transhumanist dream. More significantly, the chapter examines the distinction between human free will and Klara's programmed decision making utilizing the theory of Factor X. Moreover, it further explores Klara's lack of a subjective felt experience and its qualitative dimension. Ultimately, the chapter concludes by arguing for Klara's mechanistic approach to the world manifested in her functional consciousness.

Chapter One: Mapping the Theoretical Terrain: Philosophical Concepts and the Shift to a Posthumanist Horizon

Introduction

Amid the rise of AI in the hyper-digital age, the so-called blurred boundaries between human and machine spark philosophical questions and debates over the nature of consciousness and what constitutes the human essence. The present study foregrounds the irreplaceability of human consciousness, which despite technological sophistication, remains beyond the reach of artificial replication. Accordingly, the first chapter lays the theoretical foundation upon which the study is built. It explores the significant theoretical concepts that the study applies to Ishiguro's novel to examine AI limitations and highlight the distinction between artificial simulation and human consciousness. Therefore, this chapter chiefly aims to frame the discussion within key philosophical, posthumanist, and phenomenological perspectives that emphasises the ontological boundaries.

1. Posthumanist Thought and the Perils of Transhumanist Aspirations

The humanist thought continues to persist in the contemporary discourse through the perspectives of some prominent figures who emphasise the significance of preserving human dignity in a hyper digital age. Over the past few decades leading up to the present time, interest in posthumanism has grown considerably. It has been gradually developing, first emerging in academic discussions before becoming influential in popular culture where it serves to provide “a new context for what it means to be human” (Hauskeller et al. 1). The genealogies of posthumanism trace back to the late 20th century to the movement of postmodernism, and draw on the notion of human deconstruction. The term was coined by the literary theorist Ihab Hassan in his article “Prometheus as Performer: Toward a

Posthumanist Culture?" (1977), who then developed it further in *The postmodern turn*. In this work, Hassan anticipated the rise of posthumanism through postmodernism. He employed the myth of Prometheus to announce the emergent posthumanist culture and the ending of the humanist era, where he states, "as humanism transforms itself into something we must helplessly call posthumanism" (843). Furthermore, in Hassan's words, the posthuman culture would surmount "the external divisions of humankind" (833). Meaning that, this paradigm shift would contribute to a radical change by deconstructing the traditional binaries along with rethinking the notion of the human.

Besides, since the 1990, posthumanism has served as a broad umbrella term for a myriad of theoretical concepts across various fields including sociology, cultural theory, biology, and bioethics, all addressing the significant shifts in the human condition. In addition, rooted in scientific and academic discourse, posthumanism is fundamentally linked to the notion of the posthuman, which has developed through diverse perspectives. According to Francesca Ferrando in her *Philosophical Posthumanism* "the posthuman ... has developed ... within the frame of not only Posthumanism ... but also Transhumanism" (26). In this regard, the posthuman is "the desired end point of transhumanism"(Lagrandeur 112); that is the transhumanist project aims at enhancing the human species through techno-scientific means to thereby achieve the posthuman. Thus, this transhumanist aspiration is manifested in the attempt of using speculative technology to applaud the human consciousness in artificial machines and "overcomes the material reality and strive towards omnipotence, omniscience and [non-corporal] immortality" (Graham 69). Simply put, such ambitions reflect a radical departure from human finitude, as transhumanists envision a future where the constraints of the body, mortality, and human limitations are bypassed or erased.

Moreover, drawing on the ideals of Renaissance humanism and the Enlightenment, transhumanism is considered as ultra-humanism for it is an anthropocentric movement that

focuses on the fantasy of technological transcendence. In this framework, humans became a tool for artificial simulation, in Baldwin's words; they are reduced to "a prosthesis to technology" (1). In *How We Became Posthuman*, N. Katherine Hayles critiques this transhumanist aspiration of the soulless, artificial continuity of humans. She compares the posthumanists who embrace the responsible use of technology as a medium of advancement with those who want to transcend the ontological limitations and "regard their bodies as fashion accessories rather than the ground of being" (5). Thus, transhumanism raises concerns as its core principles idealise techno-scientific aspirations without applying sufficient critical reflection or caution, particularly regarding the ethical implications on human dignity and condition, which would bring about, in Foucault's words, the end of man; that is the end of human species (387).

Posthumanism as opposed to transhumanism and the posthuman is an academic and interdisciplinary discourse that acknowledges the decentring of the human as an inevitable consequence of digital dominance. Moreover, Posthumanism adopts a post-centralising view that avoids privileging any single point of reference; it neither neglects technology nor centres it. Rather, it treats it as one aspect of the human condition without allowing it to dominate the discourse; thereby it resists the transhumanist idealisation of technology and the notion of transcendence (Ferrando 39). Besides, Heidegger's commentary on technology is significant for it sheds light on the uncritical transhumanist belief in tech-scientific advances. Heidegger's view of technology goes beyond its traditional view as a threat, rather he emphasises that the issue lays in the improper use of technology. Therefore, modern technology for Heidegger is a limitation that deprives the human of accessing its full potential as a "way of revealing" (12). He critiques the reductionist approach of technology that disregards mystery and creativity, reducing it to be merely materialistic, measurable and controlled (Heidegger 14-17).

Furthermore, Heidegger locates the origin of this radical shift in the period of the Enlightenment which is the era that marked the foundational stage of the transhumanist thought (Ferrando 42). Accordingly, his critique touches upon the principles of the transhumanist aspirations which are rooted in the reductionist approach; that is to say, transhumanism reduces the human species to the sum of functional processes that are measurable and achievable by artificial means. In essence, Heidegger emphasises that technology cannot be mastered or controlled, challenging the transhumanist beliefs, whereby his warning reflects the contemporary discussions on AI and the fantasy of replicating human consciousness.

2. A Conceptual Distinction of Consciousness

Consciousness is one of the most mysterious aspects of human existence. The conceptualisation of this hard problem as, David Chalmers describes it, is frequently conflated with other notions such as conscience and sentience. Thus, it is essential to draw a distinction and clarify what consciousness is not. In *Great Minds Don't Think Alike*, Antonio Damasio argues that Consciousness is not a synonymous with conscience, for it is one's inner sense of what is moral and immoral whereas the former has no relation to moral judgement (Gleiser 3). Furthermore, Damasio stresses that consciousness is not general awareness, such as the awareness of ideas or issues (3). In his words, being conscious of an issue requires possessing relevant knowledge and having engaged in rational thought, yet this does not equate to the phenomena of the felt, mental, subjective experience.

Moreover, Damasio differentiates between sentience and consciousness. Sentience in essence is related to the ability to detect a stimulus and respond accordingly (4). In this regard, Chalmers emphasises this distinction by dismantling the understanding of consciousness as a process of mere stimulus response. He defines it drawing on Thomas

Nagel as a subjective felt experience. Chalmers claims that “there’s something it’s like to be a conscious organism” to feel and experience things, which ultimately shapes one’s experiential or phenomenal consciousness (Gleiser 10). Besides, Damasio states that AI’s simulation of human’s pain-signalling processes would not guarantee experiencing pain itself. In other words, he is trying to convey that AI cannot possess emotional depth or a subjective inner experience of it beyond its programmed functional behaviour. Damasio concludes arguing that AI is deprived of this human essence for it lacks what he called “a living Flash” which provides this phenomenon with a sense of a human biological embodiment (Gleiser 23).

3. Factor X as a Defence of Human Dignity

Francis Fukuyama’s theoretical writings fall under the umbrella of the posthuman discourse as he is considered to be “one of the major figures who has shaped the rhetoric of posthumanism” (Miah 3). In contrast to Hayles and Haraway, Fukuyama advocates the centrality of human nature as a fixed concept to our understanding of human identity. He acknowledges the ontological boundaries between human and non-human beings; that is to say, humans are fundamentally different from other species. As opposed to the beliefs of natural scientists and transhumanists, his *work, Our Posthuman Future*, warns against the amplifications of the techno-scientific advances that threaten human dignity. In this book, he stresses that these biotechnological aspirations may alter “the human nature and thereby move us into a posthuman age” (Fukuyama 7). As such, for him these asignal a threat to what it means to be a human rather than a progress.

Our Posthuman Future launches a critique of the widespread reductionist view. Reductionism as a philosophy explains every complex phenomenon in the light of the Laws of physics or its material causes. Fukuyama is critical of it, for this method fails to explain the

human essence and thereby classifies it as a merely observable, calculated phenomenon. He, among other philosophers, believes that this method is not necessarily wrong, yet remains insufficient to address the complexity of the unique human traits and its biological processes. The notion of a human essence has been subject to various attacks and criticism by modern science. Darwinism as a central theory in this field asserts that there is no such thing as a species essence and “what seems to be the essence is just an accidental by-product of random evolutionary process” (152). Nevertheless, Fukuyama emphasizes the ontological gap where he argues for the existence of an essential human trait. Ultimately, he highlights that the denial of this significant notion would direct humanity to “a very perilous path” (160), one that risks reducing the human essence to a sum of computational processes and threatens human dignity.

Besides, Fukuyama’s work foregrounds the main theoretical concepts that he arrived at in his critique of the biotechnological advances. He explores how these notions emphasise the irreplaceable essence of human consciousness. Accordingly, in response to the reductionist’s claims, Fukuyama proposed a concept which remains irreducible and separates humans from other forms of life. He calls it Factor X and defines it as “the essential human quality” that exists despite the absence of other non-essential or “accidental characteristics” (149). The possession of this factor guarantees one’s human and political rights. Simply put, regardless of one’s race, gender, and social class, Factor X as a human essence unifies all human beings and thereby attributes to each individual equal right. Furthermore, the attribution of this essence was subject of debates for centuries where it belonged to a certain privileged human race and never to all, yet later on it developed to include the entire human race. In this respect, he argues that “Factor X is the human essence, the most basic meaning of what it is to be human. If all human beings are in fact equal in dignity, then X must be some characteristic universally possessed by them” (150). Ultimately, Fukuyama’s claim

emphasises a necessity to define humanity through an internal feature; an essence that is not externally or socially constructed.

