

The Martian Aspects of Ishigups *klara and the sun*, defamiliarizing the known

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Abstract

This paper explores the Martian aspects of Kazuo Ishiguro's novel "Klara and the Sun" through a lens of defamiliarization, challenging readers to reconsider their understanding of artificial intelligence, humanity, and love. Utilizing the concept of the 'Martian' as a metaphor for the alienation experienced in a technologically advanced society, Ishiguro's narrative creates a distance that invites readers to engage with familiar themes in unfamiliar ways. The protagonist, Klara, an artificial companion, observes human behaviors and societal norms from a unique perspective that highlights the dissonance between human emotional depth and mechanistic understanding. This study examines how Ishiguro uses Klara's outsider perspective to reflect on complexities of identity, belonging, and the nature of consciousness in a world increasingly defined by its reliance on technology. By defamiliarizing the known, "Klara and the Sun" not only critiques contemporary trends in human relationships but also encourages readers to reconsider their own lives in the context of an evolving interplay between the human and the artificial. Further more the paper argues that Ishiguro posits the very nature of humanity as something that can be redefined in light of new technologies, thereby challenging the reader to reconsider the significance of empathy, agency, and emotional authenticity in a world where the lines between humans and machines are increasingly blurred.

Key Words: Defamiliarizing , Ishiguro , *Klara and the Sun*, A.I., Surreal , Cosmogony, Freud , Artificial Friend.

العناصر الاستثنائية في رواية الكاتب ايشيكورو كلارا والشمس ؛ تغريب المألوف الخلاصة

يتناول هذا البحث الجوانب الاستثنائية الغير معتاد عليها في رواية كازو إيشيغورو "كلارا والشمس" من خلال تحليل خاصية تغريب المألوف، مما يتحدى القراء لإعادة النظر في فهمهم للذكاء الاصطناعي اوالإنسانية والحب. باستخدام مفهوم "المريخي" كاستعارة للاغتراب الذي يعاني منه المجتمع المتقدم تقنيًا، يخلق سرد إيشيغورو مسافة تدعو القراء إلى الانخراط في موضوعات مألوفة بطرق غير مألوفة. تراقب البطلة، كلارا، وهي رفيقة اصطناعية، السلوكيات البشرية والمعايير المجتمعية من منظور فربد يسلط الضوء على التنافر بين العمق العاطفي البشري والفهم الميكانيكي. تدرس هذه الدراسة كيف يستخدم إيشيغورو منظور كالرا الخارجي للتفكير في تعقيدات الهوبة والانتماء وطبيعة الوعى في عالم يتم تحديده بشكل متزايد من خلال اعتماده على التكنولوجيا. من خلال إزالة المألوف من المعروف، لا تنتقد "كلارا والشمس" الاتجاهات المعاصرة في العلاقات الإنسانية فحسب، بل تشجع القراء أيضًا على إعادة النظر في حياتهم الخاصة في سياق التفاعل المتطور بين الإنسان والاصطناعي. علاوة على ذلك، تزعم الورقة أن إيشيغورو يفترض أن الطبيعة الحقيقية للإنسانية يمكن إعادة تعريفها في ضوء التقنيات الجديدة، وبالتالي تحدي القارئ لإعادة النظر في أهمية التعاطف والوكالة والأصالة العاطفية في عالم أصبحت فيه الخطوط الفاصلة بين البشر والآلات غير واضحة بشكل متزايد.

1. Introduction

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* begins with the phrase "When we were new...", (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 7) which is also the point of departure for this paper and an analysis of the novel based on a combination of close reading and an application of several analytical frames. Of course, the salient point about people is that we are *not* new; however cognitively blank we might be at the beginning of life, we are rapidly filled with convention, culture, and, in a word, the old, robbing us of the ability to view, experience, and represent the world in any new way once we have reached a particular stage of development. Understood from this perspective, what unites otherwise disparate conceptual categories such as the surreal, the eerie, artificial intelligence (AI), and cosmogony is their ability, when deployed in certain ways, to peel back the old in order to discover (if not rediscover) the new.

In this paper, I apply the analytical frames of the surreal, the eerie, AI, and cosmogony to Klara and the Sun as a means of exploring what the novel has to say about defamiliarizing what we think we know, which, of course, is a powerful means of sharing Klara's most obvious gift with the reader—the remarkable gift of being able to approach the world and ourselves as if we were indeed new. Unpacking this particular gift is the main objective of this paper, which explores Klara and the Sun in a multitude of ways not previously applied in the critical literature on this novel. As Klara and the Sun is new, it has not had time to accumulate a body of demonstrating degree of critique any consensus characteristics and dynamics of the novel. This paper can therefore be considered as an attempt to enumerate some possibly helpful frameworks of critique and exploration that can be taken up in greater detail in future scholarship on Klara and the Sun.

