

# On the Dimension of "Man" in Ishiguro's New Work Klara and the Sun

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## Abstract

The marriage of rational metaphysics and capital logic based on profit confused the boundary between cognitive subject and value subject, and then destroyed the human value ethics system. If the irreconcilable contradiction between the unlimited growth of capital demand in capitalism and people's all-round development accumulates to a certain limit, it will inevitably lead to a large-scale modernity crisis. In essence, the crisis of human existence is a cultural crisis. In modern society, the mechanistic paradigm with the scientific world outlook as the core is closely related to the annihilation of the logic of consumer society and the essence of "man". Ishiguro's Klara and the sun focuses on rationality and capital, and ruthlessly discloses the social reality under the vision of post mankind. It can be said that regardless of the social structure of Shi Hei literature, its modernity criticism is always the main line.

## Keywords

Kazuo Ishiguro; Klara and the Sun; Scientific and Technological Rationality; Capital Logic.

## 1. Introduction

Ishiguro's cultural value is more and more recognized by readers all over the world, but at the same time, he has always been a writer who can be understood and loved by minority readers and occupies an important position in the world cultural capital system. Due to the polysemy of his literary creation and the diversity of literary styles, most readers' understanding of Shi Hei literature is quite limited. In the era of globalization dominated by science and technology and consumption, particularity is undoubtedly the greatest identifiable value. Ishiguro is not limited and bound by the world cultural heritage and literary tradition. His writing is so free that he can spread fiction across regions and even countries wherever he wants to tell stories. Careful reading will find that these factors sneak in the text with the narrative path, and the people oppressed by capital logic urge international readers to think about the atrocities of Western imperialism and the unequal global capital distribution mechanism in history. With the diversity of stylistic forms and the Polyphony of narrative voice, the unreliable relationship between time, space, memory and the position of characters and the sequence of events gradually emerges. There is no so-called authoritative and true narration in the works, only the readers empathize with the political or moral choice judgment of the characters. With a magic pen, Ishiguro takes the whole world as the background and the whole human history as the color palette, and arbitrarily disturbs the order of the whole human growth story he is thinking about about survival and development, memory and forgetting, truth and post truth into a literary narrative. The background of random stories, whether social or historical, is vague and broad in Ishiguro's literary world. But what is clear is the "people" who are viewed and activated by telling stories.

## 2. Scientific and Technological Rationality: The Rewriting of "Man" by the Myth of "Making Man"

The disasters brought to the people of the world by the large-scale war and totalitarian revolution just over the last century seem to have been obliterated in the dust of history. Ishiguro's eyes have always focused on the emotional trauma that historical events and their remnants have brought to all mankind. His narrative power comes from his continuous attention to the "commonality" of mankind expressed by more universal literary themes such as "human nature".

What moves readers all over the world is not only Ishiguro's superb narrative skills of infinitely interweaving imagination and memory, but also people's universal reflection on human nature after the two world wars. Science and technology, which should benefit human progress, has become a sharp weapon for the bourgeoisie to stabilize its dominant position, making people not free in the opposite direction and further blurring the core of self (May 29). It can be seen that the future world invented by Ishiguro in his novel, the progress of science and technology is gradually breaking through the boundary between people and things, but Josie's mother, Christy, is an exception. She doesn't believe Klara can replace her daughter. But her idea was regarded by those around her as "fighting against science and mathematics" (283).

Ironically, a small number of sober people represented by Chrissy have been excluded by the mainstream thought of society. It can be seen that the control of society by contemporary capitalist countries has become an invisible and anonymous hand. It will not use rough coercive force, but gently let people submit in the form of general common sense, science and social public opinion (Fromm 222). Ishiguro is obviously on Krissi's side. He does not agree that the development of social science and technology in the future can reach the technical height of "creating people". "Human heart" is not an object that technology can make, not an object, but the essence of the forever mysterious "human". In the future world, evolution makes organisms more adaptable to the new environment, which will better challenge and equip organisms (especially humans) to change the environment to meet their own needs (bookin 24).

