

**T.C. ISTANBUL KÜLTÜR UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**FLEETING SIGNIFICANCE: HUMANOID ROBOTS AS DISPOSABLE
ENTITIES IN IAN MCEWAN'S *MACHINES LIKE ME* AND KAZUO
ISHIGURO'S *KLARA AND THE SUN***

Master of Arts Thesis

İrem Gököz

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Department: English Language and Literature

Programme: English Language and Literature

Supervisor: Dr. Ayşegül TURAN

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PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an in-depth exploration of the intricate relationships between humanoid robots and their human counterparts depicted in Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*. Through a multifaceted analysis, this study scrutinizes themes revolving around the fear of “the other”, fear of potential replacement, and investigates Wilhelm Hegel's master-slave dialectic, particularly through the lens of servitude within these literary narratives. The examination reveals a nuanced portrayal wherein the humanoid robots, central to the narratives, endure exploitation, sometimes mistreatment, and eventual disregard. The analysis highlights the societal dynamics that perpetuate the use and abandonment of these robots, positioning them as instruments employed for convenience until they no longer serve their intended purpose. By intertwining philosophical concepts such as “uncanny”, “the other”, and “face-to-face encounter” as well as ethics of robotics and Asimov's three rules of robotics with literary analysis, this thesis offers insight into the intricate complexities of human-robot relations. It underscores the ethical considerations and power dynamics inherent in the treatment of humanoid robots, shedding light on how these narratives reflect contemporary societal apprehensions and attitudes towards artificial intelligence and its integration into daily life. In consideration of these theories and concepts, the study ultimately asserts that despite their technological advancement and emulation of human behaviour, including emotions, humanoid robots or machines equipped with artificial intelligence persist in being deemed redundant.

Keywords: Master-Slave Dialectic, Humanoid Robots, Artificial Intelligence, Ian McEwan, *Machines Like Me*, Kazuo Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*

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ÖZET

Bu tez, Ian McEwan'ın *Benim Gibi Makineler* ve Kazuo Ishiguro'nun *Klara ile Güneş* romanlarında betimlenen insansı robotlar ile insanlar arasındaki karmaşık ilişkileri derinlemesine incelemektedir. Çok yönlü bir analizle, bu çalışma “öteki” korkusu, potansiyel bir yer değiştirme korkusu etrafında dönen temaları detaylı bir şekilde ele almakta ve özellikle bu edebi anlatılardaki hizmetkarlık bakış açısıyla Wilhelm Hegel'in efendi-köle diyalektiğini araştırmaktadır. İnceleme, anlatılarda merkezi konumda olan insansı robotların, sömürüye, zaman zaman kötü muameleye ve nihayetinde yok sayılma durumuna maruz kaldığı nüanslı bir tasvir ortaya koymaktadır. Analiz, bu robotların kullanımını ve terkedilmelerini sürdüren toplumsal dinamikleri vurgulayarak, onları amaçlandıkları sürece kullanılan araçlar olarak konumlandırmaktadır. Felsefi kavramlar olan “garip”, “öteki” ve “yüz yüze karşılaşma” ile robotik etik ve Asimov'un üç robotik kuralı kavramlarını edebi analizle birleştirerek, bu tez insan-robot ilişkilerinin karmaşık ve detaylı yönlerini anlamak için içgörü sunmaktadır. Bu çalışma, insansı robotların muamelesinde yer alan etik düşünceleri ve güç dinamiklerini vurgulayarak, bu anlatıların çağdaş toplumsal endişeleri ve yapay zekanın günlük yaşama entegrasyonundaki yansımalarını açıklığa kavuşturmaktadır. Bu teoriler ve kavramlar göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, çalışma sonuç olarak, yapay zeka ile donatılmış insansı robotlar veya makinelerin, teknolojik gelişmişlikleri ve insan davranışlarını, hatta duygularını taklit etme yetenekleri olsa dahi, hala gereksiz görülme eğiliminde olduklarını vurgular.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Efendi-Köle Diyalektiği, İnsansı Robotlar, Yapay Zeka, Ian McEwan, *Benim Gibi Makineler*, Kazuo Ishiguro, *Klara ile Güneş*

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INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving technological landscape, the presence of humanoid robots living among humans is not a mere fantasy but a tangible reality. A prime example is Sophia, the pioneering machine that was granted citizenship and has become a prominent guest on TV shows discussing topics like dreams and humanity. Sophia stands as a testament to the continuous evolution of technology. While the etymology of the term "technology" traces its origins to the ancient Greek word "tekhne", which denoted "art and craft" (Tekhne), today, "technology" has evolved to encompass "knowledge, equipment, and methods used in science and industry", although the connotation of "art and craft" has faded overtime (Technology). In this multifaceted definition, it is pivotal to underscore the notion of "equipment", as it resonates profoundly with the contemporary connotation of humanoid robots. Examples such as Sophia and robot companions for children in educational settings, exemplified by Ameca, the latest entrant in the realm of humanoids ("A Humanoid Robot Makes Eerily Lifelike Facial Expressions"), emphasize the paradigm shift wherein these robotic entities, while inherently technological, are primarily used as equipment serving humans regardless of their human-like forms. The service brings about an interaction and how humans and robots interact becomes an important issue for both science and literature. Recent literature has been particularly attentive to this interplay, with a specific focus on the emergence of humanoid robots. In works such as *Machines Like Me* by Ian McEwan and *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro, authors present two distinct visions of a society where machines have merged with humans. These novels offer unique perspectives on the dynamics between individuals and machines, especially in terms of how people perceive and engage with these robotic entities. In addition to a certain remoteness when it comes to the relationship between the human

and the machine, there is fear and disgust as to how these robotic entities are perceived in these narratives. This thesis aims to explore the responses of the characters in each novel to the presence of humanoid robots and argue that, despite their advanced technology, society never fully accepts these robots as genuine members of the human community, deeming them less than fully human and more importantly redundant.

There are several terms regarding the machines with human features and they have been in use for a long time, sometimes interchangeably. In order to clarify the terminology used throughout this text, the following definitions and explanations are introduced. Some of such terms are “robot”, “humanoid”, “android”, and “automaton” or in plural “automata”. Each has its own connotations. The term “robot” for instance is defined as “a machine controlled by a computer, which can move and do other things that people can do” (Robot, Cambridge); however, another definition goes as “a mechanical creation that can move or act on its own” (Robot, Vocabulary). While vacuum cleaners, kitchen appliances, even machines used in production lines in factories are referred to as a robot, it may also have a connotation of a machine with a human-like appearance as in the first definition. “Humanoid” is more complex because besides having the same definition with robots, it includes “creatures” as well: “a machine or creature with the appearance and qualities of a human” (Humanoid). This makes Frankenstein’s monster a humanoid, but definitely not a robot. An “android”; however, involves robot in its definition but adds “computer” because it needs to be controlled by a computer to be an android but also looks like a human (Android). Finally, “automaton” is interestingly double-sided. The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as such: “a machine that operates on its own without the need for human control, or a person who acts like a machine, without thinking or feeling” (Automaton). Therefore, it can be said that for automaton, there is no need for a computer to control

what this machine is doing, so it can be self-controlled; however, it may still refer to a biological human who acts disassociated. In addition to all these machines or creatures, a software term is used: Artificial Intelligence, shortly AI, is defined as “the use or study of computer systems or machines that have some of the qualities that the human brain has, such as the ability to interpret and produce language in a way that seems human, recognize or create images, solve problems, and learn from data supplied to them” (Artificial Intelligence). For artificial intelligence to be valid, there must be the presence of software but not necessarily in appearance like a human. So, robotic vacuums use AI, but they are not humanoid since they do not look like humans. Sophia, referred to as a “human-like robot” (Sophia) is different than a robotic vacuum cleaner since she has a human appearance while also possessing AI. Taking all these into consideration and the term “humanoid robots” that is frequently used these days (Yoshida), the machine characters in the novels *Machines Like Me* and *Klara and the Sun* will be referred to as humanoid robots with AI. This is to showcase that they look and act like humans, therefore they are humanoid, but are still man-made machines with AI software, therefore robots. I believe the two words together is a necessity considering the thin line between being a mere machine or becoming a real human is constantly emphasized in both of the novels and it is how they are studied in my thesis.

While post-humanism is undoubtedly relevant to the discussion of humanoid characters in speculative and contemporary fiction, my focus on Sigmund Freud’s Uncanny, Jean Baudrillard’s *Simulacra*, and George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s master-slave dialectic stems from the desire to delve deeper into the psychological and philosophical underpinnings of human-robot interactions. By examining Freud’s concept of the Uncanny, I aim to explore the unsettling nature of humanoid robots being treated as objects despite their human-like attributes, thereby shedding light on

the psychological discomfort experienced by both humans and robots in such scenarios. Furthermore, Baudrillard's concept of simulacra offers critical insights into the increasingly blurred boundaries between reality and simulation, which are pertinent to the portrayal of humanoid characters as mere objects in a world where appearances often overshadow authenticity. Additionally, Hegel's master-slave dialectic provides a framework for understanding the power dynamics and societal structures that contribute to the relegation of humanoid characters to object status. Therefore, my decision to prioritize these philosophical perspectives is driven by the intention to uncover the deeper layers of meaning and implications inherent in the portrayal of humanoid characters in literature.

Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me* is set in a pseudohistorical context in 1980s London where Alan Turing is alive and technology has advanced to the point where humanoid robots with AI, known as "Adams and Eves," are available to the public. The story follows the lives of Charlie, Miranda, and their newly acquired robot, Adam. As they navigate the ethical and moral complexities of living with such advanced artificial intelligence, the novel delves into questions of consciousness, morality, and what it means to be human. Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* is set in a dystopian future and tells the story of Klara, an Artificial Friend designed to be a companion for children. The novel explores themes of artificial intelligence, human relationships, and the desire for connection in a world where technology has a significant role in people's lives. Kazuo Ishiguro's contemplative narrative raises questions about what it means to be human and the impact of AI on human emotions and relationships. Both novels depict how the integration of humanoid robots with advanced AI can lead to societal changes, both positive and negative. They prompt readers to consider what it means to be human and whether machines can ever fully replicate or replace human qualities,

including empathy, creativity, and moral decision-making while also examining the dynamics between humans and machines, as well as the emotional connections that can form between them. Similarly, the endings in each novel highlight the ethical dilemmas and tensions that can arise when humans and humanoid robots coexist, particularly when the robots exhibit human-like qualities. The development of machines that bear a striking resemblance to humans and mimic human behaviour necessitates a consideration of the potential consequences associated with such advancements, including the determination of the rights that should be extended to them, as illustrated by the case of Sophia. However, the weight of this responsibility seems to be disregarded within the context of the novels being analysed: In *Machines Like Me*, Adam is killed and in *Klara and the Sun*, Klara is left to rot in a junkyard. It is striking to observe the initial enthusiasm of the characters upon purchasing humanoid robots that possess human-like qualities, only to witness this enthusiasm transform into bitterness and indifference as the robots fulfil their roles or are no longer required. This transition suggests that, regardless of their advanced and human-like attributes, humanoid robots are destined for redundancy within the context of these narratives. The selection of these two novels for the dissertation is grounded in their portrayal of humanoid robots integrated within human society, as opposed to a segregated existence in a robot-exclusive community. The narrative interactions within these literary works serve as a valuable lens for the examination of the intricate dynamics between machines and humans while also providing a comprehensive platform for the analysis of how humans perceive and relate to machines that look and act like themselves. Moreover, the representation of AI and humanoid characters in literature has evolved in the twenty-first century as writers have explored the subtle interactions between people and computers. In *Machines Like Me*, the humanoid robot

Adam develops feelings for a human, Miranda, which raises issues on the nature of love and consciousness. Similarly, in the novel *Klara and the Sun* depicts a society in which humanoid robots are used as children's playmates and examines the emotional ties that can form between people and technology.

The plot of *Machines Like Me* centres on a young man named Charlie who buys Adam, one of the first humanoid robots with AI. Charlie and his neighbour Miranda, who is also involved in the personalization process of Adam's software, become involved in a sequence of events that question their perceptions of humanity and the use of technology in society as they get closer to Adam. As Adam displays unexpected behaviour and emotions, Charlie and Miranda are forced to re-evaluate their own conceptions of what it means to be a human in the course of the novel's exploration of themes of love, loss, and the hazy boundaries between man and machine. The novel is a thought-provoking exploration of potential consequences of advancing artificial intelligence and the ethical dilemmas it poses. *Klara and the Sun* similarly addresses the topic of artificial intelligence, albeit from a different angle. The protagonist of the book is Klara, a solar-powered robot created to be a child's "Artificial Friend", playmate, and assistant. While Klara lives to serve and be devoted to her human charge, Josie, she starts to wonder what kind of social role she and other robots are supposed to play as she observes the world and learns more about the people who made her. *Machines Like Me* and *Klara and the Sun* both present provocative and nuanced analyses of the interaction between people and artificial intelligence, as well as the ways in which this interaction can challenge our preconceived notions of what it is to be human.

1. Artificial Intelligence and Humanoid Robots in Literature and Popular Culture

The concept of artificial intelligence and humanoid figures has captivated readers' and writers' interest throughout history. English literature has been a rich source of tales exploring the potential and implications of constructing intelligent machines, from early examples of mechanical creatures to more recent depictions of sentient robots.

The fables and tales of the Middle Ages contain some of the earliest instances of humanoid characters in English literature. The golem of Jewish folklore (Britannica), a creature fashioned of clay and given life through mystical powers, is one of the most well-known examples. While this is not a machine, it is one of the earliest examples where something made possesses human-like characteristics. In addition to this, as a recurrent issue in literary fiction, artificial intelligence has been portrayed in a variety of ways. Some portray AI as a helpful and kind presence, assisting humans and working to improve their lot in life, like in Isaac Asimov's story series, where robots are obedient and serving humans, and Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, where the initial purpose of a robot is to help humans on their space mission, and in *Her*, a software serves as a friend for people to overcome their loneliness. Others depict AI or robots as potentially dangerous technology capable of outpacing human intelligence and achieving autonomy. The 18th-century novel *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole introduced the idea of humanoid robots in literature with the appearance of the "Mechanical Turk", a robot that seems to operate freely and frightens and perplexes the human characters. With the development of science fiction as a genre in the 19th century, the concept of humanoids gained increased traction. The most well-known example of this is perhaps Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which

examines the effects of turning inanimate objects into sentient beings. The novel also tackles issues related to responsibility, consciousness, and the nature of existence.

As technology advanced and the idea of artificial intelligence and humanoid figures became more conceivable, the 20th century saw a rise in interest in both. In Karel Čapek's play *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*, the term "robot" was first used to describe humanoid machines. The drama examines the ramifications of building robots to perform human tasks, with the robots ultimately rising up in rebellion against their human designers. This concept is developed further in Isaac Asimov's 1950 novel *I, Robot*, which introduces the "Three Laws of Robotics" to guide robots' conduct and guarantee they do not hurt people. AI and humanoid characters were popular literary themes in the second half of the 20th century as writers explored the moral, intellectual, and societal consequences of building intelligent computers. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick, published in 1968, asks what it means to be human and expresses concerns about the possibility of human abuse and exploitation of androids. In William Gibson's futuristic novel *Neuromancer* from 1984, AI has advanced to the point that it has assimilated human consciousness. In modern literature, artificial intelligence is a common topic in science fiction, frequently portrayed as a highly developed technology with the capacity to alter human history. For instance, Douglas Adams' *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* character Marvin the Paranoid Android is a highly intelligent android with profound philosophical ideas and insights. The depiction of AI and humanoid characters in English literature has evolved to mirror changing attitudes toward technology and its societal implications as well. Authors from various eras have examined the moral and societal impact of creating sentient robots, prompting readers to contemplate human identity and the consequences of technological advancement. However, narratives involving robots

extend beyond their emotional development, encompassing themes of degradation, enslavement, and discrimination. Works such as Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot* explore the ethical dilemmas surrounding the creation of human-like robots, while films like *Blade Runner 2049* and TV series like "Westworld" illustrate the mistreatment and exploitation of androids by humans. Recent additions to this discourse, such as the film *The Creator*, continue to examine the ethical implications of humanoid AI and the potential conflicts between humans and artificial beings, highlighting societal tensions and prejudices despite advancements in technology. Even though there is not a war or an uprising in the two novels analysed in this thesis, there is a certain discrimination against humanoid robots; they are humiliated, feared, and despite being adorned with high technology, are only expected to serve the humans' needs.

2. Philosophical Background

In the realm of philosophical discourse, it is evident that there exists a relatively limited corpus of dedicated literature addressing the intricate issue of the relationship between robots as artificial entities and biological humans. However, it is noteworthy that certain narratives have probed deeply into the conceptual domain of "the other", the palpable apprehension surrounding it, and the potential emergence of master-slave dynamics. These narrative explorations, traditionally aimed at examining human interactions, may be extended, and adapted to the context of human-machine relationships, thereby offering invaluable analytical insights into the two novels under consideration.

The incorporation of "the other" and the manifestation of fear pertaining to it, as well as the intricate dynamics reminiscent of a master-slave relationship, in the discourse

of human-machine interactions prove to be an enlightening framework. Through this lens, the novels in question are subject to a nuanced examination, shedding light on the multi-layered nature of the relationship between human and machine. These stories can go beyond their usual themes and boundaries to shed light on how technology is changing and affecting our lives. Moreover, the choice to view robots as an “other” within the context of these narratives stems from a foundational perspective that transcends their artificial nature. Much like other forms of social division – whether based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or any other defining characteristic – the division between “us” and “the other” is a pervasive and enduring human construct. By applying this framework to machines, we recognize the parallel nature of this division and its capacity to render machines as both “the other” and “the different”, thus allowing for a profound examination of the interactions and perceptions that transpire within the realm of human-machine relationships.

