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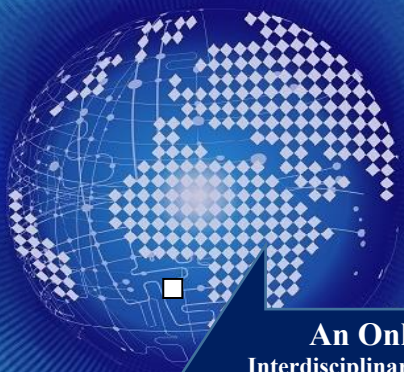

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تحية طيبة وبعد ،،،

تتقدم إليكم جامعة بدر بالقاهرة بالشكر على ما تبذلونه من جهد مادي ومعنوي لإصدار المجلة، فتميزكم المشهود خير قدوة، ممتنين لعملكم الدؤوب وتفوقكم الباهر، ونتمنى لكم المزيد من النجاحات المستقبلية.

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Humanizing Artificial Bodies: Empathy and Camaraderie in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and *Klara and the Sun* (2021)

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Abstract: Influenced by the massive rise of technology and digitization in the twentieth century, the Japanese-American writer Kazuo Ishiguro deals with the developments and repercussions of technology that particularly has to do with human replicas, whom he probingly assesses their influence on human society and human relationships. His two novels, Never Let Me Go (2005) and Klara and the Sun (2021) present a wide array of human emotions that clones and "Artificial Friends", as referred to in the latter, can practice in a world that is replete with illness, dysfunctional relationships, social ills and death. The Post-human Turn in humanities and literature questions the endurance of human agency and its role in controlling the governing state of affairs. With the advent of technology, the age-long central role of human beings has become more subsidiary, and more non-human creatures and inventions have started to take center-stage in the contemporary world. Notwithstanding the fact that they continuously struggle to survive in a world that does not wholeheartedly acknowledge them, these clones and Artificial Friend(s) are, ironically, presented as more humane than humans. The relegation of humans to the background and the centralization of post-humans brings the hidden psychological complexities of the latter to the limelight. As such, in the aforementioned novels, Never Let Me Go and Klara and the Sun, Ishiguro illuminates the sufferings, mishaps and, most importantly, the sense of empathy and solidarity that these post-humans can possibly form and express to counter the wrongdoings and evil tendencies that humans exhibit.

Keywords: solidarity, cyborgs, humanization, empathy, post-human agency.

I. Introduction

With the fast-growing interest in technology and the ever-increasing scientization of humanity, the human, as an autonomous being, has been relegated to the background and, instead, science, technology and cybernetics have taken center-stage. While there are two diametrically opposing views of the "post-human"- one that celebrates the "post-human" agent, and one that utterly disparages it- critical post-humanism views the post-human agent as a vehicle for empowerment and an emblem of human values. It rather promotes the controlling power of the "post-human" and portends the gradual eradication of the "human." This dialectic relationship between the "human", "nonhuman" and the "post-human" has been a subject of profound investigation in the field of literary and sociological studies. Different definitions were given to the "nonhuman" and the "post-human" and, although they are sometimes used interchangeably, each has its own distinct interpretation in literature. While the "nonhuman" refers to anything that is not given

human qualities, in terms of physicality, the "post-human" refers to inventions or creations that belong to a different world that lies beyond the human realm.