The combination of human and electronic technology in virtual reality is the imagination foundation of post human development. It is indisputable that with the process of human evolution, "human image" is bound to change in order to adapt to the new living environment. There is reason to believe that human progress will be enhanced through technology and even replace the fragile human body with a more durable form. The goal of contemporary technological science is to overcome all biological limitations related to the materiality of the human body (Sibilia 49). Mr. Kapaldi firmly believes that with the continuous progress of technology, the perfect substitute for human beings can be manufactured, "she is really Josie. It is a continuation of Josie" (261). Modern people are constrained by the exchange value of goods and degenerate into empty subjects like machines.

They prefer to use the dogmatic Manichaeism dichotomy to understand this chaotic world. Individual lives that rely on technology, experts and dominant public opinion to decide their own behavior instead of themselves, such as the body of "just fabric" (268) made by Mr. Kapaldi in Klara and the sun, hanging in Mr. Kapaldi's laboratory, waiting for the rebirth of "human nature". Although the human body or "human concept" will change due to technology, its "existence itself" as a species should not be diluted. Modern mechanical science represented by Newtonian physics, based on the understanding of modern linear time flow, believes that the world is composed of matter, and any movement can be finely quantified by digital changes in different time periods. Human beings have gradually realized that the movement of matter is complex and dynamic, and the role of matter is unknown. Advocating the certainty, regularity and causal route of knowledge, the understanding of man and nature, thought and material is binary and mechanical. It is believed that nature is the accumulation of pure material particles

that can be mastered, and even the human mind is a mechanical phenomenon that can be reduced to a machine.

Ishiguro interprets and evaluates the operation mechanism of the real world through the imaginary world constructed by literary texts, and examines the meaning of human nature from a critical perspective.. The believers of technology centrism in the story firmly believe that science and technology can make mankind strong enough to completely replace the God who made man, but the responsibility of saving mankind is passed on to the robot Klara by defeating the polluting machine "kutins". While denouncing mankind's lack of responsibility, Ishiguro inspires readers to think about whether mankind should reshape the essential power of "man" (Fromm 91).

### **3. Production and Consumption: The Pressure of Capital Logic on "People"**

Ishiguro transplanted the universal ideological representation of consumer society into the literary text of Klara and the sun, linked the relationship between commodity exchange value and individual success, happiness, and even the progress of the whole society, and deeply criticized the abnormal social phenomenon of people moving towards vulgarization, materialization and utilitarianism in the enthusiasm of commodity worship, forgetting their own existence value. Ishiguro fiercely criticized the unequal group division and hierarchical order caused by people who have obtained a short respite in the commodity world (Horkheimer 70). In the novel, there is no difference between the future society and the real society. The children of the rich can receive gene upgrading surgery, while the poor do not have this opportunity. Fair education is a cruel truth that everyone knows is impossible.

Ishiguro's satire is powerful. In the future society where we have placed hope, "fairness" is still a slogan. What a desperate future this is. The real social framework of capital determining identity remains unchanged in the future. Ishiguro ironically wrote that the elitist education of gene editing was not successful. The "promoted" children laughed at Rick, compared with the latest B3 and bullied Clara. The "not promoted" Rick is independent, free, sunny and sincere, and has made a mechanical bird UAV with imagination and creativity. People's subject choice also tends to weaken in front of the consumption purpose. Josie "really hopes I can go out" (164). Her real needs are not completely controlled by the subject, "she can only lie in bed and get sick. I am very happy about this" (164). Josie's passive choice against humanity bitterly shows that people can't become real themselves in the consumer society. The lack of "authenticity" makes people farther and farther away from their essence.

Klara and the sun focuses on the idealized world of sustainable production in the progress of human society. This vision has inherent socio political motives. Although "progress" is a worrying term in literary criticism, it is regarded as a continuous natural evolution rather than the capitalist position of moral progress growing for growth. The bourgeoisie's rule of society is unconsciously integrated into all corners of society (Habermas 58). Modern people are constrained by the exchange value of goods and degenerate into empty subjects like machines. They prefer to use the dogmatic Manichaeism dichotomy to understand this chaotic world. Individual lives that rely on technology, experts and dominant public opinion to decide their own behavior instead of themselves, such as the body of "just fabric" (268) made by Mr. kapaldi in Klara and the sun, hanging in Mr. kapaldi's laboratory, waiting for the rebirth of "human nature".

