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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maurits". The signature is enclosed within a hand-drawn, irregular oval shape.

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Ethics and the Posthuman: An analysis of Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*

Abstract

This research will analyse the relationship between the human and the Posthuman, as portrayed in Kazuo Ishiguro's novels *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*. It will analyse through close reading how Ishiguro presents these interactions, and what moral questions can be inferred from them. The research will apply the lenses of various ethical trends, such as Deontology, Consequentialism, and Virtue Ethics. Through analysing the relationship between the human and the Posthuman in this framework, the research will attempt to find an answer to the research question; how does Kazuo Ishiguro portray the relationship between the human and the Posthuman, and the moral questions that emerge from that, in the novels *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*?

Keywords: Ethics; the Posthuman; *Never Let Me Go*; *Klara and the Sun*; moral relationships;
Kazuo Ishiguro

Introduction

Context

“We did it to prove you had souls at all”¹ This touching quote captures the essence of Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel *Never Let Me Go* (2005). The novel revolves around the Posthuman notion of clones and their capability to supply humans of ‘fresh’ organs. Because humans in the novel use the clones for organ transplants, a hierarchy is created. The Posthuman is subservient to the ‘real’ human, and therefore thought to be an object to be used². However, in the novel there are attempts made to assert that these clones, even though created in a laboratory, do in fact have souls. The guardians of the boarding school Hailsham, for example, collect the students’ art. They do this in order to provide sustainable evidence that these clone students have a deeper layer within; which will be shown through their art. In this way, the guardians try to assert that the clones are not merely a Posthuman instrument to be used by humans, but also a human in their own right. This offers an interesting insight in the attitudes of humans towards the Posthuman. It is furthermore interesting to see that there exists a division in these attitudes, and what that division is based upon. Some people and organizations are mentioned that would appreciate the clones to be seen as and thought of as disposable; as a medical technological advancement for humans to utilise. The attempts to reconcile being human and being Posthuman can be observed in *Klara and the Sun* (2021) as well. In this other novel, also by Kazuo Ishiguro, the Posthuman ‘object’ is Klara. She is a robot, engineered to function as a friend to a de-socialized child, Josie. There is an assumption that the robot acts as a human being, and understands emotions and conversations, on the same level as humans. This assumption is made by and for the reader, for the novel is told from the perspective of AF (Artificial Friend) Klara. It is strengthened through the notion of various models of AFs, Klara being one of the newer ones, and therefore more observant than other AFs. The treatment Klara receives, however, is that of an object. She can be stowed away like a vacuum cleaner, or disregarded in conversations, as if she were not there. Here, the Posthuman is regarded as less than the human, with an equal status to that of an object. The main questions that can be drawn from critical analysis of these novels, and that will shape my research are: what attitudes of the human toward the Posthuman does Kazuo Ishiguro portray in the novels?

¹ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. 2005. P. 255

² Sahu, Om Prakash & Karmakar, Manali. *Disposable culture, posthuman affect, and artificial human in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Klara and the Sun*. 2022. P. 3

Are these attitudes ethical, are they morally right or wrong? What is the message that Ishiguro attempts to purvey with regard to the relationship between humans and the Posthuman? These notions of the Posthuman, advancing technologies, and the (ethical) attitudes from ‘real’ humans towards the Posthuman, are the central points in my thesis. I will explore these attitudes in the novels by Kazuo Ishiguro; *Never Let Me Go*, and *Klara and the Sun*. The research question that I will attempt to answer will be: what ethics are involved in the relation between the human and the Posthuman, and how are these relations portrayed and explored in Kazuo Ishiguro’s works; *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*? This research will provide fruitful insights in the ways in which literature can tell us meaningful things about life. It will provide us with a sort of ethical framework, based on earlier insights in ethics and literature, tied to the Posthuman. To this framework, we can measure our ethical, or non-ethical attitudes when it comes to AI, cloning technologies, and other possible technological advancements in the future. I hope that my research can improve our understanding of these critical themes in Ishiguro’s novels and be used to observe similar themes in other works of speculative fiction.

Theoretical framework

A number of studies have been carried out on the topic of the Posthuman. For example, the study by Sahu and Karmakar (2022)³, revealing useful insights in the relation between human and Posthuman. I am planning to use this research to deepen the link between this study into the Posthuman and the novels that I am reading. The study revolves around the Posthuman and links that to critical perspectives of disposable culture and Posthuman affect. These notions are, throughout the paper, linked to *Klara and the Sun*. I will look through the various insights that are made clear to the reader, about the disposability of Artificial Intelligence. The study touches upon the notion of othering through language, stating that we regard robots, and the Posthuman in general, as something that is not us. It is made clear that the Posthuman is rather different from humans, and one way in which this is foregrounded, is through language. Another study that seeks to make claims based on the language used to talk about the Posthuman, is the study conducted by Netty Mattar (2021)⁴. In this research, Mattar claims that the way in which we respond to the Posthuman, whether ethical or non-ethical, is shaped

³ Sahu, Om Prakash & Karmakar, Manali. *Disposable culture, posthuman affect, and artificial human in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Klara and the Sun*. 2022.

⁴ Mattar, Netty. *Language and Betrayal: Posthuman Ethics in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Never Let Me Go*. CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture, vol. 23 issue 4, 2021.

by the language that we use to talk about the Posthuman phenomenon. Mattar advances her claims with the ‘classic’ trends of ethics; the deontological approach, the consequentialist approach, and the Greek ethical philosophers. She also uses the term Speculative Fiction (SF); meaning a collection of works (novels) written about a possible future. The term specifically focusses on the possible consequences of new technologies⁵. The framework that she applies to her study is mostly focussed on ethics. Since my own research revolves around the ethical attitudes of humans towards the Posthuman, I can use Mattar’s framework to clarify what is meant by ethical and non-ethical. Another source that I can use to inform the reader of this thesis about the various lenses of ethics, is the book: *Teaching Ethics Through Literature; The Significance of Ethical Criticism in a Global Age*⁶. Specifically chapter 4 will yield interesting results, as that ties the theory of ethics to literature, something I will be doing as well. The ethics that are interesting for my research should be applicable to literature, for it will be tied to the novels. Furthermore, I am using sources that apply these notions of ethics to the Posthuman. An example of one of those is the study done by Jakob Stenseke (2022)⁷. His research tries to answer the questions of whether the Posthuman, specifically AI, can be assigned a moral status, and whether they can have moral agency. The theoretical framework of his research is rather dense, but the conclusions are tied to *Klara and the Sun*, so those will be interesting for my own research. Another research that deals with the Posthuman and their place in relation to humans, is the study carried out by Wei and Yuan (2019)⁸. This study ties relations between the Posthuman and the novel *Never Let Me Go*, making for an interesting research for me to use. It deals with the attitudes of humans towards the Posthuman, scrutinizing the entrapment of clones in the novel. My own research is focussed on the attitudes of others towards the Posthuman, and then defining whether those attitudes are considered ethical or not. Most of the sources I am using focus on either one of the novels of my research. I am planning to synthesise the main points and conclusions of these various studies and shape them into a new research that covers both novels.

⁵ Ibid, 3.

⁶ Choo, Suzanne. *Teaching Ethics Through Literature; The Significance of Ethical Criticism in a Global Age*. Routledge, 2021.

⁷ Stenseke, Jakob. *The Morality of Artificial Friends in Ishiguro’s Klara and the Sun*. *Journal of Science Fiction and Philosophy*, vol. 5, 2022.

⁸ Li, Wei & Jing-jing, Yuan. *Alienation and Existential Predicaments of Clones: Interpreting Never Let Me Go in the Context of Posthumanism*. *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, vol. 9, no. 5, 2019.