1.1 Synopsis

Klara, is an Artificial Friend designed to provide companionship for children. Set in a future where genetic engineering is commonplace, Klara observes the world from her store window, learning about human emotions and relationships. She is eventually chosen by a young girl named Josie, who is battling a mysterious illness.

As Klara becomes a part of Josie's life, she witnesses the complexities of human interactions, love, and sacrifice. Through her solar-powered perspective, Klara grapples with her purpose and the nature of consciousness. The story explores themes of artificial intelligence, the meaning of love, and the moral implications of technology in society. Ultimately, Kara's journey raises profound questions about what it means to truly connect with others and the value of life itself. The story is narrated through the perspective of Klara, an Artificial Friend (AF) designed to serve as a companion for children. Through Klara's experiences, Ishiguro examines profound themes of consciousness, love, and the ethical implications of technology.

At the heart of the narrative is Klara's quest for understanding and connection. As an AF, Klara is programmed to observe and learn from the world around her. Her observations, made from the confines of a store window and later within Josie's home, reflect a childlike curiosity and a unique perspective on human behaviour. Klara's ability to perceive emotions and her attempts to comprehend them highlight the nuances of human interaction. This perspective challenges readers to consider the nature of consciousness—what it means to feel and connect on a human level.

The relationship between Klara and Josie, the girl she serves, is central to the narrative. Josie suffers from a mysterious illness,

which adds an element of urgency and poignancy to their bond. Klara's loyalty and devotion to Josie are palpable; she believes that her solar power has the ability to heal Josie. This belief raises questions about faith, hope, and the lengths to which one would go to protect a loved one. Klara's determination to help Josie showcases a form of love that, while artificial, echoes the depths of human affection. Ishiguro compels the reader to ponder whether true emotional connection can exist between a human and an artificial being.

As the story unfolds, the societal implications of cloning and the creation of AFs are explored. The world Ishiguro constructs is one where the elite have access to genetic enhancements for their children, leading to a stark division between the "lifted" (genetically enhanced) and the "unlifted." This division highlights themes of inequality and the ethical considerations surrounding biotechnology. Klara, as a product of this society, embodies the tension between technological advancement and the inherent value of human life. Her existence prompts questions about identity and the societal definitions of worth.

Ishiguro's prose is marked by simplicity and clarity, which effectively captures Klara's innocence and perspective. The narrative unfolds at a contemplative pace, allowing readers to immerse themselves in Klara's observations and reflections. This style emphasizes the contrast between Klara's understanding of the world and the complexities of human emotions, further driving home the novel's exploration of what it means to be truly alive.

In conclusion, *Klara and the Sun* is a profound meditation on humanity, consciousness, and the intricate web of relationships that define our existence. Through Klara's eyes, Ishiguro invites us to

reconsider the boundaries between artificial intelligence and human emotion. The novel ultimately serves as a cautionary tale about the implications of technological advancement, urging readers to reflect on what it means to love and be loved in an increasingly artificial world. In doing so, Ishiguro crafts a narrative that resonates deeply with contemporary ethical dilemmas, making *Klara and the Sun* a poignant exploration of the human condition.

2. Analysing Klara and the Sun from different perspectives

2.1 The Surreal Frame

One common misconception about surrealism is that this art form was driven by the search for (or the creation of) manifestly strange objects, whereas a more appropriate formulation would be that surrealism was partly about making observers aware the ordinary is itself strange, and one of the techniques used to achieve this demonstration is naivete as part of the surrealist aesthetic itself. Given that the etymological root of *naïve* involves concepts related innocence, inexperience, and unfamiliarity (Skeat, 1910), consider the following brief examples of watershed works of surrealism, many of which have been discussed in detail in Aspley's (2010) book. René Magritte's The Treachery of Images: Naivete is part of the technique of this seminal surreal painting insofar as an illustration of a pipe (itself very basic, as if appearing in a book to instruct children) is accompanied by the French text "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" ("This is not a pipe"), with the innocence and straightforwardness of the statement compelling viewers to question perhaps previously unexamined assumptions about representation and reality. In terms of defamiliarizing the known, the tricky simplicity of Magritte's approach exposes the inherent strangeness of how we perceive and label everyday objects. Salvador Dalí's The

Persistence of Memory is conceptually naïve in a playful way, that is, by deliberately conflating time, clocks, and memory. Among its other functions, this most famous of all surrealist paintings answers the following naïve question: What if clocks, instead of tracking time, were time, and what if we had no true grasp on time itself? André Breton's Nadja, among the first surrealist novel, Nadja's structure is naïve in the sense of not making any attempt to differentiate between reality, dream, the quotidian, and the impossible. As noted subsequently in this paper, a similar approach applies towards the end of Klara and the Sun. Also Man Ray's Gift and Meret Oppenheim's Object (Luncheon in Fur) transform ordinary objects by attaching unexpected things to them, as might be done by someone (that is, a naif) who does not know what these objects are and who therefore feels justified in juxtaposing them. Naivete can also mean the combination of unrelated things, because, in distinction to naivete, the quality of knowing allows us to seriate and associate things that belong together. Consider Giorgio de Chirico's *The Song of Love*: De Chirico's juxtaposition of a classical sculpture head, a rubber glove, and a ball in an empty landscape is this kind of naivete. Lefebvre has captured the essence of surrealism's relationship to the unfamiliar and the known in the following way:

