

Mechanical Compassion and Irreplaceability of the Human Heart in Klara and the Sun (KAS)

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Abstract

This novel Klara and the Sun (KAS) analyses the human relationship with machines and its uncertain implications. Futuristically oriented, this novel provides insights into the amazing gifts of the machine/ robot who is expected to penetrate human life as a substitute for a real friend in a lonely, and, quite paradoxically, socially recluse world of the 21st century. Eventually, upon allegorical examination, the reader discovers that the writer implies a more significant realization of the true meaning of manifesting humanity and expressing love in the modern world- a world that is populated by machines raised by humans as an alternative reality to satisfy the diminishing intensity of their emotions and ideals. As the story unfolds, it becomes evident that despite its intelligence and accuracy, Klara evinces significant reservations concerning the replication of the emotional character of the human heart. This limitation greatly succeeds in stymying human fears about the destructive empowerment of the machine.

Key words: Allegorical examination, human heart, human relationship, reservations, socially recluse.

Introduction

Ishiguro's singular ability to cast his characters in a reflective mode trying to evaluate the moral correctness of their choices and to pacify the frenetic tumult in their minds using memory as a facilitative tool invites multiple readings at different levels of engagement. His writing encompasses the literary landscape of two centuries with its panoply of emotional experiences neatly concealed under an apparently tranquil narrative. In chronological terms, his literary output spans the last two decades of the 20th century and the first quarter of the 21st century, to be precise. In 1989, he won the illustrious Booker Prize for his third novel, The Remains of the Day (TROD) and received as many as four nominations on the prestigious Short List of the Booker Prize. Eventually, he was conferred with the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2017- a crowning achievement for any literary artist who wishes to examine the interlocking layers of emotions residing in the human heart and giving way to a range of actions that either glorify them or abase

them leaving them with no middle ground to latch onto in hindsight. But in Ishiguroean world that hindsight does not proclaim despair as Stevens the main protagonist muses in TROD:

For a great many people, the evening is the most enjoyable part of the day. Perhaps, then, there is something to his advice that I should cease looking back so much, that I should adopt a more positive outlook and try to make the best of what remains of my day. After all, what can we ever gain in forever looking back and blaming ourselves if our lives have not turned out quite as we might have wished? (pp. 256-257)

Therefore, Ishiguroean characters just like the butler, Stevens, are able to retrieve themselves from the repercussions of their wrong choices by similar affirmations that direct their future orientation.

While bestowing upon him The Nobel Prize for Literature, the Swedish Academy commended him for his unique way of adding to our understanding of the world around us: “In novels of great emotional force, he has uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world.” Therefore, what presents itself as a straightforward narrative contains fierce, unrelenting allegorical confrontation between the protagonists’ choices in the past and their fall out in the present moment- all communicated by making innuendoes to memory and past events.

Ishiguro’s writings have been viewed under the framework of hermeneutics of suspicion. As an alternative critical practice, Best & Marcus (2009) pioneered the notion of “surface reading” (1), in which they voiced concern about the inescapable presence of hermeneutics of suspicion in literary criticism. (5). They instead, stressed on the need for greater obviousness, explicitness, perception and intelligibility as a means to enrich the readers’ understanding of the text (9). However, subscribing to the views of Battersby (2021), I would argue that a complete rejection of suspicious reading is likely to detach the readers from some of the more plausible themes that are subtly expressed. (pp. 67-88) Therefore, a moderate approach needs to be encouraged that attaches adequate salience to both positions.

Ishiguro’s writing lends itself to enormous contradictions regarding its apparent and deeper meanings. There is a profound sense of loss that permeates the texture of words but only becomes apparent upon careful reflection. Lee (1990) focuses on the profound melancholy that interweaves the surface. These observations underscore the fact that the narrator’s description and its emotional effect do not proportionately correspond to each other. Battersby (2021), however, considers the affective component of this suspicious interpretation of Ishiguro’s works as helpful in tracking the aesthetic progression of his oeuvre.