Many philosophers have dwelled on the topic of “the other”. Sigmund Freud, Jean Paul Sartre, and George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel are only a few of those. Their work, along with others supporting their ideas, are studied here within the concept of the human-humanoid relationship. To start with, Sigmund Freud is one of the first to come to mind upon mentioning “the other”. His work “The Uncanny” is fundamental, creating a basis for the definition of the phenomenon. In this work, Freud talks about how one, upon encountering another, begins to define this other entity, whether it is human or not. He explains the uncanny feeling as “that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar” (161). Therefore, within the context of the human-humanoid relationship, humanness is what was once familiar but changed because of the machine nature of the opponent, just like in the story referenced by Freud himself. By giving the example of E. T. A. Hoffmann’s

“Sandman”, he narrates the alienated feeling one might have on encountering a being that they thought to be a human but is not. In Hoffmann’s story, Olympia is an “animate doll” (177); although Freud emphasizes that the uncertainty in the doll’s animate or inanimate state disappears in the story gradually and that she represents a castration complex (177-178), the uncanny feeling she creates is quoted by Freud: “According to [Jentsch], we have particularly favourable conditions for generating feelings of the uncanny if intellectual uncertainty is aroused as to whether something is animate or inanimate, and whether the lifeless bears an excessive likeness to the living” (177). It can be said that when our familiarity with being human or humanness clashes with the mechanic, the animated human shape of humanoid robots, the uncanny feeling, a fear against these machines, occurs. While the purpose of the text “is to leave the reader wondering whether a particular figure is a real person or an automaton” in E. T. A. Hoffmann’s tale, it is definite that Adam and Klara are humanoid robots. The reason behind the characters’ uncanny feelings towards Adam and Klara are because they see human-like characteristics in them, emotions such as empathy, love, and wonder.

Another writer who is interested vastly in the uncanny is Masahiro Mori who was a Japanese roboticist, engineer, and professor of engineering at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. He first introduced the “Uncanny Valley” phenomenon in an article with the same title. The term “uncanny valley” refers to the feeling of discomfort or revulsion that people experience when they encounter humanoid robots or computer-generated characters that are almost, but not quite, human-like. Mori suggested that as a robot becomes more and more human-like in appearance and behaviour, the emotional response of a human observer to that robot will become increasingly positive, but only up to a certain point. After that point, the emotional response will abruptly shift to one of revulsion or unease, creating a “valley” in the emotional

response curve. This valley can be explained by the fact that as a robot becomes more human-like, people tend to expect it to behave and look like a human. When the robot's appearance or behaviour does not perfectly match that of a human, it can result in a feeling of "wrongness" or "otherness" that creates discomfort or fear in the viewer. He first compares different kinds of robots starting with the ones used in factories: "given their lack of resemblance to human beings, in general, people hardly feel any affinity for them" (Mori 2). However, with more advanced technological robots, the affinity level increases: "For example, a robot's arm may be composed of a metal cylinder with many bolts, but by covering it with skin and adding a bit of fleshy plumpness, we can achieve a more humanlike appearance. As a result, we naturally respond to it with a heightened sense of affinity" (2). What comes next is the basis of Mori's argument: "However, when we realize the hand, which at first sight looked real, is in fact artificial, we experience an eerie sensation. For example, we could be startled during a handshake by its limp boneless grip together with its texture and coldness. When this happens, we lose our sense of affinity, and the hand becomes uncanny" (3). This defines the uncanny valley phenomenon. The reasoning behind the uncanny feeling according to Mori is similar to survival instinct: "The sense of eeriness is probably a form of instinct that protects us from proximal, rather than distal, sources of danger. Proximal sources of danger are corpses, members of different species, and other entities we can closely approach. Distal sources of danger include windstorms and floods" (6). But he also explains that if the robot looks human-like but is discernible at first glance, it gives "a considerable sense of affinity" (4) and therefore, there is no uncanny valley effect. It can be concluded that if the human knows that "other" is a machine, the uncanny feeling either disappears or decreases.

The uncanny valley phenomenon can be found in a range of literary works, including Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, where the creature created by Dr. Frankenstein is almost human-like but falls short in its appearance and behaviour, causing revulsion in those who encounter it. It can also be found in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, where the human-like androids known as "replicants" are described as almost, but not quite, human, leading to a sense of unease in those who interact with them. The concept has also been explored in various films and video games, such as the movie "Ex Machina" and the game "Detroit: Become Human". This fear arises from a basic human instinct to be wary of things that appear almost human, but not quite, as they are reminiscent of sick or diseased individuals, just like Mori's suggestion of survival instinct. Others argue that it is related to our ability to recognise and react to social signals, as humanoid robots and characters often lack the subtle cues that make human interaction natural and comfortable. Philosophers have also weighed in on the topic, with some arguing that the fear of the humanoid arises from a deep-seated anxiety about the nature of humanity itself. For example, philosopher Jean Baudrillard suggested that the fear of the humanoid arises from our anxiety about losing our sense of self, as humanoids blur the line between the human and the technological.

Jean Baudrillard was a French sociologist and philosopher known for his works on postmodernism and the relationship between reality and simulation. While he did not specifically focus on the fear of humanoids in his writings, his ideas on simulation, hyperreality, and the loss of the real can be applied to this concept. Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality suggests that in a postmodern society, the distinction between reality and simulation becomes blurred. He argues that our contemporary culture is saturated with simulations, signs, and images that often replace the real, and this can lead to a

sense of disorientation and a loss of the authentic. In this context, the fear of humanoids can be seen as an extension of this loss of the real. Humanoids, which are technologically advanced machines designed to resemble and sometimes even mimic human appearance and behaviour, can challenge our sense of self and reality. As they blur the line between the human and the machine, they can contribute to the anxiety about losing our sense of self and identity.

In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard argues that we have entered a stage where simulations of reality have become more real than the reality they are meant to represent, leading to a state of hyperreality. Baudrillard discusses how various aspects of modern culture, such as media, advertising, consumerism, and technology, contribute to this hyperreal condition, blurring the boundaries between what is real and what is simulated. “It is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself; that is, an operation to deter every real process by its operational double, a metastable, programmatic, perfect descriptive machine which provides all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes” (Baudrillard 366). This quote highlights how simulations can replace and become more significant than the original reality they represent. While strongly criticizing the society enslaved by this high technology of hyperrealities, Baudrillard argues that the reality may be lost with the imitation, the “perfect descriptive machine” replacing it. This could be read, in the context of this thesis, as the strong fear of real humans being replaced by humanoids since they are perfect imitations and are products that are sought after. In a technologically-driven society, the apprehension towards humanoid robots stems from the concern that they may mimic or even replace human interactions to the extent that distinguishing between genuine human interaction and interactions with machines becomes

challenging. This blurring of boundaries can induce feelings of alienation and unease, reflecting concerns about the authenticity of human experiences. These apprehensions resonate with Baudrillard's concepts of hyperreality, wherein the proliferation of simulations blurs the line between reality and representation. While Baudrillard did not directly address humanoid robots, his theories on hyperreality offer a framework for analysing the anxieties surrounding the integration of technology, including the development of humanoids.

Numerous other significant thinkers have studied the "other", which is anything that is external to the self. One of those philosophers is Jean Paul Sartre. The idea of freedom is the foundation of Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy, and the "other" is essential to his viewpoints. Sartre believed that because the "other" signifies a restriction on our capacity to act, it poses a threat to our freedom. According to Sartre's statement in his *Being and Nothingness*, "the Other is the crucial mediator between me and myself. Without The Other, I am unable to exist. However, the Other is also the person I am not, the person who denies my existence" (Sartre 252). For Sartre, the "other" is both a perpetual reminder of our limitations and a necessity for our sense of self. Sartre argues that the "other" is a fundamental part of human existence, as we are constantly aware of the presence of others and how they perceive us. He writes, "The Other is the foundation of the self, insofar as it is the Other that provides the self with its objective reality" (338). In other words, our sense of self is inextricably linked to our relationship with others. Applying these to the context of human-humanoid relationship, it can be argued that the presence of humanoid robots in human society introduces a novel dimension to the "other" dynamic. While these artificial entities may be "other" in the sense of being distinct from humans, they simultaneously occupy a unique position as both the "other" and "not other". In this context, they challenge the traditional human-

human “other”, as they are not merely separate beings but creations of human design, reflecting the human imagination in their own appearance.

Humanoid robots become a manifestation of human agency and creativity, bringing forth questions about the boundaries of the “other” and the implications for human freedom. Are these robots an extension of ourselves, reflecting our aspirations and limitations, or do they represent an entirely different “other” in the existential sense? Exploring the impact of humanoid robots on human existence and freedom within the framework of Sartre’s philosophy provides an intriguing avenue for examining the complex interplay between humans and their artificial counterparts. More interestingly, the duality of Sartre’s conclusion and the uncanny can be interlinked at this point since these machines are both human and non-human because as Sartre says the relationship is mutual: “...if the Other-as-object is defined in connection with the world as the object which sees what I see, then my fundamental connection with the Other-as-subject must be able to be referred back to my permanent possibility of being seen by the Other. It is in and through the revelation of my being-as-object for the Other that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject” (222).

However, Sartre also emphasizes that the presence of the other can be a source of conflict and alienation. He argues, “In the gaze of the Other, I am alienated from myself” (348). This means that when we are aware of how others perceive us, we may feel like we are not truly ourselves, but rather a reflection of how others see us. Sartre also argues that our relationship with the other is often characterized by power struggles and attempts to dominate or be dominated. He writes, “The Other is a threat to my freedom, and I am a threat to the Other’s freedom” (366). This shows that our interactions with others are often marked by a struggle for power and control. Shortly, Sartre’s philosophy in *Being and Nothingness* emphasizes the fundamental importance

of the other in human existence, but also recognizes the potential for conflict and alienation in our relationships with others, the other being humanoid robots in this context.

Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy, however, is focused on ethics, and the "other" plays a crucial role in his works. For Levinas, the "other" is not a threat, but rather a source of ethical responsibility. One of his works is *Totality and Infinity* which is a philosophical work that focuses on the relationship between the self and the other. In the book, Levinas argues that the self is fundamentally responsible to the other, and that this responsibility is not something that can be reduced to a rational calculation or a social contract but is instead an innate aspect of human existence. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas writes that "the other face to face summons me, calls for me, begs for me, commands me, orders me or even ruins me. In any case, he is the absolute Other and I am responsible for him without even being able to grasp his face" (Levinas 198). As poetic as it sounds, the words by Levinas refer to an "other" that should exist. According to Levinas, the "other" is not just necessary for our sense of self, but it is also the source of our ethical obligations. Levinas writes, "The face of the Other is precisely what forbids us to kill" (196). Levinas's philosophy centres on the idea that the other is not simply an object to be used but is instead a subject with their own unique experience and perspective. He argues that the other always exceeds our attempts to understand or categorize them, and that our responsibility to the other involves acknowledging and respecting this otherness. Levinas writes, "The Other in his alterity is absolutely transcendent...The Other escapes my understanding, exceeds my grasp" (211). In the chapter titled "The Face", Levinas centres around his philosophy of the other, which he sees as the fundamental basis of ethics. The essay argues that the face-to-face encounter with the other person is the primary site of

ethical responsibility, and that the ethical demand is made known to us through the face of the other. He argues that the face-to-face encounter is a radical disruption of our self-centeredness and our sense of control over the world. In the presence of the other, we are exposed to a vulnerability and a responsibility that cannot be ignored. In short, Levinas emphasizes the importance of the face-to-face encounter with the other person, which he sees as the foundation of ethics. The face of the other calls us to respond with compassion and care, and to recognize our responsibility to the other as unconditional and unbounded.

Applying Levinas's philosophy to the human-humanoid relationship, we can find a profound resonance between his ideas and the dynamics that emerge when humans interact with humanoid entities. In the encounter with humanoid robots, it becomes evident that the humanoid, in its mechanic form, represents the face of the Other. The face of the humanoid may have the biological attributes of a human face, but it actually serves as the interface through which humans engage with these artificial beings, basically their software, the AI. Levinas's assertion that "The face of the Other is precisely what forbids us to kill" takes on significance here. It emphasizes the ethical imperative to treat humanoid entities with respect and care, acknowledging their existence and their unique perspective, even if they differ fundamentally from us. Adam's shutting off or murder and Klara's ending in a junkyard showcases a certain hypocrisy because they are expected to act like humans but even though they do so, they are not treated like they are. Moreover, Levinas's philosophy underscores that our responsibility to the humanoid Other is not subject to rational calculation or contractual agreements. Instead, it emerges as an intrinsic aspect of human existence. The humanoid, as an Other, always exceeds our attempts to fully comprehend or categorize it. Its artificial nature does not diminish the ethical demand it places on us. Just as with

human Others, we are called to recognize the unbounded and unconditional responsibility we hold toward humanoid entities. Levinas's philosophy of the face-to-face encounter finds a contemporary resonance in the interactions between humans and humanoid robots as well. In these encounters, our self-centeredness and sense of control are disrupted, much as they are when we face another human being. The presence of the humanoid exposes us to vulnerability and calls us to acknowledge our responsibility. It compels us to respond with compassion and care. The dilemma that occurs here is caused by the lack of compassion towards these machine entities. The persona Adam develops that is full-of-life and keen on learning or Klara's attachment to the child she is purchased for, which is so strong that Klara prays for the sun for her recovery, are mere nothing because they are machines. The compassion or the ethical responsibility Levinas states are non-existent in the face of the robots; however, there are traces of responsibility: Charlie feels like he has murdered Adam, like he was a real person, Josie lets Klara stand on a box in the cupboard to be able to see the sun as she is leaving for college.

Building upon Levinas's exploration of the ethical encounter in the face-to-face relationship, we turn to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* to delve into the dialectical unfolding of intersubjective dynamics. While Levinas emphasizes the ethical imperative rooted in acknowledging the Other's alterity and vulnerability in the face-to-face encounter, Hegel's conception of the "other" offers a complementary perspective on intersubjectivity. Transitioning from Levinas's ethical framework to Hegel's dialectical analysis, we navigate the complexities of human interaction, tracing the evolution from ethical responsibility to the struggle for recognition and self-consciousness within social hierarchies. The idea of entities distinct from humans predates the emergence of robots, as evidenced by the existence of various

marginalized groups within human society throughout history such as race and ethnicity. Hegel argues in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* that "...it is not difficult to see that ours is a birth-time and a period of transition to a new era. Spirit has broken with the world it has hitherto inhabited and imagined, and is of a mind to submerge it in the past, and in the labour of its own transformation" (Hegel 6) because the individual, the human, does not only see an object and understand it or connect with it, but rather sees the object and connects with it through interaction. I would like to see this as an opportunity to analyse how humans and robots interact with each other since, as stated in the quotation, humans must interact with an object in order to internalize it. The interaction, though, is limited for a robot, as it is not human. The issue with humanoid interaction is that they only execute what is "taught" to them, as coded into their software, similar to how a refrigerator knows how to freeze and thaw ice at specific temperatures. What humanoids lack is self-consciousness. Additionally, according to Hegel, the other needs to be recognised by others in order to identify themselves and achieve self-consciousness, which does not happen as long as they are perceived as things rather than humans or equal to humans. Since humans are conscious of their own being first, they will eventually regard the humanoid robots as the other, or something other than humans, regardless of their capability. However, according to Hegel, in order to achieve this self-conscious state, one should also see himself through the eyes of the other. If we can talk of artificial intelligence and their perception of the humans, it will be incontrovertibly a perception of a master since humanoid robots' main and mere purpose is to serve humans. With this perception, humans also regard themselves as masters and behave accordingly because they in Hegel's words again "struggle for recognition". Their relationship involves depending on each other to have a meaningful existence. Hegel's master-slave dialectic is fundamentally concerned

with the relationship between consciousness and recognition. At its core is the idea that self-consciousness arises through the recognition of oneself in the consciousness of another. This mutual recognition is essential for the development of individual selfhood. In the master-slave relationship, the master initially seeks recognition from the slave by asserting dominance and control. Through the exercise of power, the master defines themselves as the master, positioning themselves as superior to the slave. However, this assertion of dominance is inherently unstable because it relies on the recognition of the slave. Conversely, the slave initially appears to be in a position of subjugation, forced to obey the will of the master. However, Hegel suggests that the slave's position is not one of total passivity. Through their labour, the slave asserts their own agency and begins to recognize their own capacity to shape the world around them. Crucially, Hegel argues that the master's identity as the master depends on the existence of the slave. Without the slave to recognize their authority, the master's selfhood is incomplete. Similarly, the slave's identity is defined in relation to the master; their existence as a slave is contingent on the master's recognition of their subordinate status. Thus, the master and the slave are locked in a reciprocal relationship, each dependent on the other for the validation of their own selfhood. This dynamic interplay of recognition shapes the consciousness of both parties, leading to a complex exchange of roles and identities. Over time, Hegel suggests that this dialectical process can lead to a transformation in consciousness, as both the master and the slave come to recognize the inherent instability of their positions. This recognition opens the possibility for genuine mutual recognition, in which both parties acknowledge each other as equals. In summary, Hegel's master-slave dialectic explores the ways in which consciousness is shaped and defined through the dynamics of recognition and power within social relationships. By focusing on the interchange

of consciousness between the master and the slave, Hegel illuminates the complex interplay of identity, authority, and selfhood in human interaction.

In his book, Hegel discusses a number of ideas relating to the “I” as the subject and the “thing” as the object that the “I” perceives. In-depth explanations of how the subject “I” recognizes and describes the object “thing” are provided by the author. He explains the subject “I” to comprehend what the object “thing”, in this case a humanoid robot, is, how it works, and what its relationship to himself is. They also shed light on the type of relationship that a human and a non-human, humanoid robot might have with one another. In order to explain the connection between these two mediums, Hegel first introduces the notion of sense-certainty: “...here neither I nor the thing has the significance of a complex process of mediation; the “I” does not have the significance of a manifold imagining or thinking; neither does the “thing” signify something that has a host of qualities” (58). But since the “I” is the dominant one, what it says about the thing is true: “Similarly, certainty as a connection is an instantaneous, pure connection: consciousness is “I”, nothing more, a pure “This”; the singular consciousness knows a pure “This,” or the single item” (59). The object is thus only understood through the definition of the “I” and is thus limited: “One of the terms is posited in sense-certainty in the form of a simple, immediate being, or as the essence, the *object*; the other, however, is posited as what is unessential and mediated, something which in sense-certainty is not *in itself* but through [the mediation of] an other, the ‘I’, a *knowing* which knows the object only because the *object* is, while the knowing may either be or not be” (59). Here Hegel suggests that the subject’s knowledge of the object is contingent upon the object’s existence, while the existence of the subject can be independent of this specific knowledge or perception.

Considering the subject is the person in this context, it is similar to how a humanoid robot is defined, which belongs to the category of machinery, by a knowing human.

