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**Ghosts of Remembrance and Sentiment – Replication of Humanity and Authenticity on Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let me Go* and *Klara and the Sun***

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**Dissertação Orientada pela Professora Doutora Adelaide Serras,  
Especialmente elaborada para a obtenção do Grau de Mestre em Estudos Ingleses**

**2023**

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## **Abstract**

Kazuo Ishiguro is an author worried with the technological advancements and its effects on memory, ontology, identity and psychology, and the way they are depicted in dystopian fiction. He has written two novels that are thoroughly analysed within the scope of the aforementioned topics. The object of study includes research that tackles chosen academic articles, such as “*Replication, Regeneration or Organic Birth: The Clone in Deryn Rees-Jones*” “*Quiver*” and Donna Haraway's “*A Cyborg Manifesto*”. “*Friends and Family Figures in Contemporary Fiction*”, by Zöe Brigley, in 2006, other books that are of related studies, such as *Dystopia: A Natural History*, by Gregory Claeys, in 2017, and even websites that hold important information, such as “Dystopia as an Inverted Hero's Journey”, by Alex Howe. Within the scope of the dissertation, there is an adopted methodology based on concepts of the studies of culture, dystopia and memory studies, with the support of experts' contributions in articles and books, in order to read both novels by the author and decode the cultural topics they focus on, as well as the issues both novels discuss.

The objective of the dissertation is to show the characterization of identity and dystopia as a whole and within the scope of the novels *Never Let me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*, the ontological and psychological problems that both-novels arise, and also its focus on memory, and the study of it within *Never Let me Go*. Also, Ishiguro's quality as a writer is addressed in the work. The distinction between Artificial Intelligence and humane feelings, as well as the issues with ethics and emotional distinct expressions of human and artificial beings created as human emulations are also explored. Most importantly, to respond to the question of whether or not, an Artificial Intelligent individual could be able to respond in other levels in a regular humane way.

**Keywords: Dystopia, Science-Fiction, Memory, Identity, Ontology**

## Resumo

O autor Kazuo Ishiguro é conhecido pela sua preocupação com os avanços tecnológicos e os seus efeitos sobre temas como memória, ontologia, identidade, e psicologia e seu impacto no texto distópico. Nesse contexto, escreveu duas obras que têm vindo a ser analisadas pormenorizadamente pela comunidade de investigação na última década: *Never Let me Go* e *Klara and the Sun*. O objeto de estudo desta pesquisa inclui a análise e utilização de artigos académicos selecionados, como "Replication, Regeneration or Organic Birth: The Clone in Deryn Rees-Jones' "Quiver" and "0A Cyborg Manifesto" by Donna Haraway'. Além disso, também são considerados livros relacionados, como *Dystopia: A Natural History* de Gregory Claeys, e sítios que contenham informações importantes, como o artigo "Dystopia as an Inverted Hero's Journey" de Alex Howe. Kazuo Ishiguro é também um vencedor do prémio nobel. Considerando os dois trabalhos mencionados, de referência na Ficção Científica, analisámos as implicações da distopia, ontologia, identidade, psicologia, memória e sentimentos em ambos. O objetivo da dissertação é explorar aspectos relativos à ontologia, identidade e à distopia como um todo, bem como no escopo dos romances *Never Let Me Go* e *Klara and the Sun*. A pesquisa também se concentra na problemática psicológica que os romances abordam, além do foco no tema da memória, com uma atenção especial a *Never Let Me Go*.-No âmbito desta dissertação, é adotada uma metodologia que envolve a análise das obras do autor e a descodificação dos tópicos culturais explorados, bem como as questões discutidas. É explorada a distinção entre inteligência artificial e sentimentos humanos, assim como a temática ética e as distintas expressões emocionais de seres humanos e seres artificiais criados como emulações humanas. Além disso, abordamos a qualidade literária de Kazuo Ishiguro.

No cerne da pesquisa está a questão de saber se um indivíduo com inteligência artificial seria capaz de responder em níveis semelhantes aos de um ser humano quanto às suas respostas emocionais e éticas. Em síntese, a presente dissertação propõe-se a aprofundar a compreensão de temas centrais abordados nas obras de Ishiguro, destacando a sua preocupação com as implicações dos avanços tecnológicos na sociedade e na natureza humana, com foco na identidade, distopia, memória, ontologia e psicologia, e examinando a possibilidade de respostas emocionais e éticas em indivíduos com inteligência artificial.

**Palavras-Chave: Dístopia, Ficção Científica, Memória, Identidade, Ontologia**

## **Chapter 1 – Ghosts of Remembrance and Sentiment – Introduction**

Words create worlds. The characters' minds also create worlds, and the way that the mind operates helps us interpret the massive worlds that reside within. Science-Fiction and Dystopia genres are especially useful when it comes to framing the mind of the different characters that live in their plots. Both genres extend the comprehension of our mind, as well as social and individual struggles. That is why this choice has been made, to work upon the theme of memory and feelings in two recent novels by Kazuo Ishiguro. By using characters that are not human, in the more current biologic sense of the word, but show humane attributes and attitudes, Ishiguro helps us understand our own human existence, and to the more sensible, our own humane role in the world.

To delve into these worlds that are sometimes so different from our own, is often, an uncanny endeavour, and it is hard to decipher the characters' minds. There are certain attitudes, certain thoughts depicted from these non-human characters, that detach themselves from the human way of having thoughts or attitudes. One can justify this by claiming that they are fictional characters, but part of Ishiguro's expertise is in making these thoughts or attitudes, humane, but not human. For that reason, we need a methodology that can help us understand why these characters act that way, or why they have trouble with things that seem mundane to us, and vice-versa. The distinction between the humane and Artificial Intelligence in the works of Kazuo Ishiguro, will be a good asset to investigate, and it will be the first tackled subject in this dissertation. When creating Artificial Intelligence, apart from the ethical and moral issues that it may raise, it is very important to address how to make them look like us, because there are certain cases of artificial intelligent individuals are not aware of their true identity and this discovery may be as uncanny as its development. Another important theme that needs to be addressed is the ethical and emotional distinct expressions of human and artificial beings created as human emulations. Though human, some of the knowledge we have and the way we set our rules of conduct, our moral compass and sometimes our perception if we are good or evil, can be humane, or sometimes, not. When we create a machine, or a biological being, and give them the benefit of intelligence, we are not only responsible for their acts, but we must admit that some of them are well-intentioned enough to participate in the world as humane as we are. Sometimes, even more humane than we are. Both novels address that problem in different ways that will be exposed soon after. Some of the ways these novels tend to resolve the problem, may leave us appalled; especially

with the ways characters think, it may even leave us questioning ourselves and what we are doing as human beings. Are we stripped of some humane qualities that tend to be ascribed to humans or are we going to ignore them and keep calling ourselves humane. These novels keep us questioning our place in the world, should we choose to think about the way that they are crafted.

Another objective that should be worth mentioning is the aspect of playing God, or as Tolkien says, sub-creators, (Tolkien, *On Fairy-Stories*, p.11) with characters that help us, by reflecting a role-model for us, humans, that, on some occasions, tend to lack some of their more humane characteristics. Curiously, we are the only human beings that have the capacity to use our craft and art to create a new world, or even recreate the world we live in within circumstances. We must also pay attention to the fact that we, ourselves, are biologically creatures that have their own thoughts, opinions, independent from the social system we live in. Individuals that have the power to make a choice, the power to elect their own future in an organized society. To explore the dual condition of human beings as creators and creatures, is to explore the core of our capacity of creation, and to explore in what ways we can break the limits of thought and the abilities that reside in our mind. We also need to address whether an Artificial Intelligent individual will be able to respond at different levels in a regular humane way. Furthermore, the need to know if a human will be able to respond at different levels in a regular humane way. Feeling the need to explore the psychological and sociological characteristics that make us human, is a philanthropic and philosophical endeavour, in which the paradigms and notions of humanism, are not always considered by most researchers as clear and logical enough. Like Blaise Pascal once said. “The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of... We know the truth not only by the reason, but by the heart.” (Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, 1657) This balance between the mind and heart (or soul, as *Never Let me Go* rephrases it) is notoriously important and will be further developed.

The final objective is to define Ishiguro’s contributions to worldwide literature and culture in these two novels. It is not an understatement to say that to have this tact, this ability of looking through the soul of what is humane and what is not, the author needs to be a crafty and worthy artist. This is a world that seems to pay too much attention to frivolity and scarcely remembers humane values, or even perceives them as secondary or non-important at all. Ishiguro steps away from this idea that the humane values are something of old, that should be entirely taken for granted. Instead, he provides us with

exemplification, explanation and inventiveness never seen before in the realm of the literary world, assuring the reader that he must remember that he is human, and perhaps embrace his humane character.

There have been several perspectives on how to address Ishiguro's work. Most of it has to do with studies of memory, due to his novel *Never Let me Go* (Anabela Silva, *The (Ho)use of Memory*, 2010), but there have been studies in the way narrators, often unreliable ones, work in all his oeuvre (Sandra Silva, *Escritas da Utopia na Literatura Europeia – da Utopia à Distopia*, 2015), the filter that memory does in creating falsehood or truthfulness, the worlds that the memory itself can create and memory as literary mechanism or strategy. Another field of study is related to Ishiguro's work is the definition of dystopia in the context of contemporary 21<sup>st</sup> century literature (Sandra Silva, *Escritas da Utopia na Literatura Europeia – da Utopia à Distopia*, 2015). Dystopia, and its non-consensual definition, has changed throughout times, and most of it carries in comparison the transformations that society has endured from the moment this term was utilized in literature, to nowadays society, and most of these changes tend to be fundamental in coining new definitions of dystopia, there are works that have been crucial for dystopian studies like: *Dystopian Emotions*, by Jordan Mckenzie and Roger Patulny, *As identidades do Homem no discurso da Ficção Científica: as manipulações da era tecnocientífica e o devir do pós-Homem*, de Luis Filipe Teresinho, books and works, like, *Writing with Care: Kazuo Ishiguro's "Never Let Me Go"* by Anne Whitehead, *Ishiguro's Floating Worlds* by Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *Recollecting Memories, Reconstructing Identities* by Silvia Caporale Bizzini, *AI for Everyone?: Critical Perspectives* by Pieter Verdegem, *Rereading Heterosexuality: Feminism, Queer Theory and Contemporary Fiction* by Rachel Carroll and *Dark Horizons Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination* by Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan. However, in Ishiguro's case, the dystopian aspect of his novels, as we'll see afterwards, will define themselves in a very peculiar, uncanny way. Dystopia serves more as a shell of the world, in which ghosts dwell; it serves more as a motto, a thematic underlying for the limelight-focus on the characters and the worlds that are inside them. Worlds themselves very much in tandem with the outside dystopia, often taking dystopian characteristics themselves.

The critique of a technological world is also a dimension worth mentioning in works like *Figurations of Posthumanity in Contemporary Science Fiction – all too Humanist* by Manuela Rossini, *On the Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* by Darko

Suvin, *As identidades do Homem no discurso da Ficção Científica: as Manipulações da era Tecnocientífica e o Devir do Pós-Homem* by Luís Teresinho and *Ishiguro's Inhuman Aesthetics* by Shameem Black. The novel in which this is made incredibly apparent is *Never Let me Go*. It is all over it, especially with the message that we are trying to overcome our own biological clock and expressing the need to enhance our timespan. Looking forward to a better future, the clones are created with the sole purpose of donating their organs, so that the other people can strive for a better, longer life. All this, to avoid their natural demise.

The hybrid human-machine, in terms of Artificial Intelligence, is also tackled upon in the novel *Klara and the Sun*. There have been some articles that address the aforementioned work too. *Losing Ourselves, Artificial Intelligence, Humanistic Ethics* by William Lombardo, and in a more superficial analysis, *Racist Love: Asian Abstraction and the Pleasures of Fantasy* by Leslie Bow, are a few examples that have addressed the novel.

As for the methodology that will be used, it is essentially the thorough analysis of both K. Ishiguro's novels, and the decoding of the cultural topics they focus on, these being the creation and assessment of complex feelings in automated beings or biologically engineered individuals, the maturation and life-journey of the aforementioned individuals, their sexuality, collective and individual memory, the parallelism between these beings and humans, how people deal with the cultural and philosophical shock that occurs with the relation human-machine, environmentalism, the meaning of love in the eyes of Artificial Intelligence, whether or not we are progressing ontologically and technologically at the same pace and the repercussions of rampant inequality caused by a *sui-generis* dystopian environment. This analysis will be supported by critical and theoretical bibliographic references comprehending the literary genres of dystopia and science Fiction as well as sociological and cultural approaches in the field of transhumanism.

With this summarized explanation of the different aspects of this dissertation we hope to find a way of roughly presenting the problematics in both *Never Let me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*. The themes exposed here will be much more detailed and developed further on.

## **Chapter 2 – Ghosts of Remembrance – *Never Let me Go***

### **2.1. *An Analysis – Memory in Never Let me Go***

Every aspect of the story, from its title, *Never Let me Go*, to the characters, to the plot itself, is meticulously tied with memory, memories that all the characters, Tommy, Ruth and Kathy, do not want to let go. Everything that they experienced in their short lives could be tied in memory. Addressing the beginning of the story, the first chapter opens as the main character, named Kathy, starts to remember all the critical moments that have happened before the ending of the story. As she narrates all these moments to the reader, more often than not, the reliability of the narrator is put to question. Kathy is the nexus of, not only the story, but the ties between her friends and love-interest, Tommy. She was the only one who was true to herself all along the plot, and the most reliable point we had when it came to knowing the story, reliability that, as aforementioned, is not perfect, because when we are referring to long-term memory, certain misjudgements, or conditionings of what is recalled, may influence our reshaping of events. The reader sees the world through her eyes, and dwells in her memory, as if he could not let go of her. This brings me to yet another dimension that is worth mentioning, that is, they live not in houses, they live in housings akin to concentration camps that are sugar-coated. And that prison never let's go of them. There's no escape, even if they wanted, they could not revolt against the system that made them, because they could not escape their own ontological "prison", this happens because they were clones, not humans in the current sense of the word, they could not have the ability to grow up, and this is thoroughly explored and showed in the plot. The least they could do is voice that revolt, in the shape of a scream. Tommy was one of Kathy's most reliable and trustworthy friends and Ruth's boyfriend for the most part of the novel; he is very reluctant about the way that he is treated in Hailsham, and comes up with some ideas easily, such as the idea about what the deferral may be. He thinks that if they could somehow show the human community that they had a soul, they could live a while longer. However, in a situation that happened twice in the novel, Tommy revolts against the system in the way he can, by screaming. The symbolic representation of that scream is that, even in the direst situations where a man or a woman feels trapped, there is no way out of that situation, even when they have a last glimpse of hope, it is utterly shattered in front of them. Tommy's scream was in the first time, a child's scream, because of the indifference of other kids, as well as the way they treated him, and that was like a premonition to his last scream. His last scream not only engulfed

the disorientation he felt with his life, but also the way he felt trapped to his horror-fuelled unhuman condition. But, unlike Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the ones responsible for Tommy's scream, and the deception of all the other kids in Hailsham, and other donor-kid's institutions, are very stale and cold about these kids. They say they possess no soul, only for the benefits of "real" people that use them and then let go of them as trash. We are, therefore in a dichotomy that the title presents not that clearly, but strongly, humans without many humane qualities, tend to let go of things that were indispensable for them without any type of care, while the clones, that don't have much time in the world, and are used by these humans, tend to never let go of memory, of love, of hope, no matter how little, and how futile. For instance, when they look for possibles, they tend to be hopeful that they are modelled out of mildly successful people because they thought that "(...) Since each of us was copied at some point from a normal person, there must be a model getting on with his or her own life." (Ishiguro, *Never Let me Go*, p. 137)

This puts in evidence that they were naturally inclined to find someone that were living a life that they could not have. They were life extensions, soulless ones, how could they ever live a life? Let alone produce life. Somehow, they seek comfort in all that could make them seem more human.