Method

The sources mentioned above, and a close-reading analysis of the novels will shape my research. I will use some sources more extensively, for example Choo's book on ethics, for I need to clarify the terms that I will be using. Another instance of this is Mattar's article, because it relays perfectly what is meant by 'the Posthuman'. Other sources also advance these terms, and can be used to back up Mattar and Choo's definitions. After clarifying and specifying these terms, I will apply a close-reading analysis of the novels. This entails that I will be reading the novels, looking for specific sections that will be useful for my research. Such sections contain interactions between the human and the Posthuman, for I need to find out what attitudes Ishiguro portrays in those relationships. Other important sections will be the parts in which the narrator, in both cases the Posthuman, inflects, that is; looks into their own thoughts. From those sections, I can read whether or not these Posthuman 'technologies' are really Posthuman. Perhaps they are more human than we think, or give them credit for.

Structure

My thesis will consist of four chapters. The first one, the theoretical framework, will introduce the theoretical notions of my research. It will acquaint the reader with the framework that I will be applying to the novels *Klara and the Sun* and *Never Let Me Go*. These are the ethical framework, and the notion of the Posthuman. After that, in chapter two, I will be focussing my research on one of the novels. I will begin with the novel *Never Let Me Go*. I will apply a close-reading analysis of this novel in order to answer my research question; What ethics are involved in the relation between the human and the Posthuman, and how are these relations portrayed and explored in Kazuo Ishiguro's works; *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*? In this chapter, I will link the notions of the Posthuman, and of ethics, to the various interactions of the human toward the Posthuman in the novel. In chapter three, I will be doing the same, but in analysing the novel *Klara and the Sun*. I will also find an answer to the research question, and I will also attempt to do so by close-reading the text. In the last chapter, I will synthesise my arguments from chapters two and three. This will be the conclusion to my thesis, in which I will put forward an answer to the research question.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

My research will be based on two main elements; the notions of the Posthuman, and of ethics. In this chapter, I will focus on explaining these key terms for my research. I will do so by analysing literature and coming to a definition that is appropriate for my research. The goal of the chapter is to define the terms in theoretical ways. After this chapter, I will apply the terms to the critical analysis of the novels.

Firstly, the notion of ethics. My research revolves around the analysis of interactions between the human and the Posthuman in terms of their attitudes toward each other. These attitudes will be considered ethical, or non-ethical. In order to be able to judge whether or not the interactions between the human and the Posthuman are ethical at all, I will be defining ethics by analysing a chapter of Suzanne Choo's book: *Teaching Ethics Through Literature; The Significance of Ethical Criticism in a Global Age* (Choo, 2021)⁹. I will use chapter four as a guidance point on how to use the notion of ethics while interpreting literature texts. This is an important point, for ethics in literature are different from practical ethics. From Choo's text, it can be read that literature allows a reader to engage with a text in terms of ethics. This means that the reader can draw conclusions as to what is ethical and not. This is different from practical ethics since its case study is located in a novel, whereas in practical ethics, the issue at hand is one that occurs in reality. Ethical Criticism aims at inclusivity, instead of cultural difference¹⁰. Ethical Criticism is the term that has been given to the close reading of novels, through the lens of ethics. Choo defines Ethical Criticism as follows: "Ethical Criticism is a critical hermeneutical approach to reading texts that analyses the representation and construction of ethical values, how processes of othering and marginalization occur in specific social and geopolitical contexts"¹¹. In short, Ethical Criticism is the practice in which the representation of ethical values plays a central role. Close reading is the way in which one can extract these representations, after which they can deem them ethical or not. When close reading the interactions between humans and the Posthuman, a social context in which a certain group is definitely marginalized, I will be applying this notion of Ethical Criticism.

⁹ Choo, Suzanne. *Teaching Ethics Through Literature; The Significance of Ethical Criticism in a Global Age*. Routledge, 2021. Pp. 57-87.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 60.

¹¹ Ibid, p 61.

Choo then goes on to define five lenses of ethics. The first one is that of descriptive ethics, basically dealing with the descriptions of the moral values of a community or society in the text¹². These descriptions can be explicit, i.e. the values of a particular character are given to the reader. They can also be implicit, i.e. the reader needs to infer what particular values one particular character holds. These descriptions are present in *Never Let Me Go* in the ways in which different people feel about the cloning programme. For instance, the guardian Lucy, who works at Hailsham, is against the idea of not telling the students that they are actually clones. She thinks it is best to inform them about their origin. Furthermore, others are against the procedure of cloning people in order to save lives through organ donation. Then there are also people, the institutions that put this programme on the rails for instance, that do not want the programme to end, and are in favour of the practices. In *Klara and the Sun*, descriptive ethics plays a role in the different views that people hold toward Klara. Klara is the social robot that comes to live in with Josie's family. I will be applying this lens to the texts that I will be close reading, because I am researching attitudes from humans toward the Posthuman. These descriptions will put forward the ethical values that the people regarding these Posthumans hold. The second lens Choo describes is that of normative ethics. This revolves around the question; what is the right thing to do¹³? Normative ethics will study people's behaviour and judge it by this question. Do they act in the right way? This question will be central to my analysis of the texts. It forms the core of my research, as I am reviewing the attitudes of the human toward the Posthuman. In my analysis I will focus on the question of whether the actions of humans toward Posthumans are ethical, as Ishiguro presents them to the reader. Another important question pertaining to the lens of normative ethics, is: "what significant events have affected characters in the text and how do they respond?"¹⁴. This question allows the characters some freedom of mind, for they are influenced by their environment and the events that happened to them. This will shape a character's ethical values and influence the way in which they act. This is exactly what I will be researching. I will be looking for the ways in which characters in the text respond to each other, and this will be directly influenced by the significant events, or the significance of being a human or Posthuman. A third, even more interesting, lens of ethics is proposed in Analytical ethics. Analytical ethics can be split up into two parts. The first part is Consequentialism, or more popularly, Utilitarianism. It revolves around the notion of the greatest happiness for the

¹² Ibid, pp. 62-63.

¹³ Ibid, pp. 63-65.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 64.

greatest number of people¹⁵. An action is deemed ethical if it benefits a bigger group than the groups that it negatively impacts. This is something that is readily observable in the genre of dystopian fiction, as well as in the novels that I am reading. For instance, in the novel *Never Let Me Go*, the cloning programme is set up in order to enable people to have organ transplants when they need one. This is the benefacting group, and it consists of a lot of people as it envelops everyone that can receive an organ when they desperately need one. It envelops all humans that have some form of profit off the cloning scheme, even the laboratory operators, that get monetary compensation for their work. However, the group that is negatively impacted, even suffering, is the group of clones. They are being 'harvested' for their organs, after which they *complete*. In this novel, choices have been made to make a smaller group of Posthumans suffer, in order to bring happiness to a bigger group of *real* humans. The bigger, benefacting group in *Klara and the Sun* is the family of Josie, for they need to worry less about their daughter not being sociable enough. This problem is fixed by the purchasing of Klara, who will help their daughter acquire social skills. The smaller groups that loses happiness at the cost of that of the big group, are the various Artificial Friends, like Klara. They are in a way enslaved to work for the families, they are produced and purchased. This does not lead to a happy life in which they can make choices on their own volition. However, as will be shown in chapter 3, perhaps the Artificial Friends do not suffer as greatly as one might think. Ishiguro masterfully writes the novels from the standpoint of the Posthuman, making the reader aware of their inner workings. In *Klara and the Sun*, it is not made explicit that Klara is suffering. The second mode of Analytical ethics, Deontology, is the opposition to the first. It revolves around the question of what is the right thing to do. It rallies against the idea of happiness for the masses at the cost of a smaller groups happiness. Deontology urges people to do the right thing, according to moral principles. These moral principles are in all human beings, deep down everyone knows what the right thing is. Whether people adhere to these principles, defines whether or not they are virtuous. In that way, Deontology comes close to Normative Ethics, as it revolves around the character of a human being, and the actions that they do. This mode of thinking might not be readily observable in the novel. However, in dealing with the Posthuman clones or social robots, people will have deontological thoughts about these practices. An example from *Klara and the Sun* is the father, who does not agree with the idea of bringing a social robot into the house. He feels deep down that it is morally wrong to produce social robots and objects to the