Applying this ideology of hermeneutics of suspicion to KAS raises some interesting observations. As we begin to attach multiple meaning to the words, movements and action that Klara deploys, the turbulence of the hidden struggle is exposed and brings us closer to the point of understanding that Ishiguro wishes his reader to reach. The implicit reference to the scientific orientation of humanity in the midst of overwhelming presence of artificial intelligence governing human life raises some disturbing questions.

Similarly, a surface reading of KAS reduces the affective impact of the novel. The AF, Klara, in this reductionist approach is only projected as an entertainment tool for children. Therefore, a

superficial reading alone may potentially deprive the readers of the underlying message about the ingredients of humanity that a human is expected to have and how it compares with a machine's humanity. KAS, like all other Ishiguro novels, invites the discussion of larger questions, that may be observed as thematic understatements in the beginning.

KAS may be compared to NLMG on the multiple grounds of deceptive appearance vs charged reality debate as well as the humanistic concerns of Kathy H. and Klara. Kathy's refusal to disapprove of the clone system that is advocated as a legitimate system of donation to 'real human beings' by the Hailsham School puts into perspective Ishiguro's narratorial performance of conscious inattention, misdirection and ignorance. Battersby argues that he steadily leads the reader into a mode of self-reflection and never betrays his real intention as a marker of aesthetic construction. Ishiguro stubbornly refuses to be confined within the space of programmatic or paradigmatic thinking while critically examining the contours of his oeuvre.

In NLMG we witness the phased, brutal dismemberment of student clones in the Hailsham School. Eatough (2021) suggests that this helps us appreciate the humanity of Ishiguro's clones, and to be cautious about a future in which human beings would be objectified and compromised for material ends. In the same way, KAS highlights the potential and limitations of AFs to act as possible human replacements by highlighting the human proclivities that are engendering the production of these AFs, in the first place. At the same time, a comparison is made between human humanity and machine humanity in an effort to show the affective limitations of the machines allied closely with the depleting capabilities of humans to provide emotional support to each other resulting in the creation and development of single-mother phenomenon (Chrissie and Helen- cases in point) together with the rising need to adopt machines as friends- all in an era of an expansion of social relationships fuelled by the social media devices and other platforms of social engagement that have paradoxically brought about alienation and estrangement.

Ishiguro's most recent novel Klara and the Sun (KAS) attempts to unfurl the connotative 'abyss' highlighted by the Nobel Prize Committee as his most profound contribution to the literary world by examining the complicated multi-layered relationship between a machine and a human. Replicating the Ishiguroean streak of providing an implicit, powerful message through an apparently disconnected narrative, this novel examines the conception of humanity by comparing machine-humanity with its traditional human variant. In the process, other important themes that are expected to gain currency in future, related to the diminishing social interaction and the emergent human needs for mechanical comfort are put into perspective. The following research questions have been framed:

1. Does Klara show a more compassionate form of humanity as opposed to the one displayed by humans?
2. What are the aspects of human life that Klara finds hard to recreate, despite its enormous mechanical capacity?
3. What are the realistic prospects of machines overtaking humans in different fields?

Material and methods

The research questions mentioned above are underpinned by the socio psychological approach that studies the multiple levels of interaction among individuals. (Tafjel & Fraser, 1978, p. 22, as

cited in Contarello, 2008) The research design is qualitatively grounded that lends itself to a more microscopic focus. The interaction, referred to above, takes place, among others, within individuals in the form of their feelings and thoughts; between individuals and different social groups like their families and also between individuals and other social systems in which they operate and perform different functions. This approach has a strong connection to this novel in which the reader attempts to identify the different layers of meanings as they are expressed through Klara's inter-communication and intra-communication perceptions, the forging of her responses to Josie's family and vice versa together with her exposure to the completely alien system of genetic modification, among others, synonymous with 'lifting.'

Ishiguro's book, KAS has been used as the primary extraction source of this research. Apart from this, his novels NLMG, TROD and UC have also been consulted together with various other sources mentioned in the references.