Factor X is not merely our ability to produce language as symbolic species. It goes beyond that for this ability is shared with artificial machines which are capable of thinking and thereby generating language. This is evident in the contemporary large language models such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek, Siri and many others. This suggests that the complex nature of an essence includes various features. Moreover, Fukuyama emphasizes that “Factor X cannot be reduced to the possession of moral choice, or reason, or language, or sociability, or sentience, or emotions, or consciousness ... It is all of these coming together in a human whole that make up Factor X” (171). That is to say, each quality relies on the presence of the others, none can exist independently. Additionally, Factor X as an essence is about the complexity of the interconnected of the interconnected exceptional human features such as moral choice, reason, consciousness, the full range of emotions, and free will.

In *Our Posthuman Future*, Fukuyama draws on Kantian philosophy to refer to moral choice and free will as another significant, unique, human characteristic. Kant contributed to create a philosophical basis for the notion of Factor X. Fukuyama elaborates on this notion as follows:

Factor X was based on the human capacity for moral choice. That is, human beings could differ in intelligence, wealth, race, and gender, but all were equally able to act according to moral law or not. Human beings had dignity because they alone had free will-not just the subjective illusion of free will but the actual ability to transcend natural determinism and the normal rules of causality. It is the existence of free will that leads Kant’s well-known conclusion that human beings are always to be treated as ends and not as means. (151)

He is arguing that human dignity arises from a unique human capacity which is genuine free will. Unlike animals or machines, which act according to instinct or programming and are thus bound by natural determinism and cause-effect rules, humans possess the real ability to make choices that are beyond those factors. In other words, human actions can break from predictable or traditional patterns, reflecting their uniqueness and subjectivity.

Besides, Natural scientists view the ability of free will as an illusion. They argue that human decision making is fundamentally linked to material causes and brain processes leaving no room for genuine human choice. While they acknowledge that human decision-making may be more complex than that of other animals, they deny the existence of a clear difference that draws the lines between human and non-human beings. Fukuyama challenges this by defending the notion that humans possess a kind of free will that cannot be fully explained through biological determinism alone.

According to Fukuyama, Consciousness is a core element in the theory of Factor X; it plays a significant role in defining human uniqueness. It is the basis upon which other human features depend. In his view, consciousness is among many other complex phenomena that reductionism failed to explain. He defines it as the “subjective mental states” which encompasses human thinking, sensation, as well as emotions (166).

Furthermore, Fukuyama’s work animadverts upon the view of some neuroscientists and AI researchers who claim that AI will possess human consciousness as a result of the advances in computational science. In this regard, he emphasises that science remain far from providing an explanation of consciousness. This conundrum remains unachievable, because no theory or research has yet succeeded to uncover its complex nature or explain how arises. Its mystery lies in its non-material order despite being produced by material biological processes.

John Searle is one of the contemporary scientists and philosophers who shares Fukuyama's critique. As a distinguished philosopher of mind, he argues in *The Mystery of Consciousness*, that the contemporary scientific approach fails to address the complexity of consciousness and results in deception. In this regard, this approach deprives the conscious mental states of its subjective felt experience. Fukuyama's work foregrounds Searle's comment on Daniel Dennett's limited perspective that resulted in error. He states that Dennett reduces the human consciousness to the algorithmic functions of a computer and rejects what he called the "old fashioned" definition of consciousness (Fukuyama 167).

In his work, *The Rediscovery of the Mind*, Searle identifies two different categories of reductionism that are closely linked (113-114). On the one hand, he asserts that causal reductionism acknowledges the existence of the subjectivity of feelings and thoughts in relation to the brain's neurological processes. That is to say, emotions are more than mental processes, they are subjective. On the other hand, ontological reductionism denies the subjectivity of emotions and reduces it to its material brain processes. As such, these claims of ontological reductionism are what Fukuyama and Searle argue against in their works, particularly in their discussion of human consciousness. Accordingly, Searle concludes that consciousness is a core feature of the human brain as well as a unique phenomenon that is an "irreducible feature of physical reality" (116). Through this claim, he reinforces the view that consciousness as a complex essence cannot be replicated or simulated by computational processes, rather is tied to the subjective lived experience of humans.

Some AI researchers adopt a reductionist viewpoint, where they treat the human brain as a complex computational system shaped by external inputs. Moreover, they reduce the complexity of consciousness to merely external cognitive or functional processes, ignoring the internal subjective experience. This suggests that, any machine that masters cognitive tasks would appear indistinguishable externally and thereby internally, despite lacking the

depth of internal experience. Nevertheless, Fukuyama stresses that a machine will not experience any subjective awareness or feeling of its actions (167). As such, AI possesses merely the functional skills of accomplishing tasks based on its programming, yet lacks an understanding of it.

Besides, *Our Posthuman Future* further critiques the speculations of AI proponents including Hans Moravec and Ray Kurzweil who predict that machines will surpass human abilities, reaching the complexities of consciousness. Fukuyama foregrounds the amplifications of such assumptions on human dignity for it reduces the human race to merely “complicated machines that can be made out of silicon” (168). Unlike Moravec and Kurzweil’s futuristic aspirations, Fukuyama’s view is grounded in a more realistic view. He dismisses the possibility of AI achieving consciousness despite its potential possession of a humanlike intelligence. Fukuyama is trying to convey that AI cannot replicate this essence for it cannot reach the depth of human subjective emotions.

4. The Human Emotional Gamut

Searle defines consciousness as the “subjective feelings”, that is the presence of genuine inner experience of feelings including pain, happiness, anger and many more (qtd. in Fukuyama 167). This suggests that it is not sufficient for an AI to act as it feels something; instead, it requires experiencing it. Furthermore, Fukuyama stresses that despite the advances in designing robots that mimic the human behaviour, it remains fundamentally hollow. Accordingly, AI can superficially replicate the patterns of response to the human emotions as a function yet cannot have any “subjective sense” of it (168). In essence, a machine’s actions and decisions are grounded in its programmed inputs, devoid of genuine emotional experience or understanding.

In the contemporary evolutionary biology and cognitive science, emotions are viewed not as important experiences, rather as by-products or an “epiphenomena” of their biological functions (Fukuyama 169). For instance, fear functionally, causes the body to react in ways that serves its survival. Nevertheless, the subjective feeling of it, in this view, is merely a side effect that is not essential to serve a function or guide an action. In this respect, Fukuyama points out that this dismissal of subjectivity as evolutionarily irrelevant is not based on solid evidence or reasons. Besides, he further argues against the attribution of human dignity and uniqueness to “the human reason and human moral choice” (169). In the light of above, Fukuyama introduces the concept of the human gamut of emotions where he stresses on its significance as the basis of human values, needs, goals, and fears. He argues that the “possession of the full human emotional gamut is at least as important, if not more so” (169). This indicates that a human being is characterised by a full range of complex interconnected emotions. Fukuyama draws on the experimental work of Robert Misheva to conclude that human emotions affect one’s understanding or conception of humans’ identity, more than the human physical appearance or reason.

Emotions among other elements of human consciousness remain a mystery in the face of techno-scientific advances that has merely “scratch[ed] the surface” (Fukuyama 170). Nevertheless, AI researchers argue that consciousness is an “emergent property” of computational systems. However, Fukuyama dismantles this hypothesis by stating that there is no current theory or experimental evidence that explains how consciousness might arise. He emphasises that our ability to experience and respond to wide spectrum of emotions is crucial for connecting with others as well as for the development of moral character. He states that the lack of experience of pain or suffering might result in the loss of sympathy, compassion, courage, and many more. Significantly, one who has not personally encountered suffering or death may be deprived of profound emotional depth, as it is often through such

deeply subjective experiences that individuals come to understand the complexities of existence and the full range of human feeling (173). While some forms of artificial intelligence may simulate aspects of human behaviour, such as mimicking emotional responses, they lack the unified, embodied integration of consciousness features that Fukuyama sees as essential to being human. Similar to how animal consciousness falls short of the human totality, AI no matter how advanced, remain fundamentally incomplete and hollow. Thus, consciousness is a human essence par excellence, embodying what only humans can fully possess.

5. Chalmers' Hard Problem of Consciousness

Much like Hart, Damasio, and Fukuyama, Chalmers critiques the overreliance on the reductionist approach. In his article "Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness", he suggests going beyond the traditional methods of reductionism by bringing a new fundamental approach to explain consciousness (1). In addition, Chalmers distinguishes consciousness as a sense of subjective experience from other senses of response and being tied to certain behaviour (Gleiser 10). Similar to Damasio's argument, Chalmers stresses that one needs to distinguish between experience and behaviour (function). In this respect, Chalmers suggests a hybrid conceptualisation of consciousness, what he refers to as easy and hard problems consciousness. Moreover, he argues that these easy problems of consciousness include the ability to spot or receive external stimuli and react accordingly, the ability to report mental states, the deliberate control of behaviour, and the focus of attention (Chalmers 2).

In contrast to the hard problem that resists standard methods of reductionism, the easy problems can be addressed by methods of science through an explanation of neural and computational processes. As such, the essence of the hard problem of consciousness lays in

its complexity as a subjective experience beyond the mechanisms' performance of functions (Chalmers 4). Accordingly, an artificial machine could be programmed to display some of these functional phenomena related to consciousness, yet cannot have a sense of qualitative experience including the sensations of the body, the depth of emotions or subjectivity. Ultimately, AI lacks a rich inner life despite its sophisticated programming or abilities of simulation. Thus, AI cannot bridge the existential gap between function and experience.

6. Access and Phenomenal Consciousness

In his article "On a Confusion about a function of consciousness" Ned Block defines consciousness as a "mongrel" or hybrid concept, rather than a single notion where he argues that

[T]he word "consciousness" connotes a number of different concepts and denotes a number of different phenomena. We reason about "consciousness" using some premises that apply to one of the phenomena that fall under "consciousness," other premises that apply to other "consciousnesses," and we end up with trouble. ... very different concepts are treated as a single concept. I think we all have some tendency to make this mistake in the case of "consciousness". (227)

He draws attention to the conceptual ambiguity of this essence and addresses this concern by suggesting a significant framework. Block identifies two major types of consciousness that are frequently conflated in both philosophical and scientific discourse.