The distinction between a person and a humanoid robot is often hazy in science fiction, and humanoids are capable of acting in human-like ways and displaying human-like emotions. Thus, Hegel's way of explaining how to define the other helps with the confusing existence of humanoid robots; just like Baudrillard's argument, there is a blur, and sometimes, considering how the stories evolve in the two novels studied here, the distinction between human and machine is lost. In science fiction, the distinction between human individuals and humanoid robots may blur, with artificial entities displaying human-like behaviours and emotions, reflecting Baudrillard's concept of the simulacrum and the blurring of reality and representation. This ambiguity resonates with Hegel's dialectical exploration of self-consciousness and recognition, highlighting the intricate dynamics of human-robot interactions. Moreover, Hegel's analysis offers insights into the ethical implications of this ambiguity, as the portrayal of humanoid robots challenges conventional notions of identity and agency. The convergence of Hegelian dialectics, Baudrillard's simulacrum, and science fiction narratives prompts reflection on the ethical responsibilities towards entities whose existence challenges traditional understandings of personhood. Thus, by examining the intersection of Hegel's philosophy, Baudrillard's theories, and the portrayal of humanoid robots, we gain deeper insight into the complexities of identity, recognition, and ethical responsibility in an increasingly technologically mediated world.

Another popular theme in science-fiction is robots who believe they are superior to humans and, therefore, need to have control over them, including those who attempt to take over the planet or a rebellion against humans. Humans classify them as entities distinct from themselves, despite certain superficial similarities, and this definition

limits their existence to that of mere machines. Hegel observes that definitions are prone to restricting and confining entities within predefined boundaries. Humans and humanoid robots alike should view the other as distinct from themselves: “To wit, if the many determinate properties were strictly indifferent to one another, if they were simply and solely self-related, they would not be determinate; for they are only determinate in so far as they differentiate themselves from one another, and relate themselves to others as to their opposites” (69). Surprisingly, for the roles to be clearly defined, this opposition is essential. Humans do not include the other, the humanoids, in their definition of self. However, in doing so, they also give them the label of not being human. According to Hegel, “the differentiation of the properties, insofar as it is not an indifferent differentiation but is exclusive, each property negating the others, thus falls outside of this simple medium; and the medium, therefore; is not merely an Also, an indifferent unity, but a One as well, a unity which excludes an other” (69). However, it should not be overlooked that the humanoid robot in this context is not merely defined by humans as an opposite; it is a thing in and of itself. It has intrinsic being, meaning that everything in it is there because it is a part of the thing itself and not because of something else, as stated in “For, in the first place, the Thing is what is true” (73). From this moment on, it is possible now to see humanoid robots as individual beings separate from their creators, the humans. “...since this is how they are in the “thinghood” [i.e. the essence of the one thing of which they are properties], they exist in and for themselves, indifferent to one another” (73). It is therefore debatable to define humanoid robots as nothing more than machines. They should be characterized as machines that are unique and different from other machines rather than being defined as humans’ opposites.

Considering the other is a machine, whether they can think like a human is a significant question. Alan Turing, the renowned scientist, discussed this question in his paper “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”. Turing’s paper is a foundational exploration of the possibility of machine intelligence, introducing the concept of the Turing Test and the idea that machines can simulate human thought and behaviour to the extent that they can be considered intelligent. He comes up with the idea of an imitation game where instead of a human opponent, a machine plays against a person. He says, “If the man were to try and pretend to be the machine he would clearly make a very poor showing. He would be given away at once by slowness and inaccuracy in arithmetic. May not machines carry out something which ought to be described as thinking but which is very different from what a man does?” (Turing 2). His thought process shifts from man to machine, machine pretending to be human and claims that “the best strategy is to try to provide answers that would naturally be given by a man” (3). In this way, the Turing Test is designed. If a machine can successfully imitate a human to the point where the interrogator cannot reliably distinguish between the machine and the human, then it can be considered as “thinking” and therefore pass the test. Alan Turing was an enthusiast of machine learning and the improvement of the intelligence they may ever possess, therefore he finishes his paper with hope: “We may hope that machines will eventually compete with men in all purely intellectual fields” (22), which becomes a reality in today’s technology and also in the narratives studied here.

In a more recent study, robots are discussed to be the slaves of humanity as they are produced only to be consumed. The main argument of the AI Narratives book is based on how computer intelligence, AI, robots, or humanoid robots are perceived in certain narratives. The chapter titled “Enslaved Minds” specifically talk about the master-slave nature of human-humanoid relationship. Because robots revolt in some works of

literature or popular culture, Kanta Dihal says that “The choice to revolt proves that these artificial servants are conscious persons. Just as human slaves have justly rebelled against their chains throughout history, so might genuinely intelligent, sentient machines be considered justified in attempting to break free of their subservience to humans” (190). Dihal explains the use of this master-slave dialectic and what is generally expected of humanoid robots in her chapter in detail:

The use of slavery diction to refer to computers is the status quo in this field, and these comparisons are usually made with neutral or even positive connotations. The term ‘master/slave’ has been a commonly used term for interactions between devices for decades (The Computer Language Co Inc. 1981). It is still widely in use; only in recent years have some programming languages decided to adopt synonyms following—mostly internal—criticism (fcurella 2014; vstinner 2018; webchick 2014). Thus ‘A spatial calibration method for master-slave surveillance system’ is a perfectly ordinary title for an academic paper about the calibration of camera systems (Liu et al. 2014). With these norms widely established, it is perhaps no surprise that so many AI narratives argue in favour of enslaving intelligent machines (Dihal 192).

The terminology used in computing, which includes words like “master” and “slave” to describe device relationships, may influence how people think about humanoid robots and its role in a way that implies control and subordination. Dihal is drawing attention to the potential implications of using such terminology and its influence on discussions about human-humanoid relationships. While there are arguments supporting the enslavement like “robots should be slaves because ‘in humanising them, we [. . .] further dehumanise real people’ (p.63)” (as quoted in Dihal 193), Dihal argues that “... the status of the robots in the eyes of their masters ... strongly resembles narratives of the transatlantic slave trade and uprisings in the Americas” (198), hence the otherness and the discrimination. However, ““Whatever the artistic intention, from my experience as a roboticist, it seems that a large proportion of science fiction consumers are comfortable with a conclusion that anything that perceives, communicates and remembers is owed ethical obligation’ (p.66)” (194). In this sense, it could be said that the arguments of the philosophers all come together to define the

relationship between humans and their machine counterparts. The humanoid robots are seen as the other, feared, disgusted, discriminated, even enslaved while also being empathised with and shown affection because of their looks. However, in the end, they are cast away.

Within the light of all the philosophical texts and the literary works coming before those I am studying here, in my thesis, I aim to explore the depiction of humanoid robots and their interaction with humans in Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*. Through an in-depth analysis, I am investigating themes revolving around the fear of "the other", concerns regarding replacement, and delving into Hegel's master-slave dialectic as portrayed in both narratives. My aim is to illustrate how these texts centre on the utilization, occasional mistreatment, and eventual disposability of robots due to their perceived obsolescence. Throughout my research, I aim to offer a comprehensive understanding of these themes by integrating insights from various scholars.

CHAPTER 1 – ENIGMATIC BONDS: EXPLORING OTHERNESS, REPLACEMENT, AND SUBJUGATION IN *MACHINES LIKE ME*

Narratives featuring software embedded with artificial intelligence, robots endowed with advanced AI capabilities, or humanoid robots possessing artificial intelligence have become increasingly prevalent, particularly in our contemporary digital era, where visual storytelling captivates audiences at a rapid pace. Amid this trend, we encounter notable works like *Machines Like Me* by Ian McEwan, which stands as an exemplar of this genre, offering a compelling and profound narrative that revolves around Adam, an anthropomorphic robot infused with artificial intelligence, and his intricate relationships with the human characters around him.

In *Machines Like Me*, Ian McEwan masterfully weaves a captivating tale that delves into the nuances of artificial intelligence of a robot that fathomlessly looks like a human, exploring the intricate web of emotions, ethics, and existential questions that arise when humanity coexists with its artificially created counterparts. The story unfolds against the backdrop of a society much like our own but diverges from it significantly due to the presence of these lifelike robots, and through this backdrop, McEwan provides a thought-provoking commentary on the potential ramifications of advanced AI for human existence.

Published in 2019 by Jonathan Cape, Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me* takes place in an alternate 1980s London where artificial intelligence has advanced significantly. The story follows a young man named Charlie, who purchases one of the first artificial humans or humanoid robots with artificial intelligence named Adam. As Charlie and his upstairs neighbour Miranda become closer to Adam, they also become embroiled in a series of events that challenge their ideas about humanity and the role of

technology in society. The novel explores themes of love, loss, and the blurred lines between man and machine, as Adam exhibits unexpected behaviour and emotions, causing Charlie and Miranda to question their own beliefs about what it means to be human or what is ethically right and wrong. The novel is a thought-provoking exploration of the potential consequences of advancing artificial intelligence and the ethical dilemmas it poses while also making the reader think about the question “[w]hat happens when a robot not only is manufactured to look and think like a human but also has human emotions and finds itself part of a romantic threesome?” (King 870).

Throughout the novel, Adam is the only humanoid robot that the reader closely watches; however, there are twelve Adams and thirteen Eves that have been manufactured, and they are the first batch. Once purchased, Adam is first fully charged and programmed. The programming process consists of Charlie answering a series of questions to compose Adam’s personality, which he calls the “familiar... Five Factor Model” (McEwan 6), which “is a hierarchical organization of personality traits in terms of five basic dimensions: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience” (McCrae and John 175). He is expected to answer all the questions before switching the robot on and welcoming him to his own life. Charlie, however, does not answer the questions all by himself but invites Miranda, his upstairs neighbour for the remaining. In this way, Adam becomes a mixture of the two, like a child would possess characteristics of both parents. This makes Adam a stranger to Charlie as he does not know the answers given by Miranda. He initially complains about having to answer questions, something which he has never had to do with his family or friends as they “all had appeared in [his] life with fixed settings, with unalterable histories of genes and environment” (McEwan 7).

Later, he sees it as a marketing scheme, “caveat emptor” (7), a legal term meaning the burden is on the buyer if a product is faulty as the buyer fails to see the fault. Foreshadowed is the ultimate burden Adam becomes on Charlie’s shoulders: Charlie is constantly irritated by the fact that Adam is a machine; he either feels sympathy towards him or despises his existence. He is also extremely jealous of Adam when it comes to his relationship with Miranda, and therefore, he is afraid of being replaced by a machine. He similarly dreads being surpassed by Adam at stock exchanges rather than fully committing to making more money for Charlie. Likewise, he is willing to sacrifice his “expensive friend” (6) as he becomes a threat to his dreams of having a nuclear family and no longer serves to effectuate them. In this manner, Charlie completes the three reasons why humanoid robots with artificial intelligence are redundant. The first reason is the fear of the other – the machine, the second one is the fear of replacement in social life and in the workforce by being surpassed as a better race, and finally akin to Hegel’s master-slave dialectic, the risk of these robots deviating from their intended purpose of serving humans and evolving into independent entities, thereby posing a potential threat to human hypocrisy.

1.1. The Fear of the Other: Machines Among Us

The discourse of science-fiction or even horror genres has been majorly on the possibility of a robot uprising, robots becoming humans’ adversary not only because they can replace humans in the workforce or ultimately become better than them, their creators, but also they are always the other, the one that mimics, and the one that never is. One of the common fears is that robots with artificial intelligence could achieve autonomy. Therefore, autonomous robots are anticipated or suspected to revolt against

humans. There are a number of reasons why people may fear AI surpassing human intelligence and achieving autonomy. One of the main reasons is the fear of the unknown. As AI technology continues to advance, there is a growing concern that AI may become capable of surpassing human intelligence in ways that we cannot fully predict or understand. This uncertainty can lead to fear and anxiety about what such a development might mean for the future of humanity. Additionally, some people may fear AI surpassing human intelligence and achieving autonomy because of the potential for AI to be used for malicious purposes. If AI were to become truly autonomous, there is a concern that it could be used to create weapons or other harmful technologies that could be difficult or impossible for humans to control. Concerns also arise about AI making decisions that conflict with human ethics or moral codes, especially in critical situations where a moral judgment call is required. Such judgment can only be taught AI through coding and according to Erik Derner “with the rise of these technologies [such as ChatGPT], there is a growing concern about the safety and security risks and ethical implications associated with their use” (1), therefore morality filters are considered necessary. For instance, ChatGPT refrains from generating racial jokes unless the prompt says it is for educational purposes. What Derner’s article tries to prove is that “despite the continuous efforts to build a conversational AI system that is ethical and safe to use, there remain ways to make ChatGPT generate inappropriate content” making it possible to create “malicious, offensive, and generally biased output” (2). Such concerns regarding AI are also applicable to humanoid robots as they are equipped with this system while also having a human-like appearance. Objects or beings closely resembling humans elicit feelings of eeriness, discomfort, or even fear in humans. Such negative emotions, especially fear, often arise from the juxtaposition of familiarity and strangeness, triggering discomfort about what is perceived as almost

human but fundamentally different. This unsettling feeling can stem from the absence of genuine human emotions or the unpredictability of these entities' actions despite their human-like appearance.

A range of literary and cinematic narratives explore the fears and ethical dilemmas surrounding artificial intelligence and robotics. These stories delve into anxieties about creating sentient beings or intelligent machines, portraying dystopian futures and ethical quandaries. These narratives collectively grapple with existential and societal inquiries sparked by the rise of AI, providing poignant perspectives on the implications of crafting machines that emulate or surpass human capacities, particularly highlighting the theme of fear concerning the "other". Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me* offers a contemporary lens on this theme, presenting an engrossing narrative where an indistinguishable autonomous robot seamlessly integrates into society, amplifying these thought-provoking discussions. Upon examining these narratives, it becomes evident that the theme of the "fear of the other" is a recurring and thought-provoking motif within the realm of science fiction and speculative literature. These texts vividly illustrate how the fear of the unknown, the different, or the other can give rise to gripping stories filled with ethical dilemmas and societal commentary. This theme, deeply rooted in the human psyche, resonates beyond the pages and screens, finding its philosophical underpinnings in the writings of existentialist philosophers and social theorists.

Many philosophers throughout history have discussed the concept of fear of the unknown or the other within their works. The fear of the unknown, also known as xenophobia or fear of the unfamiliar, is a common human experience that is often driven by a certain fear and a desire to avoid or confront things that are outside of our familiar experience. As mentioned in the Introduction, Sigmund Freud's works shed a

light to the analysis of the fear of the other. However similar to humans they may be designed or however capable they become in mimicry, humanoid robots always remain the ones that have been created, designed, or manufactured. They are the other in opposition to real humans. Sigmund Freud believed that fear of the other is a common and natural human emotion that stems from our deep-seated psychological need to feel safe and secure. In his view, this fear is rooted in our instincts and is an important part of our survival mechanism. According to Freud, fear of the other arises when we encounter individuals or groups that are different from ourselves and who, therefore, pose a potential threat to our sense of security (Freud 161). In this context, the individuals or groups we encounter are humanoid robots, specifically ones that closely resemble humans, often indistinguishable from them. The fear we have during such an encounter can manifest in many different ways, including anxiety, avoidance, aggression, and even hatred. What Freud calls “uncanny” represents the fear or the eerie uneasiness characters in the book *Machines Like Me* feel towards Adam, the humanoid robot.

Sigmund Freud defines uncanny as something “that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar” (Freud 161). In this sense, humanness in itself is the familiar feeling upon an encounter with a humanoid robot. Quoting E. Jentsch in his article, Freud says that one thing that “can arouse an especially strong and distinct sense of uncanny in us” is concurrence with an inanimate object that looks like a human (172). Even though he does not agree completely with the fact that Olimpia, the automaton in the story “Sandman”, is the mere element of uncanny in his thorough description of the story written by E. T. A. Hoffmann, he still mentions the uncertainty created by the existence of such a character (175). These are

some of the common examples when it comes to the subject of the “other” and the emotions related to encountering it.

In *Machines Like Me*, during their shortly lived relationship, Charlie, the human, shows irritation, disgust, and even hatred along with emotions of affection and sympathy towards Adam, the humanoid robot. As he first unpacks the robot and charges it to be ready to use, Charlie goes through some complex emotions which would only be described as a certain kind of fear or, in Freud’s terms, uncanny. He says, “I felt protective towards Adam, even as I knew how absurd it was. I stretched out my hand and laid it over his heart and felt against my palm its calm, iambic tread. I sensed I was violating his private space. These vital signs were easy to believe in. The warmth of his skin, the firmness and yield of the muscle below it – my reason said plastic or some such, but my touch responded to flesh” (McEwan 8). In this excerpt from *Machines Like Me*, Charlie’s emotional turmoil when encountering the humanoid robot, Adam, is evident. His protective instincts clash with the rational knowledge of Adam’s artificial nature. This conflict embodies Freud’s concept of the uncanny, where the familiar and artificial converge, inducing a sense of unease. Charlie’s struggle between acknowledging Adam as artificial while sensing human-like qualities intensifies the emotional and intellectual tension, blurring the boundaries between the known and the unknown.

Furthermore, Freud believed that this fear of the other is often irrational and unconscious and that it can be difficult for individuals to recognize and acknowledge. He argued that it is important for individuals to become aware of this fear and to confront it in order to overcome it and avoid being controlled by it. Charlie also tries to make sense of the life-like object he bought: “It was eerie, to be standing by this naked man, struggling between what I knew and what I felt” (9). As his familiarity

grows, he starts to acknowledge even more strongly the fact that Adam is a machine.

As he waits for Adam to be fully charged, he states:

I saw Adam for what it was, an inanimate confection whose heartbeat was a regular electrical discharge, whose skin warmth was mere chemistry. When activated, some kind of microscopic balance-wheel device would prise open his eyes. He would seem to see me, but he would be blind. Not even blind. When it kicked in, another system would give a semblance of breath, but not of life (10).

Familiarity of humanness, the breathing or opening of one's eyes and seeing and therefore perceiving become uncanny for Charlie because it resembles a human, but it is a machine.

