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Becoming Human: Exploring ‘Nomadic Subjectivity’ in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Klara and the Sun* (2021)

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Abstract

*Our contemporary time is assaulted with crises that reveal itself to us in urgency. In a rapidly technologised world, there is an ontological shift concerning the identity formation of humans since the boundaries between the human and the artificial are becoming increasingly nebulous in the postmodern time. The presence of various simulacra further complicates the existential notion of identity, especially because algorithmic systems are improving at emulating humans. Against this epistemological upheaval, Kazuo Ishiguro in *Klara and the Sun* (2021) asks compelling questions about identity and the changing human condition. While existing scholarship on the novel predominantly addresses the machine question, research on nonhuman subjectivity and identity is lacking. This article bridges this gap by examining the novel through Rosi Braidotti’s concept of the nomadic subject, arguing that Klara’s identity is fluid and continually evolving, embodying a transformative approach to subjectivity in the posthuman era.*

Keywords: posthuman; subjectivity; identity; AI

What piece of work is a man— how noble in reason; how infinite in faculties, in form and moving; how express and admirable in action; how like an angel in apprehension; how like a god; the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals...(Hamlet, Act II, Sc ii, 269-273)

Introduction

Rosi Braidotti (2013) revealed in an interview, “Critique ties you to the present (diagnosis, resistance, cartographies) but creativity is the future. Creativity projects you into where we’re going next. Critique and creativity imply different temporal frameworks”. The world we currently inhabit reveals itself to us in a state of constant climate, racial, sexual, political, epistemological, and cosmopolitical urgency. It may sound like an oversimplification of Braidotti’s statement, but human civilisation has to navigate and negotiate with various crises, the crisis of human identity and subjectivity being one of them. Sigmund Freud shook the foundation of the conceptions rooted in the Cartesian notion of the cogito by exploring the unconscious, which contests the primacy of the consciousness. Freud’s exploration highlighted the suggestion that both the depicted and the unexplored hold equal validity. This holds a very poststructuralist aura to it since poststructuralism refers to the instability of meaning. The majority of poststructuralist philosophers, including Michel Foucault, Jacques

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Derrida, and Jean-Francois Lyotard, regard the concept of universality as inherently problematic. Any claim to universal truth necessitates an external reference point through which we apprehend such universality. However, it also means that the claim to universality relies on an externality that is always radically different from the structural framework of meaning. Therefore, poststructuralism points to the impossibility of a stable and unified structural form as it perpetually requires an external element that is distinct from itself. In other words, it relies on the otherness to define itself. The crisis became more prominent when Jean Baudrillard famously analysed how reality is being replaced by simulacra. An individual's status is constantly pulled into question in parallel as a reaction to the constant change in the order of reality. Inevitably, it questions the notion of identity as this dialectic engenders a schism within modern identity, given that identity is treated as a structure in itself. The existential uncertainty that brings into question the whole notion of identity has further been complicated by a variety of simulacra, "As algorithmic systems become better at simulating human behaviors, voices, language patterns, and appearances, from chatbots and emotional robots to deep fakes, the "aura" of the individual person is called intensely into question. Now it is not a person facing an apparatus, as Benjamin saw the situation but rather an apparatus *becoming* the person" (Hayles, 2023, p. 256).