On the one hand, phenomenal consciousness is characterised by both representational and phenomenal content, yet it is identified as phenomenal for it possess the subjective experience which is the phenomenal quality. Block states that "the phenomenal content of a state is the totality of ... [its] experiential properties [that is] what is like to be in that state"

(232). Thus, a mental state is phenomenal conscious for it feels like something from the inside while experiencing subjectively the world. Moreover, this mental state can also represent something for it has representational content such as pain represented physically. However, what makes it “P-conscious” is the way it subjectively feels, not merely what it represents (232). On the other hand, access consciousness is characterised merely by the representational content which plays a fundamental role in reasoning. In this regard, Block argues “what makes a state A[ccess] –conscious is what a representation of its content does in a system”. This implies that, access consciousness is about the functionality of a state’s content rather than how the state feels.

Furthermore, access consciousness is considered as a functional concept that plays a functional role as suggested by Block “consciousness must have a function of somehow enabling information represented in the brain to be used in reasoning, reporting, and rationally guiding action” (228). For instance, pain in access consciousness is merely linked to the function it serves. In other words, pain represents an information which one can reason about and act accordingly. Therefore, it does not focus on what the pain feels like, rather recognize it as an input that serves a function and guides an action. In contrast, phenomenal consciousness is not a functional concept; rather it is rooted in the experiential quality of a certain state. Besides, Block stresses that phenomenal conscious states are sensations which are the experiences that feels a certain way such as empathy, pain, the taste of a pleasurable thing. In contrast, access or functional conscious states as referred to by Block are “propositional attitudes”, including beliefs and thoughts (232). These states have representational content and can be reported; in essence, they are more about information processing and reasoning than feeling. While some mental states may exhibit both aspects, the distinction lies in the fact that access consciousness is characterised by the functional role, whereas phenomenal consciousness is defined by its experiential quality.

According to Block the phenomenal consciousness is dismissed by the reductionists. They consider access or functional consciousness to be the human consciousness for they reduce it to mere functional concepts. This is manifested in their various attempts to attribute this type of consciousness to artificial machines, equating mere segments of coding to a human essence. Nevertheless, the complex and irreducible nature of the human consciousness draws the ontological line between humans and machines. Therefore, Block dismisses the ability of AI to possess this essence as a whole and suggests that “an example of A-consciousness without P-consciousness, imagine a full-fledged phenomenal zombie, say, a robot computationally identical to a person, but one whose silicon brain does not support P-consciousness. I think such cases are conceptually possible” (233). Thus, AI might be sophisticatedly programmed to display aspects of this functional consciousness, yet it remains devoid of any phenomenal consciousness reinforcing Damasio’s claim of the biological limit of silicon made AI.

Block’s illustration emphasises the limits of a purely functionalist or reductionist approach to consciousness, drawing attention to the gap that David Chalmers describes in his distinction between the easy and the hard problems of consciousness. The easy problems, much like access consciousness rooted in mechanisms such as attention, reportability, and behavioural control, all of which a machine might simulate. However, phenomenal consciousness and Chalmers’ hard problem of consciousness question why and how any of this is accompanied by experience. Block’s hybrid concept supports Chalmers’ view that subjective experience resists reduction to mere function, suggesting that consciousness is irreducible and fundamentally non achievable.

7. The Human Subjective Experience and its Qualia

The subjective experience as a core element in human consciousness continues to be a subject of debates as well as a challenge for the scientific and philosophical accounts of mind. According to David P. Hart, consciousness as a phenomenon is “entirely confined” to the subjective experience (156). He argues that one can absorb the behaviours of others, yet cannot access their subjectivity. In this respect, science can gain insights about the various brain processes that lead to certain behaviours: however, this does not guarantee access to the “singular, continuous and wholly interior experience of being *this* person” (157). It indicates that the relationship between the later and the former cannot be defined in terms of material causality. As such, despite AI’s ability to mimic and generate patterns of behaviour, it cannot replicate one’s subjective experience. Besides, Hart describes subjectivity as

[an] absolute interiority, full of numberless incommunicable qualitative sensations and velleities and intuitions that no inquisitive eye will ever glimpse, and that is impossible to disassemble, reconstruct, or model—[this subjective experience] is so radically elusive a phenomenon that there seems no hope of capturing it in any complete scientific account. (158)

This suggests that the subjective nature of this intrinsic quality cannot be addressed from an external, objective reductionist view and thereby remains unachievable by computational machines.

Besides, one of the challenges presented by the phenomenology of consciousness is the qualitative dimension of experience. It forms an obstacle for the materialistic attempts to explain this essence. In Hart’s words, qualia are the basic elements of the human conscious experience. Moreover, a quale is the complex, subjective feeling of “what is like” to experience a particular thing (172). Qualia, therefore, are the collection of all subjective experiences as well as the phenomenal aspect of consciousness that draws distinctions

between functional and phenomenal consciousness. They refer to the intrinsic quality that renders each individual's experience unique. In other words, qualia enable individuals to differentiate between various sensory experiences such as colours and sounds. They shape one's subjective reactions including one's tastes, pleasures and displeasures and thereby contribute to how humans perceive and assign qualities to the surrounding objects and events (Hart 173). In addition, qualia consist of a pure essential personal awareness which represents a distinct facet of this quality that guarantees the privacy of one's experience. Thus, Hart states that this subjective experience cannot arise without qualia for they are what shape the human's personal identity.

In philosophical terms, qualia are often described as "intrinsic properties", for they cannot be explained through reference to external factors or entities separate from the experience itself or the individual experiencing it. For instance, the physical cause of pain is an objective event which is different from one's subjective experience of it; that is the internal experience is not accessible to external observation or measurement. In addition, Hart argues that subjectivity is not essential for the body's basic stimulus-response mechanisms as they function based on some material processes (173). Furthermore, qualia might arise through the perception of object, yet varies from one perspective to another. Simply put, while the surrounding objects or stimulus might be similar, the way individuals internally experience them is different. In this respect, Hart emphasises the distinctions between different qualia for they are what explains the variety of subjective experiences. Moreover, the phenomenal nature of qualia cannot be fully explained by universal scientific generalisations or laws of physics. Hart argues that

The most obvious mystery about qualia is simply that there seems to be no conceivable causal model, of the sort credible to modern scientific method, that could seamlessly, intelligibly explain to us how the electrochemistry of

the brain, which is mechanically uniform and physically causal, could generate the unique, varied, and incommunicable experience of a particular person's inner phenomenal world. (174)

He tries to convey that there's no scientifically credible explanation of how the brain mechanical nature could produce this phenomenal conscious experience. As such, even the most sophisticated machines including AI that is able to store insights or physical facts about a particular event such as a sunset, would remain far from possessing a qualitative experience of it. In other words, AI may mimic human's reactions using stored patterns of response, yet cannot authentically replicate or generate an internal, personal experience like that of a human being. In essence, the mechanical perception and conceptual decoding of an object or event is not itself qualia. Qualia are linked to the subjective experience that spark one's private impressions; that is the way the world feels to one which remain a genuine mystery.

The concept of qualia has been subject to the debates within various fields including the philosophy of mind and natural science. Initially, the functionalists' attempts to interpret and explain qualia result in suggesting a causal or functional role of it. That is, qualia contribute to protecting one from various threats (176). Therefore, they conclude that qualia are not intrinsic, instead objectives properties. Moreover, the philosopher Daniel Dennett holds a materialist view of consciousness where he asserts that there is no such thing as qualia. By denying or "quining" the existence of qualia, he challenges the view that subjective, qualitative experiences are fundamental aspects of consciousness. Besides, Hart critiques this functionalist approach by questioning whether behavioural responses necessarily imply subjective experience:

Could not a very sophisticated automaton or even some kind of "soulless" human replicant have all the same functional relations without possessing subjective awareness [that is one of the fundamental parts of qualia and the

subjective experience as a whole] as well? Could not either be programmed to withdraw its titanium pincers or biotechnical digits from the flame or to flee wildly before the teeth of the bear, in either case uttering the appropriate howls of pain or terror, even though within each of them there existed only an absolute affective void? (176)

This indicates that AI can replicate human behaviour while being fundamentally hollow. For instance, a robot can mimic feeling pain and fear by withdrawing from fire without any genuine internal experience merely functioning on the basis of programmed reactions. As such, this highlights an ontological limit for AI which emphasises that it can never cross the threshold into true authentic human consciousness. Overall, Hart concludes that qualia are unique and ontologically different from other functional mechanisms.

Conclusion

This theoretical chapter initially explores the concepts proposed by Francis Fukuyama under the umbrella of posthuman discourse. Factor X and the human emotional gamut emphasise the significance of preserving the human dignity in the face of techno-scientific advances, arguing for the existence of an essential human trait. The exploration of these concepts reinforces the complexity of the human essence and emphasises the interconnectedness of consciousness, the gamut of emotion and human free will as features which cannot be reproduced in artificial systems.

Furthermore, drawing on the views of John Searle and Antonio Damasio, this chapter further explores how consciousness is defined and differentiated from other closely related phenomena. This distinction dismantles the views that equate AI's potential possession of consciousness to sentience, conscience or general awareness. Through the concept of the hard problem of consciousness, the chapter offers an exploration of David Chalmers's perspective which emphasises that functional attributes of the mind are mere easy problems of

consciousness. This idea is further explored through Ned Block's conceptualisation of the different types of consciousness arguing that AI consciousness is very limited to access or functional consciousness. Finally, the chapter touches upon Bentley's exploration of the subjective experience and the concept of qualia as an ontological limit. In addition, it further supports the claim that even if AI possesses a proto-type of consciousness, it is not human. Instead, it relies mostly on machine learning capacities, rather than an embodied experience that informs and shaped human consciousness. As such, this chapter lays the groundwork for further investigation of these concepts in reading Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Klara and the Sun*.