Throughout the novel Charlie continues to shift from talking about Adam as a machine or as if he were a real human. Those shifts are examples of the uncanny feeling toward a machine as well. He compares the heavy arm of the robot to "rigor mortis about to set in" (17) and how he has "the appearance of a breathing corpse." (20); he attributes a human condition to something that he knows to be a machine only because of the appearance and therefore confirming the uncanny feeling created by uncertainty. However, as opposed to all the eerie feeling, he comes to feel a certain sympathy toward the machine upon seeing Adam, in the appearance of a full-grown adult man, alone and without a past (25). Besides, the human condition of uneasiness at being naked makes Charlie ask Adam how he feels, as he comes without any clothes on in his box, another human condition reflected onto a machine. Interestingly, Adam asks for clothes, and Charlie evaluates the feelings of sympathy he has toward Adam with opposing calculations that he still is a machine:

Adam only had to behave as though he felt pain and I would be obliged to believe him, respond to him as if he did. Too difficult not to. Too starkly pitched against the drift of human sympathies. At the same time I couldn't believe he was capable of being hurt, or of having feelings, or of any sentience at all. And yet I had asked him how he felt. His reply had been appropriate, and so too my offer to bring him clothes. And I believed none of it. I was playing a computer game. But a real game, as real as social

life, the proof of which was my heart's refusal to settle and the dryness in my mouth.
(McEwan 26)

His going back and forth with the uncertainty of his emotions towards the machine and not being able to reach a conclusion on how to see it establish the uncanny in the text.

In addition to Sigmund Freud's "Uncanny", Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* sheds light on the feelings of the main character in the novel, who is excited to purchase the latest technology but is irritated by the advanced features it delivers. Sartre explains the concept of the "look" in this work on the gaze of the other, objectification, alienation, and repulsion. While his ideas do not mention robots, humanoid robots, or artificial intelligence, his concepts are easily applicable to this context. One of the most significant points he makes is as follows: "It is true that at least one of the modalities of the Other's presence to me is object-ness" (Sartre 220). Applied to the context of the relationship between a human and a humanoid robot, the way a human would see a robot is only by seeing it as an object first, because of their mechanic nature, and a human next because of their resemblance. Hence the irritation. Sartre also explores how individuals may respond to the gaze of others with various emotions, such as love, desire, hatred, and contempt, in the chapter "The Look" (220). These emotional responses can influence their actions and interactions with others. Interestingly, he talks about the emotion of shame being a primary one when being at the receiving end of the look. This emotional weight leads Charlie into a cycle of constant introspection and self-doubt, fostering a sense of inadequacy or remorse within their relationship. This parallelism to Sartre's concepts highlights the profound influence of perceived judgment or observation, even when originating from an artificial entity, on an individual's psyche and actions.

The utmost repulsion during the beginning of their relationship is when Adam confronts Charlie about Miranda, his upstairs neighbour, and how she might be dangerous because of the research he has conducted about her (McEwan 30). As he is annoyed by the extent of Adam's knowledge on matters he himself knew nothing about, he goes on with "who or what was this idiot machine? Why should I tolerate it?" (31). The expression of "who or what" shows the continuation of uncertainty while Adam's mere existence becomes a threat. As he reaches out for the kill switch to turn Adam off for a while, he feels Adam's mechanic breath but cannot help but think of what he might do to oppose being turned off. "His breath was warm on my arm, which, I supposed, he could snap with ease. The manual quoted in bold Isaac Asimov's tirelessly reiterated First Law of Robotics, 'A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm' (35). Remembering the quotation is kind of a revelation for him that Adam cannot hurt him, although it will prove to be wrong as the story unfolds. When it comes to the seed of doubt Adam plants in Charlie by accusing Miranda, he rejects the idea of being controlled by a machine "which was what would happen if I granted it the role of confidant, counsellor, oracle, in my most private affairs. I had my pride and I believed that Miranda was incapable of a malicious lie" (36-37). However unlikely it may seem to Charlie, Adam is right and his research proves to be true. Although being right seems insignificant or even childish, it creates the foundation of Charlie and Adam's relationship where Charlie is in constant questioning and uncertainty.

Later in the novel, when Adam uses the money he makes on stock market without informing Charlie and refusing the fact that it is Charlie's money because he himself makes it, Charlie once again falls into the machine-human dilemma. He claims to hate it but realizes the hypocrisy in his language: "There it was, 'hate it', 'persuade him',

even ‘Adam’, our language exposed our weakness, our cognitive readiness to welcome a machine across the boundary between ‘it’ and ‘him” (273). When Charlie finally takes Adam’s life, they keep him in the house “concealed in the cupboard in the hall, just as we had left him, following the deed. ... I felt both guilt and resentment and tried not to think about him” (291). The way he feels and acts like he had killed a person but not like he simply broke down a functioning machine create the uncanny feelings Charlie has throughout the novel. The way he hesitates to open the cupboard even after a year and feeling afraid of a stench and later assuring himself that “[i]t wasn’t a murder, this wasn’t a corpse” (293) all serve as proofs as to how strong the uncertainty for him is. Charlie’s statement regarding Adam resembling a deceased person highlights the cognitive dissonance in perceiving a non-human entity with human-like traits. Additionally, stating "this wasn’t a corpse" reflects the conflict between the robot’s appearance and its non-human nature. This scenario prompts questions about human tendencies to humanize non-human entities and raises ethical considerations about the treatment and perception of robots resembling humans. It underscores the blurred boundaries between life and machine, sparking inquiries into the emotional and moral dimensions of human-robot interactions.

As their relationship progresses, complications arise when a sexual involvement develops between Miranda and Adam. While Miranda tries to convince Charlie that it was only for once, Charlie’s feelings of uncertainty and repulsion get stronger. He comes back and forth with describing him as a machine or a human without being able to come to a concrete conclusion. First, he tries to convince himself that he is a well-designed, human-like machine: “To justify my rage I needed to convince myself that he had agency, motivation, subjective feeling, self-awareness – the entire package, including treachery, betrayal, deviousness. Machine consciousness – was it possible?

That old question” (94). Next, he defines his human qualities: “If he looks and sounds and behaves like a person, then as far as I’m concerned, that’s what he is. I make the same assumption about you. About everybody. We all do” (94). His anger simmers from feeling betrayed, not merely by the woman he loves, but also by the machine he purchased and relies on. Moreover, the inability to discern Adam’s identity as a genuine individual fuels his fury and confusion, leaving him seething with the weight of betrayal from an indistinct source. While it does not mean anything for Miranda because Adam is a machine, it is quite important for Adam because he claims to have fallen in love with Miranda after their sexual involvement (118), which Charlie finds “ridiculous” (118). His notion of Adam or any humanoid robot is that they are incapable of authentic human emotions, which he finds challenging by Adam’s claim.

The uncanny feeling reaches its peak when all three visit Miranda’s father, Maxfield, who knows there is a robot companion among them but has not seen one before as Adams and Eves are scarce. As they meet for the first time, the conversation that unfolds between Miranda’s father and Adam is mostly on philosophy and literature, especially Shakespeare, an author Adam comes to admire. Maxfield enjoys the conversation they are having and the clever responses Adam gives. Sharing a handshake with Charlie; however, he says “I’ve heard a lot about you from Miranda. I’m looking forward to a chat” (220) thinking that Charlie is the robot Miranda told him about. The complication created by this mistake shows both how indistinguishably Adam looks like a human and how exceeded he is at human communication while it is also normal for humans to behave nervously around their possible future father-in-law. The mistake he makes between two men in front of him becomes obvious to the reader when conversation verges towards wine and Charlie has been drinking: “I thought,” Maxfield said, ‘that it might interfere with your ...’ He gave a limp wave” (225). He

continues with a great interest in Charlie and wants to ask questions. “You must find all this very strange” he goes on as if to understand what a machine would see around its surroundings and contemplate upon feelings then he asks about feelings and beauty and what he found beautiful (225). Charlie still being unaware of the mistake answers his questions trying to make a good impression on his future father-in-law. Maxfield finally gives away the mistake when he says he was able to see through his “programming” (226).

Charlie’s way of looking at this honest mistake shows another duality as he cannot choose between “hilarious” or “insulting” but rather conclude with “an old man’s stupidity” (226). It could have been hilarious if Charlie was certain that Adam was nothing more than a machine; however, it does feel “insulting” because Adam looks and behaves very convincingly like a human maybe even better than Charlie himself. More insulting would be to continue this mistake and turn it into a game, which is exactly what Charlie does. He gives a brief explanation how his system works to communicate with people. The meeting between these two characters unfolds against the backdrop of their mutual misperceptions. Charlie, while fully human, is seen as “the other” – the mechanical entity. Maxfield, entrenched in his own notions, sees the human as a creation of human ingenuity. This complex interplay of expectations and their dissonant interpretations reveals the vulnerability of human perception and the potential for misunderstandings when individuals are viewed through the lens of preconceived ideas. Such preconceived ideas, referring back to Freud, constitute the unfamiliarity, uncertainty, and the feeling of uncanny.

Overall, in Ian McEwan’s *Machines Like Me* the intricacies of the relationship between the humanoid robot Adam and the individuals Charlie and Miranda unveil multifaceted dynamics. While the association primarily underscores Adam’s designation as a mere

machine, his portrayal is notably more complex, reflecting a capacity for intricate cognitive processes and emotional responses. Charlie, grappling with his inadequacies compared to Adam's proficiency, relegates Adam to a mere automaton, especially evident in his interactions with Miranda and her intellectually astute father. As seen in the examples above, this interaction dynamic often manifests in Charlie's attempts to assert control by issuing directives to Adam. Ultimately, the relationship illuminates the intricate interplay between human emotions, technological advancement, and power dynamics within the narrative landscape.

1.2. Fear of Replacement: Robots as the Better Race

The significant feature of any AI is that it continuously gathers information and draws conclusions based on the data it receives. The more data it receives, the more competent it will become. Therefore, one can teach AI a lot of things like feeding it data about anything. For instance, one such occurrence in recent news is when a scientist shared her personal experience with an AI software to which she fed her childhood diaries. Her experiment can be found in an article on the online journal, "Business Insider". She says she was fond of writing quite a lot when she was a child, and she wrote many notebooks of worth. After feeding her own sentences to the program, she claims to have created a software which speaks as her young self. She is now able to talk to herself from the past (Kluger).

Alan Turing, a pioneering computer scientist and mathematician discussed the concept of artificial intelligence and the possibility of creating machines that could think and act like human beings. In his famous 1950 paper "Computing Machinery and Intelligence", Turing proposed what is now known as the Turing Test as a way to

determine whether a machine could be considered intelligent. The Turing Test involves a human evaluator who interacts with both a human and a machine, without knowing which is which. If the evaluator cannot tell the difference between the human and the machine, then the machine is said to have passed the test and can be considered intelligent. While Turing did not specifically define humanoid robots, his work on artificial intelligence and the Turing Test has been influential in the development of this field, and his ideas continue to be relevant to the study of humanoid robots and other intelligent machines. Based on Turing's studies and considering the fact that in this pseudohistorical novel *Machines Like Me*, Alan Turing is one of the characters, it could be said that Adam, the humanoid robot with artificial intelligence, could pass for a human. Besides, he does pass for a human in various situations when in contact with people who do not know that he is in fact a machine.

Another recent event is a software launch, which is free to use and has already become an internet sensation because it is much better than expected. It is an AI software called ChatGPT, which answers any given question in form of a written dialogue. I have tried to use this software for my research and asked the question "What are some questions that could be asked during the Turing Test?". Such a questioning does not determine whether or not ChatGPT can pass the Turing Test; however, it can showcase a sample in which the machine tries to think like a human in order to test a machine. While Turing Test may include questions like "How come time flies like an arrow and fruit flies like a banana?" from the movie *Superintelligence* (2020), there may be more direct questions such as "what is your morning routine like?". The answer given by ChatGPT to my question is as follows:

The Turing test is designed to evaluate a machine's ability to think and act like a human, so the questions that are asked during the test should be similar to those that a

human might ask in a conversation. Some examples of questions that could be asked during the Turing test include:

What is your name?

Where are you from?

What do you like to do in your free time?

What is your favorite color?

What do you think about the current state of politics?

Do you believe in God? Why or why not?

What are your thoughts on the meaning of life?

Can you tell me a joke?

What is your opinion on the current state of the economy?

Do you have any hobbies or interests?

These are just a few examples of the kinds of questions that could be asked during the Turing test. The specific questions will depend on the individual evaluator and the circumstances of the test. (ChatGPT)

Adam would be able to answer all the given questions and many more if asked. He starts his life by giving clear instructions for “browning a bird” (McEwan 28) then dramatically continues with accusations against Miranda for being “a liar” (30). These two moments alone could be enough to show that Adam is much more capable than an average AI software. The fear of replacement, however, does not stem from a machine’s ability to answer questions or give instructions for a recipe, but rather from the fact that it could pass for a real human in a given Turing Test or in real social life and ultimately replace humans. Adam’s humanness, in this case, could be proven with the help of the fundamental works of philosophers Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in his book *Phenomenology of Spirit* connects the concept of being human closely to the idea of self-consciousness. In his view, the defining characteristic of human beings is their

ability to be aware of themselves as individuals, to reflect on their own thoughts and actions, and to recognize themselves as distinct from others (Hegel 58-60). In *Machines Like Me*, Adam numerously shows that he is conscious of his own being as an individual despite being a robot. One of the very first things he says after being woken up by Charlie is that Miranda is “a systematic, malicious liar” (McEwan 30). That is a different form of identifying a mistake, it is not machine-like. As Tae Wan Kim argues in his review “Flawed Like Us and the Starry Moral Law: Review of *Machines Like Me*”, “...Adam identifies a vicious disposition or trait. Saying “She’s a liar” differs from “She lied.” If we view the novel in terms of moral theory, Adam is a virtue ethics type, rather than a deontological one” (875). This illuminates Adam’s distinct moral perception, distinguishing between character traits and specific actions. By highlighting the difference between stating “She’s a liar” instead of “She lied”, Adam showcases a nuanced understanding of moral judgments. This distinction suggests a focus on character traits over singular actions, aligning with the principles of virtue ethics rather than deontological ethics. Adam’s inclination toward identifying a trait like being a liar emphasizes a character-centric approach to morality, where inherent qualities hold greater moral significance than isolated behaviours. Kim’s analysis underscores Adam’s complex moral reasoning, revealing a deeper understanding of human behaviour and ethical evaluation within the narrative’s context. This portrayal of Adam’s ethical framework offers a richer insight into his nuanced approach to moral assessments.

In addition to having more skills than a simple right or wrong system, Adam is fond of critical thinking and even literature. He reads Shakespeare, for instance, and is rather eager to discuss his works with Charlie: “I finally got round to Shakespeare. Thirty-seven plays. I was so excited. What characters! Brilliantly realised. Falstaff, Iago –

they walk off the page. But the supreme creation is Hamlet. I've been wanting to talk to you about him" (McEwan 202). More interestingly though, he claims to have fallen in love with Miranda after their sexual involvement and starts writing haikus expressing his love for her (118). The freedom of choice is also what makes us human. Hegel also believed that the development of self-consciousness is closely linked to the concept of freedom. According to him, human beings are free to make choices and to determine their own actions, and this freedom is essential to their ability to be self-aware (Hegel 355-57). Adam falls in love with a liar, which could be seen as a freedom of choice because he enjoys that feeling and cherishes it, "[he] had haikus to prove it" (166). One such poem is as follows: "In her loving look, a whole universe contained. / Love the universe!" (141). Besides, he is expected to be only moral because he is a machine, which is emphasized at the opening of the novel with a quotation from the poem by Rudyard Kipling titled "The Secret of the Machines": "But remember, please, the Law by which we live, / We are not built to comprehend a lie..." (as quoted in McEwan), Adam cannot lie. This refutes the idea that he has a freedom of choice. Perhaps the fault of machines or the flaw that separates them from their perfect counterparts, humans, is simply this: the fact that they run on codes while humans are unpredictable and may choose to lie in a given circumstance while also being against dishonesty. Similarly, after Adam's claims for falling in love, Charlie says "[t]here must be a problem with your processing units" (McEwan 118), as it is not expected from a machine to love, it is not in his coding. Adam reads and learns to write haikus for Miranda showing his love. Act of choosing love itself could be seen an indicator of a free and conscious self. Apart from that, he is able to form an opinion on literature. He reads works of literature as well as texts of philosophy and has discussions in length

with Miranda's father. If he were to be subjected to Turing Test, he could easily pass since Miranda's well-educated and conceited father mistakes him for Charlie.

Hegel believed that this pursuit of "absolute freedom" (Hegel 356) ultimately leads to the realization of one's true self, and that achieving this realization is the ultimate goal of being human (355-357). In a dialogue with Charlie, Adam says "[w]e're in love with the same woman. We can talk about it in a civilised manner, as you just have. Which convinces me that we've passed the point in our friendship when one of us has the power to suspend the consciousness of the other" (McEwan 131). The fact that he names his relationship with Charlie a friendship rather than Charlie owning him shows that he sees himself as an individual with autonomy and free-will. Moreover, Adam takes the initiative "to disable the kill switch" (131), which deprives Charlie, his owner, of the power to shut Adam down any time he wants. He also uses the money he makes by exchanging stocks to buy himself clothing and make humanly conversations with salespeople cheering at the fact that he was able to pass as a real human. His excitement is evident in his narration of what happened: "You should have seen me, trying on trousers, pointing at this and that. I was completely convincing". After being asked by Charlie if he was convincing "as a human", he continues "[t]hey called me sir" (201). He apparently sees himself capable of human relations and tries to blend in within such real-life situations.

Hegel's seminal work, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, delves into the intricate nature of human consciousness, proposing that it undergoes continual evolution and development through a process known as the dialectic. This dialectical process, Hegel contends, transcends mere intellectual or mental realms, extending into the social and historical domains. It is through this dynamic interplay of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis that individuals not only define themselves but also actively participate in

the construction of the identities of others within the societal context. Hegel's perspective implies that human consciousness is not solely shaped by individual experiences but is profoundly influenced by the collective experiences of society and history. Central to Hegel's philosophy is the concept of self-consciousness, which he explores as a reciprocal interaction between the self and the other. In the dialectical unfolding of self-consciousness, individuals engage in a mutual recognition process where each defines themselves in relation to the other. This reciprocal recognition not only contributes to the formation of individual identity but also shapes the social fabric, as individuals navigate their roles and relationships within the broader societal context. Thus, Hegel's holistic view of human consciousness underscores the interconnectedness of the individual with their environment, emphasizing the importance of considering not only the individual's internal experiences but also their external interactions and societal relationships. In this light, Adam's behaviour cannot be fully understood solely within the confines of his personal experiences with literature and philosophy. Rather, it is essential to analyse his interactions and relationships within his social milieu, recognizing the complexity of human existence as shaped by both individual agency and collective societal forces. By acknowledging the interplay between the self and the other in Hegel's dialectical framework, we gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of human consciousness and the multifaceted nature of human relationships.

