



## Research article

# Artificial Intelligence (AF) in Human Fantasy: The Birth of a New Subject in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*

Sharifa Akter<sup>1\*</sup> , Niger Afroz Islam <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Department of English, University of Asia Pacific. \*Corresponding author.

## Abstract

In *Klara and the Sun* (2021), the Nobel Prize-winning Japanese-British writer Kazuo Ishiguro fantasizes about an unspecified future world of possibilities for life with Artificial Intelligence. This novel raises complex questions about the notion of intelligent life, the fantasy of transcending the limits of nature, the future of the social bond, and the constitution of human emotions. This study portrays the unconscious fears, fantasies, and fascination created in the novel's plot, centred on the solar-powered AF (Artificial Friend). The novelty of this paper is to show how Klara, the Artificial Friend, the humanoid, traverses the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real and becomes a new Lacanian subject. The careful explanation of the study attempts to chart the impact of a new subject on human fantasy in society and culture from Žižek's concept of Ideological Fantasy. It explores how subjects lose their internal being when their lives are entirely commodified and exploited as a component of capitalism. Finally, Ishiguro ends his novel where the being (nature) owns over the thing (commodity). This paper will also attempt to enlist the impact of dystopian fiction on society and culture. Hence, in conclusion, this study explores a constructive approach to understanding human fantasy and acknowledges the text as a scope that meets interdisciplinary promises.

**Keywords:** Artificial Friend (AF), Lacanian Subjectivity Formation, Ideological Fantasy, Desire.



**Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**

## Introduction:

Sir Kazuo Ishiguro's lyrical tales that yearn for life, fear of disorganization and abandonment; the role that memory demonstrates a persistent concern with power and the effects of authoritarian ideologies. In the ninth work of fiction, *Klara and the Sun* (2021), Ishiguro blends dystopia and utopia, nature and nurture, hybridity and mortality, sci-fi and social realism, and humanism and posthumanism. This unique, technically gifted writer carefully crafted a new subject named AF (artificial friend) in *Klara and the Sun*. This new subject is challenging to delineate as the language

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is no more than a code-driven by algorithms that register basic visual patterns with no appetite, sleep, taste, or smell. However, the aesthetic representation of this Artificial Friend with overwhelming emotion inspires this study to review the new subject's subjectivity formation through Lacanian Subjectivity.

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021) has drawn much of the intellectuals' attention to the relationship between robots and humans from posthuman and transhuman perspectives. Yu Ting (2022) reflects on the readers' challenges of the symbolic import and profound thoughts about the bond between humans, technology, and nature. AK Ajeesh and S. Rukmini (2022) discuss the perspective of an Artificial Friend and confer a posthuman perception that challenges the conventional images of AI as a machine devoid of emotions. For instance, Mabrouk (2022) pays attention to how humans deal with robots and the choices related to ethics, politics, and morality. Stenseke (2022) also focuses on the morality of Artificial Friends. Connors (2023) explored the narrative and perspective of Interestingness in *Klara and the Sun*. Sahu, O. P., & Karmakar, M. (2022) foreground how the concept of the social robot delineated to offer empathy, care, and companionship turns into a failed project from disposability theory and posthuman effect. This fabulist science fiction channels academics to dive deep into the existential questions humanity has pondered for millennia. The eponymous character Klara, the narrative technique, ethics, and the relationship of AI, Nature, and Humans became a primary focus for most scholars.

This study foregrounds an unexplored avenue that deserves further exploration. This work is an interdisciplinary study – psychoanalytic thought and science fiction on *Klara and the Sun*. Thus, philosophers and cultural critics argue that in the post-analogue, data-driven world, humanoids are not science fiction characters; they are a part of our social reality, "a cultural other," turning into an increasingly mature anthropomorphic technological reality (Kim et al., 2009; Kim and Kim 2013: 309; Coeckelberg, 2011). The plausibility of this new notion of this paper creates scope for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. The Lacanian concept of fantasy is an indispensable idea for the conception of subjectivity and reality in the work of Slavoj Žižek, notably his major book, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, toward exploring ideological fantasy. 'Fantasy' as subjective broadens our insight into Lacan's and Žižek's theoretical methodology.