We can also say that the repetition of times the song is mentioned in the novel is worth mentioning. The reminiscence it brings is astounding, such as the time Tommy gave the Judy Bridgewater's tape to Kathy, the time she loses it, the times she reencounters it, she listens to it in her bed, just before Ruth walks in and starts to confront her about what seems to be Ruth's own unrequited feelings for Tommy. In the beginning of the novel "(...) Kathy explains their routine at Hailsham, the assemblies, the sports activities, the bullying among students, their favourite teacher, Miss Geraldine, Madame's visit to the boarding school, the Sales where they acquired their little treasures which they stored in a chest under their beds, among others. One of Kathy's treasures is a tape with songs by Judy Bridgewater, one of which gives title to the novel: What made the tape so special for me was this one particular song: track number three, 'Never Let Me Go'. (NLMG 69)." (Anabela Silva, *The (Ho)use of Memory*, p. 90). Let's not forget that the novel is brought about to us in memory and construed that way from beginning to end. We can see ourselves through all these emotions, feelings, in the lens of memory, but we can also see how we fail to feel these circumstances like clones, because we are human, and that distance is made acutely well felt by Ishiguro.

The immersion in this novel has enticed me to think about what feelings are. What are we engrained to, when we are feeling something, and whether it is tied to memory. Does it enhance our feelings, or does it lower them, do we feel because we have memory, or vice-versa?

For example, in Ruth's case, we can see that Kathy and "(...) Her memory is also revived by the fact that she has been a carer for Ruth, who eventually dies, and they both spent ample hours discussing their childhood together. But Ruth seems to have discarded some of her memories, probably facts that she feels uncomfortable with: She was probably embarrassed about it and so the whole thing had shrunk in her memory. (NLMG 49). Our mind has the ability to select the facts which we mean to store for a subsequent retrieval and the ability to erase the facts that we dislike to recollect." (Anabela Silva, *The (Ho)use of Memory*, p. 90) In this case of episodic memory, we can see that Ruth, not only does not want to remember everything, because deep down inside, she does not want to remember certain aspects of her life, as it might hurt her, but she also wants to remain at the same level as Kathy, because she does not want to admit to her friend and rival in love, that she is somehow below her, or losing to her. There is also an idea that Ruth also dreamt of being designed akin to a person that is successful and well-endowed financially, possibly just because she wants to transfer her future, that looks so bleak, to the future of a possible that could be rich and successful and empower Ruth in some way. A *possible* is a person that serves as model for the clones. However, soon after they discover that these possibles are not what they seemed to be when they were firstly take time to think what their lives could have looked like if they were not donors – a word to describe their situation as clones that served for organ-donation – and Ruth describes working in an office just like the picture in an advertisement they see. They do not possess a life of their own, they just project their image as they see fit, for psychological compensation and to appease the idea that is constantly in their minds, that they are going to die, and then thrown away like garbage. What happens can be predicted easily, they are not modelled by the office workers, or the successful people, they are probably modelled by homeless people, or other people that haven't got, what in Ruth's mind is dignity.

In Kathy's case, memory is much fairer than Ruth's use of memory. "(...) In *Never Let Me Go* "we trust Kathy more because she struggles to recreate an honest memory" 47(Walters, Trent. "Review of *Never Let Me Go*", 2005 retrieved on March 18, 2008.) to come to terms with the true meaning of her existence." (Anabela Silva, *The*

*(Ho)use of Memory*, p. 85). It is a much more difficult task than just attributing to memory the psychological and sometimes physical desires of a said person. Kathy tries to find herself by looking at those memories, and us, readers, by looking through her eyes, can see the effort that she is committed to do. Which does not mean that sometimes, she does not have some types of lapses during the recalling of such events. It is the most important part of the group's memories, not only because most of the novel is narrated by Kathy, but also because it is the only type of memory that can be trustworthy enough for the story to become canon.

“(…) Other times, Kathy is assaulted by specific and particular memories: There's a particular memory I have of sitting by myself one evening on one of the benches outside the pavilion, trying over and over to think of some way out, while a heavy mix of remorse and frustration brought me virtually to tears (NLMG 62). I have stated it before that the same event might be remembered differently by distinct people, giving rise to different memories. Kathy uses the expression “my memory of it – and Ruth remembered it the same way”, an expression which plainly confirms this allegation. This happens because the new information that is received is accommodated according to the previous experiences of the individual, and these are surely different (the experience might be the same but each individual lives it in a particular way according to diverse emotions and perspectives).” (Anabela Silva, *The (Ho)use of Memory*, p.91)

Tommy is also an interesting and important character in the novel, he is not tied specifically to memory, but tries to find solutions to their friends' problems, and cares more about them than himself. “(…). Kathy discusses with Tommy the purpose of the gallery kept by the Madame at Hailsham, a place where she stored all the art work such as pictures, poems and other things done by the students. Tommy had been told that those things “revealed your soul” (NLMG 173), so Kathy adds that the art work is a way to judge if they [students who claim to be in love]'re really telling the truth (NLMG 173) when they ask for a deferral of their donations.” (Anabela Silva, *The (Ho)use of Memory*, p. 95)

These are the most important and only characters that have been present in all the work. However, they also have fond memories of themselves, but that does not mean that they cannot grow up and are trapped in a limbo, where the only thing that they can

do is think about more time. The games, and activities that were presented in Hailsham, did not offer them the possibility of growing up, they just imitate adulthood, and are brainwashed into believing that they can do that, be that person that they have always dreamt of, but they cannot. The group still had their most important memories described by the nexus of the group, Kathy, but individually they do not have much recorded memories, except for Ruth's feelings of jealousy towards Kathy, that she expresses by the end of the novel, and Tommy's way of trying to find a light at the end of a tunnel, by using the art work that all of the students have done during their time in Hailsham, to prove that they did in fact had a soul.

By the end of the novel, when Kathy and Tommy were hoping for a deferral, two people told them they had no souls, told them they were not human, and were blunt when they did it. No matter if they did not get to know the world they lived in, no matter if they were affected by all the numbness of being brainwashed their entire youth, they are predestined to be used by humans, so even Tommy's idea is not a solution, but rather, wishful thinking. The most shocking and unfathomable trait of this novel is that there is no dissent, there is no John the Savage committing suicide, as in Huxley's *Brave New World*, there is no Orwellian Winston Smith at least trying to revert the reality back to normal. The psychological and emotional toll was so enormous, that they could only accept it, even though unwillingly. They swallowed it all, all the lies, all the contrast with the seemingly idyllic school they were in and let them spit on all the stories that they have experienced together, all the feelings they've come to know. *Never Let me Go* is not only a story about how we can look at ourselves through a darker lens, but also a story of submission – a suffocating one, that has to do with the emotional level of disturbance in the minds of these pity-deserving characters.

At the ontological level, they feel sick that they will never be able to live the same life as their human counterparts. Even though they do nothing to change it, maybe the acceptance that they are different is that they do not belong in this world apart from being mere tools mere “technical necessities”. They could not live normal lives, yet they were able to feel pain, to feel anger, to feel joy, to feel anything that a human can feel, that makes one think of the gap that differentiates us from them.

The proposition of this novel was that these beings, sentient, intelligent, capable of emotion, but ruthlessly, and conveniently labelled as “soulless”, are always at the service of mankind. And throughout the novel, the only small dissent that was presented,

was a cry of desperation that Tommy gave. These beings serve only one purpose, to enhance the life of people that need them to keep themselves alive and healthy. Therefore, the emotional backlash in which these beings are is in favour of all the exploration and exploitation that those humans who need them for lifespan enhancement. “(...) Emotion is directly implicated in the actors’ transformation of their circumstances, as well as the circumstances’ transformation of the actors’ disposition to act.” (Mckenzie, Patulny, *Dystopian Emotions*, p. 8)

These are the different layers in which we can dwell in the dimension of memory in *Never Let me Go*.

## **2.2. *Never Let me Go: An Analysis – Replication and Authenticity***

To grow and multiply ourselves, is one of the greatest gifts nature has given us and reverberates God’s commandment (Genesis 1:28. “(...) SF (Science-Fiction) differs from other “fantastic” genres, that is, ensembles of fictional tales without empirical validation,” (Preface, *On the Metamorphosis of Science-Fiction*, p.8,) because it presents us explanations within the realm of plausibility. However, it also presents us often disastrous problems that tend to be of ethical proportions in Soft Science-Fiction. The popular and prolifically used binomial of creator-creature, is one of the explored themes in *Never Let me Go*. Of course, since at least one movie adaptation of the novel *Never Let me Go*, has been made by Mark Romanek in 2011, using the core of the work to be modulated and worked upon as a narrative thread, there were no unambiguous evidence that we were on a dystopian setting. “(...) Certainly, when compared with the science-fiction novels, their film counterparts have unique strengths, one of which is the immediate representation of the extraordinary.” (Sontag, *Against Interpretation, The Imagination of Disaster*, p. 213) However, newer adaptations, or original movies, have toned down the spectacular, extraordinary characteristics of the setting, in favour of a more toned-down, down-to-earth setting, that tends to have much more to do with our current world, than a lavishly created other world, full of awe and new aspects to explore. “(...) The effect of such factual reporting of Fictions is one of confronting a set normative system – a Ptolemaic-type closed world picture-with a point of view or look implying a new set of norms; in literary theory this is known as the attitude of estrangement.” (Suvin, *On the Metamorphosis of Science-Fiction, Poetics*, p. 6) This estrangement can take different forms, throughout the times, and we can trace a historical background of differing ways of expressing it. The estrangement that has been chosen as a focus of this

work, is the one where we can only create, or replicate, an individual with our own characteristics, but the incompleteness that ensues, brings forth a whole lot of ethical questions and issues, that seem more vertebrate the more that the individual that is created grows in the sense that it gains self-consciousness of the incompleteness that abruptly shakes his inner self, and the perception of his world. This brings much more issues afterwards, because society may, or may not be, prepared to address these kinds of predicaments. The relations these individuals make with each other can be studied by our own eyes, even though never experienced in the same manner. However, “(...) if we study real relations, in any actual analysis we reach the point where we see that we are studying a general organisation, in a particular example, and in this general organisation there is no element that we can abstract and separate from the rest.” (Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 65) These relations are as real, as any other relations that we have with another subject that is our kin, what seems to differ is their understanding of their own identity, their problems with being authentic and the way they cannot form strong bonds with each other. They tend to be more obfuscated in finding out about our culture, our habits, in being like us, than to create their own mark in the world, to develop their own ideas, their habits, their own life. In failing so, they not only lack an important feature of existence – an identity –, but they are reduced to nullity, and when they reach the point of no return, when they are aware that their identity is not easily shaped, as well as their personality, they wither away.

Identity is what makes us different from any other human, and that selection of genes, seem to allocate us to our ancestors, we can, and we should know more about our origins.

“(...) Outside of philosophy, the term ‘personal identity’ commonly refers to properties to which we feel a special sense of attachment or ownership. My personal identity in this sense consists of those properties I take to “define me as a person” or “make me the person I am”. (The precise meaning of these phrases is hard to pin down.) To have an “identity crisis” is to become unsure of what my most characteristic properties are—of what sort of person I am in some deep and fundamental sense. This individual personal identity contrasts with my gender, ethnic, and national identity, which consist roughly of the sex, ethnic group, or nation I take myself to belong to and the importance I attach to this.

Someone's personal identity in this sense is contingent and temporary: the way I define myself as a person might have been different and can vary from one time to another. It is a subset, usually a small one, of the properties someone has: it could happen that being a philosopher and a parent belong to my identity but not being a man or a cyclist, while someone else has the same four properties but feels differently towards them, so that being a man and a cyclist belong to his identity but not being a philosopher or a parent. Someone may not even need to *have* the properties belonging to his/her identity: if I become convinced that I am Napoleon, being an emperor could be one of the properties central to the way I define myself and thus part of my identity, even though the belief is false.” (Stanford Dictionary, Personal Identity, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-personal/>).

Whereas group identity differs in some respects.

“Social identity is commonly defined as a person's sense of self derived from perceived membership in social groups. When we belong to a group, we are likely to derive our sense of identity, at least in part, from that group. While standard economic analysis focuses on individual-level incentives in decision making, group identity has been shown to be a central concept in understanding phenomena in social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science. It is used to explain such phenomena as ethnic and racial conflicts, discrimination, political campaigns (Rose McDermott, forthcoming), and the formation of human capital (James Coleman 1961). Social identity theory was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979) to understand the psychological basis for intergroup discrimination. According to this theory, social identity has three major components: categorization, identification, and comparison. The first component, categorization, is the process of putting people, including ourselves, into categories. Labelling someone as a Muslim, a female, or a soldier is a way of defining these people. Similarly, our self-image is associated with what categories we belong to. Social psychology experiments show that people quickly and easily put themselves and others into basic categories. The second component, identification, is the process by which we associate ourselves with certain groups. Ingroups are groups we identify with, and outgroups are ones we do not identify with. The third component, comparison, is the process by which we compare our groups with other groups, creating a favorable bias toward the group to which we belong.” (Chen, Xin Li, “Group Identity and Social

Preferences,” p. 431) But what happens when that origin is lacking the warmth that there is in creation. Humans cannot create in full power; they can only imitate God. This happens because their creations are flawed as they are, imperfect, finite beings. Whether it would be written fiction, a scientific discovery, a piece of artistic reverence, an individual with Artificial-Intelligence, or even a drawing of an 8-year-old child, all of this is lacking what *Never Let me Go* characterized as a “soul”.

“(…) The government raises the clones mostly in “vast government homes,” but a few philanthropists have developed boarding school-like facilities to raise the clones in good conditions, educate them, and encourage them to engage in sports and creative expression.” (Linett, *4 Cloned Lives: Ishiguro’s Never Let Me Go*, p.117)

The philanthropy part of the way they treat the clones, seems almost as an excuse rather than a natural help to find their identity. It is not a solution to the great problem, it is only a way of limiting the overarching truth, through a set of pseudo-emotional, pseudo-educational and pseudo-conditioning, of what a real person would feel. They keep them suspended within these walls, that cannot be teared down, and they keep waiting for the day someone would slip the truth out of their lips. Until Lucy does, suddenly all life in front of them is uncovered, and this makes them discover in themselves their true purpose, but not their identity.

“(…) All treaties on human rights affirm the principle of equality. For certain serious discriminations, such as those concerning race, ethnic origin, sex, or religion, stringent tests are posed upon the State to justify their existence.” (Cataleta, *Humane Artificial Intelligence*, p. 2) The plot of the novel tends to be a justification for the search of Kathy’s identity, and if we can attribute that there is, sometimes, exposed, and complimentary discrimination towards people, then clones, by not having a clear concern with race or ethnic origin, for example, are always easy targets, more so when compared to humans. It was within that scope, that Ishiguro conjured his novel, and most people that we encounter are not only rude and discourteous to the replicants, but they are downright not in favour of any profound artistic expression. It leaves us to wonder if the rest of the world, in which these despicable people wander, is like that.

“(…) (Martha) Nussbaum, sets out a vision of the arts and especially literature, as central to the functioning of a healthy democratic society, first

because they underpin skills of reasoning, argument, and critique, and secondly because they cultivate imaginative, caring and emphatic citizens.” (Whitehead, *Writing with Care*, p. 54)

This lack of giving something in return, in just taking advantage of what the replicants have to offer, without even apologizing, or even, looking at the bright side of the situation, thanking them, is denotative of a far greater issue than just the dependency on the replicants for a lifespan enhancement. The way this society holds its values is at the core of the identity issues that arise in the clones’ lives. Enticed by the possibility of a better change, Kathy sees identity and the incapability of reproducing themselves as something they can only accept, and that change must come from the people that gave them that status, hence the dependency that is so characteristic from the suspended state of adolescence in which they are.