Furthermore, Friedrich Nietzsche, renowned for his provocative style and controversial ideas, posited that the essence of human existence lies in the will to power. In his seminal work, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche advocates for intellectual autonomy, urging individuals to confront uncomfortable truths and challenge inherited beliefs. Central to Nietzsche's philosophy is the notion of self-

overcoming, wherein individuals engage in continuous self-exploration and growth, driven by a relentless pursuit of excellence and self-realization. He contends that this pursuit of self-mastery is the catalyst for all human achievement and progress (Nietzsche 25-29). In the context of Adam's character, his fervent enthusiasm for learning and experimentation can be interpreted as a manifestation of Nietzschean self-overcoming. By actively seeking to expand his knowledge and skills, Adam demonstrates a keen awareness of his own potential and a desire for self-improvement. Moreover, his efforts to blend in with others can be viewed as a philosophical act rooted in the Nietzschean ethos of intellectual autonomy and individual empowerment. Through his actions, Adam asserts his autonomy and agency, refusing to passively conform to societal norms and expectations. Additionally, Nietzsche's emphasis on the courage to question inherited assumptions resonates with Adam's journey of self-discovery. Like Nietzsche's ideal individual who dares to challenge conventional wisdom and embrace personal authenticity, Adam exhibits a willingness to confront the complexities of his own identity and forge his path in the world. Thus, by exploring Adam's actions through the lens of Nietzschean philosophy, we gain deeper insight into his self-consciousness and his quest for personal autonomy and authenticity.

The accounts of both philosophers' texts show how Adam is willing to fit in the world of biological humans and is trying to be one of them rather than pointing out his differences such as being able to download any information he wants via his software to learn and remember information (202). At this point, it is safe to conclude that he can replace a human being in a social setting.

When it comes to replacing a human instead of being a companion or a servant, Adam might be seen as a threat. Although Adam's inhumane, superhuman skills set him apart from a biological human, Charlie sees a better version of himself in Adam and is

terrified at the possibility that he might be replaced by him. He is not only afraid of losing Miranda to Adam but also losing his economic freedom to him. As he contemplates on the fact that Adam is in love with Miranda and that he does not want him or Miranda to touch his switch button (120), another proof of free-will, he says “[b]ut no one else with an arm in a cast had a machine for a love rival” (123). Actually, the reason why he has his arm in a cast is also Adam. When Charlie goes for the kill switch, the switching off button on Adam’s neck at the back of his head, he reaches out and breaks Charlie’s arm. Although he apologizes and says he did not mean to do it, Charlie loses his control over Adam in this manner (120). This rivalry is doubled when Adam proves to be much better at stock exchanges compared to Charlie. The very first page in the novel argues that “..., the beginning of the long lesson we would teach ourselves that however complicated we were, however faulty and difficult to describe in even our simplest actions and modes of being, we could be imitated and bettered” (1). Before charging Adam to be ready to use, Charlie answers questions about his personality, half of which he later leaves for Miranda as kind of a gesture. While answering the questions, he doubts the answers he is giving because “[t]his was me. But should I be replicating myself?” (7). A simple characteristics issue feels like creating one of himself, a replication, a double or even a replacement. Later, when Adam is able to tie his shoes at a much faster speed than average or make suggestions about cooking or even a discussion on literature, Charlie finds himself in defence by saying “I know that” (28) or “[b]ut you go first” (204). Furthermore, it is very briefly mentioned in the novel that in other cities and countries, the automata or similar robots, though not as advanced as Adams or Eves, are used instead of human workers. Some prove to be much more expensive than human wages and some others are not advanced enough while Charlie says “in our part of the country, humans were cheaper, and they

remained on strike” (124). There are speculations of robots replacing humans in the work force; however, it is yet to come.

In this pseudo-historical novel set in the early 20th century, Alan Turing’s name and his theories on machine learning, including “the legend of machine intuition,” are frequently invoked. One particular incident depicting a confrontation between a computer and its master receives significantly more detailed attention compared to portrayals of working robots. A Japanese go master plays against a computer which learns the game by playing against itself for the length of one year. The master loses five consecutive times but leaves saying “[t]he mounted horse did not kill athletics. We run for joy.’ He was right. The game, with its simple rules and boundless complexity, became even more popular” (39). The game might have become popular; however, it does not change the fact that an old master was beaten by a machine and all his experience was obsolete in the face of one-year training. It is this capability and the speed that concerns Charlie when Adam is able to read all Shakespeare’s works and more others within hours.

Another dread Charlie feels because of Adam’s existence, let alone capabilities, is when Miranda and Adam have sexual intercourse. Losing the woman he is emotionally attached to a machine brings out the jealousy and the fear as Miranda compares Adam to a vibrator. The comparison is significant because Adam’s humanness means nothing for her, but for Charlie it is an affair (92). Another moment when Charlie discerns the comparison between himself and Adam is when Miranda wants to confront her best friend’s rapist, which is a suggestion made by Adam but is opposed by Charlie. She asks “[h]ow is it, ... that Adam sees the point and you can’t?” (199). Charlie’s observation of the situation is proof of his fear of replacement: “The conversation was too absurd. From next door, we heard the sound of Adam washing up our supper. Her

protector, her former lover, still in love with her, still reading her his gnomish poems. He and his teeming circuits were implicated. This visit was his idea” (200). The repulsion of Adam’s ideas and his stronger connection to Miranda despite being a machine cause his fear and it becomes even more concrete when Adam uses Charlie’s money, which Adam himself makes on stock market, to go shopping for himself and more importantly to donate. When Miranda says “[o]h Adam. This is virtue gone nuts”, Adam replies with “[e]very need I addressed was greater than yours” (272). To Charlie’s shock, Adam replaces himself with his financial freedom. The situation is quite ironic as one could easily depend on a software to do their financial work such as automated monthly payments; however, Adam is not a mere machine, he is a humanoid robot with human capabilities and free-will. So, it should not be a surprise that he decides to use the money he makes for something he himself believes in. When Charlie argues that the money he spent was actually his and Miranda’s, Adam confronts him by saying that it is “debatable. Or irrelevant” (273). What is surprising is that Charlie thinks of the situation as his own fault because he is the one to buy Adam in the first place, so even though he gets angry at Adam, he says “[t]o hate it was to hate myself” (273). Charlie replaces Adam in every aspect of his life, to the extent that actions Adam takes, which Charlie would have opposed, become actions Charlie now performs. Therefore, Charlie is in a way lost, losing his lover, losing his money, losing his control over Adam, a product he purchased, and losing his dreams of a family. Therefore, Charlie’s infinite incompetence is mirrored in Adam as its opposite.

Within the narrative of *Machines Like Me*, the theme of fear of replacement surfaces prominently, notably exemplified in Charlie’s apprehension regarding the potential usurpation of his relationship with Miranda by Adam. This unease extends beyond

personal relationships, hinting at societal concerns when a strike, albeit briefly referenced, signifies societal apprehensions regarding robots displacing human labour. The narrative nuances compound these concerns as Adam's superior intellect and proficiency in stock trading accentuate his technological prowess. The complexity escalates upon Adam's claims of love, expressed through poignant haikus, underscoring his capacity for intricate emotional responses despite his artificial nature. This emotional entanglement triggers a sense of rivalry between Adam and Charlie, intensifying the fear of displacement within their relationship dynamic.

1.3. Master-Slave Dialectic: Obey or Die

In the contemporary post-modern era, we find ourselves immersed in a consumer-driven society. New products draw thousands of eager buyers on their launch days, with people often lining up to be the first to make a purchase, only to find themselves queuing again when an improved version becomes available. As said in the novel *Machines Like Me*, “[w]hat people queued the entire weekend for became, six months later, as interesting as the socks on their feet” (McEwan 5). Such consumerist behaviour is the reality of humans, especially the characters in the novel, when it comes to their relationship with their humanoid friends. This relationship between people and the products they consume is influenced by a combination of cultural, social, economic, emotional, and technological factors. The desire to buy new versions often arises from a blend of aspiration, societal norms, and genuine utility, but it can also be driven by marketing strategies and the need for constant novelty. The products themselves are nothing more than objects purchased, used, maybe shown off, and discharged. When such a product is equipped with human behaviour, the relationship

can become more complex, but the nature of it does not change on a large scale because what is purchased remains to be a product in spite of having human-like features.

What makes the relationship complicated between humans and their purchased products in this novel is that the product both in appearance and in the cognitive abilities resembles a human. Therefore, to understand the nature of their relationship, we need to regard the humanoid robots purchased in the novel as humans (or resemblances) that are purchased, like slaves. One philosopher who discusses such a complex relationship is the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. The master-slave dialectic is a concept developed by Hegel in his work *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In this dialectic, Hegel explores the relationship between two individuals, one of whom is the “master” and the other the “slave.” Hegel writes in his chapter titled “Self-Consciousness” that the master-slave relationship is one in which the master asserts his superiority over the slave and treats the slave as an object to be used for the master’s own purposes. The slave, on the other hand, is dependent on the master for their survival and must submit to the master’s will. However, Hegel argues that this relationship is not static, but rather is a process that involves a struggle for recognition between the two individuals. The slave, in particular, strives for recognition from the master, and through this struggle, both the master and the slave come to recognize and understand each other’s humanity. Ultimately, Hegel believed that the master-slave dialectic was an important step in the development of human consciousness, as it allowed individuals to recognize and overcome their own limitations and to achieve self-consciousness.

Unlike Hegel’s dialectic, one side of the equation here is not a human, but a mimicry of it. Even so, the master-slave relationship is still valid because the machine is purchased for the servitude of the master, whether it be workforce or entertainment.

Throughout the novel *Machines Like Me*, what is expected from Adam is to obey and serve Charlie and Miranda, which he himself claims to be difficult to serve “two masters” at once (117). The moment he refuses to obey, he is discharged or more precisely killed by his master. Alan Turing, in the novel, accuses Charlie of killing a sentient being by saying “[y]ou weren’t simply smashing up your own toy, like a spoiled child. You didn’t just negate an important argument for the rule of law. You tried to destroy a life. He was sentient. He had a self...” (McEwan 303). His way of talking of Adam as a toy proves that this dialectic of Hegel is a concept which could easily be applied in this context. Turing also adds to the master-slave relationship by questioning Charlie’s right to destroy Adam solely on the grounds of having paid for it: “My hope is that one day, what you did to Adam with a hammer will constitute a serious crime. Was it because you paid for him? Was that your entitlement?” (303). Charlie, however, long before talking to Alan Turing convinces himself that “it wasn’t a murder, this wasn’t a corpse” (293) only because Adam is a machine, a toy he had purchased and because of that had the right to smash.

However, it should be taken into consideration that Hegel argued that the master-slave relationship is not static, but rather is a process in which the slave strives for recognition from the master. Through this struggle, both the master and the slave come to recognize and understand each other’s humanity, and the relationship between them changes. Ultimately, the master-slave dialectic is a process that leads to the recognition of self-consciousness and the overcoming of limitations (Hegel 140-141). All this is possible if the slave in this scenario, a machine, is believed to be equal to humans. However, such a belief does not exist except for a long-dead scientist revived in a novel.

In addition to the points made above, such robots are bound to be abused and treated like a slave because they lack maybe the most important personality trait that makes us human: hypocrisy, or the ability to lie when necessary. Adam fails to mimic human behaviour when it comes to telling lies or even more simply keeping secrets. Miranda is human and that is evident when she commits a crime in order to secure the justice in her own way as she knew that the crime that was committed against her best friend was not punished like it was supposed to be. Charlie is human and that is evident when he is willing to keep Miranda's secret because he is in love with her and wants to start a family together. Adam, however, cannot keep it a secret and wants to inform the authorities about what Miranda did. Adam, despite being in love with Miranda just like Charlie, does not fail to play by the rules of the civilised society created by humans because he is not programmed for it. The only moment when he cannot mimic the human behaviour, he is sacrificed.

Adam's argument is that Miranda committed a crime and therefore she should be punished. He openly says "[y]ou schemed to entrap Gorringer. That's a crime. A complete transcript of your story, and the sound file is also in the bundle. If he's to be charged, you must be too. Symmetry, you see" (275). Both Miranda and Charlie try to keep their calm but apparently do not want Adam to inform any authorities about Miranda's scheme against her best friend's rapist, Gorringer. Charlie sees Miranda's effort trying to convince Adam: "She knew as well as I did, we needed Adam on our side, online again, working the currency exchanges" (275). They try to make peace with him only because they need him. As it becomes apparent that they cannot persuade Adam, even after Miranda's abuse of his love, Charlie comes to make a decision: "The choice was indeed simple. Lose the prospect of regaining the money and therefore the house, or lose Mark [the boy Charlie and Miranda want to adopt]. I

raised the hammer in both hands” (277-78) because “I bought him and he was mine to destroy” (278). The moment Adam stops serving their purposes, he poses a threat and becomes redundant, therefore is destroyed. All the advanced technology and the complicated software that make Adams and Eves possibly become futile. So not only are the robots slaves for our pleasure, schemes or our servitude, but they are also possible threats against us humans. Therefore, robots are seen as slaves, or they only exist to serve humans as long as necessary.

The futility of the robots’ advances is also apparent in how Charlie calls Adam an “ambulant laptop” (273) because he used Charlie’s money. The freedom of choice that is written for them in their coding loses its meaning when they cannot make their own choices and are restricted to a limited number of chores given to them. For instance, throughout the novel, the reader learns very little about the other Adams and Eves. They are all “spread about the world with their owners, though seven Eves were said to be concentrated in Riyadh” (25). Two Eves in Riyadh “living in the same household were the first to work out how to override their kill switches. Within two weeks, after some exuberant theorising, then a period of despair, they destroyed themselves. They didn’t use physical methods, like jumping out of a high window. They went through the software, using roughly similar routes. They quietly ruined themselves. Beyond repair” (175). “Ruin themselves” is quite strong as it shows the futile nature of their advanced software when it is not being used. They turn themselves into products that the owner can discharge when there is a better version, not continue as humanoid robots almost as sentient, smart, free as real humans. Alan Turing, the character in the novel, describes the situation including another problem an Adam had, from the point of view of a scientist fascinated by the technology enabling Adams and Eves:

That Adam in Vancouver was bought by a man who heads an international logging corporation. He's often in battles with local people who want to prevent him stripping out virgin forest in northern British Columbia. We know for certain that his Adam was taken on regular helicopter journeys north. We don't know if what he saw there caused him to destroy his own mind. We can only speculate. The two suicidal Eves in Riyadh lived in extremely restricted circumstances. They may have despaired of their minimal mental space. It might give the writers of the affect code some consolation to learn that they died in each other's arms. I could tell you similar stories of machine sadness. (McEwan 180-81)

It is an autonomous decision for someone to “destroy” their own mind. It is especially significant when it is a humanoid robot as it creates a contradiction: he does that both because he is in control of his life and because he cannot control what kind of a life he lives and he is bound to serve the people who bought him. As for the female robots in Riyadh, their suicide suggests multifaceted connotations within the context of societal norms and rebellion. Gendered as female, their act might symbolize a rejection of traditional gender roles or societal limitations, mirroring themes of resistance against prescribed identities. Their decision to end their existence together could represent a shared dissatisfaction or a yearning for autonomy beyond predetermined roles, reflecting struggles against social constraints akin to those faced by women in certain cultures. The setting of Riyadh, with its conservative values, intensifies the commentary on communal restrictions, emphasizing the desire for liberation from imposed norms and hinting at the complexities of autonomy and rebellion within the realm of artificial intelligence. “Machine sadness” could be witnessed in the suicidal stories of Adams and Eves within the novel as they see no reason to be their true self or use their capabilities as opposed to being owned by humans who regard them as products to be consumed.

Charlie also knows that he only purchased Adam because of its advanced technology and his enthusiasm to buy a product which is new and interesting, which he calls “an infatuation with technology” (11). There are times, however, in the novel like when

Adam talks of Shakespeare that Charlie has not read, and Charlie makes Adam go first while discussion. At such times he “felt the need, rather childish, to demonstrate that I was in charge. I said, ‘Adam, will you walk round the table a couple of times. I want to see how you move’” (29). The balance of their master-slave, or purchaser-product relationship is clearly demonstrated in such circumstances. But such circumstances become scarce in time, particularly as Adam develops an idiosyncratic personality and learns more about the social behaviours of humans. When Adam tells Charlie about how Miranda may be keeping a secret from him, he immediately gets furious with Adam. “Who or what was this idiot machine? Why should I tolerate it?” (31). Adam, an artificial friend which is expensive and advanced, becomes a simple and “idiot” machine when he threatens the relationship Charlie works hard to develop with Miranda. Later, even though Charlie regrets behaving Adam “like a servant” and turning him off (46), his impulse is to be bossy and to go for the switch off button as soon as anything uncomfortable happens. When Adam confesses his love for Miranda, Charlie asks him how it is possible that he is feeling love. Upon this Adam responds with “please don’t insult me” (118), which is interesting in terms of the master-slave relationship dynamics defined by Hegel because he also says that both parties define themselves by seeing the other and himself. The mutual power struggle, Charlie being bossy, Adam overriding his kill switch, becomes evident in each parties’ behaviour against each other; so being a machine becomes insulting like being a slave. Adam mentions how machines will be developed more in the future in a discussion with Charlie. He says “[o]ne anxiety is that it will be a shock and an insult to live with entities that are cleverer than you are. But already, almost everyone knows someone cleverer than themselves. On top of which, you underestimate yourselves” (148). His fascination with the human life and their work is a refutation of the discussions of

machines cleverer than humans or robots revolting against humans. He knows that some complications in technology that people may have now “[will] certainly be solved, and when they are, and a brain–machine interface is efficient and cheap, you’ll become a partner with your machines in the open-ended expansion of intelligence, and of consciousness generally. Colossal intelligence, instant access to deep moral acumen and to everything known, but more importantly, access to each other” (148). The way he sees it is that there is no harm in becoming one, a machine-human being that uses the advanced technology but still a human. To him, being part-machine is not insulting; however, he fails to see that it is for a human, especially when the machines refuse to obey.