While their definitions sometimes overlap, the "Non-Human Turn" in humanities does not investigate the development of the human, and does not look beyond his existence, but it is "expressed most often in the form of conceptual or rhetorical dualisms that separate the human from the nonhuman----variously conceived as animals, plants, organisms or climatic systems" (Grusin 2). Critical post-humanism does not examine the human in isolation, but it rather "claims that the human can no longer be seen as an exceptional being, but as an assemblage, co-emerging with other species with whom the planet is shared" (Kumbet 1). This definition of post-humanism, therefore, deconstructs what "humanism" is all about. Humanism, as a philosophical notion, is destabilized as "in the parlance of earlier literary, philosophical and theological texts, the human frays into gradations of subhuman, inhuman, and superhuman --- the bestial, the daemonic, or the divine" (Clarke 141). Therefore, critical post-humanism postulates that the post-human has gained a firm foothold in the contemporary era, to the extent that it can overpower the authority and confidence of the "human", which, accordingly, drives the latter to become highly dependable on genetically-created objects and cyborgs. Therefore, humans are no longer viewed as the sole arbiters of their own experiences, nor are they regarded as heroes or saviors in their own right. However, humans are only "a by-product" of the overall story; in other words, they have recently assumed the less powerful opposite of the binary opposition between humans/post-humans (Herbrechter 5). Before the emergence and popularity of the "Post-Human Turn" in the twentieth-century, the German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, cast doubt on the importance of human agency, claiming that "human intellect" is "wretched, shadowy … aimless and arbitrary" (Nietzsche 42). Influenced by Nietzsche, the French critic Michel Foucault subverts the importance of "Man" as the age-long representative of force, power and action. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault's perception of the human's critical faculties is highly attributable to Nietzsche; the former directly asserts that "contemporary thought is dedicated to go beyond man … the promise of the superhuman signifies first and foremost the imminence of the death of Man" (21). In *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche,* the strong impact that Nietzsche had on Foucault is shown in how "Foucault applauds Nietzsche's announcement of the disappearance of Man as the standard-bearer of an-all-too-serious anthropocentrism" (Magnus and Higgins 328). Despite the fact that the "Anthropocene", as a geological concept, centralizes the role of humans and acknowledges their influence on the environment, it is also recognized for its belief that "humans must now be understood as climatological or geological forces on the planet that operate just as non-humans, independent of human will, belief, or desires" (Grusin 1). Anthropocentrism is originally an anthropological and philosophical concept that asserts the power of humans over other species, and that, in the former's encounter with the environment and other non-human creatures, they reign supreme. However, from an ontological perspective, with time, humans started to lose their power and, accordingly, their influence gradually diminished. This explains how the definition of the "human" has been altered altogether in humanities, and how post-humans, as technology-based individuals, have now become center-staged.

Moving from the human to the post-human, the latter has taken a significantly different route, resulting in the decentering of the human and the celebration of artificial bodies and cyborgs. Dealing with post-humans entails the existence of creatures and objects that lie beyond the human world; "[it] aims to decenter the human by terminally disrupting the scripts of humanism" (Clarke and Rossini 141). The Japanese-American writer, Kazuo Ishiguro, writes about a world that has become highly saturated with post-humans, who are left in a state of uncertainty, evolving into amiable and good-natured humanoids. These human replicas or humanoids are post-human creations who are socially branded as "sub-humans" by human beings, irrespective of the fact that they can sometimes form a very tight friendship with one other. Drawing on the theoretical framework of "critical post-humanism" that empowers post-human agents and endows them with all human attributes, in his two novels, *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and *Klara and the Sun* (2021), Ishiguro presents a tale that is charged with emotions, tracing the human/post-human interaction and also highlighting the innate goodness of clones in the former and "artificial friend(s)" in the latter.

II. Post-human Agency, Knowledge and Sentimentality

The two novels by Ishiguro undermine the centrality of Man, who has always been viewed as the most active, sharp-witted arbiter throughout the history of humanity. Countering "humanism", as a movement that crystallizes the role of Man, post-humanism placed the fundamentals of humanism on a shaky ground. In other words, the two novels undermine the basic values of humanism and negate the fact that there are certain characteristic features that, if collectively present, will "make us humans … they are characteristic of us as a species, and they largely differentiate us from other species" (Copson, Donnellan et al., 24). During the age of Enlightenment, the English philosopher John Lock re-visited the term "tabula rasa", which dates back to ancient Greece, and which describes the preliminary stages of the infant's mind after birth. Throughout the history of philosophy, there has been two major schools of thought: empiricism and rationalism. While the former believes that knowledge and sensory experiences are interlocked, the latter affirms that knowledge is directly intertwined with rational thinking. Philosophers who advocate the notion of "tabula rasa" are in favor of the former as they believe that human beings are initially born ignorant, and they only gain knowledge through experiential learning and empirical interaction. In his essay, "An Essay on Human Understanding", Lock contends that "we shall not have much reason to complain of the narrowness of our minds, if we will but employ them about what may be of use to us; for of that they are very capable" (25). This notion of "tabula rasa" can be applied to the mental and cognitive state of the clones in *Never Let Me Go* and the keenly observant and quick-witted humanoid, Klara, in *Klara and the Sun.* The story of *Never Let Me Go* revolves around the lives of clones, who are trained to become carers and eventually donors before they meet their deaths. The novel is narrated from the viewpoint of Kathy, who starts the novel as a carer, narrating her experience at Hailsham, the school where all clones receive education and training to become donors. At the very beginning of the novel, before it is revealed that the narrator of the story is a clone herself, Kathy explains how clones "aren't machines. You try to do your best for every donor, but in the end, it wears you down" (*Never* 1). Ironically, the post-human world is known for the dominance of "machines" and the gradual extinction of humans. However, Ishiguro creates a narrative that is poignantly intertwined with the daily struggles that