Against this backdrop of epistemological upheaval, Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Klara and the Sun* (2021) offers a compelling exploration of identity, consciousness, and the human condition. Klara, an Artificial Friend (AF), is procured by Chrissie Arthur, simply known as the Mother, to serve as a companion for her ailing twelve-year-old daughter, Josie. Gradually, the author reveals that Josie's illness is a result of having been "lifted", which is aimed at enhancing children's cognitive abilities in a society marked by intense competitiveness and the pervasive presence of artificial intelligence. Although the procedure ostensibly enhances a child's prospect for success in an AI-driven era, it carries the risk of complications, some of which proved fatal for Josie's older sister, Sal. As we probe more deeply into Klara's narrative, the author prompts us to confront the questions of identity and subjectivity in an age of constant uncertainty and flux. *Klara and the Sun* has been at the centre of many critical debates. Hang Zhou and Yanling Yang (2021), in their article, use Agamben's theory of biopolitics to explore the nature of the exploitation of the AFs by humans to answer how power operates within the narrative; in a similar vein, Nicola Simonetti (2023), in her article undertakes a nuanced understanding of power dynamics and agency within the context of human/nonhuman relations by incorporating gaze theory; Yuqin Sun (2022) argues, basing her inquiry on the debates surrounding posthuman perfectability, how humans try to subjugate the nonhuman, creating the technological other; Jakob Stenseke (2022) brings into focus the moral status and moral agency of artificial intelligence in his exploration of the novel. Most of the scholarship in the novel mainly focuses on the machine question. There is a lack of research in exploring a nuanced understanding of nonhuman subjectivity and identity as portrayed in the novel. This article aims to address this lacuna. As argued above, poststructuralists insist that any criticism of identity should include the parts that are left out of the structure. Similarly, Rosi Braidotti aims to eliminate the necessity for an identity formation reliant on external validation. Hers reflects a desire to transcend conventional modes of identity formation. She calls it *the nomadic subject*. This article aims to analyse *Klara and the Sun* following Braidotti's conception of the nomadic subject to argue how Klara, the AF, does not hold a fixed identity; rather, she is constantly in the process of *becoming*.

Matter-ialism

Our contemporary time is intrinsically related not only to the politics of life itself but also to the phenomenon of death. Giorgio Agamben (1998) elucidated the concept of to make live and to let

die and how the subjects are embedded in its politics. Generally speaking, power dynamics intersect with the fundamental aspects of life, especially in the context of contemporary technological advancements and societal structures. At its core lies the concept of biopower, a term coined by Michel Foucault. It refers to the ways in which power operates through the management and control of biological life, and it extends beyond the traditional forms of political power to encompass broader populations. Braidotti, in her essay "The Politics of 'Life Itself' and New Ways of Dying" (2010), argues that technological advancements have greatly influenced the way life is understood, managed and manipulated. Her examples range from genetic engineering to digital surveillance, in which technology contours the shape of life itself. Braidotti writes, "...biopower has emerged as an organising principle for proliferating discourses and practices that make technologically mediated 'life' into a self-constituting entity" (p. 201). It goes without saying that our life is increasingly structured around the concept of biopower. This cartography of life includes debates over healthcare policies, environmental regulations, bioethics and much more. However, among them, technological mediation points towards the profound impact that technology has over the very essence of life itself. We only need to look towards the direction of advancements taking place in biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and data analytics to comprehend how life is not only managed but also constantly transformed and created in new ways. Moreover, under this technologically mediated life, "living matter itself becomes the subject and not the object of inquiry..." (2010, p. 201). This shift represents a move towards what Braidotti terms a "biocentric perspective." With the increasing interest in our understanding of biology, ecology and the interconnectedness of life itself, especially after Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory, there has been a growing recognition of the agency and the complexity inherent in both living and non-living matter. This epistemological shift also acts as a premonition towards the part that living organisms actively play in shaping and influencing their environments. Moreover, the "biocentric perspective" includes broader implications for the structure of social subjects. In other words, its implications are embedded within the individuals and groups within society. As society adopts a more biocentric viewpoint, it has the ability to influence how individuals perceive themselves and their relationship to the world in general. This paradigmatic shift creates "a genetic social imaginary" (2010, p. 201) whereby the role of the human body and its representations also undergo a fundamental change owing to the intervention of information and biogenetic technologies. Braidotti terms this neorealist practice of bodily realism as "matter-ialism." The new ontology comes shrouded in the garment of anxiety regarding the future possibility of being human. Here, of course, Donna Haraway's work becomes of seminal importance. The image of the artificial entangling with the human also promises a world beyond the constraints of mortal flesh. The question of mortality and longevity is of utmost importance here. Scott Bukatman (1993), in a similar vein, argues that this entanglement of the physical with the artificial creates what he terms a terminal identity. This identity is situated outside the body and is linked with the New Age fantasies of cosmic redemption through technology. The new and exciting world that technological mediation promises also comes embedded with the power relations prevalent in our contemporary times.