Focusing a tad more on replication, the clones can be seen as a beginning and end of themselves, replicas of a time that is not their own, and ultimately trapped in a destiny loop, one that keeps imitating life, but not fully understanding it, that keeps grounded with no imagination other than to escape the fate in which they are. They criticize their own existence, and, as aforementioned, have trouble in finding their own place in the world, and to a certain extent their own identity. However, little do they make up for that lack of self. They are utterly the puppeteers of their own demise because they cannot think in order to regroup themselves and start a rebellion against these pseudo-philanthropist and downright utilitarians that only do harm to these characters. It is certain that the future, seems more dystopic than utopic in the sense that people are more used to accept everything in stride, instead of dissenting themselves.

The replicants in the film *Blade Runner* figuratively show us, that only they can be able to do things real men cannot do. The last monologue (Scott, *Blade Runner*, 1982), on the 1982 masterpiece, is representative of that state. All memories will soon be forgotten, but it is within our life that we keep whichever memories that we want to keep, and for a being that can’t reproduce himself, that feels that his identity is incomplete, to pay attention to such themes is of course, not only really important, but also worthy of reverence and dignity. Roy Batty is one of the most interesting characters in the movie, a demonstration of that is the last monologue. The original monologue has been subject to change, and it has been cut, so that the impact of it would be as impaired as possible, and also so it could fit the ambience of the movie and the situation in which the scene is

composed. With some dramatic pauses in each statement, Batty said in his final moments, these heart-felt words. “(...) I've seen things you people wouldn't believe... Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion... I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain... Time to die.” (Scott, *Blade Runner*, 1982)

In accordance with our discourse about memory, and adding an historical hermeneutic approach, it is especially important to separate the ego from the occurrence.

“(...) We were determined, nevertheless, to pose the question “What?” before the question “Who?” despite the philosophical tradition that tends to favor the egological side of mnemonic experience. The primacy long accorded to the question “Who?” has had the negative effect of leading the analysis of mnemonic phenomena to an impasse, when the notion of collective memory was to be taken into account. If the “I” in the first person singular is too hastily declared the subject of memory, the notion of collective memory can take shape only as an analogical concept, even as a foreign body in the phenomenology of memory. If one wishes to avoid being stymied by a fruitless aporia, then one must hold in abeyance the question of attributing to someone—hence, to any of the grammatical persons—the act of remembering and begin with the question “What?” In accordance with solid phenomenological doctrine, the egological question—whatever the ego may signify—should come after the intentional question, which is imperatively that of the correlation between the act (the noesis) and the intentional correlate (the noema).” (Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 3)

In every great piece of art, many interpretations can ensue, and different perceptions of the same object of study can enlighten us. Sexuality was a very tricky subject for these clones, and the way they looked at homosexual intercourse, made them question themselves about the integrity of their own fragile psyche, and subsequently identity. They have been raised in a small town, and before that they got to see the world with their own eyes, they were infused with ideals and ways of thinking that were both outdated and confusingly conservative.

“(...) Gay sex, incidentally, was something we were even more confused about. For some reason, we called it “umbrella sex”; if you fancied

someone your own sex, you were “an umbrella”. I don’t know how it was where you were, but at Hailsham we definitely weren’t at all kind towards any signs of gay stuff. The boys especially could do the cruellest things. According to Ruth, this was because quite a few of them had done things with each other when they’d been younger, before they’d realise what they were doing. So now they were ruinously tense about it.” (*Never Let me Go*, p. 94)

What Kathy was reluctantly talking about, was, although not implicitly telling, physical and verbal prejudice. If they expressed their identity within “difference” it was not well accepted, it was actually repudiated, and the “normal” ones turned against the “different” ones so that they could be like them or forced in doing so. This leads me to speculate that, in a more face-valued dimension, these behaviours, that seem so strange and hypocritical, are mostly done from the fact that they did not know what the norm was for them. The “norm” was made from silly notions of time, space, behaviour. It made them feel that the only thing that they could dream of was within the four walls of Hailsham, this happened because unbeknownst to the main characters and all the children that were within Hailsham, there was a world waiting, and they were not directly educated to face the world, but to be part of humanity’s solution to longevity. Yet, still, the vile, obnoxious, evilness incarcerated in their souls, unleashes the abuses that were done by them, in intricate and solid vendetta, forever damaging the souls of those who were deemed different. This is one of the only aspects that they could carry on since they were unable to have children. The reader conspicuously deals forevermore with nothing but troubled teenagers. They devised terms like “umbrella” in a puerile way, so that they can be of the norm; it seems to be sufficient proof that these beings are not able to come of age, and afterwards point out the evilness in the eyes of humanity and the caretakers in Hailsham hat so bluntly dwells within them.

All of the thoughts that were mentioned before, lead me to understand *Never Let me Go* as a work that shows dimensions of an anti-hero<sup>1</sup>’s journey, and not only that, but in a much more interesting way, a failed bildungsroman<sup>2</sup> hat stops and loops itself in each

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<sup>1</sup> Anti-Hero: the central character in a play, book, or film who does not have traditionally heroic qualities, such as courage, and is admired instead for what society generally considers to be a weakness of their character. (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/antihero>)

<sup>2</sup> Bildungsroman: a story, especially in the form of a novel (= a long, printed story about imaginary events), that is about events and experiences in the life of the main character as they grow up and become an adult. (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/bildungsroman>)

of the characters that can be encountered therein. The need for a better understanding of the other side is mentioned before, but not properly exposed, as it will be now. A bildungsroman is a type of novel that manages, as a literary genre, the growth in terms of age, psychology and morals of a certain character, normally the protagonist or a group of characters.

Even though it can be hard. No matter if we are abounding with so much information that it can darken the perception of a better, or worse future, we always must look at the facts. Humanity seems to be entrapped in an era that is “(...) characterized by extraordinary pessimism, anxiety and ambivalence.” (Mckenzie , Patulny, *Dystopian Emotions*, p.2) This emotional tool seems to have drifted the writers to do justice to this confused era, and place the blame on humanity, in particular Ishiguro, the author whose work is tackled in this dissertation, in the case of *Never Let me Go*, in particular, is very adamant about his views on humanity, conjuring a society that is collapsing in terms of values. If this civilization has left the people in such estrangement from the good, humane values, then, it seems to me that there’s no surprise that most dystopias place the blame on humanity. Through a pessimist lens the evil that men can do lives on and on, and most of this pessimism is created by what we see in the world right now. How can we be certain that we are doing what’s right, if we cannot even trust the sources of information that are provided to us? It is only normal to say, that the common use of those in power as the evil in a non-democratic society is well stated in *1984* and *Brave New World*. Corrupted notions of honour, righteousness and of power itself lie in the DNA of these works, and many others, even though it is done in the sense that, with irony and wit, the readers may think and will not aid in making a dystopia, the truth is that we are far from what a utopia is. “(...) Mannheim’s second type of utopia is the liberal-humanitarian idea. Unlike chiliasm it is an essential feature of this type that ideas do guide activity, and there is an emphasis on reason and on free will.” (*The Concept of Utopia*, p. 84) The point of this quote is that, how can we know for certain how to use reason, if that reason is obfuscated and, sometimes, even torn apart by the media? If it is important to us, we can claim free will to be one of the pillars of the Humanities, but human nature, in a non-humane way, is always driven by the conceptualization of interest. It is true that no work is lacking bias, when it is done, the interlocutor can see clearly, the ideas that are defended by the person that has done the work, but in order to make a utopia function properly, we would need to know if we are able to strip ourselves from ideas like “self-sufficient”, “individuality”

and, in some aspects, “eye for an eye”, the paraphrase of Hammurabi's Code. It is interesting how some of these concepts can make us fair and righteous, but they can also strip us of some of our humanity.

Humans are supposed to be well-intentioned beings, but they can also turn, very easily, into the people that were taking care of the clones in Hailsham, or the society that is depicted in *Never Let me Go*, of course, in an alternative, rearview mode. It seems as if, for the greater good, these people lack the understanding of these clones' lives and wishes. In Hailsham, they are sugar-coating the future, but they are not telling any of the dire truths that they will have to face, therefore they are just being hypocritical when judged philanthropists, they create the conditions for lack of empathy within the walls of Hailsham. This lack of empathy is shown from the very beginning of the book, if there was no lack of empathy towards the clones, if there was no way of putting them down, and using them as cattle, then there would be no story. Kathy would just live as happily as someone that's introduced in the same world as her, but just is not a clone.

There is no one, in no position, that ever tried to understand Kathy, Tommy, Ruth or even other clones. To understand is the first philosophical and humane principal, indicated in Descartes' maxim, “Cogito ergo sum”, which is required to be true and have a keen sense of justice.

“(…) Understanding is not just that we either enjoy it or lack it altogether. To be human and to be aware of it is to encounter only what in some manner understood. Thus, it may be said that understanding is an unsought condition; we inexorably inhabit an intelligible world. But understanding as an engagement is an exertion; it is the resolve to inhabit an ever more intelligible, or an ever less mysterious world.” (Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct*, p. 1)

This is also valid for a first step in having social consciousness. Post-modernism may be outdated in some validations, and thoughts, but it is the last moment of contemporary History that we know of, it is very important to understand it, in the sense of Oakeshott.

The “(…) ethics of communication lead to an ethics of interpretation (to adapt Gianni Vattimo's terms) that allows us to read the History of our time as our ontological totalization of modernity's 'post'. In making us readers and masters of this, in being hostage to our reading, these writings obligate us, prior

to our understanding, to come face to face with the infinity of reading, an infinity that is not an abyss of deferred judgement, but the perpetuation of non-reciprocal answerability that transcends pre- and post-ethical political ends and origins. This is the structure of exteriority as such, and the task that still remains beyond our critical History.” (*Post-Modern Ethics*, p.281)

This quote is very important, because it helps us understand whichever is the information that we stumble upon, we need to use our own discernment to answer to that information, the important ethical capacity lies in us, to untangle the truth out of that same information. The mysteries that these types of information can tell us of the world can be seen about how people can be uncondescending and uncomprehensive of others, how can violence, in many types, can exist still in this world, the world is full of these mysteries, that are seldom given importance and utterly overlooked. The symbolism behind the act of rebellion, and its suppression, can be seen all throughout *Never Let me Go*, in the way this new, contemporary society strays off from the good values, but it can also be seen in numerous other works, one of them is very interesting. *Hunger Games* (Suzanne Collins, 2008-2010).

“(…) What makes *The Hunger Games* more than a workaday thriller is its disclosing of a world—a world that, as with all dystopias that connect, is a distorting mirror of our own. The setting is Panem, the name for North America after a catastrophic civil war. Panem is divided into twelve districts, all of which are presided over by the Capitol. As a symbolic act of penance for their past rebellions, each district is required to send a young “tribute” to the annual Hunger Games, a televised tournament in which the competitors are required to fight to the death.” (Fisher, *Precarious Dystopias*, p. 27)

This marks the beginning of the understanding of the novel. It is a cycle. It is only normal to use the cycle-type overarching plot in the sense that it can be seen really like a parallelism to life itself. Yet there is some brilliance in what has been done in *Hunger Games*, the act of rebellion is oppressed, but it is out of love and caring for one’s family that the will to fight, to dissent. In the end, it is not up to a certain individual to break the system and shut down a world that is not as clearly made from ours but bares many similarities. It is up, instead, to the collective to break the system. It is not a symbol of change in a society where everything is lost, but the collective consciousness acting in favour of a better world.

However, what of the world in *Never Let me Go*? Should the fact that they are different from us, not give them the same capacity to oppose themselves to a system that is breaking them badly, leaving them with no hope of a life with dignity. All this due to the lack of empathy of society towards beings that are different.

The circumstances for a dystopia that holds the replication of human beings has been mentioned before in the work. “(...) The politics of science fiction are concerned with magnifying aspects of unconscious narratives that are already unfolding in social 'reality'.” (Brigley, *The Clone in Deryn Rees-Jones Quiver and, Harraway's A Cyborg Manifesto*, p. 17) It is a fact, that most of the advancements that have been done in bioengineering can be traced to replication. Even though we cannot replicate humans still, the ethical issues that are presented in that sense arise. There are two works that tend to get worried with these facets, and appeal to our most humane side. Those are *A Cyborg Manifesto* and *Quiver*.

“(...) 'A Cyborg Manifesto' is an academic essay which uses high, formal language and rhetoric. *Quiver* is a novel-in-verse which creates a detective narrative in a sequence of poems. However, both texts are preoccupied with subverting lineages, maternity and reproduction and both writers deal with debates through fictions of identity and strong narratives.” (Brigley, *The Clone in Deryn Rees-Jones Quiver and, Harraway's A Cyborg Manifesto*, p. 17)

The political side of it is also approached by the appearance of subversion in gender-issues and if this will be a liberator or the work of an oppressive new system. In *Never let me Go* it is very important to observe the issues of maternity and reproduction in all the narrative – maternity can be seen as the utmost desire of all the female characters of the novel. There is always some kind of unease, almost awkwardness with the topics of maternity, whether it is from the side of the staff in Hailsham, specially Miss Lucy, the person that shed some light on the condition of the students in the school, and with the students themselves, specially Kathy, because of her almost unconsciously having feelings about her own sexual discovery and the condition of the other characters, but never taking any steps further in doing so. Most of the characters have workout differently all the ways in which they cannot have children. Some are jealous just because they cannot form close relationships and tied bonds with other characters of the opposite sex. Love does not work out without sexual intercourse, but it is not the other way around, and in the case of some of the couples that we encounter in the plot, they weave their

relationships in order to be love, but sometimes, since they are born out of necessity, or envy, these relationships do not last. Since they have a struggle with the inconclusiveness of their own identity, they tend to blame themselves for being that way, but they do not blame others for these misfortunes. The staff of Hailsham cannot be blamed for the atrocities that they have put these individuals through, because they are the only paternal figures that these individuals have. If they must put some kind of blame in anyone, they, do it on themselves, they are trapped, almost without any end in sight.

Most of the inconclusiveness throughout this debate that is presented, tends to condense thoughts of anxiety, and holds a no way-out solution, because the errors of the past cannot be undone. We cannot go back in time, and help us undo some technological advancements, no matter how that would be crucial in the betterment of our own life. And we must live with these technologies, these advanced technologies, and see what we can do to better ourselves, even though we are entangled in such moral and ethical dilemmas.

## Chapter 3 – Ghosts of Sentiment – *Klara and the Sun*: An Analysis

### 3.1. Observing Humanity in *Klara and the Sun*

To be lonely, is to fight each day to catch a time of remembrance where everything in your life prior to your lonesome state was right and full of people by your side. It is in fact a state of reminiscence, in a platonic sense, rather than just suffering. These notions can lead to an in-depth analysis of what means to be lonely, and if that state is ethical or not.

Dwelling in the streets and attaining face-to-face contact with other people, is no longer, although available, a most pondered alternative to the online dating, and communication websites. People wish to be lonely, rather than risking futile and meaningless communication with others. It is true that the emotion of loneliness carries with it the longing for better days, and the unpleasantness, unfriendliness and, reaching turmoil, is substituted with the solace one finds in lonesome days.