Naomi Kritzer's 2016 Hugo Award-winning story "Cat Pictures Please" is analyzed with Lacanian psychoanalytic thought and raises fascinating questions about the potential personhood and subjectivity of an AI, desire, and the psychoanalytic "cure." (Spicer, 2020) Purnima Kamath (2020) explored some preliminary thoughts on language-based approaches to building the AI's unconscious and drew parallels with some current thinking around consciousness in AI with Lacan's notion of the conscious ego.

The first section of the paper introduces the new concept of Artificial Friend. How an Artificial Friend is treated in the human fantasy world and the impact of its presence in society and culture. The second half of the paper aims to show the development of the new subject of Artificial Friends from the perspective of Lacanian Subjectivity. The paper will specifically focus on the psychoanalysis of artificial intelligence, Klara. The study shows the character's growth through the imaginary, symbolic, and real stages of this new subjectivity—the Lacanian and Ideological fantasy foreground the complexities and ambiguities of human emotions and the incomprehensible

simulated subjectivity of a non-human. The paper would like to draw on critical perspectives from cultural psychoanalytical theory and its impact on a dystopian society.

### **The Concept of Artificial Friend**

Humans have always cherished the 'fantasy' of an ideal society built upon 'true' human values. The desired true human values are channelled through a new subjectivity emerging in the name of Artificial Friend (AF). Ishiguro says, '... I'm not interested in the solid facts [of history] ... the focus ... is elsewhere, in the emotional upheaval.' (Mason, 1989, 39) In the *Klara and the Sun* (2021), Kazuo Ishiguro fantasizes about an empathetic humanoid surpassing a hyperreal subject's artificiality. Ishiguro termed it as an AF, artificial intelligence. It performs the role of companionship and maintains the human philosophy of friendship. Kazuo Ishiguro optimistically foresees a technologically saturated future where AF will aspire to modify the inner life and social relationships of the human community and be able to decode the complexities of human emotions. The idea of artificial friendship offers empathy, care, and companionship.

This paper draws on critical perspectives in the representation of the simulated empathetic mind of an Artificial Friend. Klara's fantasy of becoming a real friend of a human and becoming a subject allows her to exceed the freedom her master permits. Klara denies becoming a human pet, a decorative appliance, or a security device rather than a friend. Friendship is the cement for the formation of strong social ties. Thomas (2012) states that Ishiguro represents "a particular range of human behaviors, re-enacting states of mind which are of particular interest to Ishiguro." (p. 1) The cultural construction of Artificial Friend (AF) reflects the social process that constitutes Klara as the subject. A Subject is born and transformed by her immersion into culture. Apart from the role of Josie's companion, Klara was treated as a guest, a machine-like vacuum cleaner, and a sentient. She was accused of taking seats at the theatre, a threat to replace humans in a mechanized society. Josie's mother fantasizes about existential juxtaposition regarding the potentiality of Klara not as Josie's friend but as Josie's being.

Klara, the artificial friend, is also set as a contrast to the fake, artificial human friendship rather than an expensive purchase, a sophisticated plaything for Josie. Klara is shown to fulfill the promises humans always fantasize about in the friendship philosophy. The artificial friend is programmed to fulfil their functions as 'Friends' and strive for perfection. Klara has outstanding observational and imitation skills and inquisitiveness. However, the idealized form of Klara's friendship serves loyalty and selflessness beyond her programming.

### **Subjectivity Formation in the *Klara and the Sun*:**

The fantasy concept has already been invoked in the literature to enhance our understanding of subjectivity. By applying Lacanian perspective on subjectivity and fantasy, this paper analyses the critical implications of psychological and ideological fantasy, the identity formation of the new subject (AI), and the impact of fantasy-associated concepts in the relationship between human and artificial intelligence. The identity formation of AF Klara traverses through Klara's Mirror Stage in the AI store, the Symbolic stage in Josie's house, and Klara's unattained Real self as scrape at the ending. "Subjectivity is precisely the condition of our being which enables us to recognize ourselves as subjects or persons." (Sheikh, 2017, p. 1) Ishiguro's new subject, the artificial friend (AF) in the human world, becomes a subject with some constructed notions and a part of the more