Ishiguro, in the novel, presents us with a neomaterialist approach to the body in tandem with the advancements taking place in creating artificially augmented beings. The human-machine entanglement, as seen in the contemporary context as well as in the novel, is treated with both reverence and suspicion. The novel, although written from the AF's perspective in simple prose, is not divested from the broader and negative impact of the same. Ishiguro's world is augmented by machines and intelligent beings. However, it also brings to the spotlight the anxieties surrounding the same. What will happen if the robots are to snatch the jobs away? This is an age-old anxiety that

has been dealt with in various novels. If technology advances enough to create artificially created companions for kids, both negating and erasing the importance of human companionship, it can also replace human labour. It solidifies yet again how power relations are inevitably intimately interlinked with the modes of production under late capitalism. Certainly, the motive behind replacing human labour with robot labour is the unquestionable accumulation of capital. In *Klara and the Sun*, Klara slowly becomes aware of how Josie's father, simply referred to in the novel as the Father, was a chief engineer working for a company. However, through the slow narration, it becomes clear to Klara and later to the readers that the Father lost his job due to the mass automation of companies, which did not spare even the chief engineers. It becomes obvious that the Father is not the only such person with a similar qualification to have lost his job; later, Helen, Rick's mother, mentions that the Father lives in a commune populated by similar people and how they have turned their backs against the use of technology, "I'm sharing my life with some very fine people, and most of them came down the same road I did. It's become clear to all of us now, there are many different ways to lead a decent and full life" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 257). Moreover, Helen mentions once again, perhaps out of her ignorant nature, that Paul's commune is made up of "white people and all from the ranks of the formal professional elites" (2021, p. 258). Humans losing their jobs is not the only consequence of the technological takeover. Undoubtedly, there is a shift in power relations. The phallogocentric world dominated by white heterosexual men is threatened by the inclusion of technologically advanced beings in the quotidian life. Consequently, the shifting power dynamics initiate a challenge to the established social norms and structures within everyday life. Although one form of power dynamics is slowly being replaced by another, the byproducts of the malaise continue to persistently thrive. Isabelle Senechal (2021) emphasises that Ishiguro creates a dystopian version of the United States marked by increasing social inequality, fascist terrorism, and contentious scientific advancements. In this bleak future, numerous parents choose to subject their children to a hazardous genetic modification procedure known as lifting to enhance their social status and academic opportunities. Children who are lifted adhere to a rigorous regimen of home education and socialisation, while unlifted children face ostracism from their peers and are largely left to fend for themselves. Technology, although promising advancements in terms of what the body can achieve, serves to retain the deep schism of social inequality and exclusion.

The replacement of humans by machines also points towards the possibility of enhancing human abilities using technology. Technological mediation with the body inevitably puts forward the question of mortality. If technological entanglement ensures new ways of living, it will indicate new forms of dying as well. Anne Balsamo articulates it best, "and yet, such beliefs about the technological future "life" of the body are complemented by a palpable fear of death and annihilation from uncontrollable and spectacular body-threats: antibiotic-resistant viruses, random contamination, flesh-eating bacteria" (1995, pp. 1-2). The technological mediation with the body in the novel is mainly geared towards enhancing the intellectual abilities of young kids. However, an unintended consequence of undergoing the process of being lifted is the susceptibility of children to contract life-threatening illnesses, with some succumbing to these maladies without recovery. Josie's older sister, Sal, succumbed to a similar fate. Despite experiencing the tragic loss of her firstborn to this procedure, the Mother elects to proceed with Josie's lifting. This decision underscores the mother's calculated risk, predicated upon the shifting social landscape in which the individuals who have undergone technological enhancement stand poised to navigate an intensely competitive landscape successfully. Failure to embrace such advancements may consign individuals to obscurity, devoid of prospects for forging a viable future of their own. Rick epitomises the plight of the unlifted kids, who encounter obstacles in gaining admission to esteemed academic