Chapter Two: AI and The Irreplaceable Essence of Human Consciousness in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*

Introduction

The question of what makes consciousness uniquely human lies at the core ongoing debates of the posthuman discourse. This chapter aims to examine Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* to divulge the limitations of Klara in replicating the essence of human consciousness through the lens of the proposed theoretical concepts. The first sections of the chapter highlight how the novel echoes Fukuyama's defence of human dignity and emphasises the irreducibility of consciousness in the face of artificial simulation. Another section of this analysis applies Hart's phenomenological notions to reveal Klara's inability to possess a human subjective experience despite how it is sophisticatedly designed to be an imitation of life. Ultimately, the chapter draws on Chalmers and Block's hybrid conceptualisation of consciousness to argue that Klara possesses a proto-consciousness that is rooted in her machine learning capacities and programmed functional processes. As such, this comprehensive analysis chiefly aims to trace the ontological lines between humans and artificial machines, emphasising Klara's inability to possess a human subjective experience that shapes and defines the human consciousness.

Beyond theory, AI thrives in ancient and contemporary literature. The representations of this imitation of life vary as reflected in the literary works of E. M. Forster, John Sladek, Kazuo Ishiguro, and many others. In his book *Gods and Robots: Myths, Machines, and Ancient Dreams of Technology*, Adrienne Mayor asserts that according to historians the notion of AI is rooted in the medieval age, where craftsman developed self-moving machines often referred to as automata. However, Mayor traces it back to the ancient Greek myths such as the fire-bringer Prometheus and Pandora (1). These myths about artificial life are

considered “ancient science fiction” that manifests the imagination of Artificial begins long before the emergence of technology. Moreover, the mythical and ancient representations of AI though not in the contemporary sense, yet it is similar in shaping how societies view AI back at the antiquity. These imagined robots “are made, not born” and are described as supernatural and legendary (2). Since Antiquity, “biological birth and manufactured origin” draws the ontological lines between the human and artificial beings (2). In this regard, this binary has persisted through time, yet it is increasingly destabilized in this posthumanist era of deep symbiosis between humans and technology.

Much like AI fiction of the 50s and 60s which “fram[ed] technology as a false friend” as a reflection of the society’s’ suppressed war anxieties, the recent contemporary representations of AI in literature reflect the change in the posthuman condition and the rapid technological advances (Hauskeller et al. 4). Hence, Science fiction narratives serve to measure and speculate the forms of change that technology and AI in particular would bring. Besides, some fictional works that explores posthuman themes incorporate elements of utopian or dystopian sub-genres of speculative fiction. From John Sladek’s Tik-Tok to I robot’s Sonny to Kazuo Ishiguro’s Klara, the representation of sentient automatons in literature and film varied from villains to heroes, to companions. In these narratives, artificial machines are depicted with an emphasis on their humanlike capacities shaping the reader’s vision by rooting it in fantasies of the future. These depictions of life imitation not only mark a fascination with the proliferation of technology, they further draw attention to the philosophical questions and concerns raised by such advances.

1. Defamiliarization under Artificial Eyes

Contemporary Science fiction works challenge the traditional conception that they present mere futuristic speculations. These narratives offer a new lens, a defamiliarization to

our present. Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* reimagines contemporary anxieties about techno-scientific advances and its implication on human dignity by projecting them onto an altered, speculative future. Much like *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro uses a highly observant artificial machine to explore what it means to be a human in a posthuman mediated world marked by class division, genetic engineering, and overreliance on technology. This dystopian novel is narrated by Klara, an artificial friend who is among various models of solar-powered AI companions that serve the children of the rich lifted society. Early scenes of the novel reveals that Klara is purchased to offer care and companionship to a child named Josie who suffers from an unspecified illness as a by-product of her genetic enhancement or what Ishiguro referred to as "lifting" (Ishiguro 51). As the story unfolds, the events span the period Klara spends serving the child. Klara's time in Josie's household is shaped by two main functions: the AF duty of aiding the child's recovery as well as supporting the fulfilment of Josie and Rick's future together.

Klara beyond her designed role as an AF is expected to be part of a transhumanist project planned by Josie's mother and a scientist called Mr Capaldi. They plan to create an artificial replica of Josie "to continue her" after her death drawn by the despair of the mother Chrissie (Ishiguro 233). This shift in the plot's events is hinted at in the opening scenes and further developed to foreground a significant concern that threatens human dignity. Throughout the novel, Ishiguro critiques this society that commodifies emotional care and seeks to bypass grief, loss, and mortality via artificial means. In contrast to conventional portrayals of artificial beings, he does not present Klara as a threat, rather as a reflection to what cannot be replicated. Accordingly, *Klara and the Sun* uses this artificial being to examine whether mere simulation of emotion and care is sufficient to constitute a human being or there is an irreplaceable essence that is beyond AI's reach.

Besides, the decentring of the human is manifested in Science Fiction works where flesh protagonists are no longer at the centre of the story. They “have been slowly demoted from the leading role of creators and masters of technology to that of technological co-dependents and co-agents. This recasting is ongoing. Indeed, the role of slave-to-technology ... is intimated as waiting just over the horizon” (Hauskeller et al. 5). Klara represents this break from the traditional patterns of characters where this robot is a narrator that serves as a tool of defamiliarization. In his article “Art as Technique”, Victor Shklovsky describes the concept of defamiliarization as the need to render something that has become familiar into something revitalized. Simply put, the ordinary and familiar objects, people, and events are estranged to appear different. Hence, *Klara and the sun* “removes objects from the automatism of perception” through Ishiguro’s unique narrative (Shklovsky 21).

Moreover, Klara’s description of her surroundings “cast the familiar in a new light” and offers a fresh perspective (Humann 17). It is reflected in the way Klara perceives the world through a non-human (robotic) perspective. This unfamiliar descriptive approach is evident in the following lines,

But once I’d establish the importance of the Island, things became much easier. The island was in the centre of the kitchen, and perhaps to emphasize its fixed-down nature, had pale brown tiles that mimicked the bricks of a building. Sunk into its middle was a shiny basin, and there were three highstools along the longest edge where residents could sit. (Ishiguro 55)

In the previous section, the familiar details of a kitchen are perceived differently by Klara. The term “island” is a common colloquialism for a kitchen counter. Klara, unfamiliar with this idiom, interprets it literally. This literal sense in addition to her meticulous attention to the counter’s placement and use changes the reader’s perception of an ordinary household

feature, transforming it into an object of architectural and symbolic importance. This estranged, yet curious description partly guarantees a unique reading experience and partly emphasises Klara's mechanical, observant lens.

Ishiguro uses AI's unfamiliar gaze to reframe other objects. Klara refers to electronic devices including smartphones as "oblongs," describing them by their shape rather than using their conventional names as a result of her lack of experience and limited understanding. Besides, this pattern continues in her perception of people, whom she identifies through physical traits rather than names. For instance, she describes the woman at the interaction meeting as "a large woman whose shape resembled the food-blending machine" (77) and another girl as "the girl who was thin and had unusually long arms," later calling her simply "the long-armed girl" (81-82). These descriptions highlight Klara's mechanical way of interpreting the world, distancing the reader from familiar human perception and emphasizing her outsider perspective.

According to Shklovsky the familiar is made unfamiliar by increasing the length of perception and thus making the reader reason about it (20). With regard to this notion, Ishiguro emphasises Klara's visual perception skills to present a new perspective for readers beyond what is automatic and usual. He uses Klara's fragmented vision to describe a scene of being in crowd of strangers during the city trip,

[T]he room's space had become divided into twenty-four boxes arranged in two tiers ... Because of this partitioning, it was hard to gain an overall view of what was before me, but I gradually made sense of things. Josie was near the middle of the room talking with three guest girls. Their heads were almost touching, and because of how they were standing, the upper parts of their faces, including all their eyes, had been placed in a box on the higher tier,

while all their mouths and chins had been squeezed into a lower box. ... Over at the rear wall, three boys were seated on the modular sofa ... the outstretched leg of the boy nearest the window extended not only across the neighboring box, but right into the one beyond. (80-81)

From Klara's perspective this scene appears different as if it is something new. She initially fails to distinguish what is before her however she gradually recognises her surroundings by reconstructing them from disjoined visual segments. This suggests a robotic world that is not always perceived through coherence but through divided boxes or fragments. This fragmented vision deconstructs or alters the reader's habitual perception of objects and human characters in the interaction meeting. Moreover, Klara's delayed recognition postpones meaning and demands greater attention. In other terms, objects and people are not immediately identifiable; rather they emerge gradually, shaped by the increased length of perception. Simply put, Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* uses Klara's narration as a defamiliarization tool to reframe the familiar and "create a special perception of the object" (Shklovsky 25).

2. Artificial Simulation vs. Human Dignity

Klara and the Sun is a defence of human dignity, not mere representation of how that dignity can be offended (Lombardo 112). Unlike traditional Science Fiction horror novels that present AI as a rebel that evokes fear and danger, this novel explores the fantasy of human transcendence via artificial means. The AF B2 models, such as Klara, devote themselves to their jobs as companions deprived of agency or singularity to challenge humans, yet Klara symbolises the transhumanist ambitions that threaten human dignity. Similar to Fukuyama, Ishiguro's narrative foregrounds the offence to human dignity through the depiction of the replication plan organized by the mother Chrissie and the scientist Mr

Henry Capaldi. The mother is driven by her fear of losing her second daughter Josie; this is revealed in the trip to Mr Capaldi's portrait studio where she desperately told Klara

[I]t is me [Josie's mother] asking. Not Capaldi and not Paul [Josie's father]. In the end it's me. That's who it comes down to. I'm asking you to make this [replicating her daughter] work. Because if it happens [death of her daughter], if it comes again, there's going to be no other way for me to survive. I came through it with Sal, but I can't do it again. So I'm asking you, Klara. Do your best for me. They told me in the store you were remarkable. I've watched you enough to know that's maybe true. If you set your mind to it, then who knows? It might work. (Ishiguro 236)

Before this explicit demand there was a journey of implicit requests to observe and mimic Josie in various attempts such as the walk test in the store, and particularly the conversation during the Morgan's falls trip where the mother asked Klara "to be Josie. Just for a little while" and insisted that she fully embodies Josie's character (117).

