


Chapter 11

AI and Digital Sentience in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*: A Study of Posthuman Performativity

Aman Deep Singh

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4923-4137>
Nirma University, India

ABSTRACT

Science fiction (SF) is pivotal in shaping the readers' attitudes towards the future. Still, the main objective of a science fiction novel or film is not to predict the future or to assess any technological advancement. SF, mainly, teaches us what it means to be humane in a changing world of citizenship cum globalization. To convey this message, novelists and movie makers portray artificial intelligence (AI) as an autonomous or human-like character to ponder the condition of humans in flux and the social, economic, and political issues regarding technological advancement. Through the perspective of Klara, the robot protagonist, we explore artificial intelligence and consciousness, the posthuman situation of humanity, the future of utopia, humanity's changing ideologies, and the human-machine relationship or human-nonhuman relationship. The way AI enacts humans is debatable as AI introspection reflects new capacities for human potential and mirrors the limits of humanity (i.e., the creature is defined and associated with its creator).

INTRODUCTION

Science Fiction (SF) is pivotal in shaping the readers' attitude towards the future. Still, the main objective of a science fiction novel or film is not to predict the future

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-0802-8.ch011

or to assess any technological advancement. SF, mainly, teaches us what it means to be humane in a changing world of citizenship cum globalization. To convey this message, novelists and movie makers portray Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an autonomous or human-like character to ponder the condition of humans in flux and the social, economic, and political issues regarding technological advancement. The idea of the development of cognitive capabilities in AI is mainly inspired by evolutionary biology and developmental psychology. The quest for creating artificial beings is not new and has been pursued by scientists and artists. Still, this tendency to imagine and create is another expression of mimesis and anthropomorphism that has been a part of human history. Consciousness can be defined as an awareness of one's existence, i.e., awareness of and reason for actions. Intuition, empathy, and creativity are directly associated with human consciousness.

Kazuo Ishiguro SF, *Klara and the Sun* (2021) abets one make sense of the world during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing us to learn about our consciousness, which is a symptom of life and higher than intelligence. From Ishiguro's SF, one can differentiate between "primitive consciousness" (rudimentary knowledge of self-existence as in the case of Siri, Cortana, and Google Assistant) and "reflective consciousness," which is the ability to ponder upon one's own and others existence which can slightly visible in Sophia. Further, he presents two antithetical views, i.e., the historical notion of Mechanism (a mind is a complicated machine) via Paul and the Computational Theory of Mind or CTM (claims that the human brain is a computer) via Henry Capaldi. Unlike neurological theories of consciousness, which emphasize explaining consciousness from physical and biological points of view, Ishiguro attempts to clarify via the Philo-psychological and social-self theory of consciousness. Philo-psychological theory of consciousness concerns what consciousness is, and possessing an internal state is a prerequisite for a conscious entity. The social-self theory of consciousness views consciousness as a social phenomenon or interaction. Through the perspective of Klara, the robot protagonist, we explore artificial intelligence and consciousness, the posthuman situation of humanity, the future of Utopia, humanity's changing ideologies, and the human-machine relationship or human-nonhuman relationship in a posthuman (secondary) world of bioengineered beings which can be embraced enthusiastically or rejected. The way AI enacts humans is debatable as AI introspection reflects new capacities for human potential and mirrors the limits of humanity, i.e., the creature is defined and associated with its creator. Ishiguro has tried to present AI as a conscious machine rather than a manufactured risk, depicting societal issues and its interrelation with science and technology through key concepts like embodiment and situatedness

Science Fiction (SF) is a speculative fiction genre emphasizing science, technology, society, and futuristic concepts. SF is a genre that brims with narratives

21 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the product's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/ai-and-digital-sentience-in-kazuo-ishiguros-klara-and-the-sun/335340?camid=4v1

Related Content

A Multi-Objective Fuzzy Ant Colony Optimization Algorithm for Virtual Machine Placement

Boominathan Perumal and Aramudhan M. (2017). *Fuzzy Systems: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 459-486).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/a-multi-objective-fuzzy-ant-colony-optimization-algorithm-for-virtual-machine-placement/178408?camid=4v1a

Effective Prevention and Reduction in the Rate of Accidents Using Internet of Things and Data Analytics

Sowmya B. J., Chetan Shetty, S. Seema and Srinivasa K. G. (2019). *Exploring Critical Approaches of Evolutionary Computation* (pp. 99-121).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/effective-prevention-and-reduction-in-the-rate-of-accidents-using-internet-of-things-and-data-analytics/208044?camid=4v1a

KStore: A Dynamic Meta-Knowledge Repository for Intelligent BI

Jane Campbell Mazzagatti (2009). *International Journal of Intelligent Information Technologies* (pp. 68-80).

www.igi-global.com/article/kstore-dynamic-meta-knowledge-repository/2452?camid=4v1a

Demystifying Metaverse Applications for Intelligent Healthcare

Loveleen Gaur, Devanshi Gaur and Anam Afaq (2024). *Metaverse Applications for Intelligent Healthcare* (pp. 1-23).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/demystifying-metaverse-applications-for-intelligent-healthcare/334345?camid=4v1a