Discussion and results

In answer to the first research question, Klara conducts herself with admirable compassion and humanity despite being a mechanical device and presumably devoid of any emotional content. Her personality as Josie's 'Artificial Friend' (AF) rapidly evolves over the course of the novel, ultimately reaching a stage where she empathizes human emotions and even responds to them in a non-mechanical way. She also displays a supreme element of sacrifice- another human trait- by offering a slice of her physicality in the form of a certain amount of a chemical called P-E-G Nine present in her brain. This monumental sacrifice elevates her status on the scale of morality and her power to rise above the human level or at least come close to acquiring their behavioural traits, if educated at that level by design. Before she makes this decision, she inquires Mr. Paul, "If..... we were able to extract the solution from me, would there be sufficient to destroy the Cootings Machine?" (p. 226). She further asks him, "will I lose my abilities?" (p. 227). Mr Paul answers, "As I said, your overall performance shouldn't be greatly impaired. But this isn't my area. There may be some effects on your cognitive ability." (p. 227). Klara is endangering herself to a certain extent since the implications of extracting a certain amount of chemical from her brain are quite uncertain, as Mr. Paul is at pains to emphasize. Klara intends to appease her benefactor: The Sun that seems to be affected by this pollution- spreading machine. However, what is uppermost in her mind is the welfare of Josie and her complete medical recovery that may possibly come about if she makes this sacrifice.

Her affection and concern for Josie on a few occasions tends to exceed or at least match human intensity and raises awkward questions over the overtly advertised humanity of the humans. There are moments in the story where human characters' limitations and inadequacy are exposed, especially in relation to controlling their emotions in the context of forging an appropriate response to the lingering dregs from the past. A case in point is Mr. Vance's emotional breakdown when Ms. Helen seeks his help regarding her son's future. He clamours, "Damn right there's a problem Helen. Twenty-seven years' worth of a problem. Twenty-seven years you refuse to have any communication with me (p.252)." Later Ms. Helen remarks in response to Mr. Vance's reference to her fragility, as if resigned to her fate, "so fragile that I am liable to break into pieces in a puff of wind. I lost my beauty not to the years but to this fragility" (p.253). The meeting between Helen and her former lover Vance together with its implications stress the fact that the human ability to retain composure amidst emotionally fraught moments is

limited. In the situation under discussion Mr. Vance breaks down completely and, in the process, fails to prioritize the issue of the child's college admission. This inability of the humans to respond to their anger in a calculated way can possibly be exploited as a potential point of penetration and ultimate replacement by machines like Klara. That Klara does not have this exploitative streak in its personality is beside the point.

Klara is always in a state of readiness to help Josie. Her supreme self-sacrifice, intended to save the hapless girl from a premature death triggered by her 'lifted' status in which she went through genetic modification, transcends her mechanical instincts and makes her comparable to those altruistic individuals who undermine their personal ambitions for the greater good of humanity.

Swaminathan (2021) argues, that at the point of human communication with humanoids, the weaknesses of the latter are expected to be revealed. But every encounter between the human and the humanoid, quite paradoxically, only manifests the incapability of the humans. A case in point is the determined approach adopted by the 'humanist' scientist Mr. Capaldi while trying to convince Chrissie about the viability of replacing Josie with Klara. He avers, "It is not Faith you need. Only rationality." He believes that Klara can easily imitate the personality and emotional traits of Josie, thus empowering human agency and minimizing divine intervention, but Klara instead relies on providence that is manifested by The Sun in her case, seeking its visit to Josie's room and conferring her the nourishment she needs. Her reliance on the healing qualities of The Sun is absolute, clearly illustrating her superior faith in the divine scheme whereas the human counterparts- the likes of Capaldis often show signs of hopelessness and resort to some ingenious schemes of the mind to retrieve the situation. So, she succeeds in improving Josie's health by resorting to the help of nature rather than asking for some unnatural human interference. Ironically, the AF Klara demonstrates to all discerning readers that eventually faith prevails over scientific calculations and thus, by extension, human focus on science and logic for all answers is only an attempt to distance themselves from God.