Notably, the mother's despair is exploited by a scientist who is eager to divulge the mysteries of these AF models which appear to be part of a confidential project. Mr Capaldi's wish to be ahead of the AF research by replicating Josie through Klara is parallel to the transhumanist aspiration of fusing the human consciousness with AI sentience. This scientist holds a reductionist view where he reduces the essence of humanity to Klara's computational processes. Drawing on what he calls "rationality", he believed that Klara was able to "access ... quite comprehensively all of Josie's impulses and desires" and that "[t]here's nothing there. Nothing inside Josie that's beyond the Klaras of this world to continue" (Ishiguro 233). Much like contemporary AI researchers, Mr Capaldi dismisses the existence of an unreachable essence which cannot be transferred or replicated, such a belief which he

describes as “an old feeling” (233). He is convinced that the plan would succeed for he thinks that Klara would be identical to Josie; not an “imitation”, rather “a continuation of [the child]” (230). In essence, Capaldi’s attempt to persuade the mother reflects how the transhumanist discourse attempts to convince humanity to surpass ontological limitations by unleashing conscious machines where the consequences would remain positive.

Besides, Ishiguro’s work critiques such scientific aspirations by highlighting the limitations of AI in replicating the human essence as a defence of human dignity. Lombardo states that Klara despite being admirable and naïve, “she’s not a human” challenging Capaldi’s claim that she’s identical to Josie (114). He argues that

We might say that it’s derivative of human dignity, that Klara’s dignity is that of a creation bearing the imprint of its creator, the imago of her human designers. But that just kicks the can down the road. What is the distinction between Klara and her human creators? Is she just a diminished form of them, with a lower number or intensity of human-like qualities? No, Josie has something that demands stronger respect, something Klara does not have. (Lombardo 115)

Lombardo’s assertion emphasises Fukuyama’s argument that human dignity is rooted in a unique feature that artificial machines cannot possess or replicate. That is, both argue for the existence of a human essence that distinguishes humans from non-humans. Lombardo claims that human dignity lies in free will and emotional depth which are core components of consciousness (115). Similarly, Fukuyama’s Factor X is a defence against purely functional and appearance-based definition of humans. It consists of the interconnectedness of consciousness, free will and the gamut of emotions as fundamental aspects of dignity. Overall, the distinctions they draw separate Klara from other human characters such as Rick.

In other words, Klara being an “imago of life” by imitating human behaviour does not guarantee her human dignity for it stems from within; an essence that is not achievable (Lombardo 115).

Thus, Klara’s ability to narrate and decentre the human being from its privileged role as a narrator does not imply the possession of Factor X for it is not reduced to the human ability of producing language as symbolic species. Drawing of Fukuyama’s argument, Klara cannot possess Factor X due to her limitations in replicating its full range of components, particularly consciousness and its fundamental aspects.

3. Human’s Free Will vs. Klara’s Programmed Decision Making

Since the dawn of the mechanistic age, a considerable number of Science Fiction narratives imagined artificial intelligence as entities denied free will. Similarly in contemporary works, AI is depicted as an imitation of life, bound by human-made rules, programmed to obey, perform, or serve rather than choose or feel. In Fukuyama’s words, human beings are the only species that possess the ability to challenge the rules of causality and go beyond natural determinism (151). Accordingly, free will as a core component of Factor X and human consciousness draws the ontological lines between human and non-human beings. Ishiguro’s Klara is deprived of free will much like any artificial machine that is bound by its programming and limited machine learning. She is driven by her child care giver duty which confines her to artificial devotion rather than human free will.

The novel explores this binary by presenting human characters as capable of autonomous decision-making which comes in sharp contrast with Klara. As an AF, Klara is involved in an unchosen relationship. She simulates loving Josie driven by her programmed nature. Lombardo argues that Klara’s actions and sacrifices to save Josie are part of her AF job “serving an unchosen relationship” (115). In the early scenes of the novel, Klara was

devoted to Josie fulfilling a promise. In her manager's words, she made an arrangement to be purchased by the child and get a new home. All the signs or actions presumably driven by free will or desire are, in essence, a commitment to her promise as part of AF's job (Ishiguro 36-37). That is, if Josie had not been the first to show interest and make a promise, it would have been another child.

Lombardo asserts that “humans are able to maintain their dignity because they can and will never cease being able to love. It [love] is an expression of tremendous freedom” (116). In this regard, Klara and Rick's relationship is not imposed by programming, rather by choice and emotional persistence. Rick stresses that “Josie and I grew up together and we're part of each other. And we've got our plan. So of course our love's genuine and forever. And it won't make any difference to who's been lifted and who hasn't” (Ishiguro 298). In other words, they chose to commit to their love despite various challenges including the “unlifted” condition of Rick. It reflects the kind of love that cannot be reduced to programmed decisions, emphasising Lombardo's assertion that the choice of love is a manifestation of freedom that reinforces human dignity, something Klara can observe yet never genuinely experience.

Furthermore, Rick represents the genuine essence of humanity as an “unlifted” child who is intelligent and gifted. He embodies the human consciousness in a pure way and comes in sharp contrast with Klara and other lifted characters. Rick's actions reflect independent choice where the mother emphasised that “it has to be [Rick's] choice” to attend the interaction meeting (Ishiguro 74). Despite not liking to socialise with the lifted society, he accepted to attend the interaction meeting for he loved Josie and wished to “save [her]... from this lot [lifted children]” for “[i]f Josie hangs out with them much more, she soon won't be Josie at all” (93-94). Meaning that, such interaction might contribute to her character in a negative way and thereby ruin their future plan. In contrast, Klara is restricted by her

programming to obey Josie's commands and preferences and acts accordingly as a good AF. That is to say, her decisions are not guided by independent choice, rather by Josie's wishes. For instance, when Klara says "[s]o Josie would wish me to be present" (74), she justified her presence based on what she believed Josie would want, rather than on her own desire. Similarly, her hesitation at the door "Neither of them [Rick and Josie] looked at me, so I was unsure if I should follow" (77) shows that in the absence of clear guidance, she becomes passive and uncertain how to proceed. This is further illustrated when she says, "I wasn't sure how Josie wished me to respond so I waited for her to speak. But she remained silent" (87), which emphasised how her ability to interact depends on Josie's direction.

In addition to her programming, Klara relies on her limited machine learning capacities to observe behavioural patterns, infer, and form perceptions. It allows her sometimes to act on her own accord without consulting human characters, which is something she was not able to do at the beginning of the novel. This is reflected in some instances, such as when she visits Mr Mc Bain's barn (160) or her attempts to destroy the Cootings machine using her P-E-G Nine solution to save Josie and help her recover, as she claims (192). Significantly, these particular actions might appear as autonomous, presumably suggesting her possession of free will; however, they remain mere simulated autonomy. That is to say, these actions are a result of how Klara's robotic machine learning allows her to gradually adapt to display better simulations that serve the child. Accordingly, the limitations of such acts are revealed by highlighting how Klara, even in her attempt to act on her own accord, is restricted to serving the child's wellbeing. In such attempts, drawing on her limited stored knowledge, she misinterprets the reason behind Josie's illness and makes misleading inferences, such as that of destroying the Cootings machine, which she assumes would save the child. As such, her restraint reveals the ontological limits of an AF, whose behavioural

responses are filtered through the priorities of the human she serves reflecting her artificial devotion.

In opposition to Klara's actions, Chrissie Josie's mother demonstrates autonomy in her decisions and choices, such as purchasing Klara to be a replica or lifting Josie. Initially, situating Chrissie's actions in the capitalist context suggests that she is subject to peer pressure as part of a wealthy, higher-ranked class, in which all individuals conform to the societal rules and conventions. Accordingly, this particular view or interpretation would deny the mother's possession of a genuine autonomy by linking it to societal pressures and the need to escape her grief. However, Chrissie acts with conviction, challenging the rules of causality by risking to lift her daughter and create a replica once again, despite the ultimate ends that these rules suggest. This is illustrated by Josie's words, "My mom ... got courage. It goes wrong with Sal, but even after that she finds the courage to go ahead with me all over again" (Ishiguro 146). In other words, her autonomy is evident when her actions are viewed as a refusal to conform to the rules of causality, which emphasise that the precedent incidents of her "lifted" daughter's death and the replication's failure would repeat themselves as ultimate effects of the same causes. Drawn by her despair, she makes controversial decisions which she believes are in Josie's best interest despite their ethical ambiguity or risk, thinking that these actions would have positive and different ends.

This distinction extends to Rick and his mother, Miss Helen, whose decision not to "lift" Rick further emphasises the human capacity for free will. Their choice was set against a culture where genetic enhancement has become the norm. It proved that one can go beyond societal pressures, reflecting one's uniqueness and subjectivity. This is evident in Rick's stance, he supports his mother's will understanding and embracing the realities and consequences of genetic enhancement. Therefore, when Josie blamed his mother for being selfish and depriving him of a decent life, he expressed his anger writing in the bubble game

sheet, “inside it [the bubble for picture Josie’s thoughts] Rick had written: ‘I wish I could go out and walk and run and skateboard and swim in lacks. But I can’t because my mother has courage [to lift her and risk her life]. So instead I get to stay in bed and be sick. I am glad about this. I really am.’” (Ishiguro 146). The quote emphasises Rick’s critique of the mother’s decision of lifting by highlighting its severe consequences. In so doing it appears that he believes that Josie is ignorant to these facts. Moreover, Josie’s father is another character that possess free will. He willingly refuses to get back to corporate life and chose to live on the fringes of civilised society. He confidently states

I think the substitutions were the best thing that happened to me. ... [They] made me take a completely fresh look at the world. ... And where I live now, there are many fine people who feel exactly the same way. They all came down the same road, some with careers far grander than mine. And we all of us agree, and I honestly believe we’re not kidding ourselves. We’re better off than we were back then... I’m not saying it’s always easy. We all have our bad days. But compared to what we had before, we feel like...we’re really living for the first time (212-213)

The quote highlights that instead of resisting or mourning the substitution of human labour by AI, Paul embraces it as a liberating experience; an opportunity to redefine his relationship to the world on his own terms. His decision to live on the periphery, surrounded by like-minded individuals, reflects a conscious rejection of reintegration into a society shaped by peer pressures and conventions. Moreover, the specific choice of words in, “a completely fresh look,” and in “we’re really living for the first time”, reveals not resignation, but a conviction in the value of detachment, suggesting that autonomy here is not defined by participation in dominant structures, rather by the freedom to choose an alternative existence beyond such restrictions.