institutions, many of which prioritise applicants who have been lifted. The narrative depicts a populace of lifted children assured of access to premier educational institutions and poised to carve out a prosperous future for themselves. Needless to say, the imperative for these children to undergo the lifting procedure stems from the looming spectre of advancing artificial intelligence, precipitating a paradigm whereby technological entanglement with the body becomes a requisite for surpassing the capabilities of the thinking machines. However, the introduction of these advanced humans further perpetuates the segregation between the lifted and unlifted children, accentuating preexisting social disparities. When the boundaries between the human and machine are porous and constantly negotiated, the notion of subjectivity extends beyond the traditional understanding of the human subject as a discrete and autonomous entity. Therefore, the traditional notions of identity and subjectivity are destabilised. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of inquiring deeply into the ever-changing idea of identity, and we turn to Braidotti for the same.

Embodiment, Difference, and Fluid Identity

According to the poststructuralists, the thing that assigns meaning to identity must be sought in its externality. To establish a coherent philosophical critique of the same, Braidotti (1994) introduces the concept of 'nomadic subjects.' Braidotti's 'nomadic subject' is not a solidified static subject; it is "a myth, that is to say a political fiction, that allows me to think through and move across established categories and levels of experience: blurring boundaries without burning bridges" (p. 4). It indicates that although the subjectivity itself is fluid and unstable, it does not negate the situatedness of subjectivity. Braidotti borrows the term 'nomadic' from Gilles Deleuze, which is closely associated with Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of the lines of flight, invented in *Anti-Oedipus* (2012). Deleuze and Guattari (2012) focus on a particular manner in which the unconscious desire evades the Oedipal constraints and which, they argue, carries with it the potential for a post-capitalist future. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the world is composed of various assemblages that interact with one another. This interaction facilitates change by "re-orienting our maps of what has been and drawing maps for what could be from the perspective of a nomad comprises a refusal of dominant discourses" (Minozzo, 2024, p. 5). Furthermore, these assemblages are composed of lines, and the lines that transcend the confines of one assemblage and connect to a different one are termed lines of flight, "an assemblage never contains a causal infrastructure" but "an abstract line of creative or specific causality, its *line of flight*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 312). In this way, lines of flight represent an unstable identity as it refuses to identify itself with only one set of identities. Rather, the change takes place precisely because of the instability by opening itself up through the process of constant change to new concepts of *becoming*. To make the process of becoming comprehensible, Braidotti offers an ontological plane. Similar to the lines of flight, the nomad is always in movement, always trying to situate and resituate themselves in accordance with their new surroundings. Her effort is to decenter hegemony since "this dominant idea is based on a simple assumption of superiority by a subject that is: masculine, white, urbanised, speaking a standard language. This subject is the Man of reason that feminists, anti-racists, black, indigenous postcolonial and ecological activists have been criticising for decades" (Braidotti, 2020, p. 2).

While discussing the multifarious facets of identity, it is imperative to consider the body as being entangled in the same discourse. One of the primary locations for containing identity is the body. Feminists, in particular, frequently speak of the body as a space where various discourses conflict. The body is regarded as a site of difference, and it was Foucault who treated the body as a site first in *Discipline and Punish*. However, Braidotti (1994) argues that Foucault overlooks the feminine and feminist perspectives in his examination of power, knowledge, and modernity. She posits that the

foundation of her argument lies in the idea that "the subject is not an abstract entity, but rather a material embodied one. The body is not a natural thing; on the contrary, it is a culturally coded socialised entity" (p. 238). By connecting the Deleuzian idea of becoming, Braidotti explains how bodies can escape established structural forms. What Braidotti sets out to do with her nomadic subjectivity is to create the possibilities of existence that can be realised without being bound to any notion of identity. In *Nomadic Subjects* (1994), Braidotti thinks through the matter of embodiment as a way of rethinking subjectivity as "a new form of materialism, one that develops the notion of corporeal materiality by emphasising the embodied and therefore sexually differentiated structure of the speaking subject" (p. 3).