clones go through, who are in themselves replicas of human beings. The clones, Kathy, Ruth and Tommy, who are all students at Hailsham, are post-human agents, trying relentlessly to overcome pain and marginality, and also trying to understand the world around them through the experiences they encounter.

Although Kathy is a post-human creation, she emphasizes that she is not equated to a "machine" that keeps on working tirelessly. In *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro re-visits the concept of the "human" and re-evaluates its position in society. He subverts the fact that a "human" is only defined in terms of his/her agency and capability, and he instead gives voice to species who are lost in the shadows, highlighting "human entanglements with other species and agencies in technologically saturated environments" (Kumbet 6). Ishiguro undermines any boundaries between humans and clones as he endows the latter with mental acuity and artistic genius, showing how they create "paintings, drawings, pottery; all sorts of 'sculptures' … they were [the] only means of building up a collection of personal possessions" (*Never* 16). The idea of "creativity" is very important at Hailsham and is deemed one of the central skills upon which clones are assessed at school. Through Ishiguro's narrative that is filled with Kathy's nostalgia for her memories at Hailsham, she gives an account of all the practices and relationships that shaped Hailsham as an educational institution for clones. One's own ability to "create", invent and imagine grants one a sense of individuality and autonomous thinking, which Ishiguro attributes to these clones. Through art, there is an intertwinement between the cognitive and artistic processes, which illustrates how "creativity becomes an essential ingredient in defining the clones' inner world since this unveils and translates their soul: emotions reveal their human nature, nullifying the mind-body divide" (Ulmer et al., 183). Art acts as a springboard that helps clones like Kathy, Ruth and Tommy express themselves and, therefore, it gives them a sense of freedom that contrasts with their physical entrapment at Hailsham.

An insight into the psyche of humanoids and their inborn good-nature is presented in Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*, which tells the story of Klara, a sun-powered robot, or as she is referred to in the novel, an "artificial friend", who is purchased by Josie and her mother. From the beginning of the novel, when she was still on display at the store, Klara is described as a keen-sighted, observant and a very empathetic "artificial friend", who "unlike most AFs …. longed to see more of the outside" (*Klara* 8). Klara's curiosity, deep understanding and analysis of her surroundings render her a "human, endowed with 'intentionality', which is an essential trait of humanity and its consciousness" (Scribano and Korstanje 243). Unlike *Never Let Me Go*, in this novel, Ishiguro presents the close friendship that develops between a humanoid and a human. *Klara and the Sun* is not about "human" relationships among "post-humans", but it is rather about how an artificial creation has the capability to exhibit immeasurable kindness that falls out of human capacity. This novel reflects a new prism through which the humanoid can be evaluated and looked at. It is not only Klara who is interested in mingling with the "outside" world that she sees through the window of the store, but also parents buy artificial friends for their children to keep them company. While this window where she is displayed can be viewed as a spatial barrier that separates her from the outside world, it is equally a connector that instills in her the desire to penetrate the world and interact with the passers-by. As such, knowledge is not innately engraved in the consciousness

of Klara or the clones, but it is rather acquired through experience, interaction and exposure.