Ishiguro put perceptual thinking above and deeply criticized the symptoms of the late capitalist era, which organically combined the value of life and the value of capitalism. Although the human body or "human concept" will change due to technology, its "existence itself" as a species should not be diluted. Ishiguro meticulously depicts the picture of consumption alienation that the whole society is flocking to. It seems that consumers have gained more extensive freedom

in various fields, but in fact, they sacrificed their subjectivity and critical consciousness in an unconscious state. "Work" is no longer just a productive transformation of nature, but subject to the vicious circle of morbid capital accelerating machine ethics, and human logic is submerged in the overall development of capital logic, "Man" became a slave to goods (Marcuse, Popper 54).

In *Klara and the sun*, Chrissy "is bound by a contract she once signed every minute she opens her eyes" (239), often holding "a rectangular plate close to her ear" (288). She hopes that her income will be enough to support Josie's promotion. The high-intensity work makes her relationship with Josie limited to the time when Chrissy drinks coffee at breakfast. Chrissy worried that "once I stop one day, Josie's world, my world, will collapse" (239). All people are passively involved in the infinite cycle of capital investment growth of enterprise profit growth, and are in the promotion of centralized purchase. They no longer touch themselves, that is, their essence (Heidegger 27). The capitalist consumption inherent in the capitalist order of "buy or die" (white 73) shaped the deeply materialized modern people such as "coffee cup lady", "raincoat man" and "food mixer woman" ridiculed by Ishiguro in *Klara and the sun*.

Capitalist production pursues not only the production of goods, but also the production of social relations and life forms (Hardt, Negri 100). The root of the modern crisis lies in the capitalist way of production and life and the nature of the continuous growth and expansion of capital. The externality of modernity focuses on those who are driven by the logic of capital proliferation. Ishiguro always observes with compassion the spiritual characteristics of people who have changed their ethical standards after the dim light of religion. The "Id" nature of self preservation and self satisfaction is the culprit of the ecological crisis. Modern people manipulated by capital logic have no suspense when facing the choice of natural interests and self interests, and will fall to the "Id". The return of "human nature" is also an important anchor of Ishiguro's ecological ethics system. As the smallest member of society, only when human individuals regain the privilege of "thinking" and actively maintain the spiritual dimension of spiritual ecology, can they truly realize the "goodness" that makes the developable life realize its highest value. The unique creative power of human beings can provide rich, personalized, fresh and flexible life forms. In the face of the continuous global crisis, Ishiguro denounced the increasingly obvious real social scene of consumption while protesting the increasingly dazzling material inequality.

#### **4. "Sun" Belief: A Metaphor for People Who Surpass the Power of Science and Technology**

Compared with the relatively short human history, it can be said that the sun is the inexhaustible source of life. Since the birth of life on earth, all things have lived mainly with the thermal radiation energy provided by the sun. In *Klara and the sun*, like the robot Klara in the future, most of the energy needed comes directly or indirectly from the sun. Solar radiation has become an important part of human energy. After Ishiguro won the Nobel Prize for literature, his first novel *Klara and the sun* once again refreshed the global readers' understanding of Ishiguro himself. Too many readers fail to understand the creative intention of the novel. It looks like Hayao Miyazaki's film. Ishiguro gives the new film warm colors and fairy tale plots. In a high-tech future society, human beings can improve themselves through editing, and robots are freely sold in shop windows. Such scenes seem not uncommon in science fiction films, but is this novel really just a position of technological progress? Through careful reading, we can find such a paradox. As a high-tech product, Klara has a religious belief in the "sun". She believes that the sun burns its energy with absolute generosity, gives itself the power of such a solar robot, and can certainly give its human owner Josie the magical power of recovery. Ishiguro praised the spirituality and divinity of the "sun". In the heart of his protagonist Clara, "the sun"