In the novel *Klara and the Sun*, the Sun is proven to be a worthy God-like figure to which, the AF (Artificial Friends) give utter reverence and attribute certain deeds of actions that happen to people on Its advancements. Something, akin, but not quite, a true and heavenly miracle. Deceptive as it may sound, the Sun doesn't work as a deity with a full-fledged and caricatured personality, it is rather a momentaneous miracle giver, should one be rationalizing over ethically good faith. Therefore, most of the miracles that we witness throughout the narrative are done by the wishes of a special AF, notably two of them, the Begger Man coming back to life, and well of health, and the betterment of Josie (the owner of Klara, the AF that is the narrator and protagonist of the plot). But it can be argued that the Sun is not just an instrument to be used by Klara's wishes to do good. There's a passage in the book that specifies that Klara is somehow chosen to be the Sun's herald, and, to a certain extent, priestess:

“(…) That was one reason why we always thought so much about being in the window. Each of us (AF) had been promised our turn, 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 the manager said, we all knew we were more likely to be chosen while in the window. But the big thing, silently understood by us all, was the Sun and his nourishment.” (Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*, p. 5)

It is implied that the Sun would choose its heroine the truth is that, as the Sun is lonely in the skies, Klara seldom shows signs of affection towards other AF in the store. This corroborates, that, this novel embodies the *status quo* of certain individuals of this younger generations. Afraid of creating empowering ties, in fear of being rejected by their differences. Some are even Artificial Intelligences in impoverished personalities, that seem two-faced at first. It's a store of toys, that tend to be more intelligent than the rest. Adopting a different strategy than that of its AF companions in the store, Klara is highly observant of the ambient that surrounds her, often giving us insights not only in the physical realm of the oeuvre, but also in the psyche of the characters that are with her. These circumstances in which Klara is, and the fact that she's at the window, chosen by the Sun, give her all the power to try to overcome her loneliness, and that of others. There is hope in her, a characteristic that's almost dead in the human hearts.

Of course, we have certain cases where it's almost hopeless to think that we can escape loneliness.

“(…) While traditional emotional contagions spread bit by bit (ironically, much like a virus), in a mass emotional event individuals are affected by the stimulus synchronously, as the contagion permeates all interactions and leaps rapidly through news and social media. While this could result in heightened levels of collective emotions, it can also lead to individuals processing aspects of the emotional contagion in greater isolation – such as the experience of loneliness during COVID-19 – while the broader community is fragmented by a lack of organic interactional exchanges.” (Mckenzie and Patulny, *Dystopian Emotions*, p. 78)

There was a hopeful feeling that this time would pass, and, in the end, it did. However, the aftermath was a nation that struggled with loneliness more than anything else, creating cases where mental pathology resided, such as schizophrenia, mild and heavy depression, delusions that are separate from the aforementioned conditions, and other types of mental issues that tend to endure long after the pandemic.

“(…) This brief explores mental health and substance use during, and prior to, the COVID-19 pandemic. We highlight populations that were more likely to experience worse mental health and substance use outcomes during the pandemic and discuss some innovations in the delivery of services. We analyse

and present findings using the most recent data available at the time of this publication – including the Household Pulse Survey and the CDC WONDER database. Key takeaways include:

Symptoms of anxiety and depression increased during the pandemic and are more pronounced among individuals experiencing household job loss, young adults, and women. Adolescent females have also experienced increased feelings of hopelessness and sadness compared to their male peers.

Deaths due to drug overdose increased sharply across the total population coinciding with the pandemic – and more than doubled among adolescents. Drug overdose death rates are highest among American Indian and Alaska Native people and Black people.

Alcohol-induced death rates increased substantially during the pandemic, with rates increasing the fastest among people of colour and people living in rural areas.

After briefly decreasing, suicide deaths are on the rise again as of 2021. From 2019 to 2021, many communities of colour experienced a larger growth in suicide death rates compared to their White counterparts. Additionally, self-harm and suicidal ideation has increased faster among adolescent females compared to their male peers. “(<https://www.kff.org/mental-health/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>)

“(…) Several changes have been implemented in the delivery of mental health and substance use services since the onset of the pandemic, including the utilization of telehealth, steps to improve access to treatment for opioid use disorders, expansion of school-based mental health care, and the rollout of the 1988 crisis line. As the public health emergency declaration comes to an end, it is possible that some of these changes will be interrupted.” (Nirmita Panchal , Heather Saunders , Robin Rudowitz, and Cynthia Cox The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use, <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>)

It also seems as if humanity is tending to be affected by these afflictions in a faster and more propense rate, than it used to occur in a decade ago.

“(…) It’s true that our life is much easier today than it was 50 years ago. Yet, mental illness is on the rise, and drastically.

A study by researchers from NYU Langone Medical Center, published earlier this year in the journal *Psychiatric Services*, found more Americans than ever before suffer from serious psychological distress (SPD). [1] The researchers analyzed a federal health information database and concluded that 3.4 percent of the U.S. population (more than 8.3 million) adult Americans suffer from SPD.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which conducts the National Health Interview Survey on which the research is based, SPD combines feelings of sadness, worthlessness, and restlessness that are hazardous enough to impair people's physical well-being. Previous survey estimates had put the number of Americans suffering from SPD at 3 percent or less.” (Folk, “Why Is Mental Illness On The Rise?”, <https://www.anxietycentre.com/faq/why-is-mental-illness-on-the-rise/>)

In the consequence of the Digital Revolution, there are signs of dehumanization, because, by experiencing exposure to the rapid and overwhelming change in the lives of people, they themselves tend to try to react to those changes and, often, they are swallowed by the rapid and overwhelming advancements, with little to no hope of regaining their humanity back. “(…) Chiefly as a consequence of new techniques, there are profound changes in social organization which are gradually bringing about corresponding political changes.” (Russell, *The Impact of Science on Society*, p. 1) these metamorphosis on societal organization and political revolution, are essential to comprehend the way people of different cultures know about science and technology, and how they see each other’s differences in equity. And loneliness is also impacted by these political factors, such as segregations without sense and less incentives in work.

All of these factors can be seen in *Klara and the Sun*, because most of the characters in the book, with the important difference of Rick, are mechanically enhanced. This implies that, most of these kids’ schools are prepared to accept people that have their intelligence and overall skills enhanced to begin with, and the other kids’ hopes of getting into schools like these are diminished if not non-existing. This creates a great gap between the kids that are augmented, and those that are not, letting discrimination and then loneliness take place in a stronger state.

Josie, the girl that has chosen Klara to be her AF, has a hard time living a life of dignity, mainly because, as it is heavily implied in the book, is frail and sickly, because of the implants to augment her intelligence and skills. Later on, as the plot thickens, the Father and Mother, with a tremendous feeling of losing her, subject Klara to a change, almost forcing her to do their bidding. They do not say it right away, but in a certain stage, where they cannot face what they have done by augmenting Josie, they want all the memories, personality, way of thinking, in short words, they want Klara to turn into an everlasting Josie. To which Klara seems puzzled as to the fact that that solution may not be a solution at all, and that humans need to cope with grief and loss, to further develop themselves as human beings, and what of the human heart? Should it be replicated, or can you replicate every instance of it, without anything being lost. Loneliness is therefore perceived in the book, as a two-edged blade, since it is very important to maintain yourself in a lonesome state, during some periods of your life, and whether it brings you pain, it must be seen as a characteristic that changed your life. If you are lonely, maybe you'll need it as a rite of passage into a better life, with better days.

This brings us to the incisive premonition that this narrative can make about human nature, and about the humane in general. Do we have a heart, in the sense that we can be humane? Or does that heart have so many reasons, that, unexplained or not, cannot be replicated by Artificial Intelligence? If so, is it ethical to do such a thing? Premonitions tend to bear some falsehood in them, but Science Fiction writers, whether they have started writing in this genre or only lately in their career have they started working of Science Fiction stories, search for what is the highest piece of evidence of truth that we may find. "(...) It may be worthwhile pointing out here that while the popular notion is of a Plato who fades away into truth, and of an Aristotle who is concerned with the pragmatic world, Plato never suggests that ideal truth is attainable: it is only possible to act toward the social practice of dialectical logic." (Hunter, *Rhetoric and Artificial Intelligence*, p. 321) An Artificial Intelligence, such as the AF, is one of the most valuable friends a person can have, because it is the epitome, or should one say, the archetype, a full-fledged persona that is keen on observing and by that observation, feels that nothing could be better understood as a process of truth. The minor detail, the major event, everything is documented with the keen eye and mind of this intrepid little fellow. The way this artificial Butler, tends to fulfil her place in the world, is of utter courage and dignity. Most of the world seems to be engulfed in aspects that we already know about,

and most of them are amplified so that we can discern from them what should stay as it is, and what should be subject to a modification.

For instance, when the manager specifically tells Klara that the promises other kids and people in general tell her, and the expectations that she might have towards the sympathy and understanding of others might be unrealistic.

“(…) Let me tell you something, Klara. Children make promises all the time. They come to the window, they promise all kinds of things. They promise to come back, they ask you not to let anyone else take you away. It happens all the time. But more often than not, the child never comes back. Or worse, the child comes back and ignores the poor AF who’s waited and instead chooses another. It’s the way children are. You’ve been watching and learning so much, Klara. Well here’s another lesson for you. Do you understand?” (Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*, p.33)

This specific point in the story is very important, because sometimes, by the securance of Klara’s humane words and demeanour, and by the course of the plot itself, we tend to forget an important aspect of Klara’s existence. Even though her behaviour is humane, to say the most, as human-like, ethical, correct, it is done so, that we can fall in love with this character’s attitudes and words, and even her observation is seen through a spectrum of kindness, that even when wronged she would not exert any evilness to the people that are ill-mannered with her. However, she is just a machine. Ultimately, a machine, one would say. Therefore, we cannot encounter a better way of defining her, and it hurts us, that read this novel, that most of the encounters that Klara has, and the ordeals she has to overcome, make her more and more humane, a situation that maybe would not happen to most of us, in the long term. That is also premonitory, because the love-filled vision of the reality that circumscribes Klara, may tell us that machines can be capable of a more humane vision than us, if not misdirected, of course.

Another incisive premonition can be made parallel with Williams’ work *The Long Revolution*. It has to do with an age-old conflict between the individual and society, there are parts in the plot of *Klara and the Sun*, in which the analysis that is made by Klara is always made by feeding on the brighter side of circumstances. Sometimes, even when in conflict, we must look at the bright side of these occurrences. “(…) The relationship between an individual and his society is evident and crucial. It has been

discussed through the whole series of systems of thinking that compose our tradition, and it is still widely discussed, from current experience, since it seems to be agreed that precisely this issue at the centre of the conflicts of our time. Yet of course we approach the experience through the descriptions we have learned: in a more or less conscious way. “(...) When we examine actual relationships, we start from the descriptions we have learned”. (Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 95) Adequately, descriptions and observations are what Klara makes the most during the narrative. It was Klara that deduced that the issue with Josie’s health may have had to do with the fact that the supposed nanomachines of enhancement that they give to almost every child in the society depicted in the book, are the harsh cause to her deterioration over time. Parallels can be seen also, with Klara herself, because with time we tend to lose our capacities, and a supposed untimely death is just a death in itself, the only difference, is that it can cause more pain to others. Klara sees that her lifespan is much greater than those of humans, therefore, she can only tell us her story once, because it impacted her a lot, but ultimately, she was just used. All her good-will, all her happiness in helping others, and the result of that was just a normal, passing moment for her, and even if everybody tried to use her, she still did her best to fulfil her job. Josie had many similarities with Klara. Both are gentle, and hide their true feelings from other people, they tend to be sympathetic towards each other and towards other characters specially Rick, to whom they share a kind of affection, albeit in different ways of expression. Both are keen on the important question, that is left unanswered: What does it truly mean to love someone? Of course, this hope for humanity to behave like Josie, and to a certain extent Klara, may be premonitory, yet they also differed in many aspects. Klara’s faith that is directed the Sun, that is numerously approached is, of course, partially fanatic. This may come as a defence coping mechanism of the machine, or just plain fanaticism of an engaged personality, having a lot of qualities and believes in miracles. This faith reminds me of putting the fate of people in the hands of God, and if sometimes it can be good to do so, other times, it’s just attributed to free-will. All the tragedies, unwarranted or not, occur to a lot of people.

What this story tells us, is that if we put faith, or better, if we restore the faith of ancient times, then miracles can happen, and, in a hopeful point of view, we can guarantee that humankind is going that direction. However, what we see in the world is the corrupt tend to win over those who have valour and qualities. Having faith is one of the valuable lessons in *Klara and the Sun*, but I believe that if Klara prayed for a better world, not all

the just and fair people in the world would be “nourished” (as they put it in the novel), by the “Sun”, or God in a more pragmatic way of overwatching this issue. Which leads me to believe that from a personal and familiar point of view, it may occur, but the world in itself is too much of a ground for Klara to cover. And then, this: As unforgettable as this narrator is to us, it is just a machine, and the worse fate of all who experience the loneliness, that in part can be also viewed as a premonition, is lying there, for Klara to live through. Even though she tried her best to do the best she could, she is now forgotten, luminated by the Sun she so faithfully adored.

This leads us to a more conclusive end of this chapter. What does Klara see in humanity to fight so much for it? Firstly, let us point out that the book’s character has an existential crisis that is seldom obfuscated by the plot itself, but its nature is inside each line that Klara speaks. “(...) The protagonist is also an existentialist and spends a lot of his/her time thinking about the freedom to choose and the power and responsibility that come with this freedom. When he does choose a course of action, he is obsessed with understanding the agent of the choosing.” (Vint, *Bodies of Tomorrow*, p.14) This happens to Klara when she chooses to bring the Beggar Man back to life, so that he can have a better life than before, never pitying him or undervaluing him in any circumstance prior or posterior to the Sun’s help. After this, she wishes to know more about humanity as if it were a mirrored image to her own understanding and existence. The protagonist comes up with a way of justifying her own existence by knowing if the human ways, our look on the world, is ethical or not, and sometimes, even if what is asked of her is not ethical enough for her own standards, she will still, regardless if the human beings deserve it or not, help them. Why would she do this, if not because of her believability in the human heart, at its core at least.

Apparently, no matter the situation, humanity focuses on the good side of the spectrum in the book, but not all their emotions are done preserving the truest faction of the good side. Sometimes they are striving for the greater good, and they are hurt badly because of what they do, this is specifically true when thinking about the Manager, because of the way he treats its merchandise, or Josie’s mother who wants, perhaps ever since Klara was bought, to implant all the memories, personality and identity of Josie inside her. The only issue that remains untold and to solve in narrative, is the future of Klara, and, more importantly, if her opinion on humanity is still one that will make us all happy, that humanity is in fact positive in the ethical spectrum. However, addressing the

future of Klara, the story's end leaves us no trace of where she might head next. There's no further notice: will she explore more of the world? Her curiosity sure leads us to believe in that. Would we continue to think that she will remain there, effortlessly, in loops, remembering all that she has learned so far of humanity? Probably not, even so

“(…) she reached out to the metal crate she's been sitting on, and dragged it back to its original position, making the same unpleasant noise. She then walked away down the long passage between the rows, and it was noticeable how she walked differently to the way she had in the store. With each second step, she would lean to her left in a way that made me worry her long coat on the side might touch the dirty ground. When she was mid-distance, she stopped and turned, and I thought she might look back one last time at me. But she was gazing at the far distance, in the direction of the construction crane on the horizon. Then she continued to walk away.” (Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*, p. 307)

Even if she believes in the human heart, now she's older, she's wiser, and knows that difference is what makes us good, and we should treat each other as equitably as possible. Human individuals' behaviour cannot be predicted, but ever since Klara was chosen by Josie, her observation skills were immediately upgraded, and she could see some patterns that do not steer too much from us having hearts. For example, the way the kids were throwing Klara around the house, as if she were a mere object, maybe were not so far from truth. We do not even know if an AF is sentient or not, it is maybe just what they have perceived her to be, a lifeless object. So, maybe, they were doing that out of intuition. Another instance is when the Father talked about the human heart. “(…) Do you believe in the human heart? I don't mean simply the organ, obviously. I'm speaking in the poetic sense. The human heart. Do you think there is such a thing? Something that makes each of us special and individual?” (Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*, p.215) Even Josie, that has to cope with all of the pain of being alive, never blames her parents for her misfortune and always tries to do what's best, and never treats Klara as just another servant of the house, like most of the kids with AF's do, but as a true friend, giving meaning to an otherwise meaningless acronym.