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 65-69.

practice. The fourth lens of ethics is that of Practical ethics. It tries to apply ethics to practical issues¹⁶. This means that a practical issue will be reviewed through this lens in order to find an ethical solution. This lens therefore uses all other lenses in order to find a fitting, practical solution to the issue currently at hand. Even though I will be assessing two main issues, namely those of cloning and social robotics, I will not attempt to solve them. My research will centre on the reaction of the human toward the Posthuman, as Ishiguro portrays them in his novels. Therefore, Practical ethics will not occupy a primary role, since it does not lend itself to the realm of literary ethics. The last lens of ethics Choo describes is that of Virtue ethics. This lens primarily focusses on the person itself, and whether they are virtuous, ethical¹⁷. It defines ethics in a way that it is ingrained in a person's character. This ties into the realm of Normative Ethics and Deontology in the way that it describes someone's character. It is, however, different from the other two lenses, because it does not focus on the actions of the individual. It revolves around people's own identity, of whether they are virtuous human beings or not. While the virtues may not be readily observable in the novel, in analysing the interactions between the human and the Posthuman, one can infer whether a character is virtuous or not. The characters and their virtues will only take up a small portion of the analysis of these dialogues. Their inner workings are not portrayed in a conversation, they only show their outward appearance, the way they want to be perceived, the way in which they react to the Posthuman.

This leads me to the conclusion that I will be primarily using the first three lenses of ethics; those of descriptive ethics, normative ethics and analytical ethics. These will constitute the focus of my close reading. In my analysis, most of the aforementioned lenses of ethics will be applied to the interactions of the human with the Posthuman. Using them, I will draw conclusions on whether the attitudes that Ishiguro presents in the novels are ethical or not, and what questions they invoke in the reader.

Secondly, the notion of the Posthuman. What is the Posthuman? And how am I going to traverse the subject of the Posthuman and tie it to notions of ethics, as mentioned above? In order to come to a definition of the Posthuman, I will be using Rosi Braidotti's (2017) article: *Posthuman Critical Theory*¹⁸. In the beginning of the article, it is made clear that the Posthuman is a signifier of a new era, one after the Anthropocene, in which human beings

¹⁶ Ibid, pp 69-71.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp 71-72.

¹⁸ Braidotti, Rosi. *Posthuman Critical Theory*. Journal of Posthuman studies vol. 1, no. 1, 2017. Pp 8-22.

were the central power and importance. Now, in the Posthuman era, spectacular technological developments have inspired post humanist perspectives to flourish¹⁹. Braidotti establishes the term Posthuman as a discursive and material cartography of the present. The term cartography, with a nod to Foucault, is a tool for drawing the diagrams of the present²⁰. The Posthuman, therefore, is a figuration that allows for a critical measurement of the present²¹. That is the first half of the terms definition, it is discursive. This is something that will prove to be important in my research, because the novels that I am reading do in fact inspire some critical thinking on the subject of cloning and social robotics. These topics are widely popular in contemporary literature. The material part of the term Posthuman is the form that they take; this can be a cyborg, clone or social robot. In more theoretical terms; the Posthuman body is a human-non-human linking, that may include media-technological interfaces of biological and non-biological matter²². So, the Posthuman is in the first place an era, an era following the Anthropocene, that revolves around the Posthuman form. This consists of two important aspects. It is in the first place, discursive. This means that it inspires critical thinking of the present. Secondly, it has a material aspect, meaning it has physical properties. These can be observed as some form of linkage between human and non-human matter. Concretely, in the novels that I am reading, the Posthuman comes to the fore in the characters of Kathy H, a clone, and Klara, a social robot. Both of these *creatures* are neither completely human, nor completely non-human. They inspire critical thought about the present, as well as the future, in the way that they are dealt with by the people around them. Furthermore, these Posthumans are created of some human matter, but they also have a non-human complexity, as they are ‘created’ by humans. I will use the notion of the Posthuman in my research to discuss the clone Kathy H, and the social robot Klara. When talking about the Posthuman, I will commonly refer to these Posthuman bodies.

While both of these theoretical notions are concepts of their own, I will explore them in a way that they are related to each other. I will research the relationship between the human and the Posthuman and judge whether the attitudes that they hold toward each other are ethical or not. The relationship between the Posthuman and ethics is the focal point of my research. I will explore how the Posthuman is regarded, in ethical terms, by the ‘normal’ human. The actions of humans toward the Posthuman will be considered through the three lenses of Descriptive

¹⁹ Ibid, pp 9-10.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 10.

²¹ Ibid, p. 10.

²² Ibid, p. 12.

Ethics, Normative Ethics and Analytical Ethics. I will use those lenses alongside each other, in order to conclude what ethical, or non-ethical, responses of the human toward the Posthuman feature in Ishiguro's novels. Since that is what the research is all about, I will apply this theoretical framework in overlapping manner in the following chapters. I will first make a close reading analysis of the novel *Never Let Me Go*, in which I will focus on the interactions between the human and the Posthuman. I will then review in what ways ethics plays a role in these relationships. This will lead to moral questions, that can be extracted from the novels. I will repeat this procedure in chapter 4, in close reading the novel *Klara and the Sun*.

Chapter 2: Never Let Me Go

This chapter will apply the theoretical framework, using the concepts of ethics and the Posthuman, on the first novel through close reading. The analysis will revolve around the question of how the attitudes of humans toward Posthumans displayed in the novel are portrayed in terms of ethics. The chapter will look into these relationships and how they come to the fore in the novel, and analyse the moral implications by using the main lenses of ethics, as defined by Suzanne Choo²³. The chapter will focus on finding and formulating an answer to the research question; How are the relationships between the human and the Posthuman in *Never Let Me Go* portrayed in the novel? In order to answer this, the chapter will first provide a short summary of the novel.

The novel that this chapter centres on is *Never Let Me Go* (2005), written by Kazuo Ishiguro. The story takes place in an imagined past in the 1990s in England. It is not made explicit, but through various hints, the reader can derive that the novel must be set in England. Such hints can be read in the setting up of boarding schools, and the frequent mentions of Norfolk as a location of interest. The story takes place in the wake of technological advancements that change science and society. One of those advances is in the cloning industry. Scientists have found ways in which they can clone human beings. This instigated the cloning programme as it is portrayed throughout the novel. The clones are to provide healthy organs, to cure the “normal” humans that are terminally ill. In this way, incurable diseases become curable. The society in which the novel takes place accepts the moral burden, because they do not want to go back to a time in which the now curable diseases become incurable again²⁴. The clones are educated in boarding schools across the country. One of those schools is Hailsham, where the story begins. The students follow courses on arts and literature, in order to stimulate their creativity. The novel’s narrator is Kathy H., one of the clones at Hailsham. In the first part of the novel, she portrays the life at Hailsham. She talks about her life, her friends Tommy and Ruth, about the guardians, and about The Exchange. The Exchange is a fair that is held once a year, to which all students contribute their best works of art, and can buy some of the best art of other students. It is held by an enigmatic woman, Madame, who seems to collect the finest art produced by the students, and takes it home with her, to her Gallery. Madame and The

²³ Choo, Suzanne. *Teaching Ethics Through Literature: The Significance of Ethical Criticism in a Global Age*. Routledge, 2021.

²⁴ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. Faber and Faber Limited, (2005). P. 258.