Klara's Fluid Identity

Questions regarding the validity of assigning the term 'subjectivity' to something that is bereft of both *Zoe* and *bios* may arise, and rightfully so. Heather Humann (2023) argues, "Klara's ability to tell her own story complicates traditional understandings of agency and subjectivity. Additionally, her portrayal poses challenges to humanist principles about selfhood. Finally, the fact that readers are prompted to relate to a nonhuman such as Klara decenters humans from the central (and privileged) position they so-frequently occupy in fictional narratives" (p. 14). Our contemporary time is plagued by debates surrounding posthumanism; it seems repetitive to regurgitate yet again that subjectivity is no longer tethered to individuals; rather, it is a co-operative trans-species effort³ and that it occupies the in-between spaces: between nature/technology, male/female, human/nonhuman, or, in Braidotti's (2019) words, "in assemblages that flow across and displace the binaries" (p. 33). Klara occupies a similar space whereby she is the embodiment of the *in-betweenness*. She is artificially produced, yet in moments, she exhibits exceptional human compassion and care towards others, even when it threatens her very existence. Klara wholeheartedly believes that a Cootings Machine, named after the company of the same name, is responsible for all-round pollution. She comes up with the plan of destroying the machine because, for her, destroying the machine equates to ending pollution, which, in turn, means the Sun would be able to provide more of its nourishment, helping to cure Josie's illness. However, extracting a certain chemical compound called P-E-G Nine, which could disrupt the working of the smoke funnelling machine, from Klara means that she might lose some of her abilities. This means that she may no longer serve her purpose to the family, and subsequently, they might discard her altogether. When given the choice of deciding on the course of action, "This is your call, Klara. If you want, we can just drive away from here" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 252), Klara, without hesitating, answers solemnly, "Yes...Then let's try" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 253). She is not human, yet all too human. Thereby, the doubt of assigning posthuman subjectivity to Klara gets nullified. Ishiguro's fictional narrative and his portrayal of Klara turn her into a great embodiment for exploring the question of posthuman subjectivity and force us to confront uncomfortable questions about our own scheme of things.

Ishiguro introduces Klara, the AF or the Artificial Friend, as someone possessing childlike naivete. Since the AFs are solar-powered, Klara considers the sun rays to be "nourishment", "the Sun and his kindness to us", etc. This kind of thought process is divested of the matters of fact-ness that science and rationalism provide us with. Instead, for her, the Sun that she refers to with a capital S is the life-giving pagan god. However, her 'personhood' is the result of preprogrammed codes. This is to say Klara behaves and thinks the way she does, owing to her programmes. As AFs are supposed to provide companionship to kids, it is only natural that the AF would be modelled and programmed

³Margulis L, Dorion Sagan (1995) *What Is Life?* Berkeley, University of California Press.

the way that commodities are marketed towards particular demographics. Klara, at the end of the day, is a commodity herself. She is part of the AFs that are created, mass-produced, and exchanged for a monetary value, all to serve whoever owns them and eventually succumb to a 'slow fade.' Here, one could argue that humans follow a similar trajectory in a stratified society. Although tracing the parallel between the two to comment on the nature of the blurred distinction between humans and artificially created beings with regard to the production of labour under late capitalism warrants an informed and nuanced exploration, it exceeds the scope of this paper.