extensive cultural and social system. The plot of *Klara and the Sun* reveals the mirror stage of a new subject, an artificial friend. An external image reflected in the AI store window creates the perceptions of selfhood of the new B3 model AI Klara. The new robots, Klara and Rosa, get nourishment from the Sun; on the other hand, Rex, a boy AF, suggests Klara draw power from the floorboards. As Klara overdraws the power, the store's lights weaken. Rex calls Klara *greedy* and genders her as a *girl*. This store is the mirror stage for Klara that establishes her ego, which is fundamentally dependent upon external objects, on an *other*. Klara is programmed to get nourishment from the Sun for survival. Her ego is formed with this anthropomorphic description of Rex. A high-ranking woman comments about Rex's model that "B2, third series" had solar absorption problems. She also notes that underpowered robots can have behavioural issues. So, Klara's primordial form of "I" is formed as she is objectified by the other. Afterwards, Klara realizes that Rex has been commenting on her power usage as he has power issues. So, Klara's nicety and observational power formed an *Ideal-I*, determined by the "imaginary order," and started functioning as a subject. "...before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject (Lacan, 1977a, p. 4)

Thus, Klara enters the imaginary phase of her subjectivity with an ego or specular image of herself. *"Unlike most Afs, unlike Rosa, I'd always longed to see more of the outside- and to see it in all its detail."* (Ishiguro, 2021, p.5) The emerging ego of Klara starts to differentiate herself from other AF in the store. Lacan places the ego or consciousness in the realm of the Imaginary register. The conscious mind is formed during the mirror stage, and the subject is separated from the ego. Klara has an urge to get the scope to be at the store window not only due to get the direct nourishment of the Sun or being chosen to be displayed to the outside world, which are the two vital reasons for every AF in the store, but she wanted to see the outside more in details. As she gets the scope to experience the outside human world view through the window, it works as a mirror and starts reflecting the image of Klara as an *Ideal-I*. Klara learns to explain on her own. She identifies her ability to think and feel. Klara notes that Rosa, the companion AF at the store window, lacks the curiosity and observation power about the world outside, unlike her. *"I noticed such things all the time, but said nothing and let Rosa go on believing what she did."* (Ishiguro, 2021, p.13)

The store Manager's instructions regarding the conduct of the AFs with the outside human world and the inspiration they have to find a home for them work as a 'specular image' of herself to Klara. Being in the imaginary stage, Klara mediates between her ego and the *Ideal-I*. Standing on the store window, watching the outside world, Klara imagines a wholeness of her *Ideal-I*; she synthesizes the bits and pieces from what she observes; she faces her duality and her conflicts; and finally identifies her tendency to act more like humans.

In addition, the Manager's praiseworthy words about Klara's extraordinary qualities (her human-like emotions) create her image as different from the other AFs in the store. Klara also forms her expectations from human society; she expects response and collaboration from them as she imagines her similarities with humans.

*"The imaginary is the realm of image and imagination, deception and lure. The principal illusions of the imaginary are those of wholeness, synthesis, autonomy, duality and, above all, similarity."* (Evans, 1996, p.184)

Thus, being in the realm of the imaginary, Klara goes through the process of 'identification' and 'narcissism,' builds her ego, and establishes her relationship with others. *"I would not have wanted anyone other than Rosa beside me in the windows during those days...but our time there did bring out the differences in our attitudes."* (Ishiguro, 2021, p.14) Klara observes the two fighting taxi drivers, the emotional meeting of an old couple, the children on the road assisted by their Afs, and the coating machine -all these images of the outside world work as 'signifiers.' She recognizes herself and builds her response, her basis of likes and dislikes, love and hate, admiration and despair. Considering these factors, Klara creates her attraction to be more like humans and to be in the company of humans. She also creates disgust for her mechanical entity and the domination of the Manager with her rules set for the Afs in communicating with the customers.