Swaminathan (2021) also illustrates two examples of incomplete love stories of Rick and Josie together with Helen and Mr. Vance. They remain incomplete because of the breach of commitment and also the preponderance of practical matters over emotional concerns, especially in the case of Rick and Josie. Surprisingly, Klara who is not programmed to possess a strong emotional content manifests a scale of emotional intensity that sometimes comes close to matching the one exhibited by the human counterparts. However, this happens despite her inability to understand the shades of human emotions- she uses them all the same. This episode of intense emotional engagement raises question marks about the so-called edifying morality and humanity of the humans.

Another interesting question is raised by Mabrouk (2022) when he investigates the reasons why humans need machines to express love and affection. One answer is provided by the social critic, Lasch (1979) who wrote that we live in a "culture of narcissism." It may be implied from this statement that a narcissist loves himself above all other considerations and this drives him into a self-imposed loneliness. His problem is solved by the computer that provides him a comrade without having to be intimate with him. Klara makes another statement that sheds more light on this observation. "At the same time, what was becoming clear to me was the extent to which humans, in their wish to escape loneliness, made maneuvers that were very complex and hard to

fathom.” (p. 113). It is quite clear that in the 21st century and beyond, humans are likely to become increasingly detached from others. They will be immersed in their lives and thus lose all social connection with the world as we are accustomed to understand it. Since social communication is a basic feature of what makes us humans in the first place, it will most probably foster unhuman characteristics in ourselves. This lack of social interaction will have to be substituted by machine involvement. In fact, the whole point of machine involvement has arisen due to man’s steady, partial abandonment of his nature as it has been understood over the ages. His increasing distrust of other human beings and the lack of faith in their judgements has led to the present impasse where he is seeking alternative choices that appear to be ingenious but fail to replicate the entire range of human emotions. But at the same time he cannot go back since the distrust is all enveloping. In recent times, the Covid-induced isolation was a practical manifestation of what it would look like in the future. One thing is certain that anything that separates a person from the expression of his natural instincts is destined to fail or lead to an unnatural set up that is not sustainable.

At one stage in the story, while visiting McBain’s barn, Klara entreats the Sun to show mercy to Josie:

I understand how forward and rude I’ve been to come here. The Sun has every right to be angry, and I fully understand your refusal even to consider my request. Even so, because of your great kindness, I thought, I might ask you to delay your journey for one more instant. To listen to one more proposal. Supposing, I could do something special to please you. Something to make you particularly happy. If I could achieve such a thing, then, would you consider, in return, showing special kindness to Josie just as you did that time for Beggar Man and his dog? (p. 166).

She is willing to risk her own existence to make way for Sun’s intercession. These words attempt to capture the essence of Klara’s concern for Josie. It apparently strikes as odd to humans like us to perceive this role for Klara but again reliving the Ishiguroean vein of the concurrent use of comment and narration, we subtly and gradually experience the double meaning of the statement above. This is directed more at the inability of the humans to seek divine help with the same intensity and also highlights the rapidly diminishing faith of humans in harnessing all available sources of help available before resorting to the drastic measure of even conceiving the switching of roles, in this case- Josie with Klara. Her poignant statement and her candid admission of her mistakes, serves to remind the humans that they have misdirected their goals and attached too much importance to machines rather than turning to God who used to provide solutions to all their problems. Their lack of dependence on their Creator and over dependence on contraptions of their own making is leading to all kinds of problems. They are compounded by the fact that they don’t realize their mistakes, let alone learn from them. Another impressive way is Klara’s persistence in coming back to the Sun for facilitation. The human effort in comparison gives way to impatience much too soon that adds another question mark to their endurance and their ability to deal with things that take a long time to settle.

In response to research question two, Klara finds herself seriously inhibited in terms of taking control and understanding the subtleties of human emotions. And this happens despite Klara’s compassionate orientation of mind (marked by some affective deficiencies). There are moments when she feels helpless to fathom the unpredictability of emotions and experiences that humans

are capable of displaying in response to the turmoil upsetting their mental equilibrium or any other strain paralyzing their ability to make rational decisions. Since Klara is mechanically configured, she finds herself ill at ease in understanding the nuances of human behaviour who are quite capable of catapulting from one emotional response to another. This complicated mechanism of human behaviour is beyond Klara's ken and this is the area that she admits, she has limited room for manoeuvrability.