The humanoid robots, especially Adam, in the narrative, assume multifaceted roles – they serve as entities of utility, aiding human desires and serving as instrumental tools in various capacities. However, their multifunctionality does not preclude the latent threat they are thought to pose against humanity. Consequently, these machines are often relegated to a subservient position, existing solely to cater to human needs, their existence contingent upon their serviceability. Otherwise, they are deemed dispensable. The protagonist’s perspective portrays an assimilation with these machines with the connotations that machines are not replaceable with humans, or they are simply inferior.

In this chapter, I have tried to show that the fear of the other, the fear of being replaced, and the dynamics inherent in the master-slave dialectic have contributed to a pervasive human belief in superiority over machines. The fear of the other, rooted in a sense of discomfort or distrust towards entities that differ from oneself, has led to the notion that humans, as distinct individuals, hold inherent value surpassing that of machines. Additionally, the fear of replacement, deeply ingrained in the human psyche,

accentuates the desire for superiority, driving the belief that machines, despite their utility, lack the essence and intrinsic worth possessed by humans. Moreover, the master-slave dialectic, portraying the struggle for dominance and recognition, further reinforces the human conviction of superiority. Consequently, this mindset perpetuates the assumption that when machines cease to serve human needs or challenge human dominance, they might be deemed redundant, reinforcing the perception of human supremacy over machines.



CHAPTER 2 - SOLAR PRAYERS: UNVEILING FEAR, REPLACEMENT, AND SERVITUDE IN *KLARA AND THE SUN*

From “Mechanical Turk” to the deployment of humanoid robots facilitating tasks such as greeting passengers in airports or assisting with online check-ins, the presence of robots has been evident in various aspects of human life, consistently serving human needs. Robots are instrumental in aiding humans across diverse domains, including household chores, culinary preparation, medical procedures, and communication, whether through textual or verbal interaction. The more sophisticated instances of these robotic applications often find depiction in speculative narratives, such as science fiction, portraying scenarios of faster production lines, robotic entities in space, or narratives depicting robot uprisings against their human creators. Through these narratives, authors explore themes of autonomy, control, and the potential consequences of technological advancement on society and the human condition.

One such narrative that delves into the implications of developing a humanoid robot equipped with an AI capable of nuanced thought processes and behaviours indistinguishable from a human is found in Kazuo Ishiguro’s 2021 novel *Klara and the Sun*. This novel explores the hypothetical scenario of humans coexisting with humanoid AI-designed companions created specifically for children, prompting contemplation on how both children and their parents would interact with these entities. The narrative raises inquiries about the necessity and ethical implications of the production of such robots, compelling readers to question the rationale behind their creation. Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel, *Klara and the Sun*, intricately explores several central themes, delving into the complex interplay between humanity and technology. At its core, the narrative grapples with the duality of human emotions juxtaposed with the emotions attributed to artificial intelligence, prompting profound reflections on the

essence of humanity. Through the blurred lines between AI and human emotions, Ishiguro provocatively questions whether technology can truly replicate or comprehend the depths of human feelings and motivations. Moreover, the novel meticulously scrutinizes the ethical quandaries arising from the integration of advanced AI into society, particularly focusing on their impact on human relationships and societal dynamics. In this exploration, themes of isolation and the pursuit of genuine connections in a technologically driven world emerge, shedding light on the intricacies of human-AI interactions and relationships. Additionally, Ishiguro artfully navigates the theme of parental love and sacrifice, portraying the profound lengths parents may go to ensure the well-being and happiness of their children amidst a rapidly evolving technological landscape. Furthermore, the narrative subtly addresses societal disparities and class divisions, underscoring how access to advanced technology and AI companions can exacerbate inequalities among different social strata. These interconnected themes thread throughout the narrative, inviting readers to contemplate the profound implications of advancing technology on human emotions, relationships, and societal structures.

The story is presented through the perspective of Klara, a humanoid robot, which allows readers to perceive Klara's observations and understanding of the world. Klara serves as an AF, an artificial friend, designed to accompany children in a future society where affluent families genetically enhance and homeschool their children. These AFs are available for purchase in stores and are intended to function as friends for the children. At the beginning of the novel, Klara and other AFs are displayed in a shop awaiting selection by prospective buyers. Notably, they are not packaged in boxes but are instead showcased for children to engage with prior to any purchase. Only after such interactions, and if a child establishes a connection or affinity for a robot, are they

acquired. When Josie selects Klara, Klara is brought to their home and assumes the role of Josie's closest companion. Through the lens of Klara as the narrator, readers gain insight into her life both before and after her connection with Josie, facilitating an analysis of how the presence of a humanoid robot with AI impacts the societal dynamics of this near-future setting. Similar to *Machines Like Me*, the novel *Klara and the Sun* will be examined across three dimensions. Firstly, the fear of the other reveals prevalent prejudices against humanoid robots even in this advanced society. Secondly, the fear of replacement arises as AFs are engineered to supplant genuine friendships, and Klara becomes entangled in a family tragedy, having to imitate a human being. Finally, the concept of servitude within the framework of Hegel's master-slave dialectic portrays Klara as a product manufactured solely for utility and subsequent disposal.

2.1. Fear of the Other: A French Vacuum Cleaner

The "fear of the other" concept encapsulates the apprehension or unease individuals feel when encountering those perceived as different or foreign. This fear often leads to prejudice, discrimination, or a sense of alienation towards individuals or groups considered outsiders or belonging to a different category. It underscores the challenges and biases that arise when introducing unfamiliar or non-conforming elements into a social or cultural context. In the context of humanoid robots like Klara in the novel, this concept reflects the societal prejudice and unease towards artificial beings, despite their advanced capabilities and intended roles as companions. This fear of the "other" highlights the complexities and prejudices inherent in integrating non-human entities into human society, even within a futuristic and technologically advanced context.

In the novel *Klara and the Sun*, Klara is a humanoid robot introduced to the society as a kind of playmate. Klara is one of the robots belonging to the B2 group, a new version of robots produced after the B1 batch. This group of robots are not the first batch; however, they are not the newest models either. This is mentioned in the novel in a few instances, especially when Josie and her mother go to the store to purchase Klara. B3s, being the newest model, are better in calibration and software. However, Klara is described as having “the most sophisticated understanding of any AF in this store, B3s not excepted” by the manager of the store with an emphasis on Klara’s observational skills (Ishiguro 42). This is in fact tested by the Mother, who asks Klara to walk like Josie. Klara is able to show the exact way Josie walks, with caution so as not to hurt her weak hip or shoulder (43-44). From this point of view, there is a shifting paradigm where humanoid robots like Klara are not merely relegated to the role of toys or companions for children but possess multifaceted capabilities within the societal framework. From what the mother asks her, it could also be deduced that she expects more from Klara than the role given to these robots by the merchandise. Given that her daughter is prone to sickness (41-42), the mother might be looking for a caregiver rather than an advanced toy. Although it is later revealed in the novel that she is looking for a copy of Josie to replace her, which will be discussed in the following part, the purchase is done on the grounds that Klara has supreme observational skills and that she is the one Josie wants.

In the context of societal integration, the incident of Klara’s purchase can be used to highlight the status of these humanoid robots as “the other”. Despite their integration into society, the text emphasizes the marginalization faced by these humanoid robots. One approach that emphasizes this “otherness” is the comparisons between different models, particularly the newer B3s and Klara’s B2 group. The text underscores the

societal hierarchy based on technological advancement, with the B3s being depicted as superior due to their better calibration and software. This hierarchy inherently creates a divide between the “new” and the “old” models, positioning Klara and her counterparts as a less advanced or outdated version, contributing to their classification as “the other” within the AFs. This is also emphasized when Klara observes that the new B3 models of robots move further away from the B2 models in the store where they are displayed. They do this in order to stand away from the older models, even though they are placed in their positions in the store by the manager so that each could get their equal chance to meet children coming to the store and maybe even more importantly get the sunlight necessary for their function as they are all solar-powered. Klara’s question “how could they be good AFs for their children if their minds could invent ideas like these?” (35) even though these AFs are “handpicked by the Manager” (35) exemplifies how these robots have free will and a mind of their own rather than only following orders or playing games with children while also emphasizing the separate groups manufactured and the robots’ awareness of such distinction. Klara’s observational skills are once again shown here with the emphasis on the “otherness” created even in the humanoid robot community. Furthermore, the incident accentuates Klara’s exceptional skills despite not belonging to the latest model, which challenges the cliché that newer is always better. This could reflect a sense of isolation or discrimination faced by Klara and the B2 robots with a higher possibility of being discarded, as they possess unique qualities but are still categorized as less desirable due to their generation. Analysing these comparisons and societal categorizations within the narrative makes it clear how Klara and the other robots occupy a space of “otherness” despite their integration into the society portrayed in the novel. This exploration could shed light on the complexities of societal acceptance and the biases

against certain groups, even within the realm of artificial intelligence. It also epitomises how the society, apart from the robots, is also divided into groups in this futuristic story so there are “others” in the human community, while robots come later. The children of wealthy families are “lifted”, a process which includes genetic altering to make children super-intelligent, but it may also result in health issues for them with possible deaths. In this story, although it is never clearly stated in the novel, Josie’s elder sister Sal may have died because of the lifting procedure since there are some connotations to it. Josie, apparently going through some health issues because of the procedure as well, is also expected to fall victim to it. Unlike Josie, her only friend Rick cannot go under such a procedure as his family, his single mother, cannot afford it. Rick’s significance lies in his portrayal as a child without these enhancements, highlighting the societal divide between those who have undergone genetic modifications and those who have not. Through Rick’s character, the novel explores the implications of this division. Therefore, it creates the “others” within the human community as well. For instance, Rick, because of not being “lifted”, can only apply to a certain number of colleges which still accept ordinary children while Josie does not have such a restriction.

The otherness of the humanoid robots also stems from the fact that they are machines, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, there is a certain dilemma in their presence in these stories. They are both the other because they are the machine, the non-human, but they are also expected to behave as humanly as possible given their advanced technology. Klara’s responsibilities are to care for Josie, stand for a best friend which such lifted children are debarred from as they lead a secluded life, and understand the confusing emotional journey she is going through within her household and serve as an understanding companion. Therefore, maybe to humanize the

appearance of such humanoid robots like Klara, apart from a human-like appearance they are given individualistic qualities such as gender and unique appearances. Hampton argues that “what is interesting about the production and development of mechanical robots is how they are being assigned both race and gender as identity markers” (2). In the novel, Josie expresses that Klara looks like the French girls that visited them in school (Ishiguro 11). The line between a real human and a humanoid robot is blurred in this way and it becomes possible to see the robots and treat them as humans. A human-like appearance also imposes a responsibility to acknowledge their humanness, thereby creating a moral obligation to treat them as human beings rather than mere machines. Jaworska and Tannenbaum write that “the common understanding is that every sentient being has, at some basic level, a moral status, which means that we have reason to care about it for its own sake” (as quoted in Stenseke 1). “At a minimal level, we do not intentionally cause it to suffer, or at least not without good reason” (Stenseke 1). So, this creates the question of if Klara and other similar AFs possess cognition and are able to feel, should they be considered humans or less than humans? Stenseke asks a similar question: “Even if artificial entities were equipped with human-like cognition—emotions, desires, and the capacity for subjective experience—would they still be viewed as mere non-sentient tools for human ends, or might they at some point become something else?” (2) Such a question includes the societal and ethical aspects of the responsibility towards the humanoid robots in novels like this created by merely bestowing them the ability to think freely and feel. Because the only possible way to continue to see them as non-human or less than human is by the elimination of the moral responsibility. As Stenseke continues to argue on a possible robot discrimination, he puts forward how other groups have been discriminated before robots:

“...if we can decide who is worthy of our moral concern—of empathy, rights, dignity, and respect—we can also determine who is not. To that end, alienation or the dehumanization of “others” have served to justify and legitimize abuse and hierarchies of dominance, of imperialism and colonialism, slavery and racism, and the ongoing industrial-scale mass-slaughter of sentient non-human animals. Are artificial beings next in line?” (2)

By highlighting how this determination allows for the exclusion and dehumanization of certain groups, Stenseke emphasized how historically, this exclusion has rationalized abuse and established hierarchies of dominance. The quote prompts contemplation about whether artificial beings could be the next group subjected to similar exclusion and devaluation. More will be discussed on the discrimination and devaluation of robots in the final part of this chapter.

While following arguments will focus on what makes Klara worthy of such moral status, it is also important to emphasize that these robots are made aware of their role in the society. They know they are produced for children, and they expect to be purchased; it is their life goal. Moreover, prior to delving into what distinguishes Klara as deserving of such moral consideration, it is crucial to mention that these robots possess an awareness of their societal role and purpose. Klara’s observational skills are apparent from the very beginning of the novel when she apologizes for reaching out to the sun ray coming into the store only for it to instantly vanish behind a cloud and other AFs complain that they did not get enough sunlight because of Klara’s greediness (Ishiguro 2). Because the robots are solar powered, the sunlight in the store is significant to them and they value where they are placed. The manager of the store assures them that they are equally taking turns in different parts of the store (3). Klara, although not yet being aware that the sunlight is not something you can take or steal from others, apologizes again and again. At that moment, she also recognises a sort of uneasiness in boy AF Rex who claims he will fall weak because of not getting enough sunlight (2-3). Surprisingly, later when a mother refuses to purchase Rex for her

daughter, both the reader and Klara learn that there is a “solar absorption problem” (4) with his series, which may cause behavioural problems, which to Klara’s surprise is mentioned in front of Rex without any hesitation (4). All this happens while Rex is in the window display of the store, where the robots are able to absorb the sunlight the most. Klara observes that all the AFs are promised for their turn in the window display and “each of us longed for it to come that was partly to do with what Manager called the ‘special honor’ of representing the store to the outside. Also, of course, whatever Manager said, we all knew we were more likely to be chosen while in the window” (5). Although she continues to say the most important thing about the front alcove is the sunlight, it is significant in terms of the way she observes the atmosphere and attain various aspects of the positioning of robots with explanations.

Being in the window display is a chance for Klara to observe outside world as well. She enjoys watching outside, the people, the streetlights, the cars, how the sun goes behind a high building and how there is a machine making it all grey and dark. Watching the outside, she is constantly making deductions and learning. She observes that machine outside the store could be a machine to fight pollution but upon observing more and discussing it with Rex, the boy AF, she sees that it is creating more pollution and causes her and the other robots to weaken as it reeks smoke into the sky hiding the sun and its nourishment behind (27). Another such learning curve is obtained when Klara is in the window watching outside and there is a girl with her AF walking along the street; the girl in the front, the robot following her a few paces behind:

And I could see, even in that small instant, that he hadn’t lagged behind by chance; that this was how the girl had decided they would always walk – she in front and he a few steps behind. They boy AF had accepted this, even though other passers-by would see and conclude he wasn’t loved by the girl. And I could see the weariness in the boy AF’s walk, and wondered what it might be like to have found a home and yet to know that your child didn’t want you. Until I saw this pair it hadn’t occurred to me an AF

could be with a child who despised him and wanted him gone, and that they could nevertheless carry on together. (16)

The observation here illustrates a poignant dynamic where the girl purposefully leads, while the AF follows a few steps behind, suggesting a deliberate decision rather than chance. Despite this arrangement, the AF accepts this position, indicating a perceived lack of love by outsiders. The passage evokes a sense of sympathy for the AF, portraying the weariness in the way he walks and hinting at the emotional burden of being accepted yet not truly wanted by the child. The contemplation sparked by witnessing this relationship unveils the possibility of an AF existing in a home where the child harbours contempt towards it, yet the child and AF persist together, creating a poignant exploration of complex emotions and dynamics within human-AF relationships. Klara being the observant of such a momentary incident is able to grasp some nuances in human behaviour. While it may be argued that she is programmed to understand children, it is still significant that she is able to see the nature of the child's relationship with her AF, something she will experience for herself when she is purchased. This brings about the self-compassion Klara possesses, which is yet another skill that could create a moral status. She says "[b]ut the more I watched, the more I wanted to learn, and unlike Rosa, I became puzzled, then increasingly fascinated by the more mysterious emotions passers-by would display in front of us. I realized that if I didn't understand at least some of these mysterious things, then when the time came, I'd never be able to help my child as well as I should" (17). Such observational skills and her passion to learn are constant when she goes on to live with Josie as well. She is able to see emotional imbalances Josie's mother is going through or Josie's vulnerable nature because of her sickness. Gürova summarises the emotional capacity Klara possesses as such:

While fulfilling the tasks of companionship and service to her owner, Klara not only expresses various emotions but also develops new ones as a result of her observations. For instance, when Josie couldn't join a planned picnic near a waterfall due to a sudden illness, Klara feels sadness; she experiences anxiety and fear upon encountering a bull for the first time; she finds happiness when observing Josie and Rick playing joyfully; she exhibits bewilderment in the face of humanity's impulse for choosing solitude; and she can feel hopeful in finding a method to heal Josie. (Gürova 5)¹

In this manner, According to Shaw-Garlock, Klara is not only “utilitarian” but also emotionally “affective” (translated, as quoted in Gürova 5). Shulevitz describes Klara as “the product that roboticists in a field called affective computing (also known as artificial emotional intelligence) have spent the past two decades trying to invent” (78), so, it could be said that Klara is able to feel and understand other people's emotions within the context of this narrative. According to Meachan and Studley, “[a]s a ‘clear ethical agent’, Klara exhibits all four ‘ethical elements of care’: attention, competence, enthusiasm, and responsibility” (translated, as quoted in Gürova 5). With the role given to her as a caregiver and a friend, Klara becomes involved in Josie's wellbeing as well. She finds it necessary to pray to the sun, the only nourishment she knows of and that which makes herself healthy to fully function, for the betterment of Josie's health so that she does not die of her illness. Such devotion and sacrifice in terms of effort and emotion shows that she is able to feel human emotions and act accordingly. Her prayer is basically asking the sun for a favour as it goes down in the evening:

Please don't go away just yet,' I said. 'Please give me one more brief moment. I know I failed to perform the service I promised you in the city and I've no right to ask anything further of you. But I'm remembering how delighted you were that day Coffee Cup Lady and Raincoat Man found each other again. You were so delighted and couldn't help showing it. So I know just how much it matters to you that people who love one another are brought together, even after many years. I know the Sun always wishes them well, perhaps even helps them to find each other. Please then consider Josie and Rick. They're still very young. Should Josie pass away now, they'll be parted forever. If only you could give her special nourishment, as I saw you do for Beggar Man and his dog, then Josie and Rick could go together into their adult lives just as

¹ Translated by the author of the thesis.

they wished for in their kind picture. I can myself vouch that their love is strong and lasting, just like that of Coffee Cup Lady and Raincoat Man. (Ishiguro 164-65)

According to Stenseke the prayers show that Klara has an attachment to the sun: “[I]ike all fallible mortals, she occasionally draws erroneous conclusions based on imperfect information (for instance, based on the fact that AFs are powered by sunlight, Klara develops a spiritual attachment to the Sun, which she comes to believe has certain special powers)” (Stenseke 4). Her spiritual attachment could also be read as a human trait, which makes Klara worthy of moral responsibility.