Humanity is of course, full of contradictions and impediments to do a full good, because the world humanity lives in is of course, full of contrarities and bends ethics to its will, and more often than not we are filled with humane choices that are for the greater

good, and not the full good. But at the core, if we are not looking down at our own self-interest, we might just admit that we are good enough for those that are dear to us, and that is sufficient for the core of humanity to feel at the good end of the spectrum.

## **2.2. The Detachment of the Outsider (Otherness as a Means of Interpreting Society in *Klara and the Sun*)**

There are an awful lot of different nuances in *Klara and the Sun* that have to do with societal aspects. Many are based in people's emotions, feelings, and attitudes. Most of them do not show directly how everyone is influenced by those attitudes, but one can think of the impact that these demonstrations of true affection, or disoriented affection can have in understanding the human psyche. Wells has clearly worked in a divisive way what sociology can be, and that can be tied in the pessimistic Science-Fiction dystopian genre, in which the narrative of *Klara and the Sun* can fit.

“(…) To understand what Wells took this contribution to be, one must consider his broader, anti-positivistic vision of sociology as an enterprise that inescapably evaluates and prescribes, even if it frequently does so implicitly rather than explicitly. In his own words, “[t]here is no such thing in sociology as dispassionately considering what is, without considering what is intended to be.” (Seager, Davison-Vecchione, *Dystopian Literature, and Sociological Imagination*, Wells, 1907: 366–67)

“(…) Accordingly, sociology always has an imaginative component, which Wells understood as putting forward an ideal view of society against which one can measure the present. Wells arrives at this conclusion primarily because one cannot isolate, observe, and compare societies from an extra societal vantage point.” (Seager, Davison-Vecchione, *Dystopian Literature, and Sociological Imagination*, pp. 1-2) We are dealing with fictional characters, and furthermore, characters that are creations within creations, this is very important for a foreground of imagining society, because we can watch it from a detached point of view, point of view of the outsider. Klara can be useful in the story of *Klara and the Sun* because she comes from a place where she observes the world in a window, to a full-fledged place of observation, in which she can mingle with the crowd, and in a deeper way with the family that took over her. She follows them around and takes notes of their behaviour, especially when it comes to the toll that these behaviours and

accentuated words take on Josie, and especially Rick, both two people who are still growing during most of the course of the novel, though sometimes, their parents, wishfully thinking, tend to hinder their maturation. Klara analyses relationships in the family, and in general, when looking at people's reactions during parties and, to a more intimate extent, encounters. She needs some time to organize her thoughts... but comes to some brilliant conclusions about the characters, and ultimately about us, that sometimes we do not want to admit to ourselves, when looking to a mirror, that we are in fact born and raised to do such things.

“(...) By now the light had been dimmed, and I spotted the AF's in the backgrounds of several boxes, lining the walls in the mid-store, preparing for their sleep. But my attention was drawn to the three center boxes, at that moment containing aspects of Manager in the act of turning towards us. In one box she was visible only from her waist to the upper part of her neck, while the box immediately beside it was almost entirely taken up by her eyes. The eye closest to us was much larger than the other, but both were filled with kindness and sadness.” (Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*, p.26)

It is important to note that the AF's were made at the image of other humans, with some workings for them to be safe and not violent, but they have inherited, through technology these contradictory feelings, like being kind to others while experiencing a type of ontological sadness, because they will never know how well will their place in society can actually be. They live in a type of glass prison of themselves, and no matter what is their past or their future, they cannot transcend the pain and sometimes the triviality of how society looks at them, because, eventually, they are dispensable. Spinning through their unbreakable glass prison, they tend to think of themselves as subservient, and maybe, as they are, in fact, machines, therefore they need to just shut up and do their best, all the most with a smile on their face. They are sentient and self-conscious, this happens, in Klara's case when she has the conversation with the Father in which they talk about the human heart. This also puts society on a bad position, because they see Klara and the rest of the Artificial Friends as just objects. However, there's still some hope in kids like Josie and Rick.

There is also another problem, in which one can draw many parallels with current, nowadays society. It is the issue of pollution. As aforementioned, the Sun is like a deity in the book, and its nourishment gives humans the capacity of healing themselves,

and even getting back to life, when they are close to death. So, we are talking about, as mentioned before a miraculous event. This is subverted by the pollution, which blocks out the Sun's rays and helps the dark side of humanity to prosper — a metaphor for humanities' every wrong action besides their inability or lack of political drive to tackle the issue. The pollution problem even has its own "maker", the machine that gets the blame during the novel for this — the Cootings Machine. It is severally mentioned during the narration and serves as an antagonist to the Sun's nourishment and discernment. Another parallel that we can draw is the way society keeps offering more attention and reverence to the side of competition, in detriment to the side of cooperation. This choice that society does, almost unconsciously, sheds light to their own individual personalities, and how individuality is much more valued than a societal, wholesome view of how civilization works.

Two situations, in particular, from the side of Josie's mother, who has her enhanced by what seems to be nanomachines, and from the side of Rick's mother, who wants desperately that her son goes to a good college, even if he is not enhanced by the same adjustments that the majority of the kids seem to have. This dichotomy is characterized by being the underwhelming factor that Klara must show us that society is much more futile than it appears at first site. The situation is terribly aggravated by the eminent disease that these adjustments second-handedly did to Josie, and even if it is not really said in relation to other kids that have had the same fate, there are certain hints in the novel that other kids suffer from that too, or at least, excessive aggressiveness.

One other aspect of the novel, that is somehow camouflaged because of it appearing only briefly in the beginning and the end of the plot, is the increment of a special character, the Manager. This character appears only on crucial moments in the novel, serving as a full-circled end, in the final part of the novel. But he is not wholeheartedly neutral. Most of the episodes in which he appears, he is seen as nothing but a merchant. However, certain passages tell us that he is not caring enough for his own merchandise, and only wants to keep appearances.

The non-human are just merchandise, and they do not receive much love, because they are just meant to be used by the human, and if they should fail, they would suffer the consequences of that mischievous act. The privileged are paramount when comparing them with the non-privileged, not only because the colleges no longer see full human knowledge as being the best, and in detriment, research only in science and technology,

because it is much better for this society to create engineers and medical people, than those who study the humanities. The jobless people are seen as a nuisance because they do not have anything to add to the powers that be. While the people with jobs, have them limited to a shallow surface; scientific, technological and economic based jobs are of the utmost importance to this society, of all the stores that Klara comes across, none of them are libraries or bookshops, only frivolous pieces of a machine, that tends only to walk further, to suit a need that is not theirs, but of a mechanized conspiring humanity with no humane values in it.

This seems outrageous, but in *Klara and the Sun*, the most humane character is an AF and a sickly girl, there are no heroes, or at least, heroic figures in the story. There may be well-intentioned people, people that are adept to schemes, shallow people, like Rick's mother, and a kid that suffers from being different, like Rick, yet all of these characters are just part of the world, and the main antagonist is not Pollution, but the way that this society is organized, the societal structure. Standing before a world with no heroes, no way of solving all the problems, but only God-like figures, or in a more focused explanation, authority patriarchal figures, AF's have no other choice but revere a deity – the Sun. Also, apart from these daring figures, there are normal people, that we could recognize in the street every day, seen through the lens of an AF who is far from being their equal. No one is special, everyone is put at the same size, without heroes and capacity to dissent. In the real world, just as in Klara's world, there are no real messiahs or important figures, just society, and its will, or not, to change. What usually happens in dystopia is the following.

“(...) The dystopian hero is even more committed to his rebellion and cannot turn back, which leads us to the second act. In the traditional hero's journey, this is usually (though not always) the adventure proper, from the time the hero leaves the ordinary world to go on his quest, to his victory over the enemy or otherwise achieving his goal. Likewise, in the inverted hero's journey, most of the action occurs here.” (Howe, “Dystopia as an Inverted Hero's Journey, Act II)

Throughout the novel, there are certain interactions that are important and that are set apart from all the rest of the relationships that characters create between them. Rick and Josie, for example, have a good friendship that lasts most of the time. Also, the relationship that both have with Klara, that, to different degrees, complexifies every little detail and conversation that they have, and, to an extent, if love can flourish between two

beings that even transcend species, between a human, with no augmentation, and a machine like Klara. However, there are other possible perspectives on the human/ non-human/ transhuman debate:

“(…) Contemporary science and technology studies, on the other hand, adopt a different agenda. They have developed an analytic form of posthuman theory. For instance, Franklin, Lury and Stacey, working within a socio-cultural frame of reference, refer to the technologically mediated world of today as ‘panhumanity’ (2000, p.26). This indicates a global sense of inter-connection among all humans, but also between the human and the non-human environment, including the urban, social and political, which creates a web of intricate inter-dependences.” (Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, p. 40)

This idea is very interesting from the point of view of relationships, because if we think of humanity with a different lens within humanism then we can hope that “panhumanity” can explain the way we are interconnected, and if love is merely a construct of the brain, and if it is that universal.

One can argue that the space and time in which *Klara and the Sun* resides, assumes the idea that these AF may suffer from trauma, which is like the scenario in *Never Let me Go*.

“(…) Kazuo Ishiguro uses his narrators as storytellers both in a Benjaminian and in an Arendtian sense, linking the construction of identity to a fragmented memory process as a (mostly ineffective) means for the characters to recover from a phantasmal past.” (Bizzini, “Recollecting Memories, Reconstructing Identities”, p.66).

Deconstructing a character in *Klara and the Sun* is not the same as in *Never Let me Go*. In the former, characters are wholesome, but they lack even the capability of constructing an identity in the first place, they do not know where to even start doing such a task, and most do not even care, a bit unlike Klara, that albeit her astounding observation skills, lacks the ability to look inwards. Meanwhile, the latter have their focus and all their time dedicated to find the part of their personality and identity that is missing, mainly through the use of recalling their inner struggles at the hands of a society that has done very little for them. These differences will be further explained and studied later in the dissertation, in the third chapter, but it is important to point out the differences in the

relationship of the characters. One can say that in the former example, the relationships go out a bit more smoothly because there is not this identity-crisis pressure, while in the latter, jealousy and lack of assurance tend to reign over the heads of all the characters in the book, leaving them with fractured relationships, almost as fractured as their memory.

“(…) Readers of *The Collective Memory* have perhaps not always taken full measure of the rupture that breaks off the development of the work with the unexpected introduction of the distinction between collective memory and historical memory. Did not the principal dividing line for which the author fought above pass between individual memory and collective memory, those “two types of memory”— “remembrances... organized in two ways” (50)? And yet the difference is strongly marked: between individual memory and collective memory the connection is intimate, immanent, the two types of memory interpenetrate one another. This is the major thesis of the work. The same thing is not true of history inasmuch as it is not assigned to what is going to become “historical” memory.” (Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 393)

Focusing on the fiction that is in the limelight now, there is a proper thought that pervades all this, it is a universal truth that humans are not able to survive on their own, seeking attention from others, even if they are mildly strangers. Humanity is a congregation of social beings. The threshold of consciousness that a human can achieve that lets him withstand being alone, is not the same as an augmented person’s threshold, let alone the one of a robot with artificial intelligence. Sometimes, some people, are tententiously driven by their purpose in life, to justify their own existence. As if there is a voice in their head identifying them, as policemen, medical practitioners, researchers, or whatnot. Some go further in this search for an existence, to say that if there is no meaning, like most of the nihilists think, Nietzsche, Derrida, Camus, Kierkegaard, also an existentialist and Sartre, although the latter usually better known for his existentialism theory, and some attribute logical meaning to their own existence, in faith, because they are God’s creations and they are observed by them, like the experience of Schrodinger’s Cat.

“(…) This mentions a thought experiment, in the field of quantum physics, executed by Austrian physicist Erwin Schrodinger, many concepts were introduced with this experiment, as well as, and most importantly for this dissertation, the concept of superposition. Schrodinger's point in this thought

experiment was to highlight the peculiar implications of quantum theory when applied to macroscopic objects like the cat.” (<https://builtin.com/software-engineering-perspectives/schrodingers-cat>)

It leads to the philosophical question of whether the cat can be considered both alive and dead at the same time, or if it collapses into one definite state upon observation. Others don't care much about ontological pursuits, but all of them have one absolute truth in common, which is they are gregarious animals. They need society to subsist, let alone to strive or do more adventurous endeavours. Klara makes this evident by looking at the families and their relationships, for example, the way Rick repeats insatiably “mom”, “mother”, “please stop”, means that he is fully aware that her mother's personality, not only is very different from his, but that it hinders him in ways that he himself does not want to put up. Albeit this difference, and frenetic repetition of words by Rick, when he is referring to his mother, he is justifying all of this out of self-love. However, this is not the only type of love that Rick has, nor it is the strongest type. Should he imagine that his mother is suffering, he will act accordingly, and try to stop her from suffering. This happens because his self-love does not surpass his motherly love, she is after all the person who carried him, and most importantly, who gives him every object, and sentimentality she can so that he can strive. Psychologically speaking, there would be no other way, but to defend the mother from the father that walked away on her, even if it would cost his professional life. Rick is a strong character, because he chooses to protect his mother, even if she is too stubborn to admit she is wrong, and even if she fails in giving her child the future she so desperately wants him to have. Rick forsakes his future, for love of his mother, who has always stood by his side. Klara sees this with her own eyes, and that makes her feel ever more in “love” with Rick.

This leads us to another relationship that is addressed in the subterfuge-filled love triangle between Josie, Rick and Klara. Klara and Josie obviously have feelings for Rick, and during the plot neither of them let him know about it, so Rick remains oblivious to that, even though he could have returned those feelings for either of the individuals in a very good way.

Let's suppose that if there is a hero in *Klara and the Sun*, Rick is the hero; there are various indicatives that Rick should be the hero of the plot. Klara is just an observer and storyteller, and incapable of knowing if what she does is ultimately correct or incorrect, she can see the good in other people, but not in herself, therefore she lacks an

introspective ethos and lacks the inner stimuli to fight for a cause. Therefore, she is not really characterized as being a heroine of the story. Josie is an interpersonal, caring, loveable character, but she is weak in body, and that leaves her complexed, and that also does not change throughout the novel. However, Rick has extreme capacities of intelligence, he is willing to make sacrifices, valorous, with a good sense of justice, this all contradicts my earlier assumption earlier on this chapter, that this is a plot of no heroes, but unfortunately, even if *Klara and the Sun* was desperately in need of a knight in shining armour.

It's understandable that Rick has all these capacities in him, but it is in the lack of understanding the relationship with society itself that lies the downfall of the hero's archetype. He is not a hero, because he does not care to change society, nor does he impel others to do that, he ends up being like Klara, Josie, and all the other characters in terms of will. This happens also in *Never Let me Go*. The whole plot revolves around the relationship between these characters the very hindrance in changing this afflicting world, this afflicting dystopia. The relationships ultimately do not change in the story, they are static, with no advancements whatsoever from either side. Those involved in these relationships just want to carry on in the world, oblivious of what the world could do to them, or of what they could change in the world. That reminds one of reality itself. So, Ishiguro points out that we certainly do not like living in this world, but we do much less about it, we just try to go, like the sea's waves, in one direction, without sometimes even pondering in looking around. Therefore, it all fades away in this dimension of heroes. Heroes are long gone, what's left is a world in decay, and it is not through sheer observation that we can save the world, but by experimenting on it.