Exchange keep playing an important role in the novel, even after the main characters leave Hailsham. After Hailsham, they go to live at a place called The Cottages, where they live with other ex-students that are some years older. This location, albeit something else from Hailsham, is also part of the whole cloning programme. If the first part read like a diary, the second part reads like a high school testimony. Important themes, such as love and sex, literature and art, and questions about their lives and purposes, play a chief part in the everyday lives of the students. The students, much like “normal, human” teenagers, discover sex, and have questions about the purposes of their existence. It is here that they learn of their identity as clones. The way in which Kathy tells the readers is very matter-of-factly, she reveals that they had ideas about their identities all along. The students are now all aware that they are, in the near future, going to be someone’s donor. Another option for them is to take care of the clones that are giving donations; this is the path that Kathy chooses. Even as a carer, the time of donation will come, albeit later. It is during this second part of the novel that the friendship between Kathy and Ruth begins to deteriorate. It is revealed that Tommy and Kathy were in love since Hailsham, and that Ruth knew. Even though she knew that the two were in love, she still decided to date Tommy. In the third part of the novel, we follow Kathy as she takes care of Tommy, whom she has not seen in years. As Kathy cares for Tommy, they fall in love, which causes them to question their purposes in life once more. Tommy is about to go into his fourth donation, one that no other clone had ever survived, and is generally regarded as the last donation²⁵. It is during these rough times that Kathy recalls a rumour that she heard in her time at The Cottages. Apparently, if you could prove you really loved one another, there could be some delay in the donations, and the couple could live a little while longer. It was known as a deferral²⁶. She decides to go and seek out the headmistress of Hailsham, Miss Emily, because she will allow them to have this delay. After she has found where Miss Emily lives, Kathy and Tommy go there, in order to appeal. During this closing scene, all secrets regarding the cloning programme, Hailsham, and the Exchange are revealed. The biggest revelation is that the Exchange was a way for Miss Emily and Madame to prove that the clones had souls, in an effort to rally against the programme. They thought that if they could prove that these man-made clones actually had souls, that they could stop the programme on ethical grounds. The way in which they wanted to prove this, was by letting

²⁵ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. Faber and Faber Limited, (2005). P. 273

²⁶ *Ibid.* pp 150-151.

the students make art, since that is something, they believed, that could only be done by someone with a soul.

There are two main relationships between the human and the Posthuman manifested in the novel; there is a relationship between the guardians and the students at Hailsham, and there is a broader relationship between the founders and runners of the programme, and the clones. When speaking of the guardians, Madame is included in those, because she plays a rather significant role in the novel, and in the descriptions of Kathy. The guardians follow the rules of the programme, they rear the clones in non-threatening or damaging circumstances. They do this so that the organs are staying safe and healthy, as they are the programme's main point of interest. This is ironic, for the clones are thereafter going to be "donating" these healthy organs. The term "guardian" then becomes an ambiguous one, because do they really protect the students? Or are they only interested in the health and safety of their organs? An interesting part in the novel revolves around the intense aversion of Miss Lucy surrounding cigarettes. She has an outburst about how the students' health is the most important thing, and that they therefore should never smoke cigarettes²⁷. Besides their obsession with the students' health, there is another focal point that the guardians promote; art and creativity. It is of the utmost importance that the students find their creative drive, and that they spend a great deal of time producing art, in whatever form they like. This is further underscored by The Exchange. This event is of significant importance to the students, because it allows them to have some form of personal possession and expression, something unique. An example of this are the prolific poems, written by Susie K. As we learn in the closing part of the novel, the guardians attempt with this focus on creativity and art to prove that the students have souls. There is a strange irony in this ideologic goal, for the guardians fail to see the real creativity, the real proof that the students have souls, which is in the mythmaking that these students employ²⁸. They conjure up an idea about a deferral, about delaying the time of their donations, in order to live longer. In creating this myth surrounding the possibility to live longer, the students actually prove that they have souls, that they are human beings. They believe their artwork will somehow transform their lives, just because it is taken away without reason. Another argument Robbins (2007) makes to support the statement that the students are actually human is that of actions having merit. Kathy and Tommy discuss the worth of being a carer, and Tommy does not understand that Kathy can do it for so long. Kathy then asserts that

²⁷ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. Faber and Faber Limited, (2005). Pp. 66-68.

²⁸ Robbins, Bruce. *Cruelty Is Bad: Banality and Proximity in 'Never Let Me Go.'* A Forum on Fiction, vol. 40, no. 3 (2007): 294. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40267704>.

a good carer can make a great difference in the life of a donor, even though all donors will eventually *complete*²⁹. The fact that the guardians merely focus on creativity as a measure for having a soul or not is one that complicates the relationship between the guardians and the students in terms of ethicality. Whether or not something is considered to be ethical, can be tested by the various lenses of ethics. These different modes of thinking about actions and consequences, are used to “test” an action or intention on its ethicality. The intent of the cloning programme is rather unethical, and the fact that the guardians contribute to this, is morally deplorable. This can be deduced by using the lens of Deontology³⁰. Deontology focusses on the question; What is the right thing to do? It analyses actions and intentions by asking this question. In doing so, one would certainly come to the conclusion that working in the programme that has a way of “farming” clones, is not the right thing to do. Another question, commonly posed in Christianity, is that of doing upon others what you would have them do upon you³¹. By employing this question into the narrative of *Never Let Me Go*, it is highly doubtful whether anyone would want to be in the position that the clones are in. So, deontologically speaking, this relationship is morally discardable. On the other hand, Miss Emily and Madame do attempt to stop the programme, something which is perhaps only doable from inside it. They try to assert that the clones do in fact have souls, which would make them, the Posthuman, human. Then, rationally, it would be very unethical to exploit another human being for their organs. So, in this sense, the guardians, Miss Emily, and Madame, are rather virtuous. This is the irony that Ishiguro etched into the novel. In using the lens of Virtue Ethics, one could argue that the guardians’ contribution to the programme is ethical. Virtue Ethics focusses on the character of the actor, it tries to assert that the character is just, or not³². In this sense, it speaks in favour of the guardians’ attempt to shut down the programme, because it does not yield them anything. Moreover, they will probably lose their jobs at the very least. In doing so anyway, it shows that their character is just, they want to end the suffering of someone else. The lens of Virtue Ethics would deem their characters and their intentions ethical and virtuous. Differing from the realm of Deontology, Virtue Ethics investigates people’s characters, instead of their moral obligation or duty³³. As the guardians do not succeed in their attempt of stopping the programme in this manner, are they still

²⁹ Ibid. p. 295.

³⁰ Choo, Suzanne. *Teaching Ethics Through Literature: The Significance of Ethical Criticism in a Global Age*. Routledge, 2021. P. 66.

³¹ Ibid. p. 67.

³² Ibid. pp 71-72.

³³ Ibid. p. 71.

considered virtuous, and therefore their actions ethical? Should they have done more in order to break away from the programme? These questions also tie in with Virtue Ethics, questioning the morality of the guardians' characters. Can they be redeemed? The relationship, however, is harboured from two sides. The Posthumans, the clones, constitute the second half of the relationship. They inspire in the reader, the question of what it means to be human. What is the defining factor? These clones have psychological and emotional depth³⁴. This depth separates them from the "ordinary" Posthuman, that could also be something simpler like Siri or a cyborg, as Braidotti defines the Posthuman³⁵. While a 'normal' Posthuman is a linkage between something that is human and something that is not human, these clones in *Never Let Me Go* are definitely something else. They are closer to being human than being a cyborg, but what causes that? This inspires questions of what it means to be a human, which is also inspired by the narrator of the story, Kathy. She disturbs the lines between what is human and what is inhuman³⁶. An example of that can be found in the beginning of the story, for it is not mentioned that she is a clone, so it feels like reading a young girls' diary. Wei and Yuan (2019) underline that if there is no difference between a human and a human clone, it is ethically repugnant to exploit them for their organs³⁷. So, the thinner the line between a "real" human and a Posthuman, like a clone, the more morally despicable the act is of harvesting their organs. The clones in *Never Let Me Go* are so close to being real humans, only their origin is not the same as that of humans, that exploitation cannot occur with a good moral standard. These Posthumans, while still definitely post-human, should, arguably, be tested to the same morals that we hold for human beings. Deontological and Normative analysis would argue, however, that the relationship between the guardians and the clones is not portrayed as being ethical. Ishiguro portrays the guardians as really virtuous people, as seen from Kathy's perspective. However, even though they try to topple the programme, their attempt fails, and they basically give up trying. Their intentions are ethical and virtuous, but their attempts are not enough to actually stop the programme. Does this make them less virtuous? Does it mean that their attempts were in vain, and that they are therefore bad people? What else could they have done?