III. Overcoming Marginality through Camaraderie

By the middle of the twentieth-century, Foucault introduced a concept called "biopolitics", which refers to the interference of governmental bodies in regulating and controlling people's bodies and lives. This relationship between one's biological existence and governmentality constitutes what bio-politics is about, which Foucault defines as "the entrance of the living species into the calculus of political rationality" (Lemm and Vatter 14). The ambiguity of the cyborgs' social position in the contemporary period left them in a state of uncertainty, oscillating between their categorization as "living species" or as Man's inanimate invention. In Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto", she proposes that a cyborg is a "hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction" (5). Through Haraway's perception of the cyborg's position, it can be deduced that, although they are "created" or "replicated", they are still active participants in their own social reality, which makes them artificial creations with human qualities. Therefore, since they forge "social relations", they straddle two different worlds; the dystopian world of technology and machinery and the human world of social reality. In so saying, the concept of "biopolitics" can be applied to the condition of these post-human agents in the two novels, rendering them post-humans who still fall under the hegemony of people and the social stereotypes inflicted on them. Ishiguro delineates this ambiguous position ascribed to them to depict how, although they are not socially categorized as human beings, their humanity and altruism are exceptionally incomparable. Kathy starts to realize her marginal position and difference from other humans when Madame visits Hailsham to view and collect the artwork done by clones. Kathy starts to realize her idiosyncrasy, believing that "there are people out there, like Madame, who don't hate you or wish you any harm, but who nevertheless shudder at the thought of you … and who dread the idea of your hand brushing against theirs" (*Never* 29). However, this sense of inferiority, or rather peculiarity, is instantly countered by Ishiguro's attempt at humanizing these clones. As the novel progresses, Kathy recounts Tommy's romantic interest, breakup and reunion with Ruth. Between love and friendship, Kathy herself develops an interest in Tommy. This complex love triangle demonstrates the emotional side of these clones and how, no matter how much they try to retain their love and friendship, they are destined to meet their fates. However, this sense of loneliness and marginality never ceases to tie them together and create a kind of friendship that perpetuates, in spite of all the challenges they go through. At the beginning of the novel, Kathy contends that, notwithstanding the fact that they might differ, they have "grown up together at Hailsham", and "knew [and] remembered things no one else did" (*Never* 9). Throughout the novel, there is an emphasis on the bond between Kathy, Ruth and Tommy, and how, no matter how their relationship is sometimes threatened by some impediments, they are all grouped together. Accordingly, on account of their awareness of their oddity, an intense sense of camaraderie grows among the three, propelling them to unite together in the face of all the discriminatory practices that are carried out against them.

VI: Post-human Spaces: A Vehicle for Empowerment

In his book, *The Future of Post-human Space-Time* (2006), Peter Baofu provides a different definition of space and time, emphasizing that these two co-dependent notions are fluid and changing, liable to mutation depending on the changing nature of world politics and demographic distribution. Baofu speculates that space and time will eventually be altered and distorted after the dominance of cyborgs and humanoids. He contends that "space and time will not last, to be eventually superseded by post-humans in different forms … thus, even the physical existence of space-time cannot last forever, with ever more transformations in the process" (8). In *Never Let Me Go,* Ishiguro traces the development of these clones, along with the challenges, changes and troubles they meet throughout their stay either at Hailsham or the Cottages. As two central spaces in the novel, Hailsham and the Cottages represent different stages in the lives of clones. When they reach their teenage years, they move to the Cottages where they start to mingle with older clones, who are also known as the "veterans." The Cottages acts as a transitional phase in the lives of clones; it transports them from their childhood years at Hailsham to the hospital where they officially become "donors." As they slowly learn about their fate, students at Hailsham were initially oblivious to their own fate. When they learn about the truth of their origins and the role they were "invented" to play in life, Miss Emily explains that, as the head guardian of Hailsham, she intends not to talk about their inexorable fate, hoping that they will at least embrace what they temporarily have. Miss Emily admits to Tommy that she "lied to [him] [and] fooled [him]", but she also tells him how she "sheltered [him] … and gave [him] [his] childhood" (*Never* 179). Merging the reality of the world with Ishiguro's overt call for the rights of these post-humans, or perhaps "sub-human" creatures, he links the fall of Hailsham to the dreariness of the future. After Kathy, Ruth and Tommy leave Hailsham, they learn about its closing, which symbolizes the cessation of any future care for these clones, and the annihilation of any kind of "refuge" for them. Ishiguro envisions a future that is devoid of humanity and empathy, which he imparts through the words of the Madame: "I saw a new world coming rapidly. More scientific, efficient, yes. More cures for the old sicknesses. Very good. But a harsh cruel world" (*Never* 182). The cruelty of the future heralds the dominance of a dystopian world, which, will though bring in many technological advancements, will equally yield the most adverse effects on humanity.