Klara, just another product among other AFs of her generation, possesses acute observational skills, and her reasoning holds ground against all and any persistent persuasion, "Even though I was new then, it occurred to me straight away it might not have been my fault; that the Sun had withdrawn his pattern by chance just when I'd been touching it" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 4). From the outset, Ishiguro sets her apart from other AFs, even the newer ones that are supposed to be an upgraded version of the last one, just like our technology with its various new variants, each of which is marketed as fixing problems, or bugs as developers refer to them, persistent in its previous version. Unlike any of the AFs, Klara seems to possess a disposition towards endless curiosity, "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. 9). Klara is exhibiting traits of self-awareness, unlike her fellow AFs. Moreover, she is curious to learn more about the outside. The more she perceives, the better judge she becomes of things and people around her. Klara is already creating her own lines of flight; her subjectivity is already unstable, never confined to the parameters of the programme inscribed within her.

At the core of Klara's constant subject-making lies Josie, who inspires Klara to learn new things or rather, it would be more appropriate to state that Klara copies Josie, "...I copied Josie's method of placing elbows firmly down on the Island's surface, and from then on felt more secure" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 56). New environments may become overwhelming and disorienting. However, Klara is rapidly becoming an expert at navigating the constantly changing new environment. Upon arriving at the Arthur household, Klara, much like any individual, must adapt to a new environment and undergo several adjustments beyond her familiar zone. In Klara's own words,

...here too was another adjustment I had to make. In those early days, at stray moments, I'd often look out at the highway going over the hill - or at the view across the fields from the bedroom rear window- and search with my gaze for the figure of a distant AF, before remembering how unlikely a prospect that way, so far away from the city and other buildings (p. 57).

Klara, although she is becoming an expert at copying Josie, also has to navigate the treacherous terrain of human emotions and what triggers happy or sad reactions. Klara feels she is solely responsible for Josie's well-being and likewise takes decisions on her own, keeping in mind the best course of action for Josie. However, what she fails to realise at first is the intricacy of human emotions. One such incident occurs when Klara does not wake Josie up for their daily routine of conversing with her Mother while she sips her morning coffee owing to her bout of weaknesses, Josie is visibly upset with her, "When she woke up, she shouted angry words at me" and that "Josie didn't shout at me again, but once we were down in the kitchen, she didn't smile while she ate her breakfast" (p. 58). Klara becomes all too aware of how important the morning routine between Josie and her mother actually is after noticing the signs of displeasure in Josie's demeanour. Klara, although not an expert at first, is increasingly becoming adept at deciphering the intricacies of human emotions. Moreover, her observational skills about Josie and her feelings towards other

people strengthen the more she meets new people. Recounting the first time Klara met Rick, a childhood friend of Josie, Klara observes, "...perhaps, in his own way, this boy was as important to Josie as was the Mother; and that his aims and mine might in some ways be almost parallel, and that I should observe him carefully to understand how he belonged within the pattern of Josie's life" (p. 70). Apart from trying to understand the master she serves best, Klara slowly starts to transgress boundaries in such a way that it indicates her ability to gain autonomy over the decisions she makes. In one statement, she reveals, "In the situation that had developed- and in the absence of clear signals from Josie- I'd taken the course I'd considered to be for the best" (p. 95). Klara's evolving ontology transcends her programmed parameters as she assimilates and integrates experiential data. Klara evidently indicates a nuanced cognitive capacity requisite for discerning optimal choices based on accrued knowledge. It goes without saying that this decision-making process parallels human decision-making, which is often characterised by independent, informed deliberations that are devoid of external supervision.

Nomadic subjectivity, as explicated at the beginning of this paper, extols the virtues of hybridity and becoming. It underscores the dynamic interplay and fluidity inherent in the construction of identities and different modes of being. This conceptual lens inevitably exhibits an examination of Klara's multifaceted nature. Klara is situated within a paradigm of machine intelligence engineered to simulate human emotions and behaviours. As argued in the previous section, Klara's interactions with the other humans surrounding her, along with other AFs, create a complex web of relations in which Klara constantly blurs the boundaries between organic and artificial by showing an affinity towards successfully deciphering complex emotions and at times, showing unbelievable human emotions herself. Within this complicated tapestry of relations, the demarcations between subject and object become nebulous. Klara's role as an AF transcends mere mechanistic function as she engages in nuanced exchanges and relational dynamics that mirror human social interactions. Her ability to evoke emotional responses and empathetic connections from human interlocutors, no doubt, highlights the efficacy of her design in mimicking human-like qualities. However, Klara is also transgressing boundaries towards *becoming*.