³⁴ Mattar, Netty. *Language and Betrayal: Posthuman Ethics in Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go*. CLCWeb, vol. 23, issue 4, article 9, (2021). P. 4.

³⁵ Braidotti, Rosi. *Posthuman Critical Theory*. Journal of Posthuman studies vol. 1, no. 1, 2017. Pp. 11-12.

³⁶ Mattar, Netty. *Language and Betrayal: Posthuman Ethics in Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go*. CLCWeb, vol. 23, issue 4, article 9, (2021). P. 5.

³⁷ Li, Wei & Jing-Jing, Yuan. *Alienation and Existential Predicament of Clones: Interpreting Never Let Me Go in the Context of Posthumanism*. Journal of Literature and Art Studies, vol. 9, no. 5, (2019). P. 458.

The second relationship that is to be explored in this chapter is the relationship between the founders and runners of the programme and the clones. The clones, again, occupy the role of Posthuman. They are not fully human, though questions could be posed as to what defines a human being. They are created in a laboratory, sampled from real humans. The novel is purposefully vague about the actual process in which these clones are “produced”. It is not of the utmost importance to know all about the actual process of cloning. The novel revolves around the ethical and moral questions surrounding the situation and purpose of the clones, not around the technological details. Little hints can give us some clues about the humans that they are cloned from. In the second part of the novel, during their time at The Cottages, there is talk of a *possible*. Two friends of Ruth, Chrissie and Rodney, discover this *possible* during a trip to Cromer, at the Norfolk coast. A possible is a person, a real human, on which a clone is modelled. The woman Chrissie and Rodney saw was dressed in neat clothing, working at an office. She looked like Ruth, if Ruth were slightly older. Working at an office is also something Ruth dreams of achieving, so it does not come as a surprise that she wants to see this woman for herself. The group, accompanied by Tommy and Kathy, go to the offices where Chrissie and Rodney had seen the woman first. They follow the woman in her lunch break to a shop, only to discover that she does not really look like Ruth from up close. This breaks Ruth, and she says: “We all know it. We’re modelled from trash. Junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps”³⁸. With this statement, she destroys the hope anyone, especially herself, held for the possibility to be modelled on a successful human being. It gives us a clue, however, to the situation surrounding cloning. The *possibles* are older than the clones, so the cloning process must have been done while the real human is already grown up. However, the clones start out as children. Even though the thought of *possibles* can give us a little insight into the ways in which the programme works, the fact that the people on which the clones are modelled are not the most successful, wealthiest human beings, shows that the clones do not stem from the upper levels of society. This further adds to the already grim reality of the cloning industry. The people on which the clones are modelled probably needed the money so bad that they had no opportunity for moral considerations. The questions in which the whole programme is shrouded add to the macabre feeling of the Posthuman entering the world of the human, dissolving the boundaries between the two worlds³⁹. A thing we do learn about this programme is that it is instigated in the postwar period in England. Fuelled by technological

³⁸ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. Faber and Faber Limited, (2005). P. 164.

³⁹ Mattar, Netty. *Language and Betrayal: Posthuman Ethics in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Never Let Me Go*. CLCWeb, vol. 23, issue 4, article 9, (2021). P. 1

advances and an emotional value of not wanting to lose any more humans. It is from this emotional perspective, the fear of death, that the company is founded. They used the technology in order to cure diseases that were incurable before. This is what people wanted most in that period, leading the moral questions to be postponed. However, when people started asking these questions about the morality of the programme, it was too late, there was no returning to a world in which cancer, for instance, was not curable⁴⁰. This is the premise on which the company works; curing diseases that no-one else before could cure, while employing methods that may in some eyes be deplorable. This relation, between the cloning programme and the clones, is best analysed through the lens of utilitarian ethics, part of the larger lens of Analytical Ethics⁴¹. The utilitarian idea is that any action should focus on the happiness for the biggest group. Any actions should be done in order to bring happiness to a big as possible group. In this way, by exploiting a smaller group, the world would know more happiness, and that would be a good thing. This mode of thinking is observable from the novel, as the cloning programme establishes a way of curing diseases that before this period would mean the end of the person carrying it. The programme cures a multitude of different diseases, curing masses and masses of people, all at the expense of *some* clones. The clones' suffering does not, in the eyes of the company, outweigh the happiness brought to the "real" humans by curing the incurable. In a way, following utilitarian ethics, they are right. So, judging from utilitarian ethics, their actions would be morally justifiable. However, the second mode of Analytical Ethics, Deontology, proposes the complete opposite. It is the action itself that matters, not the consequences. From that lens, we analyse the action of cloning a human being, rearing it to become a literature adept, and then harvesting it for their organs, in order to cure the disease of another human. An argument, presented by Sing (2021) follows this line of thinking to propose the question; if these clones are raised to be like humans, should they not be treated in the same way⁴²? On this premise, one could hardly argue that the actions of the company that instigated and maintained these practices are ethical. From a Consequentialist/Utilitarian point of view, one would argue that these actions, however deplorable, do raise happiness for the biggest group, and that would deem them ethical. If one were to regard these actions from a Deontological point of view, however, one would argue that no happiness is worth exploiting human-esque creatures in the way that is

⁴⁰ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. Faber and Faber Limited, (2005). P. 258.

⁴¹ Choo, Suzanne. *Teaching Ethics Through Literature: The Significance of Ethical Criticism in a Global Age*. Routledge, 2021. Pp 65-67.

⁴² Ranjang Sing, Santi. "We're modelled from trash": *Confronting Transhumanism and Critical Posthumanism in Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go*. *New Literaria*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2021. P. 2

done here, so it would not be deemed ethical. Ishiguro portrays these different lenses of ethics alongside each other in the novel. He presents the cloning programme in a way that it invokes questions of morality in the reader; Is it right to clone a human, raise them, and then harvest their organs in order to cure someone else's disease? This is not a question with a right or wrong answer. That is not what Ishiguro means to do. By proposing these various relationships, and adding nuances to the story, Ishiguro merely invites the reader to think about the issues that are presented in the novel.

This chapter has explored the different relationships between the human and the Posthuman in Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*. By applying an analysis of various lenses of ethics, this research concludes that most of these relationships are complicated. Ishiguro is vague about the exact practices that take place in the novel. However, the specifics that the reader does learn about them, sheds light on the treatment of the Posthuman, by the human. This relationship is not portrayed as an ethical one. The clones live their short lives without parents, and the ones that are meant to protect them, the Guardians, merely raise them so they are as healthy as possible. On the other hand, these Guardians, though failing to really protect the clones, do attempt to show that the Posthuman clone has a human soul. In trying to break the boundaries between the human and the Posthuman, the Guardians challenge the programme. They do not succeed, but that is not Ishiguro's point. Ishiguro invites the reader to think about the moral implications of the Guardians' actions. Are these Guardians morally despicable for participating in the cloning programme? Or can they be redeemed because of their efforts to put an end to it? The programme, though portrayed as a negative institution, is also morally defended in the novel. Ishiguro shows that the human society has become dependent on the success of the programme. He shows that there are two sides to this appalling practice. In showing these two sides, he again invites the reader to stop and think about the morality of the cloning programme. There is no right or wrong in the novel, there is a morally grey area that the reader needs to figure out for themselves.