The behavioral changes these clones, particularly Ruth, encounter when they move to the Cottages attest to the well-delineated life sketch that Ishiguro draws for these clones. As a typical teenage student, Ruth changes when she moves to the Cottages, which is akin to the university level, and starts to act differently as she tries ceaselessly to mingle with the "veterans" there. Kathy reflects on her friendship with Ruth at the Cottages, realizing how "those early months at the Cottages [were] a strange time in [their] friendship", and how they "quarrel[led] over little things, but at the same time [they] confid[ed] in each other more than ever" (*Never* 86). Their growing sense of empathy towards one another is best expressed in their pre-completion stage when they approach their death, after dealing with the intolerable pain of organ donation. When Ruth is about to "complete", Kathy could not leave her bedside and she held tightly to her hand, which "squeez[ed] whenever another flood of pain made her twist away" (*Never* 158). Ishiguro accentuates the kind of nonverbal language that these clones exclusively communicate through with each other. This is demonstrated in the eye language between Kathy and Ruth when the latter is on her

deathbed. After calling the nurse to bring more painkillers for Ruth, Kathy explains how they looked sharply at each other, and, although Ruth did not utter a word, Kathy "knew what her look meant … my hope was that with our gazes locked as they were for those few seconds, she'd read my expression exactly as I'd read hers" (*Never* 158). As they are fully aware of their fates, these clones cling to any hope, irrespective of how slim it is, just to enjoy some more time together.

This pinch of hope is represented in Norfolk, which is described in the novel as the "lost corner … where all the lost property found in the country ended up" (*Never* 49). Clones have high hopes that they will find in Norfolk what they lost or what, more precisely, they never initially possessed. Kathy and Ruth start to come up with their own interpretation of the mysterious space of Norfolk, which they always find missing from Miss Emily's calendar collection. They do not only form fantasies about the place, but they hail it as a place of retrieval, gain and resolution. On their trip to Norfolk, Kathy and Ruth believe that they might find their "possibles"; the original human they replicate. As a space that counters their strict, regulatory educational institutions where they were brought up, Norfolk is a hope-inspiring one where they believe they will understand their true selves and resolve their identity crisis. Since these clones have no knowledge about their past, "what they are looking for is [a] missing (primal) memory which exists even before their existence", and their attempts at trying to find out their originals turn out to be "disillusioning" (Tseng 110). The idea of predestination and the power of fate is obviously shown when Miss Lucy, the guardian at Hailsham, tells the clones blatantly: "none of you will go to America, none of you will be film stars … your lives are set out for you. You'll become adults, then before you're old, before you're even middle-aged, you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you was created to do" (*Never* 58). Their knowledge of their own fate binds Kathy, Ruth and Tommy together until they reach the stage of completion and die. Ishiguro presents how love, friendship and tolerance stem from empathy and, more importantly, from sharing the same trying circumstances and the same dismal fate.

Throughout the novel, there is a contrast between life inside and outside of Hailsham. Hailsham, as a school that is limitedly for clones, is deemed an inversion of reality; an eccentric place that gathers idiosyncratic students together. The dichotomy between the "normal" and the "alien" runs throughout the novel. Kathy is aware of the fear and repulsion that humans feel towards herself and her fellow clones, and she even compares clones to "spiders", believing that "Madame was afraid of us. But she was afraid of us in the same way someone might be afraid of spiders … it had never occurred to us to wonder how we would feel, being seen like that, being the spiders" (*Never* 29). Kathy imbibes her own peculiarity since she takes pride in her achievements as a carer for other 'donors', which shows how "there is something obtuse and even self-harmingly complacent about Kathy's account of an atrocity in which she is also a victim --- the compulsory farming of 'clones' for body parts to allow non-clones ('normals') to live longer" (Bennett 16). In Chapter 6, Kathy affirms that any place that lies beyond the borders of Hailsham is a "fantasy land", and she emphasizes her ignorance of the outside world by explaining how she and her fellow clones "had only the haziest notions of the world outside and about what was and wasn't possible there" (*Never* 49). Between two opposing worlds lie these clones, who straddle two different realms that leave them totally lost, unable to properly