In fact, no matter how sophisticated a machine may become, it will always be constrained to negotiate with the multiple layers of meaning wrapped around the human heart. This organ may be mechanically imitated, but its subjective experiences cannot be reproduced in their entirety. The entrance to the human heart presumably offers the biggest obstacle that the machine has to contend! Klara may succeed in replicating Josie's actions or other physical traits, but the sudden changes that the human heart undergoes in response to certain stimuli are beyond any mechanical capability. Mr. Paul instructs Klara "you'd have to learn her heart and learn her fully or you'll never become Josie in any sense that matters" (p. 219). He indicates the difficulty of the challenge for the machine and she is already aware of it.

At another place during the same conversation, Mr. Paul contends, "No matter how long you wandered through those rooms wouldn't there be always others you'd yet not entered?" (p. 219). At that stage, Klara is confident, and she asserts, "Of course, a human heart is bound to be complex, but it must be limited." (p. 219) But later, she confesses before the manager that "however hard I tried I believe now there would have remained something beyond my reach. The mother, Rick, Melania housekeeper, the father. I'd never have reached what they felt for Josie in their hearts. I'm now sure of this manager." (p. 306)

Therefore, Klara's frank admission to some extent, allays human reservations about their eventual replacement by machines. This fear is summed up succinctly during a woman's encounter with Josie at the theatre. "First, they take the jobs, then they take seats at the theatre." (p. 242)

In response to the third question regarding the potential and limitations of machines, Hossuri (2021) argues that KAS may be considered a post humanistic novel since Josie and her sister Sal were subjected to experimental genetic modification to improve their faculties. However, the experiment proved fatal for Sal and led to Josie's deterioration of health. The failure of this experiment clearly illustrates the inherent risks posed by genetic modifications of humans thus lending credence to their apprehensions in terms of embracing this technology.

Hossuri (2021) also compares Ishiguro's NLMG with KAS in terms of their science fictional and dystopian elements. But NLMG ends on a despondent note whereas KAS raises some insightful questions about the constituents of humanity and the possibility of displaying humanity by other creatures like robots. The narrators in both novels also have a non-human orientation. In NLMG, Ishiguro employs a clone, Kathy H. as the storyteller while in KAS he uses an artificially intelligent robot, Klara as his spokesperson. Hossuri further argues that in both the novels, vulnerability and constraints of the AI products (like clones and AFs) in terms of dictating their own fates are quite evident. Therefore, any prospect of empowerment of the machines over humans is quite remote.

Shaw (2021) aptly states:

The boundless helpfulness of our female digital assistants — our Siris, our Alexas, the voice of Google Maps — has given us a false sense of security. No matter how we ignore and abuse them, they never tire of our errors; you can disobey the lady in your phone and blame her (loudly) for your mistakes, and she'll recalculate your route without complaint. Surely, nothing truly intelligent would put up with us for long, and the Philip K. Dicks and Elon Musks of this world have spent decades trying to convince us that AI rebellion is inevitable. But Kazuo Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun . . . issues a quieter, stranger warning: The machines may never revolt.

This observation counteracts all human fears of a possible revolt by the machines where they start disobeying their masters' orders. It supports their positive, subservient use where their actions are controlled and do not go beyond their established boundaries.

Preston (2021) comments, "a novel expands on his theme of what it means to be not-quite human, exploring love and loyalty through the eyes of an android." This statement also paints the savoury side of machines that appear to be considerate rather than threatening.

Stenseke (2022) examines the morality of artificial entities from two divergent perspectives: the view "from within" and the view "from outside." The first interpretation is based on metaphysical and cognitive attributes. The second view invokes the behaviouristic paradigm, emphasizing the agent's outward behaviour as outlined by Danaher. Stenseke (2022) further argues that KAS illustrates that morality from within that is secondary to and dependent upon the view from outside. Therefore, Klara's inner morality is shaped by the views of others.

In my view, the superiority of the external view over the internal view is questionable since Klara demonstrates a very strong internal ethics. Her external behaviour although stereotyped is also disciplined and so it is not easy to consider one as superior to the other. Nevertheless, if this view is considered to be a true assessment, then it clearly points to the fact that humans are still in control.