Overall, Ishiguro, through these distinctions, illustrates what Fukuyama asserts in the theory of Factor X: human dignity arises from Free will as an essential human trait which excludes robots or artificial beings from the equation, as their actions are limited to programmed responses and their machines learning capacities. In other words, *Klara and the Sun* reveals that the genuine uniqueness and worth of an individual reside in their ability to consciously choose freely and have an autonomous sense of life beyond the bounds of determinism and artificial programming.

4. Klara's Lack of Subjective Experience

The previous chapter has established how different philosophers defined the conundrum of consciousness as subjective mental states that consist of human thought, feelings, and sensations which are experienced subjectively. These definitions suggest that the subjective experience is the basis of human consciousness. In *Klara and the sun*, Ishiguro never sets the scene for his readers; that is, they are supposed to rely on Klara's observation and "gather all they can" (Lombardo 111). This implies that Klara's narration provides readers with pieces of puzzle that when collected divulge her limitations including her lack of a qualitative, subjective experience and limited understanding of the world.

In the novel, Klara uses the terms consciousness and general awareness interchangeably in "I pressed on, conscious of the contrasting atmosphere ... I'd also been aware of a voice calling to me, and now I spotted the object" (Ishiguro 175-176). However, Damasio states in *Great Minds don't Think Alike*; consciousness is distinct from general awareness of things, ideas or issues. Klara is depicted as being conscious of her surroundings, such as when she "became very conscious of the smooth woven fabric of [the mother's] dark sweater" as she tried to protect her. This general awareness requires possessing relevant knowledge, reasoning about it or merely retrieving it (Ishiguro 329).

However, this does not guarantee her the felt, mental, subjective experience of being protected or embraced by the mother. Moreover, *Klara and the sun* illustrates Damasio's argument that sentience does not equate to the conscious subjective mental states. In this regard, Klara observes human behaviour, responds with apparent sensitivity, and even expresses concern when Josie is unwell. Yet these gestures remain devoid of a conscious subjective experience. When Klara claims, "I believe I have many feelings. The more I observe, the more feelings become available to me," she equates the felt subjective experience with the accumulation of data rather than internal reflection (Ishiguro 111). In essence, Klara's ability to detect a stimulus then generate patterns of response suggests sentience rather than consciousness.

This mechanistic processing reveals the core distinction that thinkers like Chalmers insist on: sentience may allow an entity to store inputs and respond and behave accordingly, yet conscious experience requires the qualitative feeling of those states; the what it is like to be in them (Gleiser 16). Klara lacks this internal access where her reactions arise within the boundaries of her programming, without any phenomenological depth. As such, she cannot possess what Hart calls the "qualitative or dimension" of conscious experience; the intrinsic qualities that sparks the uniqueness of human experience and grants meaning to emotions (172). Klara's sentience may be sufficient for functional interaction, which does not guarantee her a human-like consciousness, rather suggests a functional form of consciousness.

By virtue of her sophisticated observational skills, Klara could observe, absorb and thereby mimic Josie's behaviour with a remarkable precision. However, Klara could not access the child's subjectivity. This is illustrated in her attempt to embody Josie's character during the Morgan's Falls trip. Klara's simulation could not convince the mother who answered angrily, "[w]hat is this? Who's this talking? ... That's enough. Enough!" (Ishiguro

119). Accordingly, she failed to be identical to Josie for she lacks the child's inner subjective experience of being that person (Hart 157). Moreover, Hart emphasises the irreducibility of the subjective experience and qualia to the reporting of material facts arguing

A computer equipped with the right instrumentation [such as Klara's sophisticated abilities] could record all the physical facts about, say, a sunset quite exhaustively as far as scientific method is concerned, despite its incapacity for any qualitative experience of the "what it is like" of that sunset. At the same time, my personal experience of what that sunset "is like" is not an additional objective fact about the event itself, but only a subjective fact about me. (174)

In the passage, Hart distinguishes between objective physical data and subjective qualitative experience. This assertion is relevant to Klara's limitations as an artificial being. That is, Klara possesses advanced observational and analytical abilities, which allow her to note and describe detailed information about her environment, human behaviour, and even symbolic elements or objects such the Sun. However, she remains incapable of experiencing what these things feel like. Hart's assertion that "a computer could record all the physical facts despite its incapacity for any qualitative experience" directly applies to Klara's lack of a subjective conscious experience and qualia.

As illustrated in the novel, Klara can describe the sunset in precise, even poetic, way saying "The Sun had become just a short line glowing through the grass. ... The Sun was now barely a pink mark in the sky" (Ishiguro 63-64) or associate it with a divine healing power for solar power AF's and humans. Nevertheless, she is deprived of an internal, emotional experience of that sunset, for it is beyond mere functional abilities of reporting material facts. Her reverence for the Sun may seem spiritual or intuitive, yet it remains rooted

in her programming as a solar-powered machine as well as in learned patterns such as her observation of Bagger man's recovery not in conscious feeling. Therefore, Klara's perspective, according to Hart, lacks the "what it is like" which are the qualia that define the uniqueness of human experience. As such, qualia are not reducible to objective data, in Hart words, "they cannot be directly correlated with, let alone identified with, the physical realities they presumably reflect, because those realities as objectively measured lack any of the purely relative features of qualitative experience" (174).

When discussing Ishiguro's depiction of this barrier to human consciousness, it is of great importance to refer to Klara's conversation with Josie's father. During their journey to the city, He asked her whether she was considering the difficulty of accessing and replicating the human heart "[not] simply the organ [rather] in the poetic sense"; that is the depth of the emotional, subjective experience which makes each individual unique. Klara answered

'It might indeed be the hardest part of Josie to learn. It might be like a house with many rooms. Even so, a devoted AF, given time, could walk through each of those rooms, studying them carefully in turn, until they became like her own home.' ... he said ... '[r]ooms within rooms within rooms. Isn't that how it might be, trying to learn Josie's heart? No matter how long you wandered through those rooms, wouldn't there always be others you'd not yet entered?' I considered this for a moment, then said: 'Of course, a human heart is bound to be complex. But it must be limited. (243).

In the quote, Ishiguro is using the father's scepticism to draw attention to the inaccessibility of the subjective felt experience. The father's insistence that there would always be "others [rooms] you'd not yet entered" emphasise this notion. That is to say, Josie's subjectivity

would remain far from the reach of Klara's objective 3rd point of view similar to that of the reductionism.

Besides, Klara's approach to subjectivity reflects Chalmers critique of the traditional scientific methods that could not explain the gap between physical processes and this felt experience. As such, Klara's mechanistic view would not bridge the gap. Moreover, Klara's response, "it must be limited," reveals her limited mechanistic understanding where the human heart, however complex, can be grasped through her observational study. This view is reinforced by her earlier claim: "I think if I continue observing Josie carefully, it will be within my abilities [to continue her]," in which she equates inner emotional depth with an external observable pattern of behaviours (Ishiguro 243). In essence, the father's words challenge this notion, exposing the limitations of Klara's programmed logic and reinforce the idea that this essence cannot be achieved through data accumulation or functional mimicry.

5. Functional Consciousness and Artificial Emotions in Ishiguro's AF

The analysis of Klara's limitations in replicating the human consciousness can be further expanded through Chalmers and Block's framework that view consciousness as a hybrid concept. As explained in the theoretical chapter, the lack of the experiential aspect of a mental state results in the absence of phenomenal consciousness which therefore draws the ontological line between artificial machines and human beings. By contrast, the existence of mere functional processing suggests what Block refers to as access or functional consciousness. He states that AI cannot possess consciousness as a whole for its silicon structure lacks the subjective experience and its qualitative dimension. This suggests that Klara has a functional type of consciousness that exists independently only in zombies and robots. As a sentient machine, her proto-consciousness is rooted in what Chalmers describes as easy problems of consciousness, representational content and "must have a function" such

as allowing the stored data in her programming to be used in reasoning, reporting, and guiding action (Block 228).

In contrast to human consciousness, Klara's consciousness is linked to her programming and observational machine learning which allows her to recognize patterns of behaviour and make inferences. In most of her interactions with the characters of the novel, she displays some aspects of her functional consciousness including her ability to perceive (observe and absorb), retain, interpret, and generate patterns of response, as these are essential skills to her job as an AF. This implies a mechanistic robotic approach to understanding and replicating emotions beyond a genuine subjective experience. Moreover, it reflects Fukuyama's claim that a machine such as Klara can master a set of functional skills to accomplish a task, yet cannot grasp a full understanding or feeling of it (167). That is to say, despite Klara's ability to display some simulated emotions, she is deprived of a full human gamut of emotions and a proper understanding of the complexity of feelings or of the world's realities.