has absolute authority and power like an omnipotent God. But different from the traditional "God", Klara gave the "sun" human dimension, just like one of the ancient Greek gods. She believes that the "sun" rises in the East and sets in the west, which means that "the sun is on its way, walking between the roofs of buildings" (3). Obviously, Klara regarded the "sun" as an existence with giant attributes, rather than a god quietly sitting high on the temple and worshipped by incense. Klara was "lucky to see him walk like this" (3), "often worried that she would be weaker day by day, because the sun was often not seen in the center of the store (3). But boy AF Rex told Klara not to worry, because" the sun always has a way to find us, no matter where we are "(3). Even convinced that touching the pattern of the sun can have strength. The word "sun" is mentioned many times in the novel. Undoubtedly, the sun is a central word in this work. The "pattern of the sun" has also appeared many times. As an apposition of sunshine and shadow, "pattern of the sun" has more metaphorical significance. The belief in the "sun" seems closer to it. In the 21st century, which is swept by a wave of science and technology, Ishiguro takes a new look at "faith" and gives it special power, which is ironic. In order to accept "age", Josie had to bear its complications, lingering in bed and becoming weaker and weaker. The adverse reactions brought by high technology can not be solved by technology itself, but put into a good faith. If Clara's cognition as a robot has not yet reached a certain level, but in this article, both Josie's father Paul and Josie's boyfriend Rick do not hesitate to believe Clara's plan to save Qiaoxi. This seemingly ridiculous plan of praying to the "sun" for Josie's recovery has received unconditional support from mankind. It can be seen that what Ishiguro wants to express is his deep doubt about science and technology. Is it true that Mr. kapaldi said that "the new Josie will not be an imitation, she will really be Josie. It is a continuation of Josie" (261)? In this era of heavy reliance on technology, the human mind has degenerated into a container for listening to any advice and strategy. Although Clara's barn prayer plan and kutins destruction plan sound absurd, their seemingly standardized steps are recognized by humans who lack the ability of independent thinking, so they are considered feasible and reasonable. As the core field of physical and mental existence, subjectivity has pushed the human subject to its own limit. Here, we have to praise Ishiguro's wonderful hand, which simplifies human activities into the rough equivalence of utility, and the wonderful irony is amazing. Ishiguro's original intention is to refuse to limit the meaning of existence and stay on utilitarianism and usefulness. The discourse siege focusing solely on productivity has deeply rewritten the essence of mankind. In this era, we are all regarded as homogeneous cultural subjects, controlled and manufactured by ideological authority such as kapardi. Kapardi believes that "the final winners are always those who stick to it and maintain confidence". The "confidence" here is absurd. This "confidence" believes that "a human heart must be complex, but it must also be limited" (276). Clara's "faith" is an ancient "sun" that can heal and save mankind. If Mr. kapaldi's "confidence" is the future of mankind, how can we understand that the sequelae of genetic modification that cannot be saved by scientific and technological treatment is dramatically cured by the "sun" that Klara believes in. Ishiguro deliberately compares these two "confidence", but he has already reached a conclusion.

## 5. Conclusion

The disasters brought to the people of the world by the large-scale war and totalitarian revolution just over the last century seem to have been obliterated in the dust of history. Ishiguro's eyes have always focused on the emotional trauma that historical events and their remnants have brought to all mankind. His narrative power comes from his continuous attention to the "commonality" of mankind expressed by more universal literary themes such as "human nature". What moves readers all over the world is not only Ishiguro's superb narrative skills of infinitely interweaving imagination and memory, but also people's universal reflection on human nature after the two world wars. Since the Second World War, the essence

of capital pursuing profit has continuously promoted scientific and technological innovation. So far, technology centrism has appeared as an accomplice of capital. Science and technology has brought about the diversification of consumption forms and commodities, and consumerism reacts on technological upgrading. They jointly disintegrate the individual's sense of resistance, and then maintain the capitalist ruling system. Science and technology, which hopes to lead people into an ideal society, has also colluded with consumerism. While bringing efficiency, it counts and manages people in the form of numbers. Ishiguro is deeply aware of this social reality. Starting from mankind's expanding scientific and technological rationality and capital consumption logic, he describes the unchanged future social picture, with the intention of alerting global readers and truly understanding that it is most important for human survival and understanding the world in the dimension of "human", Neither technology nor consumption can really position and solidify people's unique position in the world.

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