Stenske (2022) further posits that Klara's acute observational qualities, help her apprehend the natural phenomena straddling her inner and outer world, by making inferences based on deduction and induction. They also help her demystifying the nuances of human social interaction. The external signs including body language, gestures, voice, tone etc. act as useful tools to understand human behaviour.

This highlights the fact that her mind is scientifically trained to make evaluative judgements about phenomena and human behaviour. Her faculties have been designed with scientific accuracy and she acts like a sentient being. But despite all her mechanical sophistication she fails to display any rebellious streak in her personality.

Lombardo (2021) says that education has become so competitive that most of the colleges give only 2 percent of all positions to the 'unlifted' students. In order to compete with the rest, Chrissie has already sacrificed her daughter Sal and even Josie is showing signs of weakness because of her 'lifted' status but in order to be competitive, humans are forced to do so. This

unnatural act is aggravating imbalance in their life by introducing genetic inequality as well as wealth inequality.

In the novel KAS, we gradually come to know that the threat to human life is not posed by Klara as a representative of the wicked side of AI, but is driven more by the exaggerated use of technology by humans. In this new equation, all human enterprise including the hallowed domains of education and health are used as capitalistic tools for accumulation of profit. If 'lifting' is not done, then the child is marginalized and pushed to the background thus destroying his prospects of growth.

Chrissie's state of mind regarding the probable substitution of Josie's role by Klara, accurately summed up by Dr. Capaldi who is tasked with this role, highlights the problems of Artificial Intelligence and the inhibitory factors to their individual and social acceptance. He says:

A part of us refuses to let go. The part that wants to keep believing there's something unreachable inside each of us. Something that's unique and won't transfer. But there's nothing like that we know that now. You know that..... Nothing inside Josie that's beyond the Klaras of this world to continue. The second Josie won't be a copy. She'll be the exact same and you'll have every right to love her just as you love Josie now. It's not faith you need. Only rationality. (p. 210)

Josie's father's observations about the same prospect adds another dimension to the whole debate:

Deep down I suspect he may be right. That's what he claims is true. That science has now proved beyond doubt there's nothing so unique about my daughter, nothing there our modern tools can't excavate, copy, transfer. That people have been living with one another all this time, centuries loving and hating each other, and all on a mistaken premise. (p. 224)

Josie's father expresses his reservations despite the fact that his scientific mind attaches significant credibility to the whole idea. But his emotional association with his daughter dressed in infinite memories will be lost forever.

Howard (2001) points out a recurring feature of Ishiguro's novels related to the retention of poise and calm despite the extreme emotional turbulence of the characters. Ishiguro said at one stage, "I am interested in the way words hide meaning." Speaking of the balance and imbalance of writers, Ishiguro remarks that most are "more than averagely sane and responsible" but that many "write out of something that is unresolved somewhere deep down, and in fact it's too late ever to resolve it." Writing is a "kind of consolation for something that got broken" and the activity of imaginative writing is a "way of trying to fix that thing or caress that wound that would never heal."

This wound is apparent in all Ishiguro's novels. In KAS it is symbolically expressed by the inevitability of Josie's deteriorating physical condition inter alia whereas it is given a literal character in UC by Mr. Brodsky.

Black (2022) argues that the question of the constitution of humanity is a trope that forms a central part of NLMG. The presentation of a dystopian world is similar to Huxley's Brave New

World and Orwell's 1984. The question of the character of humanity is implicitly raised by the criticism of the romantic conception of aesthetics and empathy. The projection of clones is only a veneer and the deeper theme relates to the global inequality. She makes the point that only by identifying the mechanical, artificial and replicated facets of our personality we will be able to contain the brutalities that we commit apparently to protect human life. Despite the unreality of clones, they exhibit features of empathy and allow us to see the mistakes that we are consciously or unconsciously making. This aesthetics of duplication allows us to show compassion to others without any obstruction by ideals leading to the conception of a new definition for empathy in a post humanist age. (pp. 785-807)

Actually Black (2022) suggests that by considering the mechanical life of the clones and the horrors they go through we will look within ourselves to find the remedy. True to the Ishiguroean streak that punctuates his books, NLMG makes us realize our mistakes by referring to what we are doing to clones but there is no direct condemnation. Everything is cloaked in grace and restraint that puts into perspective the beauty of Ishiguroean writing. Since the clones are being viewed as inhuman entities, we have the freedom to study ourselves without any reservations that we accord to human characters and the traditional concept of empathy is conceptualized in post human terms.