We can see art as having dimensions that linger within the minds of the interlocutor after we finished reading a book, or after an art critic's observation of a painting. In the case of *Klara and the Sun*, it is highly unlikely that a person reading this novel is not touched by its ending, it comes at full circle. Just before going on her way, Klara has a conversation with the Manager, and her life and, most importantly, her purpose seems to be over. When asked by Klara if the Manager only comes to get spare parts of Artificial Friends he replies. "(...) "Not just that. I like to collect souvenirs." She indicated her pouch bag. "They don't allow us to take anything substantial. But smaller things, they don't mind. The workers here know me. But you're right. Whenever I come here hoping to come upon one of my old AFs.'" (Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*, p. 305)

This implies that the place where Klara is, turns out to be just a wasteland for Artificial Friends and other obsolete objects that people used to have and now discarded. The plot itself is the only aspect of the novel that matters to Klara. Therefore, she is forever enshrined in the subconscious and conscious of the AF. This has been her purpose, and now that it is complete, what's left of her curiosity, of her will to know more about society. No matter what effort she makes to fulfil her next step in her long life, she is just an object, and maybe even has no life of her own, just a long existence which is the more overwhelming, because no one can save her again. Josie has gone on with her life, as well as Rick, and both their parents are satisfied.

## Chapter 4 – Ghosts of Remembrance and Sentiment– A Comparative Analysis

### 4.1. Dystopia and Identity

The two novels that were touched upon in this dissertation can be divided into two categories. One, *Klara and the Sun*, that deals with emotions and humane or non-humane responses to those same emotions, and the other, *Never Let me Go*, with emotions through memory, through a fallible lens that is transfixed in the mind of its main character, Kathy, and can give us insight into the world and into other characters in the book. However, in this particular chapter, we are going to need to see which of the elements are the best, in order to address this evaluation.

One of the forerunners of this analysis, is how both novels start out, and the first words they choose to use. “(...) Depicted in media like photography and film, utopian and dystopian thought have at least one thing in common. Their visions of either perfected or socially alienated worlds are commonly prompted by criticism of the social/political *status quo* and point to its reform.” (Levine, Taylor, *The Upside of Down*, p.1) this quote, takes, at least in the dystopian thought-part, a glimpse of what we are about to experience in both novels, even if we are not fully acquainted with these worlds, we think that maybe there is criticism to be sought about in both novels, because of the way it is depicted. sometimes revealing irony, and sometimes sarcasm, of the writer towards these worlds he creates. “(...) One of the signature effects of Kazuo Ishiguro's fiction is a moment when a character behaves with sudden, inexplicable, and astonishing cruelty - not to a stranger, but to an intimate.” (Robbins, *Cruelty is Bad*, p. 289) For example, in the case of Ruth towards Kathy, in *Never Let me Go*. This is also a sad, but true expectation that we should have more inclining towards *Never Let me Go*, than *Klara and the Sun*. Most of the characters that we encounter in these novels are fragile, sometimes more fragile than they seem to be at first glance, and sometimes, these characters are products of a past that haunts them, like Kathy, or sometimes they are absorbents of all that surrounds them, with little to no experience of how humane or human behaviour should be, like Klara. They are always at the wrong place, in the wrong time, referring to other characters, and their characteristics and personality to justify their own actions, this happens because there is a certain intention, that appears in other characters, for Kathy to be the scapegoat of the group, she always takes on the desperation and frustration of other characters, in Klara's case she observes but sometimes she is looked down upon and other characters justify their actions just because she is a friend.

This creates a one-sided relationship, in which Klara ends up being a physical scapegoat, because some other characters look at her as if she is a mere toy. This meanness is particularly present in *Never Let me Go*, we come across some peculiar characters that carry with them the power to do evil to others. Whether it would be because of sheer envy, like Ruth, or because of pure innocence, albeit with lack of social skill and thought, like Rick's mother, these two novels show examples of how a person can try to petrify others' opportunities, whether it would be in the love aspect, or in the work aspect.

These characters have aspirations. However, because of their ontological state, they cannot fulfil them, at least in the way that it is expected for the human eye. "(...) As a hybrid of machine, human and animal parts, the cyborg breaches boundaries that have previously defined what it is to be human. Pre-cybernetic technologies were haunted by the ghost-in-the-machine, but they still lacked autonomy." (Brigley, *Replication, Regeneration, and Organic Birth*, p.18) Even if we are not properly talking about cyborgs, this statement is of utmost importance, because it helps understand why we should eliminate all the other ideas of possible growth for these characters. They can expand their knowledge, they can expand their wisdom, while we, also creatures dependent on a creator, are endowed with free-will. This unwarranted fascination that these characters have for their human counterparts, are just signs of how their own endeavours can lead them to a fulfilling life without these same humans. They do have the ability for memory, they do have the capacity to, show and express emotions, complex thought patterns and even feelings that are much akin to human nature. However, this is secondary, because in both novels it is made clear that they do not have the ability to dissent, let alone, think pre-emptively and, more importantly, independently from other human beings. Klara needs to serve them as well as she can, and though horrified, Kathy needs to serve them as well as she can too, because even if she became a helper of other clones, she does so in order to facilitate their demise, not their development.

This pattern follows through most of the novels' development, and we are constantly bombarded with statements about self-help, humanity, humane thought, for example, in *Never Let me Go*, when Kathy tries to understand her sexuality through pornography books, and Tommy comforts her and says it is natural she has those doubts, when Ruth redeems herself with Kathy and shows hints of humanity rather than jealousy, going as far as wishing the best for Kathy and Tommy's relationship, in Klara's story, when the Father, a stern and adamant engineer, shows some humane thought about having

a heart and what human nature is in its most pure essence, and how Klara can perform miracles, with the Sun's help, and how the unexpected, the inexplicable can leave all people in awe, because there are certain feelings, certain occurrences that we cannot fully explain. However, the saddest truth, is that the clones and the Artificial Friends unfortunately cannot attain humanity. Their own identity forbids them of doing so. By accepting their reality, they are reducing their own willingness to explore even more humane features. The interesting aspect is that those feelings, those features that they explore are done so in a more humane manner than most humans explore their feelings, their features; mostly because they are mundane for humans, but not for the clones and the Artificial Friends.

The first part of each book is characterized by both the passage of time and the introduction of the protagonist: "(...) My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years." (Ishiguro, *Never Let me Go*, p.1) This happens in a similar way in *Klara and the Sun*, but it is made through an observational aspect, rather than a remembrance:

"(...) When we were new, Rosa and I were mid-store, on the magazines table side, and could see through more than half of the window, so we were able to watch the outside – the office workers hurrying by, the taxis, the runners, the tourists, Beggar Man and his dog, the lower part of the RPO Building. Once we were more settled, Manager allowed us to walk up to the front until we were right behind the window display, and then we could see how tall the RPO Building was. And if we were there at just the right time, we would see the Sun on his journey." (Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*, p. 1)

There is also a certain similarity in both novels. The qualities that both protagonists have made them chosen by those around them as-important players in their lives, which means that it is through the values of these characters that, even if they are not complete heroes of the story, they are at least, praised. For example,

"(...) an AF would feel himself growing lethargic after a few hours away from the Sun and start to worry there was something wrong with him – that he had some fault unique to him and that if it became known, he'd never find a home. That was one reason why we always thought so much about being in the window. Each of us had been promised our turn, 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.” (Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*, p. 5)

So, Klara is chosen to be representing the store as a special honour, being visible to most of the people that stumble upon the store. This appals even Rosa, the friend that is mildly introduced in the first part of the novel and is only briefly mentioned afterwards.

We can sense and understand the separation of the three most important characters in *Never Let me Go*, and that is due to two reasons, the first being that they are afraid to create ties with each other because they fear being hurt, and the other reason is that they have made slightly different options in life, but Kathy remains both the nexus of all the characters and she is revered by most of the characters. Specially Ruth that, although she feels a certain jealousy towards her, she admits, eventually, that Kathy and Tommy are the ones that share true love, therefore they should have been the ones that were together.

In both novels’ endings the protagonist becomes isolated, for the same reasons. Kathy chooses to be a caretaker, someone that takes care of the clones before their completion (their death), and that leaves her embarking in a journey of solitude, unable to create ties with the people she encounters afterwards. Near the ending of *Never Let me Go*, she states:

“(…) Even the solitude, I’ve grown to quite like. That’s not to say I’m not looking forward to a bit more companionship come the end of the year when I’m finished with all of this. But I do like the feeling of getting into my little car, knowing for the next couple of hours I’ll have only the roads, the big grey sky and my daydreams for company. And if I’m in a town somewhere with several minutes to kill, I’ll enjoy myself wandering about looking in the shop windows.” (Ishiguro, *Never Let me Go*, p. 208)

She seems to be immersed in her own solitude, seeking for the company of her own self and nothing more than that. As if she is almost self-sufficient, she tends to forget, at least for a while, what she ventured with her friends in the past.

The same happens with Klara, tendentially, in her observations, she is almost always distant and verbalises everything in her interior monologue to which we have access. However, in the end, after she has fulfilled her part with Josie’s family, she works

her way out of life, accepting, almost willingly, a life that has no more to give. No longer interested in making use of her outstanding observational qualities, she just wanders and wonders about the past, feeling happy and throwing away the rest of her life in detriment of a memory she holds dear. It is a sad ending for this character.

One dimension that is all-embracing is dystopia and the social issues it presents. One can affirm that most social theories and social backgrounds can be found in the study of dystopia rather than utopia, which its core concern is to present a society that has no flaws.

“(…) Social theorists from Wells to Levitas have taken utopia as one of their core concerns and highlighted its relevance to the pursuit of the social sciences. The treatment of utopia at the hands of these theorists has often proven insightful, nuanced, and productive. The category of dystopia, on the other hand, has tended to be handled less adroitly. One likely reason for this is that many theorists have tended to endorse the equation of dystopia with anti-utopia, as in the case of Kumar’s comprehensive study, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, a decisive intervention that has to a considerable extent set the parameters for sociological enquiry into utopia ever since (Kumar, 1987). Kumar is very clear about this identification in the opening pages of his book, where he defines the anti-utopia – a term he uses in place of the term ‘dystopia’ – as ‘a relatively recent invention, a reaction largely to the socialist utopia of the nineteenth century and certain socialist practices in the twentieth century’ (Kumar, 1987: viii). Complicating matters somewhat, there is the further fact that this habit of equating dystopia with anti-utopia is shared by a number of prominent literary scholars who have written on utopia, most notably Fredric Jameson in his much-cited book, *Archaeologies of the Future* (Jameson, 2005).” (Seeger, Davison-Vecchione, “Dystopia and the Sociological Imagination, p.8)

This difference and dichotomy of utopia and dystopia is worthwhile mentioning because of two main reasons, the first is that we cannot understand the present without past records, and since dystopia is a transformation of the earlier utopia, it makes sense that we understood what exactly is a utopia, then see what a dystopia is. The second is a more sociological, mediatic phenomenon since there is a certain emergence of dystopias with social backgrounds that have gone into the realm of Social, or Soft Science-Fiction, such as, the aforementioned book series *The Hunger Games* (2012-2015, Gary Ross), the

Netflix hit series *Black Mirror* (2011-ongoing, Charlie Brooker), films such as the *Matrix* (1999 – 2021), which is based on the anime *Ghost in the Shell* and also videogames such as *Half-Life 2* (2004, Marc Laidlaw). All of these works take place in a world that is far from perfect, it's nature as a south of heaven place creates discord, with problems of pollution, often in circumstances as dire as post-nuclear holocausts and involved in the most nefarious aspects of human nature that technologies often reflect. To believe in such occurrences helps us understand the world of *Never Let me Go*, in the more corporate side of dystopias, and most importantly, the world of *Klara and the Sun*.

However, let us first find a good definition and explanation of what a utopia is. It will take us to the past, more precisely to the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and early 16<sup>th</sup> century, where the world was changing crucially and at a radical pace, more particularly if we focus on England. There was a man at that time, a humanist, writer, and thinker, that forever revolutionized the world and invented a whole new genre of literary and cultural expression – Thomas More. Often credited by its Latin signature Thomas Morus, he was a strong believer in Christ and religion, but as he lived on, he started growing suspicious about the church and the luxurious lifestyle of its acolytes, priests, and high clergy. However, he always fought for an inner reformation of the ecclesiastical institution. He never accepted the schism and died in defence of the Catholic faith.

“(..) Born to an affluent mercantile and professional family, he was representative of the lively intellectual culture which had evolved in fifteenth century London and which provided a platform for the early manifestations of humanism. More's outlook was shaped by his legal role in the affairs of the city, then by far the largest in England with a population of about 50,000, and it was as a representative of city interests that he was first drawn into service of the Crown. This involvement with London's civic life also played its part in the conception of *Utopia*, his best known work, completed in 1516.” (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Thomas More, p.1)

He coined the word and thus started the genre. It would live on to be one of the most important genres of literature and a significant cultural achievement.

A utopia is, foremost an ideal land, where a world of perfectness can prosper, and a world of equalness, with a well-organized society, in which all people had their

function well established, basically a world that could not exist. Utopia means a *topos* that does not exist, made apparent by the prefix -u.

“(…) The opening of *Utopia* at once raises a fundamental issue: the relationship between imagination and experience. We encounter real, that is to say historic, persons such as More (or at least his fictional self), Tunstall, the Habsburg delegation, and Pieter Gillis; but then we are introduced to Raphael Hythloday, whose fictional nature is conveyed by his name (Hythlodæus, “purveyor of nonsense”). This merging of worlds, real and imaginary, prepares the reader for the Platonic tension between two cities—that of the philosopher's birth and the one which he creates with words (*Republic* 592A–B). As Raphael describes his travels, Gillis is prompted to suggest that he serve some prince. However, this would entail swapping cities, moving from the ideal to the actual, a compromise which Raphael rejects. As it is, he can live as he wishes (CU: 51). There is a deliberate echo here of Cicero's discussion of the retired life in his *De officiis* (I.20.70), and, for that matter, of the argument of Pico della Mirandola which More had earlier translated. On the one hand, there is the option of intellectual liberty, free of external constraints and, on the other, the career of public service, which inevitably demands a degree of accommodation to the *status quo*. At this point, “More” intervenes to urge the latter course: Raphael owes it to himself to use his talents for public benefit, even at some personal inconvenience.” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Thomas More, topic 4: Utopia)

Furthermore, reflecting about utopia and its usages, there is an important claim that utopia is everywhere, and can range from a political, religious and humanist influence, and far beyond those conceptions.

“(…) At a descriptive level, utopia is defined far more broadly by Bloch than by the commentators we have hitherto considered. He includes day-dreams, myths and fairy-tales as well as travellers' tales and literary utopias. More surprisingly, such diverse topics as the sea voyages of medieval Irish monks and alchemical attempts to synthesise gold are discussed. The creative arts, particularly literature, architecture and music, are also important vehicles of utopia. Bloch refuses the identification of utopia with a literary genre: to limit the utopian to the Thomas More's variety, or simply to orientate it in that

direction, would be like trying to reduce electricity to the amber from which it gets its Greek name and in which it was first noticed. Indeed, the utopian coincides so little with the novel of an ideal state that the whole total of philosophy becomes necessary ... to do justice to the content of that designated by utopia.<sup>1</sup> Explorations of the vast field which Bloch regards as utopian occupy four of the five sections of *The Principle of Hope*. The first, very short, section is concerned with day-dreams which are part of everyday life for people of all ages, although the preoccupations of children, adolescents and adults differ. They include dreams of revenge, of sexual conquest, of financial success and its consequences: Most people in the street look as if they are thinking about something else entirely. The something else is predominantly money, but also what it could be changed into.<sup>2</sup> Included here are the fantasies with which people help themselves through the day. Bloch agrees that these are essentially 'escape attempts',<sup>3</sup> involving the wish to break out of the world or change one's place within it, rather than to change to world itself." (Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia*, p. 99)

This can, in contrast help us understand the focus of our study – a conventional definition and analysis of what a dystopia is in parallel with *eutopia* (the good place), another one of More's neologisms, and within the scope of speculative fiction, Dystopia has a lot of similarities as well as some differences when it comes to common literary tradition, and only when looked upon through the lens of culture can we interpret the fullness that dystopia has to offer us. "(...) A cultural process such as a literary tradition can therefore only be grasped with help of the general: the horizons and tendencies of a cultural locus-its historical semantics, to begin with-have to be used to interpret any production of that time, place, and society." (Suvin, *On the Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, p. xii)

It is important to learn more about dystopia, because with that we can fathom out our own existence in a world that is more similar to a dystopia, than it would seem at first glance. We see the world as bearing many of the claw-marks of dystopia, since most of the world, after the fall of the Berlin wall, had a moment where democracy was limited, but at least respected, in the occidental world, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is much more difficult to determine whether the world is democratic or not, because sheltered neo-Nazi parties, see most of the population turn to their fascist ways, because there is a radical instability,

this happened during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. There is almost a deifying characteristic in dystopias that needs to be approached in this work.