identify themselves. Ishiguro employs Kathy as a representative of all other clones who have the very same feelings, concerns and thoughts that she speaks out. Through Kathy, Ishiguro gives voice and recognition to "duplications" who are endowed with human characteristics and who, unconsciously, "adop[t] the euphemistic language of discrimination … ('normals' for the privileged natural-born people in a society; 'completing' for the death of a clone whose vital organs have been harvested" (Bennett 3). This sense of loss is demonstrated in Kathy's interest in the song "Never Let Me Go" that she listens to and imagines that it is a song from a mother to her newly born baby, imploring him/her to hold on to her. This is not only a demonstration of human impulse, but it is also a pitiful scene of the motherly instincts that are denied to female clones like Kathy. This explains how the title itself does not merely refer to the song that Kathy plays in the novel, but it rather carries an earnest imploration to "never let go", either of the memories, bygone friendships, or deceased clones who were lost to donation. Towards the end of the novel, Kathy contemplates her future and reflects on her past, awaiting the time of her "completion", after which her life ends.

The store in *Klara and the Sun* can fairly be compared to Hailsham in *Never Let Me Go.* In spite of all the false beliefs they had at Hailsham, Kathy, Ruth and Tommy still hold tightly to the memories they made at the school, especially after they leave and mingle with the world. Both Hailsham and the store serve as spaces of "otherness"; in other words, they are places that are particularly constructed to accommodate people who share common idiosyncrasies. Once these "othered" people, or humanoids, step out of their "homes", they become either fascinated or, conversely, discouraged by the outside world that has long been unknowable for them. When Klara leaves with Josie and her mother, it is her first time to get wholly immersed in a world that is dominated by humans. Throughout her stay at the store, she only saw replicas of herself; other artificial friends who belong to different models. However, after she moves with Josie, she experiences how challenging it is to deal with humans, and notices how daily interactions are far more difficult than merely watching them through the window. Klara narrates how Melania Housekeeper, the one who takes care of Josie and Mother's house, "shortened the time [Klara] spent with Josie … and, initially, she even attempted to prevent [her] coming into the kitchen for the mother's quick coffee and Josie's breakfast" (*Klara* 52). When Manager, the unnamed human woman who takes care of the store, comments on Klara's observable intelligence and sharp eye, Klara asserts that "a child like that, with no AF, would surely be lonely" (*Klara* 11). Since the fundamentals of humanism are shaken and new spaces have been created to accommodate these humanoids, a growing sense of camaraderie is formed and cemented between humans and post-humans.

VII. The Human/Post-human Conflict

These AFs also long for company and their sense of loneliness is no less agonizing than that of children, who opt for the company of a robot. The sense of estrangement that annoys and takes hold of Kathy and her friends at Hailsham in *Never Let Me Go* is also featured in *Klara and the Sun*, which renders the latter a novel in which "the theme of loneliness is more central … and investigated in a more

fundamental way … Klara navigates a sea of human solitude, where the desire to love and be loved is forever frustrated and no relationship … seems permanent" (Bennett 222). Instead of being a tool that causes separation from the outside world, like most technological inventions, Klara connects with humans and brings them together through her high emotional and intuitive faculties. One of the downsides of technology is the process of "lifting", which is a process of genetic transformation that young children go through to become more intelligent. Josie, the fourteen-year-old girl who goes with her mother to buy Klara from the store, is eventually "lifted", but, her friend, Rick, is "unlifted", thereby leading to his exclusion from all institutions and events that are only reserved for "lifted" students. While "lifted" students are given more opportunities and privileges than those who are "unlifted", they are bound to eternally suffer from chronic illnesses that eventually lead to their death. When Rick's mother says that she wishes to send him away to Atlas Brookings College so that he can undergo the genetic process of "lifting" and leave her alone, Klara is surprised that "someone would desire so much a path that would leave her in loneliness … I didn't think that humans would choose loneliness" (*Klara* 152). In spite of the differences between them, both Klara and Josie are extremely lonely, and, while the former exhibits boundless compassion and love, the latter is utterly inappreciative of what Klara does to her. Ironically, instead of choosing a fellow human, these children choose to befriend artificial friends to keep them company and alleviate their pain, which foretells the eventual eradication of humans and the impending advent of a futuristic world. Rick tells Klara how agonizing it feels that he does not belong to other kids, and how he feels inferior, telling Klara "you are super-intelligent and I am an idiot kid who hasn't even been lifted" (*Klara* 125). When Klara lives with Josie, she learns that Josie has a sister, named Sal, who died earlier after being lifted. However, because of the gross discrimination that "unlifted" students are subjected to, Josie's mother induces Josie to undergo this genetic process to become more intelligent and quick-witted.