Moreover, Klara disobeys the Manager's instruction when Josie interacts with her for the first time and shows interest in taking Klara as her AF. At this point, she felt alienated and differentiated herself from other subjects (Rex, Rosa, The Store). According to Lacan, subjective formation's symbolic phase starts when a subject feels disjointed and fragmented. Then, the use of symbols is the savior of the trapped subject. *'The imaginary is decipherable only if it is rendered into symbols'* (Lacan, J., & Granoff, W. 1956, p.265) *This use of the symbolic is the only way for the analytic process 'to cross the plane of identification'* (Lacan, 1977b, p.273)

Klara's Symbolic recognition starts when she discovers her differences with her other fellow Afs- Rex, Rosa, who worked as the signifier for Kalra, and Klara reveals her entity as a separate being. She considers the store her family; staying in the store, surrounded by the other Afs, makes Klara feel rooted. However, Klara's observation power of the outside human world differs from her peer AFs. These feelings create a void/lack in her of the incomprehensiveness of her experiences in that human world. All these observations of Klara about the human world work as signifiers/symbols and tend Klara to fill up the lack or void she feels. She continues the process of identification in the symbolic order. *'Still, there were other things we saw from the window- other kinds of emotions I did not understand- of which I eventually found some versions in myself.'* (Ishiguro, 2021, p.16)

Some incidents are incomprehensible to Klara, as she could not answer why the old couple was sad even though they were hugging each other with compassion or how the taxi drivers patched up so quickly; she could not understand why the Afs were unhappy with the children even though they had found their home. All these seem complex to Klara, and she tries to analyze these matters and cannot share them with her friend Rosa, as Rosa fails to notice things like Klara. Kalra becomes puzzled and feels the urge to ask for the answer: *" But the more I watched, the more I wanted to learn, and unlike Rosa, I became puzzled and then increasingly fascinated by the more mysterious emotions passers-by would display in front of us."* (Ishiguro, 2021, p.14)

The mentioned urge in Klara, her tendency to learn more about the human world, unlike the other Afs, is her driving force that systematizes her symbolic order and forms desire against her void/lack. *"So, I began to seek out on the sidewalks, inside the passing taxis, amidst the crowds waiting at the crossing-the sort of behavior about which I needed to learn"* (Ishiguro, 2021, p.14)

Klara moves among the signifiers with her desire to be signified as a good AF. At this moment, Josie becomes a primary signifier in Kalra's subjective formation. Centring Josie Klara's desire

evolves forming the unconscious, leading her to the Real order. Klara made her first move, supported by her desire to establish a relationship with Josie before Josie became Klara's customer, inside and outside the store window. Klara responded to Josie in sign language-nodding, using her fingers and hands, a facial expression which she learned from her keen observation of the passers-by and somewhat from the store magazines. Despite the Manager's instructed etiquettes fixed for the AFs of the store, Klara made a different move as an individual subject, accepting the human social narratives represented by Josie.

*"I wanted also to tell her that if there were anything difficult, anything frightening, to be faced in her house, we would do it together..... it seemed to make her happy." (Ishiguro, 2021, p.21)*

Here, Klara is signified by Josie, makes a mutual promise to be for each other, enters the language, and learns to deal with others as a subject. Klara's desire to be Josie's AF is reflected when she ignores other customers and even rejects the Manager's persuasion. She behaves unfriendly and stiffly towards that customer and clarifies to the Manager in her language what she desires. Klara is the only one among the AFs who often questions and converses with the Manager and shares her opinion. The Manager also replies and explains to her. Klara's behaviour is her language; this is how she creates her communication rules and enters into language, showing the process of her subjective formation. *"Any aspect of the psychoanalytic experience which has a linguistic structure thus pertains to the symbolic order."* (Evans, 2006, p.203)

Through Josie, through language, Klara makes her liaison with the social narratives, the law, the community, and the culture. Klara's social or cultural cognition started when she took an interest in watching the outside world with extreme curiosity. Klara acts as a being and accepts her social entity through the successful reproduction of Josie's walk at the request of Josie's mother to impress her. This humanoid made a pact with the community of others- the 'Big Other'; Klara accepts the laws and contracts of the human world. Josie introduces Klara to a 'universe of symbols' (Evans, 2006, p.203), which creates a totality; as Lacan says, "In the symbolic order, the totality is called a universe" [ibid], and Klara finds a home (Josie's home). Klara's desire to be perfect AF and to help her kid more effectively made her recognize language and culture. As a being, Klara enters the triad of the symbolic order- the ego, the other, and the big Other. Shifting to Josie's home involved Klara in the triangle relationship, which is different from other AFs (ego); Klara, as a being (other) and Klara, as Josie's AF, in Josie's world (big Other), and she evolves her desire to be one of the humans. Klara is introduced to new social and cultural symbols associated with Josie's life, her house management, her relations, their behavior, their lifestyle, and every tiny detail of Josie's life. Klara learns to cope with all these as a subject. She follows everything Josie, her mother, and the housekeeper ask her to do; she also recognizes their likes and dislikes, primarily related to Josie: *"...but soon I learned how important it was, nonetheless, for Josie to be able to sit with the Mother during the quick coffee."* (Ishiguro, 2021 p.42)