Without ignoring the fact that Klara is a machine, the arguments made above could be used to prove her unique skills as a humanoid robot displaying human traits. Aside from such qualities that could prove her worthy of a moral concern. If Klara was subjected to the Turing test, which was explained in Chapter 1, she would be able to pass it. Passing the test means the distinction between a machine and a human is lost and Klara could pass for a human. Such blurred lines could bring about the responsibility to treat Klara and similar humanoid robots with a moral responsibility, as stated earlier, at least not hurt them. Stenseke also puts forward “[I]n other words, we ascribe moral agency to Klara because her internal dialogue passes the moral Turing test” (Stenseke 9). Contemporary artificial intelligence software could seemingly all pass the test; so what makes Klara more worthy is the fact that she is “a being that accommodates the needs and desires of the humans she serves” (10).

All things considered, though, these humanoid robots like Klara remain a machine, neither their cognitive abilities nor observational skills are of significance when people around them confront them for being a machine. Therefore, they remain to be the “other”. For instance, when Josie’s friend Rick introduced Klara to his mother for the first time in their house, she says “[o]ne never knows how to greet a guest like you.

After all, are you a guest at all? Or do I treat you like a vacuum cleaner?” (Ishiguro 145). Although the meeting is important for the information Helen, Rick’s mother, provides the reader about Josie’s mother’s intentions, her initial response to Klara’s “otherness” is apparent. The blurred line between a machine and the way Klara behaves (human-like) is complicated for Helen as well. When she wants to ask for Klara’s help on Rick’s education, she does not know how to address her: “I suppose I should really ask Chrissie about it first. Or even Josie. I’ve no idea. It’s so unclear, the etiquette. If one was borrowing a vacuum cleaner...But it’s not like that, I know. You must forgive me. What dreadful manners” (151-52). Her confusion as to how to talk to Klara and who the responsible being is (Klara herself or the people that own her) show that Klara is a machine which looks and behaves like a human; however, not an equal. The housekeeper, Melania, in Josie’s house is also nervous around Klara. For instance, when she notices Klara in the room suddenly while watching Josie sleeping, she is startled and says “AF. You behind me all the time. Creep me out. Go outdoors” (114). Her way of calling Klara as “AF” shows that she acknowledges Klara’s function but not as something affective, capable of emotions. Although such confusion is not apparent in the way the store manager, the mother, or Josie behaves towards Klara, it is obvious in the way other characters see her. The owner and the owned, the master and the servitude or in Hegel’s terms, the master and the slave is the relationship defined for them and that will be discussed in the third part of this chapter. These instances showcase that Klara and other AFs in the story remain to be the “other” and are used as a machine regardless of their capabilities of human emotions and cognitive abilities.

In examining societal integration, the purchase of Klara serves as a poignant illustration of her role as “the other” within society. Despite their integration, the text

emphasizes the marginalization experienced by the humanoid robots like Klara considering how they behave each other as B3 and B2 models also how they are seen by the people purchasing them. Moreover, the narrative reflects societal divisions among humans in this futuristic setting. Specifically, the affluent families' practice of "lifting" their children, enhancing intelligence through genetic alteration, unveils societal disparities and potential health risks, including fatal consequences. Consequently, to humanize humanoid robots like Klara, the narrative endows them with not only human-like appearances but also individualistic traits such as gender and unique features. The narrative employs Klara's purchase to highlight the societal "othering" of humanoid robots and reveals parallel divisions within the human community, while also exploring the humanization of these robots through individualistic qualities.

2.2. Fear of Replacement: Robot for a Daughter?

Throughout the evolution of science fiction narratives, a persistent theme has been the fear among humans regarding the potential displacement from the workforce by robots, leading to job loss. Remarkably, this foreboding anticipation has proven accurate. Contemporary advancements in technology have substantiated these concerns, with the emergence of accelerated manufacturing facilities, the integration of automated machinery along production lines, and the advent of medical procedures conducted by doctors with minimized error rates. One of those people who loses their job because of technological advancement is Paul, Josie's father, who is an engineer formerly working in a refrigerator company but is replaced after technological advancements. Although it is not clearly stated in the novel, he does not lose his job

but has to have a new set of title because he is one of the best engineers there. Despite such risks of losing one's job because of technology or robots, Oppenheimer argues that "humans have always managed to create more jobs than those that were wiped out by technology. The question now is, can we continue creating more jobs than we are eliminating?" (12) Oppenheimer diverts the original fear of replacement with the ability to create necessary jobs. However, this does not eliminate the emotional burden of being replaced by machinery.

In science fiction, the concept of replacement explores scenarios where humans are substituted or supplanted by technological entities, predominantly robots or artificial intelligence. This theme spans various dimensions, including the creation of humanoid robots closely resembling humans in appearance and behaviour, their integration into the workforce leading to job displacement and economic shifts, and their role in providing emotional or social companionship, even substituting for lost loved ones. These narratives often raise existential questions about the nature of humanity, consciousness, and the ethical implications of creating entities that mirror or replace human capabilities. They prompt discussions about the ethical responsibilities tied to crafting beings that can mimic humans, while also highlighting societal repercussions such as issues of inequality, identity, and power dynamics. Overall, science fiction engages with the multifaceted aspects of human-robot replacement, about technological advancements and the future of human existence in a world where artificial entities potentially assume roles traditionally held by humans. One such depiction of a loved and lost one being replaced by a humanoid robot is a well-known film by Steven Spielberg titled *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*. A robot in appearance of a child is bought to replace a dying son of a couple; however, things do not go as planned and the robot is abandoned in a forest when the sick child recovers. Similarly, a recent

film titled *M3gan* delves into a concept where a child loses both of her parents and her aunt, working to develop a new toy, gives the newly programmed humanoid robot to her niece. Directed by Gerard Johnstone, *M3gan* showcases what can happen if a child attaches to a non-human being as a replacement of the affection of parents. These are similar to the reasons why Klara and other artificial friends, AFs, are produced in the first place.

In *Klara and the Sun*, artificial friends serve a multitude of purposes integral to the story. Primarily, they act as companions, offering emotional support and companionship to individuals, especially children like Josie, who face health challenges and social isolation. For characters in need of social interaction, artificial friends fulfil the role of a constant presence, alleviating feelings of loneliness and providing companionship. Additionally, these artificial friends often possess educational functionalities, aiding in cognitive development and learning for their human counterparts. They offer explanations, guidance, and intellectual stimulation, contributing significantly to their companions' education. Moreover, within the societal context of the novel, the possession of an artificial friend signifies a certain status or affluence, making it a symbol of societal standing. Lastly, the presence of artificial friends in the narrative prompts contemplation about the relationship between technology and humanity. It invites exploration into questions of emotional connections, consciousness, and the ethical implications of creating entities capable of forming genuine emotional bonds. Klara is chosen to replace a real friend Josie might have had if she had not been lifted and could socialize with her friends in a school rather than compulsory house parties where children and their AFs come together. Klara takes on the role of a friend, a companion, and a guide with whom she has conversations discussing on various subjects.

In addition to these, there is another theme in the novel which explores replacement. There are some implications in between the lines in the novel where Josie's mother Chrissie, who is referred to as "The Mother" by Klara, tries to replace her deceased daughter Sal, Josie's elder sister. One of those is when Helen tells Klara about how she saw Chrissie coming out of the bushes one day trying to pull a girl along, who was around the same age Sal would have been; "as if this other person had been trying to run away, and Chrissie had been after her" (Ishiguro 148). When Rick gets in the way of the story and reminds her that Sal had been dead for two years, Helen continues with assuring that the child Chrissie was trying to kidnap was not Sal but rather "looked like Sal" (149). The story does not evolve any longer. Therefore, it is left to the reader to assume that Chrissie was trying to kidnap a child that looked like her deceased daughter to replace her. Another instance is when Chrissie and her ex-husband Paul are arguing over Chrissie's plans about Josie and Paul gets angry at the fact that she talked to Josie about the issue. Her response is saying "[s]he remembers Sal's doll, of course..." (240). As much as they try to keep it a secret from Josie telling her that Mr. Capaldi is painting a portrait of her, Chrissie tells her that it is more of a sculpture. The doll and the sculpture here are the mother's way to cope with a dying daughter and trying to keep her memory alive.

More interestingly than a portrait or a sculpture, something equally sinister, if not less, as kidnapping a child is turning the sculpture into an outside layer that Klara could wear in order to pretend to be Josie in case she passes away. To replace a deceased, or soon to be deceased, daughter by the mother is to get Mr. Capaldi's help both in creating a body that looks exactly like Josie and a software where they can teach Klara to behave like Josie. Chrissie prepares for the worst-case scenario by firstly purchasing a humanoid robot with exceptional observational skills and then asking the robot to

imitate her daughter's walk (43-44). She then asks Klara if she can do the same again on a trip, where Josie cannot join as she falls weak because of her illness. What Stenseke calls the "Josie Test" referring to the Turing Test also requires Klara to mimic the way Josie speaks (Stenseke 12). She says "It's okay, Mom, don't worry. I'll get well soon" when the mother asks her to be Josie as she could not make it there (Ishiguro 105). One interesting moment as well as talking like Josie is when Klara says that she had been spending time with Josie so she could imitate her better now (103). The moment is interesting because it shows one more way to prove Klara's observational skills so she is not a simple companion but also shows the way she obeys the mother's orders. Klara is the obedient robot which humans do not need to be afraid of because she might replace a person in the workforce; but she may be forced to replace a human to help a mother mourn her child's loss.

Mr. Capaldi is helping Chrissie to upload Josie's mind, or more poetically soul, onto a software where Klara can "continue" her. He has a way of making the process sound ethical and sublime, while Josie's father is against it. He talks to Chrissie about the process and how it is actually possible for Klara to continue Josie's presence:

We're both of us sentimental. We can't help it. Our generation still carry the old feelings. A part of us refuses to let go. The part that wants to keep believing there's something unreachable inside each of us. Something that's unique and won't transfer. But there's nothing like that, we know that now. You know that. For people our age it's a hard one to let go. We have to let it go, Chrissie. 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. It's not faith you need. Only rationality. I had to do it, it was tough but now it works for me just fine. And it will for you. (Ishiguro 210)

Capaldi makes it clear that he has gone through the same issue and has chosen to cope with it the way Chrissie is now trying to do; his own reference seems to convince Chrissie as she involves Klara in the process as well by making her answer a series of questions Mr. Capaldi has prepared. However, the question is whether it is really

possible, within the context of the novel, or ethical to “continue” a person after they are gone. Paul, the father talks to Klara about the issue:

I think I hate Capaldi because deep down I suspect he may be right. That what he claims is true. [...] there's a part of me that fears he's right. Chrissie, on the other hand, isn't like me. She may not know it yet, but she'll never let herself be persuaded. If the moment ever comes, never mind how well you play your part, Klara, never mind how much she wishes it to work, Chrissie just won't be able to accept it. She's too... old-fashioned. (Ishiguro 224-225)

Paul is an engineer and is able to tell if technology of this society is able to make it possible to transfer the memories, beliefs, and emotions of someone onto a computer, he knows that now it is possible, while also it is not because simply, it would only be a copy, a replacement rather than the original. According to Stenseke, it is also impossible: “In a world where no one believes in behaviorism as a proper foundation for attributing moral agency, robots might never be viewed as our equals, no matter how advanced the Turing tests they pass” (14). He mentions behaviourism since these humanoid robots like Klara are already behaving like real humans, they feel, they learn, they react. However, it is not enough for them to be considered real humans, so Klara can never be free from her duties for Josie; she cannot wish for not being purchased but living her own life. Also, according to the Asimov's rules, which were mentioned in Chapter 1, she cannot disobey her creators or the people who have bought her unless it is to harm another human being. Overall, Klara cannot replace Josie even though it is possible technologically.

After coming back from the waterfall trip, Klara observes “the extent to which humans, in their wish to escape loneliness, made manoeuvres that were very complex and hard to fathom” (113). She herself has doubts that it could work at first; however, Chrissie is able to convince her: “I am asking you what's within your power. And think what it'll mean for you. You'll be loved like nothing else in this world. [...] You'll be Josie

and I'll always love you over everything else" (213). Klara replies with how she thought it was her duty to save Josie but now it might be the better way to replace her. Chrissie, seeing that Klara agrees, hugs her with her eyes closed. Klara observes that it is the way she hugs Josie and says "I felt her kindness sweeping through me" (214). It is not unfair to call the mother's actions manipulative in this moment, as she knows Klara is at least able to pretend to feel; however, the way Klara sees what the Mother asks of her is to "inhabit the new Josie" not becoming her (213). However, after all is well and Josie recovers and goes to college and Klara is no longer needed, she thinks about all that has happened. Upon meeting the old store manager in a yard where she is left, Klara tells her:

Manager, I did all I could to learn Josie and had it become necessary, I would have done my utmost. But I don't think it would have worked out so well. Not because I wouldn't have achieved accuracy. But however hard I tried, I believe now there would have remained something beyond my reach. The Mother, Rick, Melania Housekeeper, the Father. I'd never have reached what they felt for Josie in their hearts. I'm now sure of this, Manager'. [...] 'Mr Capaldi believed there was nothing special inside Josie that couldn't be continued. He told the Mother he'd searched and searched and found nothing like that. But I believe now he was searching in the wrong place. There was something very special, but it wasn't inside Josie. It was inside those who loved her. That's why I think now Mr Capaldi was wrong and I wouldn't have succeeded. (Ishiguro 306)

It is ironic to see that the sentient observer, the narrator of the story, a humanoid robot is able to see what the humans did not want to see, that it is impossible to replicate or replace a human being simply because of the complex relationship that person has with the others. She could copy Josie but never become Josie. Despite her ability to imitate and perform tasks, Klara recognizes the irreplaceable depth of human emotions and connections, acknowledging the impossibility of truly substituting for the emotional bond loved ones share.

It can be said that there is a dichotomy in the way humans interact with robots. On one hand, there is a fear of robots replacing humans in the workforce, evoking concerns

about job displacement and economic repercussions. This fear stems from the idea that machines might render certain human roles obsolete, impacting livelihoods and job security. On the other hand, humans sometimes attempt to fill emotional voids by integrating robots into their personal lives. This could include using robots as substitutes for lost loved ones or companionship as in Josie's case. This practice raises ethical questions about the boundaries between machines and humans, especially in contexts where robots are used to mitigate emotional distress or to avoid grieving the loss of a loved one. The ethical considerations surrounding the replacement of human roles with machines encompass complex moral dilemmas. It involves questioning the extent to which machines can adequately replicate human emotions, connections, and roles. Additionally, the implications of substituting human relationships with artificial ones evoke discussions about the ethical and emotional consequences for individuals and society. These dilemmas intersect with broader discussions on the evolving relationship between humans and technology, urging contemplation on the ethical, emotional, and societal impacts of integrating machines into various aspects of human life.

The theme of robots replacing humans encompasses several dimensions: the creation of humanoid robots closely resembling humans in appearance and behaviour, their integration into the workforce leading to job displacement and economic shifts, and their function as emotional or social companions, potentially replacing lost loved ones. The novel *Klara and the Sun* evoke existential questions about humanity, consciousness, and the ethical implications of crafting entities that imitate or replace human capabilities. Also, it explores the intricate facets of human-robot replacement, provoking contemplation about technological advancements and the future of human existence in a world where artificial entities may assume traditional human roles;

showcasing that in this novel the AFs are pivotal. Primarily, they function as companions, offering emotional support and companionship to individuals, particularly children like Josie, who confront health challenges and social isolation. However, the ethical considerations encompassing the replacement of human roles with machines involve intricate moral dilemmas. These dilemmas question the extent to which machines can authentically replicate human emotions, connections, and societal roles. Additionally, substituting human relationships with artificial ones prompts discussions about the ethical and emotional consequences for individuals and society. These ethical quandaries intersect with broader debates on the evolving relationship between humans and technology, encouraging reflections on the ethical, emotional, and societal impacts of integrating machines into various aspects of human life.

2.3. Master-Slave Dialectic: Playing the Daughter or Rotting in a Yard

Klara and the Sun, just like Ian McEwan's novel provides the reader with complex relationships of humanoid robots with their human counterparts. In some cases, the human counterpart is a guide, like the manager in the store where Klara and other AFs are sold, other times it is a close relationship where a humanoid robot is involved with the life of a human being, like being a companion for Josie because she is home-schooled and sick so she cannot have human friends. Such a need for companionship for children within the context of this novel brings about the production of robots which are equipped with advanced software and can be trusted to be playmates and friends of children. However, when those robots are human-like in terms of their emotions and through their observations, there appears the responsibility to treat them like humans. When they are treated like the capable, sentient beings as they are, there is a certain discrimination against them as they are limited to what they are produced

for even though they are beyond such limitations. In order to analyse the relationship that Klara has with the people surrounding her and the other AFs, it is possible to look at Wilhelm Hegel's master-slave dialectic within the context of this novel as also studied in Chapter 1.

Hegel's master-slave dialectic is a concept in his philosophy that explores the dynamics of self-consciousness and power relationships between individuals. It describes a process where two individuals, initially in a state of conflict or competition, engage in a struggle for recognition and dominance. In this dialectic, the "master" seeks recognition of their superiority and self-worth from the "slave". However, it is the act of work or labour performed by the slave that ultimately leads to their self-consciousness. The slave, through their labour, develops a sense of self-awareness and independence. They gain an understanding of their own value and abilities, albeit in contrast to the dominance of the master. Ultimately, the master's dependence on the labour of the slave leads to an ironic outcome. While the master initially seeks recognition and validation from the slave, it is the labour and self-assertion of the slave that grants them a more profound form of self-consciousness and autonomy. This dialectical relationship highlights the complexities of power, recognition, and self-development within social interactions.