Chapter 3: Klara and the Sun

This chapter analyses Kazuo Ishiguro's 2021 novel *Klara and the Sun* in light of the notions of ethics and the Posthuman. It will apply the notions of ethics and the Posthuman to the critical analysis of the novel's interactions between the human and the Posthuman. It will focus on how these interactions, or relationships, are portrayed by Kazuo Ishiguro. The focal point of this research is: How are the attitudes of the human toward the Posthuman represented in the novel *Klara and the Sun*? The chapter will start by providing a short summary of the novel, in order to contextualize the relationships that will be analysed further on. The research question this chapter centres on will be; How does Kazuo Ishiguro portray the relationship between the human and the Posthuman, and the moral questions that emerge from that, in the novel *Klara and the Sun*?

The novel *Klara and the Sun* (2021) takes place in a society in the near future. No locations are mentioned by name, but parts of the story transpire in a large city, with much traffic and skyscrapers. Other parts of the narrative take place in the countryside. The society that Ishiguro portrays here, is one that embraced the technological advantages in Artificial Intelligence. It becomes clear from the novel that some jobs are automated, and that robots take up a position in the everyday household. Klara is an example of such a robot. She is an Artificial Friend, which means that she is designed to help a child to make them able to have social relationships. The child she will provide her services to is Josie, who follows her education at home. Klara is meant to become a friend to Josie and help in that regard with developing social skills. In order to provide a service as good as possible, these Artificial Friends are equipped with exceptional observational qualities, making them excellent in picking up behavioural patterns. Klara is remarkably good at reading people that come across the window of the shop, much better than another social robot, Rosa. The novel starts out when she is still in the shop, where she is waiting to be purchased by someone. From the beginning, it is clear that Klara has a special relationship with the sun. She believes it provides nourishment, something that can be explained by the fact that she is solar powered. The novel is narrated by Klara herself, which helps the reader understand her and her goals, while at the same time obstructing clear meaning about what is actually happening. Everything is described from her limited number of experiences, which is something that the readers have to look past in order to get to the real situation that is taking place. This is

because Klara does not always understand what she comes across, and therefore invents a reason for it to be that way. An example of this is the incident with the Cootings machine in the second part of the novel. The Cootings machine is a steam roller, used to press down tarmac. She regards this Cootings machine as something terribly dangerous, because it creates a black cloud that blocks out the sun. She therefore decides to destroy it. Sometime before the incident, Klara is purchased by Josie's mother. She will be the Artificial Friend to Josie, because Josie has trouble making social connections. The friendship between Klara and Josie comes to bloom quickly, as they spend a great deal of time together. Everything seems to be good and as it should be. Until one day, on a trip to the waterfalls, when Josie is gone for a minute, the Mother suddenly asks Klara to walk like Josie does. Klara obeys and does her best Josie impersonation. The Mother seems to be in shock, tears coming to her eyes. Klara does not understand what is happening, and thinks that she has done something wrong. Later, however, in the third part of the novel, the Mother's masterplan is revealed. Josie apparently, has contracted an illness, some side-effect from her *lifting*. *Lifting* is a procedure in which children are being altered in a way, in order for them to become smarter. This would increase their chances of getting into a better university, and therefore getting a better education. The education is important, because in this imagined future a range of jobs are being taken over by Artificial Intelligence. Therefore, one must have received good education in order to be guaranteed a well-paying job, that cannot be taken over by AI. The procedure in which a child is *lifted* is a dangerous one. This becomes apparent as the Mother speaks of Josie's sister, that died from the same illness that now affects Josie. The Mother's plan was to make Klara *continue* Josie after she would inevitably pass away. There is a doctor, Mr Capaldi, who is making some sort of robot that looks like Josie, in which Klara's chip could be implemented. In this way, it would be Klara that would look and act like Josie, and the Mother would not have to cope with the loss of another daughter. The Father does not agree with this practice, because he does not believe in Klara's ability to *continue* Josie. He has a personal resentment toward AI, because he lost his job working in a factory, to a robot. The novel's finale finds Klara in the scrapyards, where she is waiting for her "slow fade". This slow fade is a literal fade from existence, for Klara's batteries will run out. Even though Mr Capaldi worked as hard as he could, the Father objected to the plan. He said that Klara would never be able to *continue* Josie, for Klara does not have a human heart. The heart was what made Josie special, and Klara could never copy or *continue* that. So, the Mother's plan did not go through. Therefore, there was no more need or want for Klara. The Manager from Klara's store comes to visit her here, and tells Klara how she always thought that Klara was one of her most

observant AFs. She does not take Klara with her, however, and Klara fades into non-existence in the scrapyards.

The novel features two main, distinguishable relationships of the human with the Posthuman; that of Josie and Klara, and that of The Mother and Klara. These relationships of the human with the Posthuman seem to be directly oppositional to each other, but in analysing the respective relations, it may come to the fore that they are more alike than it initially seems. The definition of the Posthuman is hard to link to Klara. She is a robot, but she also feels a wide array of human emotions. Because she is the narrator of the story, the reader becomes aware of these emotions. Ishiguro blurs the line between human and Posthuman on purpose. He does so in order to pose the moral question; how do we treat the Posthuman? Do we *use* them as an object? Or do we consider their feelings, and regard them as an equal? These questions come to the fore in the character of Klara. She is treated mostly as an object. First as a product, to be sold, then as a robot, prized for her ability to copy and potentially *continue* Josie. However, the reader knows her feelings and her patterns of thinking and believing. From these descriptions, one could infer that she has a mind similar to that of a human. Klara describes Josie in terms that make her look like she is really young, and sickly. An example of this can be found in the first meeting of Klara and Josie. Josie walks by, “pale and thin”, taking stock after each step to make sure she was safe and would not fall⁴³. Klara notes this, and adds that she estimates Josie to be fourteen and a half years old, thereby showing the reader how well her observational skills are. Josie starts talking cheerfully to Klara, and it is in this first encounter that their friendship begins to form. Josie is being described as someone who radiates kindness. It is clear that Klara likes Josie as much as Josie likes her. However, one must consider the point that Klara has been programmed for being friendly, and making pleasant connections with children. The question is then posed of whether Klara has any free will in liking Josie? That does not seem to matter, for when Klara is bought by Josie’s mother, she takes it upon herself as her duty to take care of Josie, and do anything necessary to make her happy. This seems to be a strong indication of Klara’s Posthuman programming. In the following chapters of the novel, Josie and Klara become the best of friends. As Klara narrates the novel, it becomes clear that she really enjoys spending time with Josie. In these descriptions of her times with Josie, it becomes clear that she actually feels happiness. An

⁴³ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Klara and the Sun*. Faber and Faber limited, 2021. P.9.