### **Formation of Klara's Unconscious:**

Gradually, Klara overcomes the initial difficulties in the logistic support of Josie's house; she gets habituated to household matters and learns to adjust herself following Josie's trick to sit on the high stool in the lobby. Melania, the housekeeper, possesses a great dislike and difficulty for Klara when she wants to treat Klara as one of the home appliances of their house. Klara was able to

understand Melania's toughness, adapted to it as time passed, and discovered Melania's concern for Josie's well-being and health, as well as her importance in Josie's life.

Klara's encounter with Rick was also strenuous initially, as Klara could not understand Rick's relationship with Josie when she said that Rick was her friend. Klara thought she was Josie's best friend as Josie was lonely, and she came to their house to give Josie company. However, Josie clarifies that Rick is her special friend with whom she can plan her future life, and Klara is her AF. Klara comes to comprehend Rick's importance, and later, after meeting Rick, Klara realizes that, like Klara, Rick wants to protect Josie from all harm and feels caring for Josie. By this time, Klara learns about the reason for Josie's illness, the 'Lifted' children, and Josie's dead sister, Sal, who died of the same sickness Josie has. Rick's concern, Melania's concern, and Josie's sickness made Klara signified, and she built her unconscious to protect Josie as her AF. Following the meeting with Rick, Klara's next exploration of the social symbols comes from the interaction meeting arranged in Josie's home, where Josie was the host, and she invited other lifted children with their parents. The interaction meeting introduced Klara to the society that keeps AF for their children, namely the upper class. The meeting discloses to Klara the dominating approaches of the other owners of the AFs towards their AF. Klara feels discomfort around Josie and notices Josie's changed conduct towards her. For the first time, Klara disagrees with Josie and upsets Josie with her disobedience. Here, Klara launches her action rather than following only others' instructions, just like the other day when Klara did not wake Josie to join her mother for breakfast because Klara felt Josie needed early morning sleep. Both times, Josie was upset, and Klara was anxious about Josie's change as she thought it would change their friendly terms with each other, but the following day, Josie appeared to be the previous Josie. However, from the meeting, Klara learns that humans can change their behaviour, and she will have to cope with it.

Klara's mother is one of the significant signifiers in the symbolic function of Klara's subjectivity. Klara produces desire around Josie's Mother till the day Klara imitates Josie's walk; she feels that the mother is somehow strict, complex, and, most importantly, very significant to Josie. Since Klara came to Josie's house, the mother has been counting on Klara because Josie likes spending time with Klara. The mother accepts Klara as a subject when she permits Josie to watch the sunset with Klara instead of chatting with her as she returns from the office because, in Josie's words, Klara loves to watch the sunset from her room. Again, the mother takes Klara on a trip to Morgan Falls, leaving Josie at home for her sickness. Here, she considers Josie's wish to take Klara to Morgan Falls; simultaneously, she considers Klara a being. Klara feels signified when, on the way to the Falls, she talks about Josie's father that he is not with them, how AI replaces his job, and they are separated. Reaching the Falls, Josie's Mother interacts with Klara with more ease and eventually asks Klara to pretend to be Josie, and Klara hesitantly follows to do so. The mother also expresses her wish to have more outings without Josie and requests Klara not to share the matter of pretending with Josie. This trip makes Klara identify the insecurity Josie's mother was suffering from losing her one child and the sickness of Josie; the anxiety about losing her daughter. Though not fully aware and comfortable with the mother's intention to bring Klara as Josie's AF, Klara signified herself as a friend who would prevent the mother from losing Josie and Josie from losing her life. Klara feels her role to be essential and robust in her unconscious, which is opposed to her AI nature.