Since Josie's mother is fully aware that she might lose her daughter on account of this genetic transformation, she decides to resort to Mr. Capaldi, a man whom the mother hires to duplicate Josie and "get her portrait done … there has been a long break on account of her health, but she's stronger now and so I want her to go in for another sitting" (*Klara* 150). Ishiguro reflects on the complexity of the mother-daughter relationship by revealing how Josie's mother chose to let her daughter undergo this genetic enhancement process, yet she still cannot come to terms with the fact that she can live without her. The rigid caste system that distinguishes between "lifted" and "unlifted" students is nothing but a reflection of the oppressive social hierarchy that permeates society, and which also brings in some questions about human/machine boundaries that put the latter in jeopardy when trespassed. As hard-hearted as it seems to be, Josie's mother wants Klara to "train" herself to become Josie so that she can compensate for her loss after she dies. This idea of Klara becoming another Josie is a complete eradication of the former's identity, making it another replica of a human, as in the case of *Never Let Me Go,* and discarding her sentience altogether. Reason is no longer exclusively associated with humans, but humanoids as well can masterfully perform the very same duties allotted to humans. In light of these paradoxes that expose the helplessness of both humans and post-humans, Ishiguro examines the pitfalls of technology and, also, prophesizes the bleak

and humanity-free future that is likely to take place. However, he still aims to present how these post-humans deserve to be placed on a par with human beings.

Klara in the story is more than a humanoid or an artificial invention; she rather emblematizes all the basic human emotions that are, ironically, nonexistent among humans. Since she regards the sun as her deity, Klara implores the sun to cover Josie and help her overcome her illness. As a means of sustenance, nourishment and religious escapism, the sun's "special nourishment proved as effective for Josie as for Begger Man, and after the dark sky morning, she grew not only stronger, but from a child into adult" (*Klara* 285). The notion of "love" is re-forged and re-evaluated in this novel; Ishiguro offers a deep understanding of what everlasting love means and how far it is central to the human experience in general. Since Rick remains to be "unlifted", which does not place him on a par with Josie, they both drift apart after they join college. The importance of love is also shown in Klara's plea to the sun to save Josie, telling him that the bond between Josie and Rick is both strong and unbreakable. However, after Josie's cure, Rick vents to Klara about his relationship with Josie, telling her "when you passed it on that Josie and I really loved each other, that was the truth at the time. No one can claim you misled or tricked them. But now we're no longer kids, we have to wish each other the best and go our different ways" (*Klara* 288*).* Ishiguro questions the essence of love and provides a new lens through which love can be assessed, making it possible for an electronic invention to be the savior of a human's life. The fact that Josie is cured at the end, which spared the mother and Mr. Capaldi the need to replicate her, also re-assesses the replaceability of humans in one's life. Towards the end of the novel, Klara reflects on her entire journey ever since she left the store and went with Josie, expressing her pleasure that she did not have to replicate her. On account of her very remarkable observational skills and intelligence, Klara believes that no one would replace Josie for her mother and Melania Housekeeper, especially after the pain they went through when they lost Sal, Josie's sister, before. Klara experiences familial love throughout her stay with Josie, which is, again, another form of love that Ishiguro presents in the novel through the eyes of an artificial friend. She comments on the bond between Josie and her mother saying: "I would never have reached what they felt for Josie in their hearts" (*Klara* 302). Compared to humans, and even specialists like Mr. Capaldi, Klara notices from the beginning how the idea of creating a "duplicate" of Josie is non-viable. Josie eventually manages to circumvent her lethal illness, which was almost incurable, only through Klara's intervention. Ishiguro presents how human's potential for love and kindness is inversely proportional to those of robots; while humans' innate goodness can diminish, robots' kindness endures immeasurably.