We can extend the same principle of analysis to KAS in which Ishiguro creates the same world of artificial reality. This time the clone, Kathy H. is replaced by the AF, Klara who points out the humanistic degradation by what is happening at the inhuman level.

Another important point raised by Black (2022) in her narrative is the lack of protest by the clones at the condition that they are condemned to bear. There seems to be a resignation to fate that is quite surprising. Harrison (2008) explains:

This extraordinary, and in the end, rather frighteningly clever novel isn't about cloning or being a clone at all. It's about why we don't explode, why we don't just wake up one day and go sobbing and crying down the street, kicking everything to pieces out of the raw, infuriating, completely personal sense of our lives never having been what they could have been.

Just like Kathy and the other clones, human beings do all that is in their power to repress their instincts and make peace with the irregularities that have blighted their lives. This repression acts like a permanent feature of their personality but in humanitarian terms it may be termed as self-denial. This contradicts the basic principles of humanity as they are traditionally observed in society. Humanity, as it is generally understood, calls for an expression of one's instincts within morally defined limits but unfortunately the characters realize this inadequacy much later when the situation cannot be reversed. A case in point is Stevens in TROD who does realize his mistake but only manages to redeem himself by making the most of what 'remains of the day.' His reunion with Ms. Kenton is not possible and the implications of his blind loyalty to a NAZI sympathizer cannot be erased.

KAS does have some similar traits but it shows some dissenting notes as well. Klara, like Kathy H, suffers but does certain things to alleviate her plight. She is reminded of her extreme lack of freedom by the manager in these words:

Let me tell you something Klara. Children makes promises all the time. They come to the window, they promise all kinds of things. They promise to come back, they ask you not to let anyone else take you away. It happens most of the time but more often than not the child never comes back. Or worse, the child comes back and ignores the poor AF who's waited and instead chooses another. It's just the way children are. You've been watching and learning so much Klara. Well, here's another lesson for you. Do you understand? (p. 33)

Klara gives a much better account of what it means to be human. She discovers that her choice in being picked up by a child depends on the child's whim. However, she does show agency when it matters most. A case in point is her regular visits to The Sun, pleading Josie's case before it in vehement terms. Similar to the sacrificial nature of Kathy H, she offers some amount of her chemical as a sacrifice but is more proactive in trying to make a change. On the other hand, Kathy H refuses to make a change at all and accepts things at face value. Therefore, by all accounts, the conception of what it means to be human is more fully realized by Klara in contrast to the self-effacement and quiet acceptance of her state by Kathy H.

Conclusion

This novel attempt to gauge the importance and capabilities of machines in the life of humans and has a futuristic orientation. After taking his readers through various stages of Klara's evolution, Ishiguro stresses the fact that in the near future machines or robots will become so advanced that they will have the capability to act as human friends and provide support and compassion to their owners. However, there will always be one area that will frustrate or challenge their enormous capabilities and despite making a serious attempt to master this aspect, they will never be able to penetrate the strong emotional content of the heart-Of course, heart in the poetic sense since Klara has time and again proved her proficiency in imitating the physical traits of Josie. KAS, by crafting a social world inhabited by AFs is pointing out to the extent of social control that we are willingly parting with and giving it over to the robots and machines. This, by extension, applies to a diminution of our humanity as the social component is inextricably linked to being human in the first place. We have to draw a line where we feel that the mechanical control of our life is driving us away from the warmth of life experienced by the real, social interaction.

In holistic terms, heart is truly divinely inspired and has so many nuances and works in so many unpredictable ways that even the mechanically precise Klara who has tremendous powers of observation fails to capture its full range and concedes defeat in her final conversation with the manager.

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