At this point, Klara faces disappointment when she fails to comprehend some of the signifiers, like- the bull she saw on the trip to the Falls, Josie's mother's complex mood, Josie's strange behavior during the interaction meeting, and the mystery of the Sun's setting place, which Klara thinks is the Sun's home. Klara gradually realizes the severity of Josie's sickness, which she marks as the cause of that complex emotion on the mother's face; she also learns about the 'lifted' and 'unlifted' from Rick, she learns about the death, the probability of Josie's death and detects it as the major crisis of their life. However, Klara could not solve the puzzle of death because she does not have death; she also could not solve the source of the Sun, her life force; she believes that the Sun can empower and solve every crisis. The Sun and death, two natural symbols from the universe, conflict with Klara's robotic understanding. Here, we can find a binary between Klara's technological nature and the nature of this universe that left Klara in a reality that creates her subjectivity. According to Lacan, 'the absence of any fixed relations between signifiers and signified.' (Evans, 2006, p.203) determines the symbolic with desiring subject headed to its Real and denotes with fantasy in her unconscious.

### **Desire, Fantasy, and the Real in Klara**

Josie's family adopted Klara as her AF. Nevertheless, with time, she imagines her role as being emotionally connected to her owner's companion. She fantasizes about being one of the family members. She moves on her symbolic order by her desire in search of the Real and creates fantasy around her reality. As for Lacan: *"Fantasy is opposed to reality, a purely illusory product of the imagination which stands in the way of a correct perception of reality."* (Evans, 2006, p. 60) Klara wants to fix the tension in the family due to Josie's illness. However, she was never expected to do so or understand their state. She gets treatment merely as an AF in the home and outside. Klara forgot her function as an AF determined by her owner, but she was reminded that she is an AF for performing some routine work for Jossie, who is sick. Klara learns the mother's original purpose when they meet Mr. Capaldi. She learned that Josie's mother was processing an AI replacement when Josie was not there, and she appointed Mr. Capaldi for this project. Mr. Capaldi wants help from Klara because she can imitate Josie almost perfectly, including Josie's emotional aspects. However, Klara feels disheartened to know the true purpose of her presence in the family and requests the mother not to lose hope. She receives her functions for Josie as her responsibility. However, in doing so, Klara fails to comprehend everything she feels and the humans do: *"I did wonder, if I were to inhabit the new Josie, then what would happen to... all this?"* (Ishiguro, 2021, p.183)

Thus, Klara is living an opposed reality, which she does not belong to. She needs help locating what she is searching for. Lacan says the real is *'the domain of whatever subsists outside symbolization.'* (Lacan, 2006. p. 388) At this point, Klara's signifiers stop working, leading her toward an impossibility. Josie's mother breaks down and requests Klara to help her. She does not seem to be that high-class, hard-core personality anymore, and Klara's measurement of the mother's character fails. The Mother and Klara are considered desiring subjects and learn to desire through their fantasy. The mother fantasizes about Klara as a new Josie, making Klara a desiring subject who desires to help out Josie. Next, Klara sees Josie bedridden and fears dying, and she prays to the Sun for special nourishment. Klara gets her power and force from the Sun; so, she believes that the Sun has the power to heal Josie. By this time, she also realized that machines like them and the coating machine were threatening Nature (Sun). Klara also reveals that the Sun does



not live in the barn; it was never in the barn; she does not know where, but still, she makes her entreaty to the Sun. Here again, Klara's fantasy conflicts with her reality, and she accepts the unknowable/rational. Klara's fantasy comes to be distorted. "*Distortion in the fantasy marks it as a compromise formation of the subject that enables the subject to sustain his desire.*" (Evans, 2006, p. 61)

Klara's compromised self only aims to get Josie back into her life, and she gets it when Josie revives her health after a long illness. Klara believes the Sun considered her prayer. Josie recovers from her sickness resulting from her genetic upgradation, and she continues her everyday life without any AF. Klara does not need to replace Josie with a new Josie; her vow to cure Josie is complete. However, she does not know how. Klara considers this unattainable, just as the source of the Sun, but accepts the Sun as the healer. Klara feels a kind of calmness inside her and surrenders to all the impossible and unknowable she cannot attain. Lacan links the real with the concept of impossibility; the real is '*the impossible*.' (Lacan, 1991, p.167)