Becoming Josie

Although the efficacy of her programming is unquestionable, Klara herself foments a transformative process of self-actualisation whereby she evolves beyond the confines of her initial programming. Through various encounters and assimilating diverse human behaviours, Klara undergoes a process of ontological expansion. She acquires new insights and capacities that transcend her preordained function. This ongoing process of becoming imbues Klara with a sense of agency and autonomy, propelling her towards a state of emergent subjectivity that, again, defies conventional categorisations.

Klara's transgressing boundaries become increasingly clear to the readers when, at Morgan's falls, the Mother asks Klara to *become* Josie. The Mother orders, "Okay, Klara. Since Josie isn't here, I want *you* to be Josie. Just for a little while. Since we're up here" (p. 117, italics in original), to which Klara replies, "In fact now I know her better, and have seen her in more situations, I'll be able to give a more sophisticated imitation" (p. 117). The Mother's fervent requests of asking Klara to sit the way Josie would sit to asking her to move the way Josie would, even speak in the way Josie does. After undertaking all the orders successfully, Klara describes, "The Mother leaned even further across the table, and I could see joy, fear, sadness, laughter in the boxes. Because everything else had gone silent, I could hear her repeating under her breath: 'That's good, that's good, that's good'"

(p. 118). The aura surrounding Klara's potential metamorphosis into or emulation of Josie and the consequent narrative tension becomes palpable with the introduction of Mr Capaldi, an artist commissioned by the Mother to make a portrait of Josie. This development is marked by Josie's extended sessions with Mr Capaldi, spanning several months, during which Rick initially harbours suspicions regarding the nature and purpose of the portrait. During a subsequent visit to Mr Capaldi's studio in the city, Chrissie, accompanied by Klara, provided explicit instructions to Klara regarding her anticipated interaction with the artist. Notably, the occasion marked the inaugural instance whereby the Mother addresses Klara with the affectionate term 'honey', which, we may assume, was reserved for Josie. Her usage of the endearment term implies an emotional proximity akin to that of her daughter. Chrissie, from asking Klara to mimic Josie's demeanour during their trip to Morgan's Falls to start addressing Klara as 'honey', indicates how Klara is slowly being trained to become Josie within the Arthur family. Chrissie's directive to Klara, "Remember. Mr Capaldi will want to ask you some questions. In fact, he may have quite a few. You just answer them. Okay, honey?" (p. 216) serves to underscore Klara's designated role in simulating Josie's persona. This transition from the mere emulation of Josie's behavioural attributes to the direct invocation of an affectionate term in Klara's address signals a subtle yet profound shift in her relational dynamics with the Mother.