In the novel, Klara is exposed to an array of complex emotions which she struggles to understand. This limitation is explicit when she says "The more I watched, the more ... I became puzzled then increasingly fascinated by the more mysterious emotions passers-by would display in front of us" (Ishiguro 21). In this respect, Klara cannot feel anger or understand the reason for it or the way it arises. Her sophisticated observational abilities guarantee her a basic understanding of emotions including the ability to detect them through verbal and non-verbal cues such as when "Josie fell silent, then her face, full of sadness" (107). Accordingly, she generates patterns of response, chiefly to serve the child which works as driving force for her keen learning, as demonstrated in: "I realize that if I didn't understand at least some of these mysterious things [emotions], then when the time came, I'd never be able to help my child as well as I should. So, I began to seek out on the sidewalks

[everywhere she can observe] the sort of behaviour about which I need to learn” (21). Klara’s curiosity stems from such limitations. Although she cannot experience anger herself, she makes various attempts to intellectually simulate it. This is made evident in her reflection:

I tried to feel in my own mind the anger the drivers had experienced. I tried to imagine me and Rosa [another AF] getting so angry with each other we would start to fight like that, actually trying to damage each other’s bodies. The idea seemed ridiculous, but I’d seen the taxi drivers, so I tried to find the beginnings of such a feeling in my mind. It was useless, though, and I’d always end up laughing at my own thoughts. (22)

This passage, highlights how Klara is not able to feel emotions organically, rather she relies on her digital mind and silicon structure to feel or act as if she feels something. It suggests that all her behaviours and responses are programmed and stresses how AI struggles in its attempts to imitate the human in general and consciousness in particular. Accordingly, Klara acknowledges her emotional limitations emphasising the gap between the subjective felt experience and artificial simulation. This is further reflected later in the novel; despite her claim that intensive observation would make her feelings arise, she failed to feel angry “I knew I should feel anger [like any human would feel], but coming on it after the surprise about the store, I felt something almost like kindness towards the terrible machine” (214).

In addition to anger, Klara wonders about other complex feelings which she cannot spot or interpret in human behaviour. These include the ones that her manager describes as a mixture of pain and happiness. She reflects on it questioning whether she can one day feel it: “if Rosa and I, a long time from now, long after we’d found our different homes, saw each other again by chance on a street. Would I then feel, as Manager had put it, pain alongside happiness” (26). An answer to such question is revealed by the end of the novel

where Klara meets the manager after years in a junk-yard of robots. Unsurprisingly, she does not feel this mixture, rather merely reports that “happiness filed ... [her] mind” (335).

Moreover, Klara’s limited understanding is further emphasised when she struggles to interpret the emotional complexity of the characters. Observing Josie and her mother’s unexpected shift in behaviour after the Morgan’s Falls journey, Klara is puzzled by the change that does not fit her stored patterns or expectations of cause and effect. She reports that despite her efforts to fulfil the commands of Josie and her mother, she is confronted with emotional reactions that she cannot decode. Ultimately, she concludes that “humans, in their wish to escape loneliness, made maneuvers that were very complex and hard to fathom” (127). This quote divulges how her understanding is shaped by her programming as part of her functional consciousness. As such, loneliness is her default explanation of emotional complexity, as it is the main and one of the few human conditions that she is equipped to recognize. Ishiguro thus emphasises Klara’s inability to fully understand human subjective emotional states, emphasising the ontological gap between artificial functionality and genuine human experience.

Klara as an Imago of human (in Lombardo’s words), is able to generate artificial forms of emotions such as robotic empathy, love and “other kinds of emotions” where she stresses that “I did eventually find some versions in myself, even if they were perhaps like the shadows made across the floor by the ceiling lamps after the grid went down” (Ishiguro 23). Klara here describes her artificial feelings as shadows of a lamp suggesting that they do not resemble those experienced by humans for they are not genuine emotions, rather mere simulation. This mechanistic approach to emotions is closely linked to her “intellectual cognition” (Askew 81). It is illustrated in the way Klara reacted to Josie’s insult during the interaction meeting. She did not feel or express sadness or anger; instead, she states:

‘[I]t has ... been very interesting. ... It’s important for me to observe Josie in many situations. And it was very interesting, for instance, to observe the different shapes the children made as they went from a group to group.’ ... the interaction meeting had been a source of valuable new observations ... these were helpful lessons for me. (Ishiguro 92-96)

This quote demonstrates how Klara treated the incident as a source of observation and learning. It emphasises her interest in gathering various data about human behaviour which would serve her AF job. Moreover, Klara’s learning is driven by a detached, analytical mindset, which reinforces her artificial nature and highlights the limitations of her proto-consciousness when it comes to authentic emotional experience.

In contrast to Klara, Rick embodies the essence of human consciousness, possessing a full emotional gamut. He is depicted experiencing, subjectively and deeply a range of complex emotions including love, anger, emotional strain, happiness, loss, pain, sadness and many others. This reflects Fukuyama’s argument that humans are characterised by a full gamut of emotions which is essential for connecting with others and developing a moral character. Furthermore, Rick is able to experience alienation. During the interaction meeting, he stays apart, not simply physically rather, psychologically and socially. He stresses that “I don’t belong here. This meeting is for the lifted kids” (Ishiguro 93). Additionally, compared to Klara whose abilities cannot extend to experiencing anger, Rick can genuinely feel as well as express anger and is described “watching her [Josie] with large eyes that were both angry and fearful. ... His gaze came to me for a second, still filled with fear and anger, then he strode out of the room without word” (147).

Moreover, Rick is more grounded in the realities of such hyper digital world and the implications it brought, unlike Klara or other characters that are emotionally detached and

escaping including the mother who desperately tries to surpass grief by planning to replicate her daughter. On the one hand, as previously stated, Rick realises the amplifications of genetic enhancement on Josie and critiques such decision that deprived her from enjoying her childhood. He is aware of the social injustice and discrimination experienced by “the unlifted”. He fears the loss of the Josie he knows to a different version, to someone who conforms to societal elitist expectations at the expense of herself and as such wants to save her from the lifted “lot” (Ishiguro 93). On the other hand, Klara is not aware of so many realities including the social injustice, class struggle, the ethical dilemma posed by the replication project as well as the real cause of Josie’s illness. That is mainly for her functional consciousness and programming limits her understanding and grounds it in fulfilling the needs of the child. This is illustrated in her failure to recognise the meanness of the lifted children or understand the change in Josie’s behaviour. Her programming restricts her perspective, it is evident in

‘I can see Rick is afraid Josie might become like the others. But even though she behaved strangely just now, I believe Josie is kind underneath. And those other children. They have rough ways, but they may not be so unkind. They fear loneliness and that’s why they behave as they do. Perhaps Josie too.’... Her remark [Josie's insult of wishing to have B3 AF instead of Klara] had most likely been intended as a humorous one, to keep back the threat of disharmony during the meeting. (93-95)

The quote divulges how Klara’s perspective attributes kindness to Josie's behaviour, despite the clear change in her behaviour. It reflects her programmed nature that compels her to form and preserve a positive image of the child. In addition, Klara’s interpretation of Josie’s insult as a humorous remark further reveals her inclination to rationalize negative behaviour rather than confront it as it is the way Rick does. Similarly, her attribution of the other children’s

“bitterness” to a fear of loneliness shows how she lacks an understanding that goes beyond her stored inputs or manager’s instructions (Ishiguro 12). Therefore, instead of understanding or acknowledging the realities, Klara’s perception is filtered through her programmed duty to protect Josie and maintain social harmony.

Moreover, Fukuyama claims that AI’s lack of a subjective felt experience affects its development of a moral character (173). Accordingly, Klara’s morality is defined in relation to the child’s well-being. This is reflected in her attempt to destroy the Cootings machine, committing an act of vandalism which is, in Josie’s father’s words, counted as “criminal damage” (Ishiguro 248). It is further demonstrated when Klara states “I could have listened to her words [the mother’s discussion with someone] by putting my head to the wall, and I even considered doing so ... But I thought this might make Josie even more anxious” (203), which emphasises that her decision not to eavesdrop is not driven by her conscience, rather guided by her AF programming. Furthermore, this lack contributes to her failure to understand loss, death and the absence of vulnerability. When she states, “I believed it was my duty to save Josie, to make her well. But perhaps this is a better way” (237), in reference to the plan of making her a replica of Josie, she reveals a lack of understanding human mortality. For Klara, replacing Josie with an artificial copy appears as a continuation of her AF duty. However, this belief reflects her inability to grasp the existential finality of death and the implications of attempting to substitute a unique human being. Rather than considering the replication plan as a violation of Josie’s dignity or a betrayal of her so-called friendship, Klara interprets it as a beneficial solution. This sheds light on how her programmed devotion and functional consciousness fall short of the deeper human emotions tied to grief and loss.

Besides, Fukuyama argues that the lack of the subjective experience of pain or suffering (vulnerability), result in the loss of sympathy and a profound emotional depth (173). As such, Klara displays patterns of response in a form of artificial or robotic emotions that

lacks a subjective felt experience. When Klara claims, “I believe I have many feelings. The more I observe, the more feelings become available to me,” (Ishiguro 111), she links emotional growth to her capacity for observation, suggesting that emotion, in her case, is not innate but learned and accumulated through machine learning capacities and physical behaviour grounding in materialism. This mechanistic approach to feeling sharply contrasts with the human subjective experience of emotion as spontaneous and deeply rooted in phenomenal consciousness. These limitations are illustrated in Klara’s interactions with Josie’s mother. Initially, the mother’s unexpected laugh after Klara’s claim and her ironic suggestion “maybe you shouldn’t be so keen to observe” acts as a critique which exposes the distinction between human and artificial forms of emotions (Ishiguro 111). Although she apologizes, her scepticism lingers, as seen in her reaction to Klara’s claim of sadness, “You felt sadness. Okay.” Her tone and silence at the end imply disbelief, emphasizing the ontological divide between humans and artificial beings.

In addition, despite Klara’s careful articulation of emotional responses such as expressing “regret” over Josie’s absence or “sadness” over Sal’s death. The mother interprets her artificial emotions as functional, generated replies rather than authentic sentiments. When Klara says, “I’m grateful you brought me here,” referring to the waterfall, Chrissie responds with scepticism: “That’s odd. I was just thinking you didn’t look so happy. I don’t see your usual smile” Klara then explains, “I apologize. I didn’t mean to seem ungrateful. I’m very pleased to see the waterfall” (Ishiguro 115). Similarly, in another moment, Klara states, “I was very sad to hear Sal passed away,” to which Chrissie replies, “Sad puts it pretty well.” Klara attempting to be a good AF kept apologising “I’m sorry. Perhaps I shouldn’t have...” (116). This suggests a persistent doubt in Klara’s emotions and empathy. That is to say, instead of regarding the AF’s statements as evidence of genuine felt sympathy, the mother

treats them as syntactically appropriate reactions from a sentient machine. Moreover, Chrissie highlights how Klara is deprived of missing as shown in:

‘Curious thing to ask an AF. In fact, I don’t even know if that question makes sense. Do you miss that store?’