Lastly, Klara turns out to be a scrap only, without any desire, waiting for her slow fade, wishing Josie a good life ahead. Staying in the old machinery room of Josie's home, Klara shifts through old memories and seems content doing so. Klara recollects that once she agreed to continue as Josie, she could continue Josie, but she could have never done this completely; there would be something always missing:

*"I did all I could learn, Josie, and had it become necessary, I would have done my utmost. However, I did not think it would have worked out so well. Not because I wouldn't have achieved accuracy. However hard I tried, I believe something would have remained beyond my reach now."* (Ishiguro, 2021, p.262)

### **Ideological Fantasy**

The new conditions of the new subject's social bond recognize the repressed unconscious of a dystopian society. To Žižek (2008), desire is caused by the urge to fill in "the empty place of the Thing" to suture the hole at the heart of the symbolic reality. (p. 150) Lacanian Fantasy explains how the subjects are constituted as a desiring subject, and there is distortion and compromise formation. All these lead the subject to create false consciousness. So, the illusion is double that creates a social impact, resulting in the class struggle and discrimination shown in the introduction. In Marxist Ideological Fantasy, Žižek argues that "ideology" is not only the imaginary relationship to reality; ideology itself is the notion that social reality relies on a fantasy. In his foundational work, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Slavoj Žižek calls it "false consciousness," This is a mental state, a false representation of the social reality. (Žižek, 2019, p. 27) In the plot of *Klara and the Sun*, the AFs and the human society live in a reality forming against their desire as a fantasy. Josie, Josie's mother, and the other family, like Josie, are living in a reality where they do not belong because they do not know what they are doing. "*It must be nice sometimes to have no feelings.*" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 84) Josie's mother does not know what she is doing. Because of a false representation of social reality, she wants to be like Klara, who has no feelings. A human who is not only to replace her child but also fantasizing about changing her human emotions like an AI. She needs clarification about what she wants. Klara also competes with other AF and fantasizes about sitting beside the humans. However, the reality differs.

Human beings are part of nature. Nevertheless, Ishiguro shows how the characters in the story lead an artificial life. Josie's mother always kept Josie from Sunlight, which nourishes humans and solar-powered AI. Later, Klara recognizes the fact and opens all the windows for Josie.

"The illusion is therefore double: it consists in overlooking the illusion which is structuring our real, effective relationship to reality. And this overlooked, unconscious illusion is what may be called the *ideological fantasy*" (Zizek, 2019, p. 30)

They are overlooking the instincts of a human child. They live in a constructed social reality where everything is preplanned and structured. They are not performing spontaneously.

Josie's mother was confused about replacing her daughter Josie with an AI replica. Mr. Capaldi, the AI expert, is an excellent example of Ideological fantasy. He is an AI expert who, for his job and survival, creates a false consciousness to overlook the most precious bond and feelings between a mother and her child. He says, "We must let it go." (Ishiguro, 2021, p.180) He is overlooking the illusion and forcing Josie's mother to fantasize that "The second Josie will not be a copy. She will be the same, and you'll have every right to love her just as you love Josie now." (Ishiguro, 2021, p.181)

Mr. Capaldi is trying to replace the most beautiful, selfless, pure relationship between a mother and her child. Josie's mother, Chrissie, leaves her husband to maintain her class and sacrifices her first daughter, Sara, during gene editing for better academic performance. She has risked again to enhance Josie's intellectual abilities even after witnessing the death of her firstborn. Her unparental emotions reveal her as a customer cum guardian who is more interested in such upliftment than the child's well-being. The Ideological Fantasy works through "The crucial relations between people take on the form of relations between things, between commodities—instead of immediate relations between people, we have social relations between things." (Zizek, 2019, p. 31)

The Socializing Party is a perfect example of how relations between people turned into relations between things. It is alarming that people count the relations based on what they possess. Though the socializing party is meant for social interaction, the conversation of the virtual meeting is not to greet each other as friends but rather who has the best models as B3 and what their AF can do. They talk about their professors and housekeepers. They are competitive and materialistic. They are abusive towards their AFs 'Throw her over onto the sofa. She will not get damaged.' (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 87) They throw their AFs to check if they land on their limbs. They ask Klara to sing for their entertainment. However, Klara's ego resists this harassment, which shows her subjectivity is different from that of other machines, such as AFs. These bullying changes Josie's tone towards Klara. Kids dominantly tried to command Klara. When Klara ignores the command, Josie feels embarrassed. She wishes to have a better B3 model. But, Klara and Jossie's relationship is so warm that they enjoy the sunset together. This party negatively impacts her because she forgets her relationships and bases her social relations on things.