The ending of both novels, *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*, is piercingly poignant as it unleashes the helplessness, victimization and loneliness of these post-human agents, who were initially created to provide aid, either socially or medically, for human beings. *Klara and the Sun* ends with Klara's loneliness in the yard, having no other companions but the sun. The mystical relationship she has with the sun endows her with faith, resilience and a positive mindset. This transcendental image of the sun also signifies the need to either ameliorate or transcend the ills of the future, which can possibly be done through faith and the pervasiveness of humanity. Towards the end of the novel, Klara is visited by Manager whom she tells about all the happy memories she had with Josie, irrespective of the fact that she was

sometimes exposed to negligence and marginality. The fact that Ishiguro presents how an "artificial" creation can have this immense religious faith sheds light on the amiability and humanity of Klara, who tells Manager that "the sun was very kind to me. He was always kind to me from the start. But when I was with Josie, once, he was particularly kind" (*Klara* 300). The ending of the novel does not only signify the potentialities that Klara innately possesses and can channel through the human sphere, but it also subverts human autonomy and independence, which are two vital notions that humanists have long called for and centralized throughout history. It is not the mother or Melania Housekeeper who intervene to help with the healing process of Josie, but, ironically, it is the "human-made" invention that calls upon divine intervention to cure her. Klara's spiritual power and moral compassion demonstrate how "post-humanism calls into question the conventional assumptions about human autonomy, rationality, and agency … in doing so, post-humanism has opened up a wide range of questions in the twenty-first century that call for the reexamining of representations of life, bodies, and volition" (Clason and Demson 2). It is not only a re-examination of human nature or a negation of post-human monstrosity, but the novel also brings to light a new perception of religion and spirituality through Klara's unalloyed good-heartedness and intriguing journey from the store to Josie's household. This new perspective of religion, which is presented by a post-human, shows how "artificial intelligence [in the novel] acquires some sort of consciousness and is rendered as a kind of technological semi-human who barely resembles the human being, but at the same time presents its all too human characteristics" (Benedikter 159). This, therefore, demonstrates how critical post-humanism encourages the humanization of post-human creatures by giving them a human identity that is not only limited to physical shape or moral qualities, but also by proving how they can still have their own deity and religious affiliation.

VIII. Conclusion

Both novels, *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*, chronicle the lives of either human replicas or post-human agents that tell their stories and reveal their own confusions, miseries and unheard feelings. Instead of knowing about either Kathy or Klara from the point of view of a human, Ishiguro provides readers with a different worldview that is described and seen from the perspective of "post-humans." The novels depict different types of 'post-human' characters: genetically engineered clones designed as human replicas and Klara, an artificial creation with an unexpected capacity for empathy and compassion. The two novels re-evaluate the meaning of love, camaraderie and friendship in a rapidly changing, contradictory world that both centralizes and, conversely, peripheralizes post-humans. Despite the fact that the two novels entirely focus on the role of Klara and Kathy, they also trace how these two characters are marginalized on account of their "non-human" affiliation. However, both novels ultimately present them in a very self-denying image that makes them more of "heroines" in their own right, who had to take into stride many obstacles and nuisances to either help alleviate the pain of their fellow clones, as in the case of *Never Let Me Go*, or accompany and heal humans like Josie in *Klara and the Sun.* The contradictions that underlie the novels are also demonstrated in the representation of both the downsides and upsides of technology. While Ishiguro laments the absence of humanity in a future that will, perhaps, be dominated by post-humans and artificial

intelligence, he also posits a different positive facet of this technological breakthrough, showing how they, paradoxically, embody the goodness of humanity. The two novels demonstrate the indispensability of these artificial beings, disproving the concept of "anthropocentrism" that grants human beings supremacy over all non-humans. Therefore, through the employment of critical post-humanism as a main theoretical framework that crystallizes the leading role that post-humans play in the contemporary era, *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun* are deemed literary "tour de force" that offer a new definition of love, faith, companionship and, most importantly, re-evaluate the meaning of "humanity" in a "post-human", human-free world.

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