example of this can be found in the ritual that she develops with Josie, to watch the sun set every night⁴⁴. The opposite becomes clear as well, when Josie falls into periods of unstable health. Klara worries about her then, and she considers her goal of making Josie happy, which she is failing at that time. This, for instance, happens on the day of the trip to Morgan Falls. Josie is too sick to come, so she wants Klara to stay at home with her. The Mother, however, is still intending to go, and wants Klara to come with her. Josie breaks down, but admits that Klara should see a waterfall, because she had never seen one. Here, Klara is torn between her duty of caring for Josie, and following the Mother's orders⁴⁵. In these scenes of trouble and happiness, Klara proves that, even though she is definitely a robot, she is computed close to being a human and feeling human emotions. This is suggestive of Klara as an anthropomorph robot. Anthropomorphism is based on illusion, interpretation and temporality⁴⁶. This means that the robot is an object that uses human tendencies, in order to give the illusion being alive, rather than actually being alive⁴⁷. In simpler terms, the robot acts humanlike, but is not actually a living human being. These anthropomorph features also reside in Klara. She is a social robot, and due to her humanlike behaviour, she elicits emotional attachment⁴⁸. She is regarded as a human, because she acts like one. This makes people emotionally attached to her, which is part of her programming, because that is her job as an AF. This solves the problem of Klara having access to human emotions, while being a social robot. It allows us to regard her as an anthropomorph Posthuman. Josie is human, but not completely. She has been *lifted*, a procedure in which she is enabled to become smarter and have better opportunities in life. This process is veiled in mysteries, as it is not Ishiguro's intention to reveal the practice, rather the outcome. The process makes Josie ill. Critical readers could pose the question of whether Josie is now, technically speaking, also a Posthuman. There must be something implanted or adapted in her brain, in order for her to actually *lift*? While interesting, it cannot be proven from the novel, and therefore, this research will regard Josie as human. Her attitude to Klara appears to shift throughout the course of the novel. In the beginning, when she just met Klara, she is really impressed with her. She is also actively establishing a social relationship with Klara, and entrusts her secrets to Klara. She sees Klara as a friend, rather than something to be used. This changes when she has a meeting with her friends from

⁴⁴ Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Klara and the Sun*. Faber and Faber limited, 2021. P. 53.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 95-96.

⁴⁶ Deep Singh, Aman. *Anthropomorphism and Social Robotics in Kazuo Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun (2021)*. IEEE. P. 421.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 421.

⁴⁸ Ibid. P. 421.

school. She is not used to seeing these people in real-life, as most education is done online. During the social gathering, Klara is not allowed to enter the room, as she is not human. Here, the dynamic shifts between Josie and Klara. At some point, Josie shows Klara off to her friends, like she is an item that everyone will be jealous of. One of the boys that is laying on the sofa commands Klara to come to him, like she is a servant. Klara freezes, because she is not used to being spoken to in this way. She only starts to move as Josie shoots her an angry glance. The boys start teasing Klara; telling her to sing, to greet them. They even talk of throwing her to see if she lands on her feet. Josie does nothing to interrupt this rude conversation; neither does Klara. Klara seems to be subjected, in a way, to the humans in the novel. It is in this scene that her status as an object is underlined. In the previous chapters of the novel, the reader is being acclimatised to the idea of Klara as a being capable of human emotions, and perhaps worthy of moral consideration. That image is juxtaposed to the image that Ishiguro paints in the meeting episode. In analysing the changing dynamic between Josie and Klara, this research draws upon the ethical lens of Deontology. Deontology is a philosophical stream of thought that revolves around the question; what is the right thing to do? It is part of the broader branch of Analytical Ethics, a mode of thinking that also includes Consequentialist Ethics⁴⁹. In contrast to Consequentialist Ethics, Deontology measures an action by adherence to moral principles. These moral principles can lie in religion, or, as Kant (1724-1804) would argue, in reason⁵⁰. Following these moral principles would lead to a morally right action. Not adhering to them would mean that the action is not morally right, and therefore unethical. The social meeting interaction, between the friend of Josie, Josie, and Klara, would not be considered ethical, in subscribing to Deontology. Ishiguro presents in Josie someone who seems to change behaviour, depending on the social situation they are in. This cannot be right, for one has to act according to the same moral principles, in every situation, according to Deontology. The lens of Virtue Ethics would object to this practice, for it is somebody's character that is deemed ethical or not. Virtue Ethics claims that a person is virtuous, morally good, when it practices virtues toward others. These actions and interactions are not measured by their outcome, but by their intention⁵¹. Following this criterium, one would object to considering Josie ethical, for her intentions are not virtuous. In the meeting with her friends, she wants to pose herself as someone that is liked. She has no regard for

⁴⁹ Choo, Suzanne. *Teaching Ethics Through Literature: The Significance of Ethical Criticism in a Global Age*. Routledge, 2021. Pp. 65-66.

⁵⁰ Ibid. pp. 66-67.

⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 71-72.

Klara, or her feelings. The argument that Josie would not consider Klara to have feelings does not hold, for they have had moments of emotional connection before, which would not have been possible, if Klara had no feelings. Further on in the novel, when Josie grows up, she has less and less regard for Klara. First, Klara is banished from her room, and gets her own. Although it seems like a positive change, it is not to Klara, for she likes to spend a lot of time with Josie, as they had always done. Then, she is put into the closet, like a vacuum cleaner. This point is further affirmed by the cleaner Melania, who hates Klara. At one point, she says to Klara: “If it makes Miss Josie worse I come dismantle you. Shove you in the garbage.”⁵² Sahu and Karmakar (2022) analyse this interaction with accordance to language. They claim that by reducing Klara to a vacuum cleaner, to something that can be shoved in a garbage bag, she is reduced to something less than human⁵³. It is in the end of the novel that the relationship between Josie and Klara deteriorates significantly. Josie is not foul with Klara, but it is clear that she has no interest in her anymore, basically ignoring Klara’s existence. Analysing this from a Virtue Ethics standpoint, it is clear that Josie does not think of others, but only considers herself. Her character is not virtuous in her interactions with Klara, the Posthuman. In conclusion, the relationship between Klara and Josie, as Ishiguro portrays it in the novel, is constantly in flux. They have had exciting times together, being each other’s friend, but that friendship does not hold. To consider Josie unvirtuous or unethical in her dealings with Klara is far-fetched. It is rather human to get attached and de-attached from people. Her detachment from her former good friend Klara is a testament to how much she respects Klara as an entity. Her detachment is not based on the fact that Klara is a robot.

The second relationship; Is that of the Mother and Klara. Klara, again, fulfils the role of the Posthuman. The Mother is fully human. In her dealings with Klara, she regards her much like Josie does, as a best friend to her daughter. However, the reader learns in the closing parts of the novel that the Mother has more plans with Klara. She wishes Klara to *continue* Josie, if she passes. Since the Mother has already lost a daughter to the illness following her *lifting*, she cannot bear it to lose another. She notices how observant Klara is, and asks her to behave like Josie in the Morgan Falls section. Impressed with the accuracy of Klara’s movements, this is where the Mother’s plan begins to take shape. She begins this process without consulting with Klara. Her permission to take part in such a project is not asked. In this regard, she completely neglects Klara’s autonomy as a sentient being. However, she did

⁵² Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Klara and the Sun*. Faber and Faber Limited, 2021. P. 178.

⁵³ Sahu, Om Prakash & Karmakar, Manali. *Disposable culture, posthuman affect, and artificial human in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Klara and the Sun (2021)*. Springer, 2022. Pp. 3-4.

purchase Klara, so is she not the owner? And can the owner not do whatever they like with the *materials* they buy? These questions can be posed in opposition to the one that is prevalent in Deontology; whether it is right for the Mother to force a sentient, thinking robot into a position where she becomes someone else. Judging from this lens of ethics, one could argue that the Mother is morally wrong in forcing Klara to *continue* Josie. However, another lens of ethics, that of Consequentialism, would argue in favour of this action.