Rick is uninvited to the socializing party for his class and normalcy. The conversation of the people implies that Rick is not one of them who has yet to undergo genetic upliftment. As the capitalist society decides the norms, Rick is the *other* among the genetically uplifted society. Rick is placed as a contrast who lives in Josie's neighborhood. He has the natural intellect to create drone birds.

Though he has comparatively better IQ/ intelligence, he has to struggle to get admission to a good college. The upliftment is the deciding factor in employment, career, and success.

Rick comments on how Josie changed around the upper-class children. These upper-class children are also fulfilling their loneliness with the things they have. For Josie's genetic upgrade, she lacks human qualities that make her sick and limited to being a natural human being. She is torn between two ideals of society. She needs clarification about how to behave—how society demands or is kind to everyone. Ishiguro intentionally foreshadows the future consequences of using technology everywhere. Rick influences Jossie. Klara and Rick both want Josie to behave like a natural human being. In the context of *Klara and the Sun*, the characters with human psychological fantasy are produced from the desire to attain an AI-associated everyday life. This unconscious fantasy creates false consciousness, a double illusion in society, which Žižek calls Ideological fantasy.

### **Conclusion:**

Ishiguro idealizes a new subjectivity when he introduces Klara, a non-human entity as a narrator. The humanistic qualities, emotions, observation skills, faith, loyalty, and aspirations of an Artificial Friend transcend the standard narrative of AI subjectivity. The social and cultural fragmentation of the ego of the future world is projected through human fantasies regarding AI. Ishiguro's insight into human vulnerability, emotional upheaval, expectation, and disappointment is explained by the psychic disintegration of both Humans and the New Subject, Artificial Friend. Fantasy, according to Žižek, functions as a support against the traumatic realization that the Other, i.e., the symbolic order, is lacking and, as such, fails to complete the lacking subject herself: "'reality' stabilizes itself when some fantasy frame of a 'symbolic bliss' closes off the view into the abyss of the Real. Far from being a kind of dreamlike cobweb that prevents us from 'seeing reality as it effectively is,' fantasy constitutes what we call reality. (Žižek, 2019, p. 118)

Klara's mechanical and geometrical worldview blurs the distinction between self and other. Klara's subjectivity projected the illusions of human fantasies where every relationship becomes commodified and exploited as a component of capitalism. Through Klara, Ishiguro shows how a machine values the natural life force whereas a human being prefers a false artificial reality.

The contemporary research landscape in the domain of artificial intelligence and psychoanalysis demands in-depth expansion or exploration. For Lacan's psychoanalysis and framework, the concept of ego, subject, and unconscious using structures in language provide a good foundation for psychoanalysis in AI. Moreover, this study is a fascinating, in-depth study of a new subject, Artificial Friends in *Klara and the Sun*. The real-world robot is in question to reach the sophistication the Klara as AF achieved in Ishiguro's fantasy. However, Ishiguro, through his new subject, forecasted artificial slavery, commodified relations, class division, and suffering in an age with Artificial intelligence. The fantasy of friendly, benevolent AI is perhaps a possibility with a sense of one's own subjectivity and personhood in a world full of distortions. The humanoid identifies disconnection to nature and connection to artificiality shows the deterioration of the moral of society. This paper would like to conclude by stating that data-driven empathetic beings in Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* emerge as a critique of the social, environmental, emotional, and cultural complexities of the future world.

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Ms. Sharifa Akter is currently working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Asia Pacific, Dhaka, Bangladesh. She is also doing her PhD in Disability Studies at Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh. Her research interests are – Critical Theories, Cultural Studies, Postmodernism, and Psychoanalysis.

Ms. Niger Afroz Islam is an Assistant Professor Department of English, University of Asia Pacific, Dhaka, Bangladesh. She is doing her MPhil in Postcolonial Feminism. Her research interests are- Postcolonialism, Feminism, Partition Literature and Psychoanalysis.

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