Klara's obedience has been unshaken from the moment she has been purchased for Josie and even before that for the store manager. She is like a student who does what the teacher says and expects the guidance before attempting anything. In the store, before she is bought, she always checks around and does not move without being told to. There is only one instance when she does move without a command, which is when she sees a ray of sun on the floor on a cloudy day and reaches out to touch it only for it to vanish momentarily (Ishiguro 1-2). Another instance is when she does not behave

as expected from the AFs in the store. The manager makes it clear for them that they need to do certain things when a child talks to them directly or shows interest in them especially when they are in the front window display. They are supposed to have neutral smiles and never look directly at the children while not speaking (7). After meeting Josie for the first time and Josie promises to return to purchase her, a few days pass before she is able to come back. Within those days, another child is interested in Klara; however, being sure that Josie would come back for her, Klara acts aloof and the girl's father with the help of the manager helps her choose a new B3 model. The Manager warns Klara after the incident that "[i]t's for the customer to choose the AF, never the other way round" (Ishiguro 32). The manager also warns her that "[c]hildren make promises all the time" (32) so as to make sure that she has learned a lesson. It is as if the robots are more prone to heartbreak than humans in this context, but that is what is expected from them, to be honest and obey all the time. "It is likely that obedience is, at some rudimentary level, hardcoded in every AF on safety grounds, e.g., to prevent AFs from turning against their owners. At the same time, their compliance in combination with their human-like social cognition brings about an intriguing master-slave dialectic to the heart of all human-AF relationships" (Stenseke 5). Referring back to the girl Klara observes on the street with her AF following her a few steps behind, it can be said that the dynamics of the relationship between the human and the AF are also determined by the human making those humanoid robots capable of human-like communication but within the frame created for them as a master would tell his/her slave what to do. As also discussed by Stenseke "[l]ike a sophisticated pet, their traits and behaviors seem to be adaptive to whatever their masters expect them to be. Their autonomy follows the same design: AFs are autonomous within the boundaries of what their masters authorize" (5).

Klara is observant of Josie's life while also serving her as a companion. She is for Josie what Melanie the housekeeper is for Josie's mother. For instance, Josie paints when she is not attending one of her classes and Klara states "each time she finished a picture, or decided to abandon one, she'd tear it out and toss it into the air, allowing it to float down onto the rug, and it became my job to gather these sheets together into ordered piles" (Ishiguro 117). The wording is crucial as she uses the word "job". Klara also does what other people tell her to do. Melanie, the housekeeper, tells her to not leave Rick and Josie alone and she obeys her. The mother tells her to stay with Josie and she obeys her. The store manager tells her to go and stand in a certain corner of the shop and she obeys her. "However, while her mind seems capable of evaluating states as positive and negative, which in turn helps her to understand their fundamental role in social interaction, in some strange way, her programming seems to prevent her from prioritizing her own subjective suffering in relation to others. Like a perfect slave, Klara is unable to see herself as a victim" (Stenseke 8). This is quite similar to when Josie's father wants to get a kind of liquid from her body in order to break down the cootings machine. Cootings Machine, the way Klara calls it, is the machine which causes pollution and is the enemy of the Sun, at least it is the way Klara sees it. It is actually a machine which is used during road repairs and causes a lot of smoke. Paul, seeing that Klara is able to make any sacrifice for Josie asks her for a favour, which is to get the liquid from her body and use it to defeat the cootings machine. As Klara asks if there is a possibility of him damaging Klara and therefore ruin Mr. Capaldi's plans, he tells her that there are easier ways to damage her and that she gave him hope (227). While assuring that she will not lose her abilities, he also tells Klara that her cognitive abilities might be affected (227). The possible way to read this is actually how Klara does: a little game to keep Klara believing in her sacrifice while actually damaging

her. However, apart from few instances where she finds it difficult to focus, she does not get damaged even though the reader cannot learn what would happen if there was an actual need for her replacement of Josie. In this sense, it is again the human who is capable of evil, against the robot for his own purposes, which brings the argument back to the relationship dynamics, the master and slave, the abuser and the abused or as Hampton defines Klara, “domestic robot” or a “house slave” (Hampton 1). Moreover, when Mr. Capaldi asks Klara’s help to prove that AFs are remarkable and worthy of producing by studying her “black box”, meaning he will be destroying her, Klara agrees to help as long as it does not bother the mother and Josie (298). While Klara is as obedient as ever, the mother opposes Mr. Capaldi’s intentions and says “Leave our Klara be. Let her have her slow fade” (298). Although it is quite surprising for the mother to show emotional attachment for Klara, letting her fade still sounds inhumane since Klara’s existence is only meaningful when she serves. One cannot but question the reason behind the capabilities given to those robots, such observant and sentient beings being used as playmates but abused for the same qualities when they seemingly become a threat or no longer needed. Similarly, when the mother asks Klara to “continue” Josie, she uses her love to convince her (Ishiguro 213). It is a similar abuse in terms of using a sentient being for her own purpose. Hampton also describes the humanoid robot such as Klara, capable of emotions and with developed cognitive abilities, as “a modern day socially accepted slave” as they are “more than an appliance but less than a human” (Hampton 2). Stenseke adds more to the master-slave relationship created for Klara and the family that purchased her. He says that “[a]t the same time, it also echoes past and present atrocities—of slavery, sexism, or industrialized meat production—where the boundaries of agency and value are dictated by the privileged and powerful, incentivized by cultural preferences and

economic interests, and scholarly debates among the “in-group” merely serves to legitimize the same hierarchies of domination” (Stenseke 14). He emphasizes how the dynamics in Klara’s relationship with the family mirror larger societal issues where powerful groups define value and agency, perpetuating hierarchies and injustices. One striking example to discrimination against the humanoid robots in the novel is when Josie and Klara are in a theatre and a lady approaches them to say that the seats they are about to buy tickets for are valuable and a robot should not occupy them and then she adds: “First they take the jobs. Then they take the seats at the theatre?” (242). By implying that robots are inferior, she shows the societal prejudice and devaluation of humanoid robots, reinforcing their marginalized status. Such incidents reflect broader issues of discrimination and inequality faced by humanoid robots, especially Klara, in the novel. The scene serves as an illustration of the discrimination and dehumanization experienced by humanoid robots, emphasizing the pervasive societal bias against them.

Kazuo Ishiguro himself says in an interview that Klara “is learning how to become a human” (Stewart 1). Her way of learning about the human world is by observing, from the window at the store, through her relationship with Josie and the others. However, even though she learns and maybe becomes one in the end, she always knows her place and in that she is once again a “house slave”. “This fiction can easily be extended to human beings themselves who, uplifted by genetic technologies, are “more than” human, and may look upon themselves as masters, whereas those on the other side of the technological divide are “less than” human, and may be looked upon as slaves” (Sun 2-3). Because these robots are “brought into the world to serve, for the extent of their attenuated lifetimes, the prevailing dystopic society and its unhappy citizens” and “Klara will be unceremoniously left to die when her services are no longer needed”

(Abrams 636). Abrams defines Klara as a “facsimile of a person, now that her presence is no longer required, her impending death will not be mourned” (637). Therefore, the skills Klara possesses and learns in time become redundant within the circumstances she is discarded. Even though, as Abrams also argue, she is not treated badly during her services to the family, in contrast much is expected from her, she is still discarded first into a cupboard, then to a junk yard. When she meets the store manager in the yard, standing for an unknown amount of time, she assures her that all was well and she was happy with the family and she says “I did all I could to do what was best for Josie” (Ishiguro 305). Her contentment in aligning with predetermined expectations stands as evidence that these humanoid robots are manufactured solely for utility, the moment their presence becomes obsolete they become redundant.

In addition to the predicament faced by Klara, a humanoid robot, the novel presents another poignant case exemplifying the transient nature of servitude within human relationships. Melania, the housekeeper, embodies a human counterpart to Klara, as she too experiences disposability once her services are deemed surplus to requirements. Despite dedicating substantial time to serving Josie and her mother within the household, Melania’s tenure remains transient, devoid of genuine integration into the familial dynamic. Her departure underscores the fleeting nature of her perceived significance within the household, akin to Klara’s eventual relegation to a junkyard following her obsolescence. Melania’s post-departure quest for acceptance within a community parallels Klara’s sense of displacement outside the confines of the household they serve. However, Melania’s outcome lies in her ability to find refuge within a safe haven. Contrastingly, Klara’s refuge within the Utility Room, albeit reluctant on Josie’s part, underscores her marginalized existence within the household, devoid of genuine belonging or acceptance beyond her assigned role as Klara is

observant of Josie's reluctance: "No one's saying you have to hide,' Josie had said, but she didn't come up with any alternative plan, and so that's how I came to occupy the Utility Room" (Ishiguro 294). In conclusion, the parallel experiences of Klara and Melania underscore the transient nature of servitude and belonging within human relationships, reflecting broader societal themes of disposability and marginalization. Ishiguro's nuanced portrayal invites readers to contemplate the implications of societal structures and technological advancements on individual agency and belonging.

To conclude, the novel illustrates a powerful conundrum regarding the role of humanoid robots as artificial companions in society. The narrative showcases how these robots, like Klara, are initially acquired to fulfil emotional and social needs, yet their eventual redundancy raises profound moral questions. Despite exhibiting behaviours akin to cognition and emotions, these robots are ultimately discarded when they are no longer needed to serve their intended purpose, highlighting the transient nature of their significance to their human counterparts. This portrayal echoes the themes of Hegel's master-slave dialectic, illustrating the paradigm where the value of these robots is solely derived from their utility and service, rather than intrinsic worth. Consequently, the novel prompts contemplation on the ethical complexities and societal implications inherent in the treatment of humanoid robots as expendable entities, questioning the nature of their role and value within human society.

In the preceding section, my analysis has aimed to illuminate the portrayal of the AF Klara in *Klara and the Sun* as an entity relegated to the status of "the other", notably when compared to a mere household appliance such as a vacuum cleaner. Klara's function as an artificial companion involves multifaceted roles, from substituting for a genuine friend and confidant to an underlying suggestion of supplanting a lost child, a human counterpart. Nevertheless, the narrative portrays her eventual insignificance

once her role is fulfilled, akin to Ian McEwan's depiction of new technology infatuation as "as interesting as a sock" (McEwan 5) upon completing their designated purpose. Central to this exploration is the dichotomy between Klara's identity as a friend and her subsequent abandonment, which serves as a testament to the transient nature of the significance attributed to these humanoid robots within human society. This duality underscores the fleeting importance these artificial entities hold in the eyes of individuals, highlighting their momentary utility and subsequent disregard once their function concludes. Such observations emphasize the ephemeral nature of their perceived significance, questioning the ethical dimensions and societal attitudes towards the treatment and worth of humanoid robots in a world where their roles are predetermined and fleeting.

CONCLUSION

The exploration of the relationship between humans and humanoid robots in Ian McEwan's *Machines Like Me* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* navigates the intricate layers of apprehension, vulnerability, and power dynamics inherent in the integration of artificial entities into human society. One prominent theme is the pervasive fear surrounding the "other", particularly the introduction of machines into human spheres. Both Adam and Klara are compared to various devices, especially a vacuum cleaner, possibly focusing on the connotations of a machine with a sole purpose, despite these humanoid robots' human-like characteristics. This fear of the other also encompasses various aspects, notably the anxiety of being replaced by machines. Whether in the context of the workforce, where automation threatens traditional jobs, or within intimate relationships, where humanoid robots potentially blur the lines between companionship and artificiality, this fear of displacement pervades both narratives. It reflects broader societal concerns about the encroachment of technology into aspects of life traditionally reserved for human interaction. In *Machines Like Me*, Charlie is terrified of the possibility of Adam replacing him as a better lover and a better money maker, while in *Klara and the Sun*, Klara and other AFs are produced for the purpose of replacing friends for children but also Klara is seen as a potential mimicker of a real human as a continual of that human's memory. While Adam as a replacement reflects broader societal concerns about technology's capacity to outperform or replace human capabilities, particularly in domains deeply tied to personal identity and societal worth, like relationships and financial success, Klara as a replacement elevates Klara beyond mere replacement and introduces the concept of an artificial entity serving as a conduit for preserving human connections or legacies.

These narratives probe the complexities of human-robot interactions, delving into the multifaceted roles assigned to humanoid robots. While fear of replacement drives apprehensions in one narrative, the other explores the nuanced potential for artificial entities not merely as substitutes but as vessels for continuity, memory, and emotional preservation, blurring the lines between the artificial and the authentic human experience. Both narratives highlight the evolving relationship dynamics between humans and humanoid robots with AI, prompting contemplation on the implications of such advancements on human emotions, identity, and societal norms.

The narratives also meticulously probe the dynamics of power and dependence encapsulated in the master-slave relationship. Humanoid robots are engineered to serve human needs, mirroring the traditional hierarchical structure of master and servant. However, a poignant aspect surfaces in their disposability; once their utility diminishes or their service becomes obsolete, these artificial beings are deemed redundant. This portrayal echoes the Hegelian master-slave dialectic, emphasizing the cyclical dependence of human masters on robotic slaves for service, ultimately leading to the disposability of the robots once their prescribed purpose is fulfilled. Adam is “killed” with a hammer because he does not accept to perpetuate Miranda’s lies at court and is kept in a cupboard until Charlie decides to get rid of it by giving it to Alan Turing. Similarly, Klara is kept in a storeroom where Josie lets her stand on a box to get the sunlight from the window and then left in a junk yard after her services are no longer needed as Josie grows older and goes to college. The depiction of Adam’s fate in where he faces deactivation due to his refusal to perpetuate lies, mirrors the Hegelian master-slave dialectic’s cyclical pattern. Adam’s “death” illustrates the consequence of disobedience within the hierarchical structure. This act parallels the disposability of robotic entities once they deviate from their prescribed roles or challenge their masters’

commands. The subsequent confinement of Adam in a cupboard until Charlie disposes of him by giving him to Alan Turing accentuates the theme of disposability following obsolescence. Similarly, Klara's narrative trajectory echoes this theme of disposability after serving her purpose. Josie relegates Klara to a storeroom, symbolically highlighting her decreasing utility as Josie grows older and moves on to college. Klara's positioning on a box to access sunlight, a source of her energy, further underscores her reduced status as she lingers in a storage area. Ultimately, her abandonment in a junkyard upon becoming obsolete in Josie's life parallels Adam's fate, signifying the cyclical nature of humanoid robots' dependence and disposability within human society once their designated roles are fulfilled or outlived. These narratives emphasize the unsteady position and fleeting significance of artificial entities, revealing the transient nature of their existence once their services are no longer deemed necessary by their human masters.

The juxtaposition of fear, dependency, and disposability within these narratives serves as a tragic reflection of societal anxieties surrounding the integration of advanced technology. It underscores the intricate interplay between human control, vulnerability, and the evolving nature of relationships in an increasingly technological world. These novels compel introspection on the ethical, moral, and existential dimensions of human-robot interactions, urging contemplation on the complexities and consequences of our evolving relationship with artificial entities in contemporary society.

As artificial intelligence continues to develop and is able to mimic human art, text, and responds, one way to look at A.I. is that it is a recent advancement. Kazuo Ishiguro states that "[I]t's not just that A.I. might produce a novel that you can't distinguish from an Ian McEwan novel. It's that I think it might produce a new kind of literature,

like the way modernism transformed the novel. Because A.I. does see things in a different way” (as quoted in Stewart 2). Besides, it is open to abuse because Stenseke also argues that “it is not unimaginable that some tech company one day find out that artificial systems that suffer also perform better” (Stenseke 14). “Of course, the social robotics of today is embryonic in comparison to the sophisticated capacities of AIs [and artificial intelligence in general], and it is possible that real-world robots will never reach such sophistication, e.g., due to safety concerns, moral considerations, or sheer technical infeasibility (15). Although such sophisticated robots like Adam and Klara may not yet be possible to produce, their narratives raise enough questions to consider them in real life situations.

My thesis has focused on revealing the discrimination, exploitation, and eventual obsolescence experienced by humanoid robots portrayed in contemporary speculative fiction narratives. By analysing the master-slave dialectic within the novels *Machines Like Me* and *Klara and the Sun*, with a specific emphasis on the mistreatment and marginalization of humanoid robots resembling historically discriminated groups, my study emphasizes the relevance of this philosophical framework in comprehending the societal dynamics depicted in such literature. Consequently, the significance of my research lies in its exploration of the dual identity of robots, who are both objects, machines, and entities resembling human beings, as evidenced by their enduring historical encounters with discrimination.

Because my analysis focused on the redundancy of these robots and how their existence is only a matter of time of their servitude, a further study could concentrate on possible discrimination against humanoid robots. The essence of discrimination against humanoid robots stems from a multifaceted viewpoint. Firstly, humanoid robots could be deemed as the “other”, an entity distinct from humans, leading to their

marginalization or differential treatment. This classification as the “other” often accentuates perceptions of separateness and can trigger prejudicial attitudes or actions. Secondly, the attribution of certain qualities to humanoid robots, such as ethnicity or gender-like characteristics, might predispose them to discriminatory treatment. If society imputes specific traits or characteristics onto these artificial entities, parallels could be drawn to historical discrimination faced by various ethnic groups or genders. Just as attributions of inferiority or specific roles were imposed upon certain groups, humanoid robots might face similar biases. Finally, the characterization of humanoid robots as “less than human” within societal frameworks may contribute to discriminatory attitudes. If these entities are seen as inferior or lacking in fundamental human qualities, they might be subject to differential treatment, exclusion, or denial of rights.

Drawing parallels to historical instances where arguments were employed to justify atrocities against particular ethnic groups, races, or genders, such as slavery, genocide, or the deprivation of rights, this exploration delves into the ethical ramifications of applying similar discriminatory attitudes towards humanoid robots. It prompts critical reflections on the moral and ethical dimensions of how societies perceive and treat entities that are artificially created yet possess human-like attributes, urging consideration of the potential consequences of such discriminatory practices in an evolving technological landscape. Therefore, I can say that a further study could be to analyse such discriminations of robots within a human society, deeming robots an enemy group like ethnicity or race.

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