‘I [Klara] sometimes think [no feelings] about the store, I said. ‘The view from the window. The other AFs. But not often. I’m very pleased to be here’

The Mother looked at me for a moment. Then she said: ‘It must be great. Not to miss things. Not to long to get back to something. Not to be looking back all the time. Everything must be so much more...’ (102).

The passage emphasises how Klara is not able to subjectively feel or simulate longing or sadness as it is not part of her AF programming, compared to the mother who is always looking back, missing her daughter Sal and grieving her death. It is further illustrated when Chrissie envies Klara for being a robot deprived of feeling and wishes to escape and be detached from reality and feelings.

Accordingly, Ishiguro uses these scenes to divulge how humans and machines are distinct by raising deeper philosophical questions: even if an AI like Klara can mimic emotions superficially, does that equate to genuine feeling or subjective experience? Or is it merely an imitation structured through accumulated data in a form of stimulus response as part of her functional consciousness? Klara and the mother’s interactions highlight a dismissal of the possibility that AF’s emotions are authentic where the mother, “will never let herself be persuaded” (Ishiguro 249). That is, despite her desperate attempt to replicate her daughter and embrace the notion of a loving a copy, she believes in the specialness of her daughter as a human being who is conscious, emotional and has a subjective experience of

life which cannot be replicated or transferred to a soulless robot. Thus, no matter how sophisticated the replica would be, she would feel something is missing.

Ishiguro defends human dignity through the mother's stance; her reactions, her scepticism over the authenticity of Klara's emotions. He employs the transhumanist plan to foreground the concern and thus employed her perspective to showcase Klara's limitations. Furthermore, the father emphasised that "Chrissie just won't be able to accept it. She's too... old fashioned [for she believes in the human essence]. Even if she knows she's going against the science and the math [that is against the reductionist view of essence], she still won't be able to do it (249). In contrast, the father was trying to resist this belief, fearing that this plan would deprive him of grieving his daughter where there would be no value to her loss. In Lombardo's words "Josie would be endlessly replaceable ... Grief would seem irrational ... why would we still care about others the way we do ... we would no longer be living a recognizable human life" (114). As such, all of which threatens human dignity by reducing the human essence to computational processes where human values and emotions such as empathy, joy, grief and nostalgia would be lost and replaced by artificial simulation.

Conclusion

This Chapter examines Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* to reveal the limitations of AI in replicating the essence of human consciousness. Through a multidisciplinary framework that falls under the umbrella of posthuman discourse, it becomes evident that Ishiguro's narrative draws an ontological boundary between artificial simulation, Fukuyama's Factor X and human consciousness in particular. Klara's narration though interesting and defamiliarize the human experience offering a fresh perspective, is shaped by observation, pattern recognition, and even emotional simulation, rather than an inner subjective felt experience. Furthermore, Klara's lack of subjective experience is highlighted through her inability to understand

human experience and emotions. It suggests a proto-consciousness that is rooted in functional processes; what Block coined as access consciousness. This chapter thus reinforces the argument that an AI like Klara, regardless of its sophistication, cannot transcend its material boundaries to reach the essence of consciousness. Ultimately, it calls for a deeper reflection on what constitutes consciousness and why this essence of being human remains a conundrum that is beyond replication.

General Conclusion

How it is that anything so remarkable as a state of consciousness comes about as a result of initiating nerve tissue, is just as unaccountable as the appearance of the Djinn, where Aladdin rubbed his lamp in the story . . . (qtd. in McGinn 349)

Similar to how Julian Huxley once likened the emergence of consciousness from objective, material processes to the inexplicable, magical appearance of the Djinn in Aladdin's tale, the mysterious nature of consciousness as an essence of humanity continues to challenge scientific and philosophical inquiry. A challenge this dissertation has sought to explore through the analysis of Klara's limitation in replicating this essence in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*. This study shed light on the difficulty of bridging the gap between physical brain processes and the qualitative subjective experience of being, emphasising the enduring enigma at the heart of consciousness studies. In essence, this enduring mystery supported the central claim of this research: that no matter how sophisticated AI becomes; it remains hollow and not capable of replicating the subjective essence of human consciousness.

The first part of the dissertation laid the groundwork by establishing a multidisciplinary theoretical framework for analysing and understanding the essence of human dignity. It initially presented an in-depth view of transhumanist and posthumanist thought, tracing its genealogies and development. Furthermore, it offered a conceptual distinction to consciousness and other closely conflated concepts including sentience, conscience, and general awareness. Through this examination of AI's limitations in replicating the human consciousness, the study questioned the transhumanist aspirations that challenge the traditional definitions of what it means to be human. Drawing on Fukuyama's perspective, it emphasised the significance of preserving the human dignity which lays in the

possession of Factor X as a combination of exceptional traits that distinguishes the human beings from other artificial forms of life. It further stressed on the complex nature of this human essence as it consists of the interconnectedness of the emotional gamut, free will as well as the conscious subjective experience which cannot be reduced to mere computational processes.

Moreover, the theoretical chapter explored a hybrid conceptualisation of consciousness suggested by Chalmers and Block to highlight that the mystery and distinction is grounded in the subjective felt experience. Chalmers concepts of easy and hard problems of consciousness are closely linked to Block's distinction between Access and phenomenal consciousness. Both emphasised that the mere existence of functional processes does not equate to the possession of a subjective felt experience that defines the human consciousness. Finally, the chapter examined Bentley's exploration of the ontological challenge offered by phenomenology which lies in the qualitative dimension of the subjective experience or what is known as Qualia. Each of these theoretical concepts was scrutinized to reveal AI's inability to transcend its functional consciousness and achieve a human like consciousness for it is deprived of a felt subjective experience.

The second part of dissertation undertook a close or narrowed analysis of Klara's limitations in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* through the lens of the presented theoretical framework. Initially, it briefly explored the development of AI's portrayal and the ontological distinction in Science Fiction from ancient Greek myths to the contemporary narrative of *Klara and the Sun*. Moreover, the chapter offered a brief critical overview of the novel which highlights how Ishiguro employs Klara's narration as a tool to cast the familiar under a new light and reveal AI's limitations. Furthermore, it highlighted how Fukuyama's defence on human dignity manifests itself in the novel. In other words, *Klara and the Sun*, as a defence of human dignity, emphasised the irreducibility of consciousness, and reinforced a

reassessment of the transhumanist aspirations to simulate or replace what it means to be human.

This part of the second chapter revealed that Klara is deprived of Factor X for she lacks its fundamental components such as free will which other characters in contrast possess. Moreover, this analysis showed that Klara is hollow and does not possess an inner subject felt experience or its qualitative dimension which serves as a barrier to achieving a human like consciousness. Ultimately, drawing on the hybrid conceptualisation of consciousness by Chalmers and Block, the study argued that Klara possesses a proto-consciousness that is rooted in functionality. This research further shed light how this type of consciousness manifest itself in Klara's lack of understanding of complex emotions and realities beyond her AF job as well as her robotic simulation of some emotions which thus traced the ontological lines between humans and artificial simulations of life.

In a nutshell, this dissertation offered a comprehensive analysis of the limitations of AI in replicating the essence of human consciousness in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*. Through a close reading of the novel and the use of various theoretical concepts that fall under the posthumanist discourse, the study examined how contemporary literary fiction depicts or presents the ontological boundaries that deprive AI of a human-like consciousness. The revealed insights significantly contribute to the discussion on how contemporary fiction addresses the challenges posed by the techno-scientific advances.

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المخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة الكيفية التي تتخيل بها رواية كلارا والشمس للكاتب كازو إيشيجورو الحدود الوجودية الفاصلة بين الإنسان والكائنات الاصطناعية. وتهدف إلى استكشاف تمثيلات حدود الذكاء الاصطناعي في العمل الأدبي، مع تركيز خاص على إبراز الوعي البشري بوصفه جوهرًا لا يمكن استنساخه أو تعويضه. لتحقيق هذا الهدف، توظف الأطروحة إطارًا متعدد التخصصات، يجمع بين مفاهيم ما بعد الإنسانية، والفينومينولوجيا، وفلسفة العقل. والتي من خلاله تسعى إلى التركيز على الطبيعة المعقدة والغامضة للوعي البشري، باعتبارها معيارًا حاسمًا للتمييز بين الذات الإنسانية الأصلية والمحاكاة الاصطناعية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تجادل الأطروحة بأن كلارا، رغم امتلاكها وعياً وظيفياً متطوراً يظهر قدرات ملاحظة وتحليل عالية يمكنها من أداء مهام معرفية وسلوكية عالية الدقة، إلا أنها تفتقر إلى السمات الجوهرية للوعي البشري، مثل الإرادة الحرة، والتجربة الذاتية، والنطاق العاطفي، والكيفيات الشعورية. وهي عناصر لا يمكن اختزالها أو توليدها صناعياً. من خلال هذا التحليل الدقيق، تسعى الدراسة إلى الإسهام في النقاشات الفلسفية والنقدية المعاصرة حول تطور الذكاء الاصطناعي، حدود ما بعد الإنسانية، وتسليط الضوء على ما يُعرف بـ "العامل العاشر" كدلالة على الغموض المتأصل في الكينونة البشرية. ويخلص البحث إلى أن رواية إيشيجورو تكشف عن فجوة مستمرة لا يمكن تجاوزها بين محاكاة الذكاء الاصطناعي والوعي البشري الفريد، مؤكدة أن الذكاء الاصطناعي، وإن نجح في تقليد السلوك والانفعالات، يبقى عاجزاً عن بلوغ الجوهر الإنساني الداخلي بما ينطوي عليه من كرامة ذاتية وتجربة شعورية لا يمكن محاكاتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوعي البشري، التجربة الذاتية، الذكاء الاصطناعي، النطاق العاطفي، الوعي الوظيفي، الكيفيات الشعورية، الإرادة الحرة، العامل العاشر.