Following Klara's completion of Mr Capaldi's evaluative assessment, intended to gauge her proficiency in replicating Josie's demeanour, a pivotal revelation unfolds, illuminating the underlying objective of the purported portrait. Mr Capaldi elucidates this purpose succinctly, "Klara, we're not asking you to train the new Josie. We're asking you to *become* her" (p. 232). The intention is to fabricate an AF bearing the physical semblance of Josie, with Klara slated to seamlessly assume the persona of this new AF in the unfortunate event of Josie's demise. There is a surety surrounding Klara becoming Josie, as explained by Mr Capaldi, "I'll be able to give you scientific proof of it. Proof she's already well on her way to accessing quite comprehensively all of Josie's impulses and desires" (p. 233). He goes on, "There's nothing there. Nothing inside Josie that's beyond the Klaras of this world to continue. The second Josie won't be a copy. She'll be the exact same and you'll have every right to love her just as you love Josie now" (p. 233). The statement may be interpreted as a critique of reducing the essence of human existence to quantifiable metrics and replicable algorithms, thereby diminishing the intrinsic humanity of individuals. However, dialectically, it also alludes to the possibility for artificially created beings to attain agency and autonomy, thereby underscoring the Deleuzian concept of lines of flight inherent within the conception of the nomadic subjects. Inherently, there exists a tension between the devaluation of human uniqueness through technological reductionism and the potential for nonhuman entities to assert their own agency. This duality reflects the complex interplay between human and artificial intelligence within contemporary discourse surrounding posthumanism and the relentless technological augmentation. In any way, this is indicative of the trajectory of transformation, of the lines of flight, whereby artificially augmented machines transcend predetermined constraints and forge alternative modes of existence. This is the essence of Braidotti's nomadic subjects, who navigate fluidly through sociocultural landscapes, resisting fixed identities and embracing multiplicities. This complex dialectic between the commodification of humanity and the potential for liberated agency within nonhuman entities illustrates the relationship between technological determinism and emerging modes of subjectivities in the age of posthumanism.

Conclusion

Posthuman subjectivity, in general, stands in opposition to the Enlightened concept of autonomy. For the posthuman subject, autonomy is a process of self-making that is inherently linked to the subject's environment. Posthuman subjectivity, as argued by Braidotti, views autonomy as an ongoing process of self-making. This subject is similar to the idea of the nomadic subject, which posits that the self is perpetually in a state of flux, continuously shaped and reshaped by its interactions with external forces. Braidotti's nomadic subject epitomises this dynamic interplay, embodying a fluid identity that traverses and transcends fixed boundaries. In other words, the nomadic subject's formation and reformation are influenced by a constellation of external factors, such as Althusser's ideological state apparatuses or Foucauldian power structures, which inscribe and modify the body and mind. This constant negotiation and renegotiation with the environment emphasises the interdependence between the self and the world. Within this framework, the agency is not located within a sovereign individual but emerges from the subject's capacity to engage with and adapt to its surroundings. This process of becoming involves an incessant dialogue with the subject's location. Thus, the integration of technological mediation with the human body and the subsequent potential for artificially created beings to gain agency further exemplifies the Deleuzian lines of flight, highlighting the transformative potential and the perpetual becoming that lie at the core of nomadic subjectivity.

Klara exemplifies the liminal space of in-betweenness, serving as a representation of the embodiment of posthuman subjectivity. Ishiguro's portrayal of Klara navigates posthuman subjectivity, forcing us to confront uncomfortable questions about our own definitions of humanity, agency and the interplay between humans and AI, ultimately complicating the discourse on posthumanism and the potential for AI-imbued machines to possess genuine subjectivity. Klara's journey of continuous subject-making exemplifies Braidotti's concept of the nomadic subject. Her ongoing process of becoming transcends her initial programming, embodying the nomadic subject's fluid and adaptive nature. This ontological expansion allows her to acquire new capacities, and it imbues her with a sense of agency and autonomy. This process of becoming highlights her emergent subjectivity. Her journey represents the fluidity whereby artificially augmented entities transcend predetermined constraints and forge alternative modes of existence. Klara's hybrid nature encapsulates the convergence of artificial and organic elements, challenging the entrenched distinctions and further inviting contemplation on the nature of identity and consciousness in an increasingly technologised world. Her narrative arc serves as a testament to the transformative potential of machine intelligence, blurring the boundaries between the synthetic and the authentic, illuminating pathways towards new modes of being and becoming. Klara not only embodies the nomadic subject but also forces us to re-examine the boundary between human and artificial beings, highlighting the implications for re-examining posthuman subjectivity in contemporary discourse. Moreover, Klara's journey embodies the nomadic subject's resistance to fixed identities and its embrace of multiplicity and the perpetual becoming, reflecting the transformative potential of posthuman subjectivity in a technologically mediated world.

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