“(…) Visions of the apocalypse are at least as old as 1000 BC, when, in Norman Cohn’s rendering, the triumph of chaos over order defined the Egyptian ‘Prophecies of Neferti’, which foretold of the complete breakdown of society. The ‘great no longer rule the land’, the ‘slaves will be exalted’. Crime, robbery, and murder are rampant. The desert encroaches. The Nile turns blood-red by the corpses floating in it.<sup>2</sup> The Greek term, apokalypsis, unveiling or uncovering, indicates the revelation of mankind’s destiny.<sup>3</sup> Many variations on it come down to us through the ages. Once they were the preserve of millennialists who heralded the final punishment of sin and the dawning of a new Divine era. Now such nightmarish scenarios occupy an increasingly prominent position in our vocabulary and our mental world, but without the hopeful outcome promised by theology. Most of what we associate with ‘dystopia’ is thus a modern phenomenon, wedded to secular pessimism. The word is derived from two Greek words, dus and topos, meaning a diseased, bad, faulty, or unfavourable place. It first probably appeared in the mid-eighteenth century, but was not widely used until the twentieth. It has some awkward cousins, like Jeremy Bentham’s ‘cacotopia’, or ‘evil place’. In common parlance, the word functions as the opposite of ‘utopia’, the bad place versus what we imagine to be the good place, the secular version of paradise.” (Claeys, *Dystopia: A Natural History*, p.4)

In dystopia’s definition, there is a clear distinction between what it means in comparison to utopia, but it also can be defined in comparison to a more palpable concept, yielding to none other, and the best to be defining dystopia – totalitarianism.

“(…) In both history and literature, ‘dystopia’ has been most frequently identified with the colossal tragedies of twentieth-century despotism. In the death and prison camps of Germany and Russia in particular, millions were murdered, often with great brutality. In perhaps the finest work of modern historical narrative, Alexander Solzhenitsyn described ‘terrorism’ as producing ‘one of the most shameful centuries in human history’, ‘the cave man’s century’. A vast and complex literature has arisen to try to explain how mankind went so far wrong, and to avoid such calamities in the future. Within it, many and heated disagreements have arisen. Whatever we make of these attempts, we clearly

cannot understand dystopia (or indeed utopia) without confronting this history. Yet at times neither historical narrative nor literary expression seem to capture the depravity of these events. We might well wonder, indeed, whether any words can do so.” (Claeys, *Dystopia: A Natural History*, p. 113)

This helps us understand why history has a close tie with dystopia, even if it is grounded on human suffering and some of the understatement that far-right ideologies do, almost certainly lying of some of the atrocities that were done on their behalf. This leads us to explore the imaginative side of dystopia and how we can take many elements in consideration and they can help us in our comprehensive study of dystopia.

“(…) Gradually, critics began to track this dystopian turn, noting its innovations in formal flexibility and political maneuvering. In particular, at the roundtable session devoted to a draft of Lyman Tower Sargent's essay "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited" at the eighteenth annual Conference of the Society for Utopian Studies in November 1993, a discussion on dystopia ensued in which Sargent urged a general reconsideration of the concept and a specific discussion of the new dystopias of the 1980s and 1990s. In the published version of the essay, Sargent observed that politically engaged texts such as Piercy's *He, She and It* (1991) "are clearly both eutopias and dystopias" and thus "undermine all neat classification schemes" ("Three Faces" 7), and he suggested that these new works might usefully be understood as "critical dystopias." Parallel to Sargent's contribution, others began to investigate this new body of work. Constance Penley, in "Time Travel, Primal Scene and the Critical Dystopia" (1990), identified as "critical dystopias" those films such as *Terminator* that tend "to suggest causes rather than merely reveal symptoms" (117). Jenny Wolmark in *Aliens and Others* (1994) recognized a complex mixture of "utopian and dystopian elements" in works by Atwood and Tepper as they "critically voice the fears and anxieties of a range of new and fragmented social and sexual constituencies and identities in post-industrial societies" (91). Drawing on the work of Soren Baggesen, Jim Miller (1998) argued that Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy and *Parable of the Sower* were "critical dystopias motivated out of a Utopian pessimism in that they force us to confront the dystopian elements of postmodern culture so that we can work through them and begin again" ("Post-Apocalyptic Hoping" 337). And working in broader strokes, in a commentary on

Fredric Jameson's extensive work on Utopia, Bryan Alexander observed that "[i]n the face of enforced global more-or-less complacency as postmodern night-utopia the dystopian trope provides what Jameson describes as a 'bile [which provides] a joyous counter-poison and corrosive solvent, to apply to the slick surface of reality'" (Jameson, qtd. in Alexander 55-56). In this range of work, the contemporary historical moment is interrogated by critical positions that necessarily work within a dystopian structure of feeling (and perhaps that "moment" has recurred, as has the dystopian genre, in one form or another since the onset of twentieth-century capitalism—beginning in its monopoly and imperialist phase, taking another form in the 1940s and 1950s, and yet another in the 1980s and 1990s)" (Baccolini, Moylan, *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*, pp. 3-4)

These types of analysis are fundamental in structuring dystopia as a genre, as a cultural emporium in which we can find all that we need to battle the empire of capitalism, as most of the choices that the heroes do to work around all the incongruences of society, even if they fail. What dystopia teaches us sometimes is that we must not be afraid to fail, but we should not give in to our failure, because that can have disastrous consequences. Dystopia has even become a trope, a certain meme within a society that we can see nowadays. We can encounter many implications of dystopia in today's world, and our identity is very important, because most of the people that gather the information about themselves, see them in relation to society and the world they are in, grasping a good notion of identity is important as sometimes the revolution to throw away such systems, starts within ourselves. Culturally, though, the focus is much more societally driven.

“(…) Culture (now) becomes the area of ethical concern while civilisation becomes the realm of the material forces. As Williams himself puts it, 'the mistake follows from the original strategy of the book, which is the recovery of a very specific tradition. The result was to project back the appearance of a coherent discourse, which prevented [him] from fully re-engaging successive thinkers with their history.’” (Shashidhar, “Culture and Society: An Introduction to Raymond Williams” p.49)

As another dimension worth tackling, identity is very important because Understanding identity is essential for fostering empathy, tolerance, and inclusivity, thereby creating a more harmonious and interconnected world. As we continue to

navigate the challenges of the 21st century, a profound comprehension of identity can serve as a corner stone toward building a more compassionate and united global community. We could look at identity as a psychological process foremost. We are what our mind perceives of ourselves. There are a lot of ways one can go in the labyrinth of identity's psychology, but we can try by addressing it in childhood.

“(...) Psychoanalysis today is implementing the study of the ego, the core of the individual. It is shifting its emphasis from the concentrated study of the conditions which blunt and distort the individual ego to the study of the ego's roots in social organization. This we try to understand not in order to offer a rash cure to a rashly diagnosed society, but in order to complete the blueprint of our method.” (Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, pp. 11-12)

There are ample examples of clashes of identity with society, *Childhood and Society*, has many examples, a combat crisis in a marine, the boy Sam with a neurological crisis, and that helps us gather a lot of information on why construing our personality is a dialectical process that happens until the end of a person's lifespan. And sometimes these crises do not have negative sequels in the future, Erikson withheld that personality develops in a seemingly predetermined order through eight stages of psychosocial development, from infancy to adulthood. During each stage, the person experiences a psychosocial crisis that could positively or negatively affect personality development. These eight stages are: Hope, Basic trust *versus* basic mistrust; will, autonomy *versus* shame; Purpose, Initiative *versus* guilt; Competence, Industry *versus* inferiority; Fidelity, Identity *versus* role confusion; Love, Intimacy *versus* isolation; Care, Generativity *versus* stagnation; Wisdom, Ego integrity *versus* despair. This individual growth of a brain carries many aspects within them that help us understand which stage of life we are in, and most of the needs of the individual are in conflict with the needs of society. Although obscure, or darkened, there is always a blurry line that can be drawn between psychoanalysis and the individual, for example whether or not we can predict if a person is trustworthy or not, can be exerted, by Erikson's light by a conflict. In the side of trust, if the caregiver is reliable, consistent, and nurturing, the child will develop a sense of trust, believing that the world is safe, and that people are dependable and affectionate. This sense of trust allows the child to feel secure even when threatened and extends into their other relationships, maintaining their sense of security amidst potential threats. Meanwhile, in the other side of the coin, if the caregiver fails to provide consistent,

adequate care and affection, the child may develop a sense of mistrust and insecurity. This could lead to a belief in an inconsistent and unpredictable world, fostering a sense of mistrust, suspicion, and anxiety. Under such circumstances, the child may lack confidence in their ability to influence events, viewing the world with apprehension. This can be balanced if we have the psychological strength to know how to raise awareness in a child's mentality.

“(…) Social identity is commonly defined as a person's sense of self derived from perceived membership in social groups. When we belong to a group, we are likely to derive our sense of identity, at least in part, from that group. While standard economic analysis focuses on individual-level incentives in decision making, group identity has been shown to be a central concept in understanding phenomena in social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science. It is used to explain such phenomena as ethnic and racial conflicts, discrimination, political campaigns (Rose McDermott, forthcoming), and the formation of human capital (James Coleman 1961). Social identity theory was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979) to understand the psychological basis for intergroup discrimination. According to this theory, social identity has three major components: categorization, identification, and comparison. The first component, categorization, is the process of putting people, including ourselves, into categories. Labelling someone as a Muslim, a female, or a soldier is a way of defining these people. Similarly, our self-image is associated with what categories we belong to. Social psychology experiments show that people quickly and easily put themselves and others into basic categories. The second component, identification, is the process by which we associate ourselves with certain groups. Ingroups are groups we identify with, and outgroups are ones we do not identify with. The third component, comparison, is the process by which we compare our groups with other groups, creating a favorable bias toward the group to which we belong.” (Chen, Xin Li, “Group Identity and Social Preferences”, p. 431)

By identifying ourselves within a group and by comparing ourselves and the groups where we are inserted, with other groups and individuals of other groups, we can understand better our own identity and shatter differences between other groups, giving us a sense of globality. This is of utmost importance, because we are aware that

inclusiveness Is a path that, although sometimes difficult to travel in, it can let us see how global this world has become. More than ever, we should learn how to respect and tolerate other belief systems and ways of thinking.

This opportunity to openness, is another dimension that is expressed in the dystopias of *Never Let me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*. Although analytically fertile, and its interpretative system can lead us to take one opinion or one other, it is important to state that one of the indicatives of quality of these novels, is the fact that its inclusiveness in the mind of what seems to be outcasts, can help us further understand them and us in a broader sense. One must not fear difference; as they search for a way of being understood, they are constantly put through ontological trials, many of which are referred in this dissertation. Our observations and objective are to better comprehend these individuals' struggles and feel empathy towards them. Only then can we grasp their true identity.

#### **4.2. A Comparative Analysis – A Focus on Differences**

While working about the differences between *Never Let me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*, it is imperative that the most apparent and appropriate differences are put to light during the current chapter. Because *Klara and the Sun* uses Artificial Intelligence to explain us why sometimes, for instance, humans are perceived as lonely individuals, and *Never Let me Go*, creates its own ontological labyrinth, through clones, beings that are replicating themselves through a human original. These two differences between *Klara and the Sun* and *Never Let me Go* are important, because they set out the exploration of two different types of analysis throughout the respective novels. In the former, they tend to be steered at humanity, and the way humanity behaves nowadays, while living in a dystopian environment, while in the latter, it is much more about the ontological issues that the novel's protagonists and overall cast have, namely, the nature of humanity: One of the central ontological issues in the novel is the search for answers of what it means to be humane. The story follows characters who are clones created for the sole purpose of being organ donors, the donors. They are raised in a seemingly idyllic environment and their fate is predetermined from the start. This raises questions about the essence of humanity and whether these clones possess the same rights and ontological bearings as regular humans. The novel explores the theme of identity and self-discovery. The clones in *Never Let me Go* struggle to come to terms with their identity as they grapple with their

purpose in life and the inevitable fate of their organ donations. Their search for identity raises questions about the nature of personhood and whether identity is solely determined by one's biology or if there are deeper aspects that define who we are. Ishiguro's novel delves into the ethical implications of cloning and genetic manipulation. The story raises questions about the boundaries of science and the responsibility of society to ensure ethical practices in scientific advancements. The creation and treatment of clones in the novel highlight the dangers of playing with the very essence of life. The clones in "Never Let Me Go" are raised to accept their inevitable deaths as organ donors. This raises ontological questions about mortality and how one's perception of life and death may be affected by their knowledge of a predetermined fate. It also explores the human struggle to come to terms with mortality and the pursuit of meaning in life despite its fleeting nature. The novel raises questions about whether the clones have any control over their lives or if their fate is entirely predestined. This theme explores the concept of free will and the extent to which individuals can shape their destinies in the face of predetermined circumstances. This creates a dichotomy between both novels and in the manner these novels address some of the issues, that they may even have in common with each other.

Both ways of looking at the problems presented by the novels are, in fact complementary. This can be argued, because individuals with the capacity to use memory and observation usually use it through logic. By doing so, one of the novels uses memory and the other observation, making them linked to past and present respectively. So, apart from the differences that are present in the observation-part of *Klara and the Sun*, and the memory part of *Never Let me Go*, most of the situations in which we can encounter in both novels, can be parts of questioning of our own lives and experiences.

“(…) At the very end of the novel, the meaning of this anger is confirmed. Tommy and Kathy, now donor and carer, find the address of the retired head of their old school, which has since been closed down, and they confront her with the question of deferrals - their childhood belief that they could be saved for a while from the donations by the quality of their artwork, or the quality of their love. They discover that deferral was a myth. On the drive back, Tommy runs off into an open field and expresses the feelings appropriate to this discovery. Seeing "Tommy's figure raging, shouting, flinging his fists and kicking out" (274), Kathy is inspired to tell him the following: "maybe the reason you used to get like that was because at some level you always knew" (275). And

Tommy agrees. On some level he did know. In which case, Miss Lucy seems to have failed in the mission of eliminating Tommy's anger. Or on the contrary maybe she has succeeded in an unacknowledged effort to maintain that anger. Miss Lucy's advice to him that his conduct in school was "not [his] fault" was not "conservative" but politically correct, if that phrase can be cleansed of recent associations: it confirmed that what his anger expressed (as in so many stories of juvenile delinquency) was a precocious knowledge of a collectively blocked future, knowledge of a general social injustice to which anger was an entirely appropriate response." (Robbins, *Cruelty is Bad*, p. 298)

Even though there is no appropriate response to all the evident evil that these characters need to endure, there is a reaction, at the best, described as infantile, to a contrariety to what they thought would dispel they're already approaching fate. The knowledge that demanded more than an explanation, would be the spark that sufficed for a revolution rather than a teenage-like outbreak. Yet it did not. Apparently, Ishiguro wished to demark himself from other Soft Science-Fiction narratives. In *Klara and the Sun*, it was evident that there was not even a childish outburst coming out of any of the Artificial Intelligence or Artificial Friends, as they so intelligently put it in the novel, the term "Artificial Friend" is used to refer to a type of humanoid AI designed to be a companion for children. The term "Artificial Friend" is likely employed for several reasons.