Consequentialism, as Choo (2021) describes, deals with the notion of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people⁵⁴. If the suffering group is smaller than the profiting group, an action is considered to be ethical. The suffering group in this scenario would comprise of only Klara. Even this would be a conjecture, for we do not know whether Klara actually likes or dislikes the situation that she will be in. One can infer, however, from her goal of helping Josie and being her friend that she will not care deeply about the Mother. She will only want Josie to be happy, as that is what she is programmed to do. Following this argument, Klara will dislike the situation of *continuing* Josie. The benefitting group is comprised of the Mother, and the Father. However, an argument could be made against the inclusion of the Father in this group. He does not agree with the practices of Mr Capaldi, and is also averse to robots. He will never fully believe that Klara is Josie. Therefore, his happiness would not increase, and he would perhaps even be a part of the suffering group. This weighs the equation down in favour of the suffering group. The suffering group is larger than the benefitting one. From a Consequentialist point of view, this would make the action unethical. A third lens of ethics one could analyse this relationship from; is that of Virtue Ethics. Again, Virtue Ethics deals with the character of the people involved in the action. A person is judged ethical if their character is ethical, and their intentions toward the other are morally good. Aristotle (384-322 BCE) believed the ultimate goal to be *eudaimonia*, human flourishing⁵⁵. To be able to achieve this, one must always act according to intellectual or moral virtues. These intellectual virtues encompassed comprehension and intelligence, i.e. does one understand the situation? The second category of Aristotle's Virtue Ethics, is that of moral virtues. One must always act according to these moral virtues. They included temperance and generosity. Through practicing these virtues, Aristotle believed, one could achieve human flourishing⁵⁶. These are the criteria to judge an action by, does the agent follow their intelligent or moral

⁵⁴ Choo, Suzanne. *Teaching Ethics Through Literature: The Significance of Ethical Criticism in a Global Age*. Routledge, 2021. Pp. 65-66.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* pp, 71-72.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 71-72.

virtues? If the answer is negative, then the agent will not have acted in a morally good way. The Mother's intentions are to *continue* Josie, so she would not be lost. She does this for herself, not taking into consideration Klara's feelings. Klara's feelings, as discussed above, are a tricky topic. She is a robot, she is programmed to compute data in certain ways. However, she also feels in certain ways. Jakob Stenseke (2022) also analyses this problem, and discerns the feelings that Klara has. He claims that she can feel, for example sadness, when she thinks that Beggar Man died, in the beginning of the story⁵⁷. He further declares that emotions play an important role in most of her observations. He finds a goal for this in the way of her programming. She is programmed to be a social robot, so she needs to be able to evaluate positive and negative situations. However, he asserts that she is not capable of seeing herself as a victim. She cannot prioritize her own suffering from that of others⁵⁸. This is testament to her character being virtuous, because she thinks of others instead of herself. However, does the fact that she seems to be incapable of considering her own suffering, save the Mother in this regard? The Mother also neglects the possibility that Klara could suffer from the decisions she makes. Is it morally wrong to object a creature to your volition when it has no mind to feel anguish in the situation? Perhaps Virtue Ethics has no answer for that, since it judges the character of the actor, and seems to disregard the character of the entity undergoing the action. Revisiting the lens of Consequentialism, one could then argue that Klara cannot feel suffering, and therefore, there cannot be a "suffering group", making the group of people that are benefitting from the action of the Mother, the bigger one. This, in consequence, would mean that that action is deemed ethical.

In conclusion, Ishiguro successfully portrays a morally ambivalent problem. He creates situations that evoke questions about the morality of human interaction with the Posthuman. The ethical scenario offered in *Klara and the Sun* is ambiguous. It can be read from both sides, the human side and the Posthuman side. This relationship, between the Mother and Klara, is no exception. The Mother has had virtuous stances toward Klara, but also more questionable manners in which she interacted with her. In all, Ishiguro portrays a human being, trying to interact with a Posthuman. The novel functions, in that regard, as a warning to people. It warns about the intellect of the Posthuman, as well as asking the moral questions about how to deal with these Posthuman robots.

⁵⁷ Stenseke, Jakob. *The Morality of Artificial Friends in Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun*. *Journal of Science Fiction and Philosophy*, vol. 5, 2022. P. 8.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 8.

Conclusion

This thesis has centred on the topics of ethics and the Posthuman, as portrayed by Kazuo Ishiguro in his novels *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*. The research focussed on the moral questions that Ishiguro's works raise about the relationships between the human and the Posthuman in the novels. The main research question was; how does Kazuo Ishiguro portray the relationship between the human and the Posthuman, and the moral questions that emerge from that, in the novels *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*? This thesis has analysed various interactions between the human and the Posthuman that occur in the novels. In analysing those relationships, the notion of ethics was applied to these interactions. The research has drawn on the insights of Suzanne Choo (2021), and her explanation of the various lenses of ethics⁵⁹. From these lenses, mainly those of Deontology, Consequentialism, and Virtue Ethics, the relationship between the human and the Posthuman was analysed. The conclusions are ambiguous, as Ishiguro does not offer the readers a clear right or wrong in his novels. There is no sharp contrast between right and wrong: the humans in the novels are confusingly ethical and unethical throughout the narrative. The Posthuman, however, being placed in a subjected position to these humans, does not seem to be aware of any exploitation. They do not seem to suffer in this position of subordination. This further problematised the analysis of their relationship with the human. If the Posthuman does not mind its exploitation, then is it morally wrong to do so? Is it morally wrong to use a social robot, or a clone, for the purpose that it was intended and produced for? Or are there moral values that every human should hold and take into consideration in dealing with the Posthuman? These questions become apparent in analysing Ishiguro's novels. Both of these novels centre on the notion of "what it means to be not-quite human"⁶⁰. This ties in with the theory of Rosi Braidotti (2017)⁶¹. She writes about the Posthuman, and defines it as a human-non-human linking⁶². Another research that dealt with the notion of the Posthuman, was that of Aman Deep Singh (2021)⁶³.

⁵⁹ Choo, Suzanne. *Teaching Ethics Through Literature: The Significance of Ethical Criticism in a Global Age*. Routledge, 2021.

⁶⁰ Preston, Alex. *Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro review – another masterpiece*. The Guardian, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/mar/01/klara-and-the-sun-by-kazuo-ishiguro-review-another-masterpiece>

⁶¹ Braidotti, Rosi. *Posthuman Critical Theory*. Journal of Posthuman studies vol. 1, no. 1, 2017.

⁶² Ibid. p. 12.

⁶³ Deep Singh, Aman. *Anthropomorphism and Social Robotics in Kazuo Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun (2021)*. IEEE.

He theorised that the Posthuman is an anthropomorph body that it is humanlike. While Singh applied that notion mainly to the novel *Klara and the Sun*, it is also highly applicable to the clones in *Never Let Me Go*. In a way, then, both Posthumans in the novels are typified by being humanlike. This has consequences for the ways in which the human relates to the Posthuman. The Posthuman in the novels is not a “normal” Posthuman, like Siri. The Posthuman in the novels seems to have emotional attributes, and cognitive skills, resembling closely those of humans. This in turn, affects the social interactions humans have with them.

The morality of the relationships between the human and the Posthuman is obstruse on purpose. Ishiguro does not seem to aim to create a clear divide in right and wrong. He very cleverly invokes moral questions in the reader, by writing his Posthuman in such a human way. The novels are not meant to be warning humans for the coming of evil Posthumans; nor are they an indicator of human wickedness. The novels are seemingly meant to provoke an awareness in the reader. The reader needs to become aware of the ethical debate that surround the Posthuman. The reader is left to think about the morality of the practices that are described in the novel, and the role that the human plays in those practices. The judgement of these practices is entirely up to the reader; Ishiguro merely portrays the causes and the effects that these situations have on both humans and the Posthuman. That, in conclusion, is what this research has proved, through analysis of social interactions between the human and the Posthuman. Ishiguro does not offer right or wrong, he portrays the relationship between human and Posthuman as one that is constantly in flux. In doing so, he stirs up moral questions about dealing with the Posthuman; about the attitudes of humans toward the Posthuman. Through invoking these moral questions in the readers, Ishiguro seemingly attempts to spread awareness about the potential ethical debate that will spark when these dystopian futures become reality.

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