Denoting some kind of euphemism, the term "Artificial Friend" serves to soften the idea of these AI companions. Instead of calling them "robots" or "androids," which might carry negative connotations or sound impersonal, the term "Artificial Friend" conveys a sense of warmth and companionship, that is true for some, but falsely put so for others. Reflecting societal norms in the novel's world, humanoid AIs are a common sight, and society has accepted them as companions for children. By using the term "Artificial Friend," Ishiguro emphasizes how these AIs are integrated into everyday life and social norms. Emotional connection, happening because throughout the novel, the main character, Klara, develops a deep emotional, philosophical and transcendental bond with her human companion, Josie. The term "Artificial Friend" highlights the novel's exploration of what it means to form genuine connections and relationships, even between humans and artificial beings, in a humane way, another aspect is the exploration of identity and authenticity. By using the word "Artificial," Ishiguro prompts readers to

question the nature of identity and what it means to be genuine or authentic. The novel delves into themes of consciousness and the uniqueness of individual experiences, regardless of whether they belong to a human or an AI. Philosophy and its study: Ishiguro's choice of terminology sparks philosophical reflections on the boundaries of personhood and the essence of friendship. The novel challenges readers to reconsider the meaning of friendship and whether it can transcend the boundaries of the biological.

There was only observation, and no revolution, no will to fight over something that was imposed and not a solution to any of the problems presented to the Artificial Friends. Even though it is a slight difference, and the end-result would be the same for Tommy and for Klara, it is of utmost importance to point out that at least Tommy has a reaction to the system that is imposed on him, while Klara accepts her fate as it is, as she dwells in what seems to be offscourings.

Another aspect that we need to assert in both novels, is that one is more about the characters being in the same situation, some with different levels of intelligence, and abilities that have to do with emotions and tact, but ultimately all of the characters are trapped in a limbo that remains untold but is shown: the inability to grow out of teenagerhood, while in *Klara and the Sun*, all the characters have their uniqueness to them. They all struggle to find solace in a disrupted situation that has befallen them. They have their unique personalities, their strengths and their weaknesses, their differences. It can be said that they are the ones that carry out their own destiny, while in *Never Let me Go*, it is very important to point out that these destinies are already set out for them. The Artificial Friends' destinies are ultimately led by fatalism too, since they have a limited lifespan, and they eventually begin to undergo a decline in their functionality and health over time. When this takes place, and their health takes its toll, performing these licit functions they go on to the company that manufactured them, like the objects that they are, people are akin to their feelings, and emotions, but then again, they have their own life to lead, and they can be seen as a burden, therefore it is much better to leave them astray, than to harbour them into their own lives.

The narrators in both novels also exhibit certain stark differences. Kathy, of course, recalling her short life, and the other, Klara, is constantly observing the environment that surrounds her and sometimes even going as far as thinking some solutions for the other characters' problems. However, there are much more differences. Kathy has a much more direct and overall humane approach when it comes to

intermingling with the other characters, particularly since they were all childhood friends. In contrast, Klara has a much harder time interacting with anyone other than Josie. It appears her status as a sort of maid of honour or personal assistant in the household blocks some of the even highest ties of friendship she could ever afford to do with her family. Even though it is a good way of telling a thoughtful, and thoroughly well-crafted story about loyalty and the ultimate meaning of love in a world where sometimes love is not that well established, it is very hard for Klara to experience it, except for her relationship with the Sun.

Another strong difference is that, in Kathy's case, there is nothing that she can possibly do about Tommy's fate, the fate of a loved one, that is already thrown away by the hands of a dire, selfish system. This leaves her meaning in this world obsolete, and the only hope she has that can work around and substitute all that she has experienced, are some fond memories of her friends, thus building identities and being aware of them. She is therefore stuck into what can be called a crossroads leading to nowhere. No matter what kind of voyage she does, she knows her lifespan is short, adding to that, shorter than normal people's would be, and all that is left for Kathy to do, in the end, is to go through a pathway in life, that will lead her to her own individual memories, again and again. This failed system can lead to a downfall in Kathy's life and create a much larger gap between her and the friends she had to leave behind. Even though she has hope, she cannot have the possibility of rephrasing and reshaping her life in order to be happier, and, most importantly to be fulfilled. Mostly what is left for her is to dwell in her memory, instead of making a jump to another dimension of her life. The same cannot be said of Klara. Klara does not dwell in memory; she deals with the present rather than the past – a much fairer way of dealing with any situation that can occur to her. Therefore, she can be a better narrator of stories than Kathy could ever be. Because memory can be elusive, and though appearances can be thought of as a different way of retelling some aspects of life, and sometimes deceiving, we can ultimately trust Klara more than we can trust Kathy's report. Klara tries to help everyone, instead of pondering why she should help herself more, and if that could, in some way, benefit her helping of other people. Even though she is an artificial intelligence, the way Henry Capaldi and, in the end, Josie's mother interpret Klara, as definitely, much more into the department of Emotional Intelligence, rather than Rational Intelligence. Henry is the person that wanted to make Klara a double of Josie, withholding Josie's personality, mind, behaviour, appearance, and, not sure if he

could accomplish it, the heart. She is, after all, an Artificial Friend, and as far as friendliness or sympathy are concerned, Klara ticks all requirements. She is attentive, altruistic, caring, loveable, interested in helping other people, she has no interest in herself as a being, she does not question herself what is the purpose of her existence because she already knows it is to help people, and if that help is not perceived by her as meaningful, and actually helpful at all, she will advert those who have made a bad decision. All of these assets, make up for the lack self-interest this character has in herself. Kathy and Klara are very alike in their willingness to do good, but they are not very alike in how they achieve that, and how their actions impact on their own personality and discourse.

This leads us to explore more about the rationality, reasoning and thought process behind these two characters, and most importantly, what drives them. Pointing out that most of the characters in *Never Let me Go* are teenagers that cannot grow up, and suffer a tragic fate at the end, we know beforehand that there is no good closure, therefore the hands of fate throughout the entirety of the novel, the only problem that subsists is whether that fate can be delayed or not. So, it is a fatalist novel, with no way of truly reaching a solution, it is an impending doom that befalls all the students in Hailsham and in the other similar schools that we were not introduced to. Knowing that there is nothing Kathy can do to help her fellow mates, festers and lingers in her thoughts. In every interaction of *Never Let me Go*, there is not a single word that comes out of her mind that does not display a wounded individual, an individual that is at the hands of fate, but birthed by humans trying to play God.

Instead of severing herself from those around her, she tries and tries to delay this fate, but no matter what measly connection she makes to try to at least appease their tragic fate, there is no rational explanation for anything, and so they are trapped at the hands of the purposes of human science. The ethical challenge is why most scientists seem to care more about the advancements that they can do, than what is right or wrong for each and every being.

In *Klara and the Sun*, it works rather differently. Klara can actually do amazing things, and though she would suffer from a tragic fate, if she wanted, she could escape from it entirely. She is just afraid. The chains that tether her is just fear of being anything other than a helper in a world of people that do not seek redemption and do not want to reward her for any of her well-doings. Instead, they prefer to send her off to a place where she will probably be dismantled. Why not dismantling atomic bombs instead? It leaves

anyone furious with the plot's outcome, because after Klara has served her purpose, she does not belong there, in their home, anymore. Let us say that Klara is invisible, and Josie's healing was just a miracle for people to untangle. People tend to remember evil more than they remember good, and in some cases, it is comprehensible, but in others, they should put Klara in a pedestal and at least let her live her life with them forever, instead of getting rid of her, the way they did. And Klara does not care, or even think about. She just accepts this irrational behaviour as humanity's idea of rewarding for her deeds, almost mimicking Christ, in his final words. "Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do." This serves as the ultimate redemptive figure in the novel, just after she has healed Josie, Klara was not praised by any of the parents, not even by the housekeeper Melania, which is an Artificial Friend too.

## Chapter 5 -Ghosts of Remembrance – Conclusion

There are myriads of memories and humane feelings in the novels' plots, in the characters, in the choice of words. Helping one find its humane side is the main thematic nexus in the work of Ishiguro. This author explores certain issues that are important for our own understanding of breaking preconceptions and does so with extreme attention and detail.

“(…) This is similarly emphasized by Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston, who argue that “the posthuman condition is upon us” and diagnose in “posthuman” narratives a “nostalgia for a humanist philosophy of self and other, human and alien” (Posthuman Bodies, vii), a nostalgia I also see at play in some of the works I will be examining here, such as Pamela Sargent’s *Cloned Lives* (1976) and Kate Wilhelm’s *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang* (1976).

The stories that circulate in each culture are essential to start understanding and coming to terms with fresh models of subjectivity, which will necessarily develop as a response to modern technologies.” (Ferreira, *I am the Other: Literary Negotiations of Human Cloning* p.2)

These models of subjectivity are created to make us understand why modern technology is so important in each cultural context and also in a globally ever-changing world. We are now connected in more ways than we can ever possibly imagine, and most importantly, without giving rise to lack of privacy, we need to tolerate new ideas and new ways of thinking. That is one of the reasons that this dissertation came to fruition. The other two reasons why I believe that this dissertation is important, is because it is centred around humanity and most importantly, in the humane – a realm that is applied in all humanism, but should always be practiced, not only preached. The final reason that one can consider this important, is because like anything in life, it is made with love and caring, because a world without the possibility of finding love, of finding redemption and conscious tranquillity, is a world that would be difficult to live in. Most of all, we should practice forgiveness; goodness will be ensued after we practice that. In a dystopia, a world so conflicted, so astray, in the case of Ishiguro, even when all hope is seemingly gone and

lost, there can be an upbeat ending at the end of each apparently endless tunnel, this happened with Josie and, although bleakly, Kathy did find some comfort. At the same time, this dissertation is about remembrance and sentimentality, giving way to a broader analysis of dystopia, ethics, narrative, identity, and the different layers of character development.

Firstly, the theme that was introduced was of memory, in which the analysis was grounded on both *Never Let me Go* and constant paced, extensive use of the (Ho)use of Memory PhD thesis by Anabela Silva. It explored how the use of memory as a conceptual line for the plot and as a means of showing how memory works, is used ubiquitously throughout the novel. It also explored certain aspects that tied the reader with Kathy's point of view of the plot, and how reliable her memory is, because she wants to understand herself, who is she, and it gives way to an exercise of self-truth and authenticity, that, although not infallible, it is done *tout court* as a insatiable yearning for self-understanding. Then I started classifying how their houses were, and how Hailsham was like a cajoling prison from which they could not escape, because they were too embroiled in the schemes, and lies that they were told. After Kathy was introduced, afterwards Tommy entered the explanation. Having explained the meaning of Tommy's scream in different parts of the novel, the focus was how it was practically ignored, left as a futile cry for help, given that no one would help his condition, no matter how much he scream. All because of conformity, because humans treated them as trash. An unethical way of evaluating their worth, one would say, as cattle, rather than individuals with their own identity and values. Then about the title and its occasionally mentioned importance in Kathy's life. After a while, having talked about the different memory types of the characters, the problem of emotions arose, and also how ontologically entangled were the characters.

In the second part of the first chapter, the empirical assurance of Science Fiction works was made, together with the human differences between creator and creature. There was a brief mention to the *Never Let me Go* movie adaptation. There is analysis on personal and group identity.

Afterwards there was a reflection about how inhumanly the children of Hailsham were treated, and how far from being human they were. Another aspect of the dissertation is to show that although they cannot be humans, they were humane nonetheless.

Also, there was a comparison was made between the dystopia like worlds, briefly that explained why these dystopias are filled with irony, and how the world now mostly resembles a dystopia rather than a utopia. Afterwards, a talk about comprehension and condescension ensues, as there is a need for us to be ethically capable of understanding our own problems and solve them in a contemporary society, making a good use of society as was made in the work *Hunger Games*.

As the chapter ends, technology becomes the main topic, as there is a certain unease, anxiety and feelings of entrapment because of the constant technological advancement. We should learn how to live with this and find better solutions to the problems that it raises.

Afterwards the analysis on *Klara and the Sun* starts. As writing about loneliness ensues, exploration on themes like what it means to be lonely, what it means to be separated from society, and how social alienation tends to take its grip on this part of the dissertation. It is swiftly shown that the Sun is a deity or a God-like figure in the world of *Klara and the Sun*, and though he does not have a personality, or any way of communicating directly to the characters or the reader, he does, advertently do miracles to help the most needed. Klara is somehow chosen by the sun to carry out his doings when she begs him to do so.

Afterwards, it is stated that Klara is needed by everyone around her, but even during the Artificial Friends stores' part of the story, she is very inclusive, and keeps most of the thoughts she has to herself, and the reader. As for interacting with others, she is very shy, and does not open herself to anyone. She is very into herself, and although she has good values, not even Rosa, the Artificial Friend that is much closer to her, more than any character at that point in the narrative, knows much about her. A connection is made with the withdrawal-culture of most of nowadays society, because in younger generations, there is tendency to be more lonesome than in other generations.

Then, COVID-19 pandemic was briefly mentioned, with articles to corroborate the information that was written down. With this being classified as true information with facts presented, then it was easy to link it to *Klara and the Sun*.

Afterwards the mechanically enhancements that were done to most of the kids that were in the story, only to augment their academic prowess and also their cognitive and motor skills. This was made possible by a government that privileged children that

had these augmentations, in detriment of other children that did not have them. If the kids did not have these abnormal assets in their bodies, then it would be very difficult for them to enter schools. However, it is heavily implied in the novel that, in some cases, these augmentations are done so without caring about the health of those that possess them, so in the case of Josie, she became ill after those augmentations were within her body.

Afterwards the characterization of loneliness is made, as to close the subject that was being talked about in this part of the dissertation. Following that, it brings us to the incisive premonition that the narrative can do about human nature. Focusing on ethics, the dissertation ensued with some quotes about Artificial Intelligence, and the book itself *Klara and the Sun*. An important reference is made to the Manager of Klara's shop, that most children only care about the Artificial Friends only to make them obsolete after they do not need them. Therefore, Klara should not put much trust in the words of humans, specially and most specifically in the promises that they make to them.

In the next part of the discussion, we see that the spectrum through which Klara sees the world is full of well-intentioned feelings without being completely naïve. And although she believes in miracles and has faith in the resolution of problems through non-scientific means, she has true values and qualities, that are akin to Christianity without the hand of the Church that, in some views, corrupts Christianity.

Afterwards, it is stated that, no matter the ethics, wrong or right, the protagonist, Klara, justifies her own existence basing herself on the standards that humanity is at.

And doing so, the current status of humanity was addressed in the following sections, concluding that although full of contrarities and sometimes foul use of ethics and language, which can subdue individuals or groups of people, more often than not the choices that we make, are, at the core, filled with goodness, and that is what *Klara and the Sun* shows the reader.

Following this line of thought we speak about the nuances in the narrative of the aforementioned book, how it makes us understand people's emotions, attitudes and feelings, although not directly. This sub-chapter's name is the detachment of the outsider. The imaginative component of sociology is addressed.

Once again, the observation skills of Klara are put to light. As she follows people's behaviour and even psyche with her senses and knowledge of the people she

encounters. Specially within her family and she always comes to conclusions about the characters, and ultimately, about us as individuals within a hard-to-read society.

Another problem that takes its place in the novel, is the issue of pollution. In detriment to cooperation, they chose to be blind by their own greed. This shows us how individuality prevails a lot in the current world.

Analysis about Josie and Klara ensues, with mentions to nihilist philosophy and philosophers, and the concept of superposition, in the Schrodinger's Cat experiment. Afterwards, mention that there are no heroes in the plot of *Klara and the Sun*, means that there is no archetype for us to follow, therefore a grey moral ground.

In the last part of the dissertation, I make a comparison between the two novels, as well as delving deeper into the concept of identity and dystopia, because both of the concepts are part of the problematic within the characters and the place they live in. Studying them with the more appropriate *corpora* of information was necessary to enable a deeper comprehension of the focus of both themes.

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