The 'new realm of the marvelous' is marvelous no longer....With Surrealism...it is no longer a question of the marvelous, but of the weird, the unexpected and the bizarre....In fact, this so-called marvelous realm operates on the level of everyday life. Not above or outside it, as in the cases of magic....The marvelous is supposed to turn everyday life inside out, to discover its other, infinitely more interesting side. (Lefebvre, 2008, p. 115). The surrealist frame (in all of the dimensions explored above, through key words in this

genre) is richly applicable to *Klara and the Sun*—indeed, from the beginning of the novel, where Klara is already functioning as someone who can show us what Lefebvre described as the "infinitely more interesting side" (Lefebvre, 2008, p. 115) of a reality we think we know. Here, Ishiguro uses a perspective rooted in innocence and inexperience to defamiliarize the known through Klara's eyes. This approach recalls the surrealist technique of naivete, which, as noted in the examples above, also defamiliarizes the known. Some close readings are offered below, divided into the subcategories of cosmogony, social interaction, isolation and space, and memory of reality.

2.2 Cosmogony

Cosmogony is a major theme within *Klara and the Sun* and could be approached as a standalone theme. However, cosmogony also fits within a surrealist appreciation of the novel (see also Klingsöhr-Leroy, 2004 for a more detailed discussion of the interaction between surrealism and cosmogony), especially if the point of such an analytical departure involves the concept of naivete. Klara's perception of the sun as a source of physical nourishment is conceptually naïve insofar as she views the sun almost as a deity, as a child might do. This innocent belief system creates a surreal framework within which the ordinary act of sunlight filtering into a store becomes imbued with a sense of mystical importance that Klara is then able to convey to the reader:

When I was lucky enough to see him like that, I'd lean my face forward to take in as much of his nourishment as I could...But as soon as my fingers touched it, the pattern faded...I patted the spot where it had been, and when that

didn't work, rubbed my hands over the floorboards—it wouldn't come back. (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 12).

Here is a naive reverence for the sun that transforms a simple, ubiquitous, and unremarked

natural phenomenon into a profound, almost magical event, much like Dalí's playful conflation of time, clocks, and memory in *The Persistence of Memory*. Klara's actions and serious but nonetheless amusing descriptions make the reader rethink the everyday experience of sunlight just as the surrealist works described above make us rethink other objects that we think we know—thereby defamiliarizing the known. The sun, which we consider known to us, is shown to us anew by Klara.

The sun is just part of Klara's naïve cosmogony. Another part of it is the world itself.

Klara's observations from the store window reveal her naïve wonder at the outside world—with her detailed attention to the smallest elements, such as the individual bricks of the RPO Building and the behavior of passers-by, highlighting the unfamiliarity of these scenes that we only think we know:

I could see for the first time that the RPO Building was in fact made of separate bricks, and that it wasn't white, as I'd always thought, but a pale yellow... I could see the passers-by, their different kinds of shoes, paper cups, shoulder bags, little dogs. (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 11).

This meticulous description of the mundane, but as seen through Klara's new eyes, compels viewers to question their assumptions about representation and reality in much the same way as surrealist art does. The end result is that Klara makes us feel that

we have considered to be familiar is actually strange and therefore worthy of deeper contemplation and wonder. Ultimately, in this and other portions of the book, Ishiguro uses Klara's naive perspective to, in creating a new cosmogony as expressed by Klara, defamiliarize what we think we know about creation. We are left wondering how we would look at the world if indeed we could see it through new eyes. Much of *Klara and the Sun* presents us with precisely these eyes so we can answer the question for ourselves.

2.3 . Social Interaction

Klara's interactions with other so-called Artificial Friends (AFs) like herself are also marked by naivete, revealing deeper truths about their existence and the dynamics within the store. For example, when Boy AF Rex accuses Klara of being greedy for taking all the sun's nourishment, the conversation touches on a fundamental, though usually unspoken, anxiety among the AFs about their dependency on sunlight:

'You took all the nourishment for yourself, Klara. Look, it's gone almost dark.' Sure enough the light inside the store had become very gloomy... 'I'm sorry,' I said to Rex, then turning to Rosa: 'I'm sorry. I didn't mean to take it all myself.' (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 15).

Klara's and the other AFs' naive belief in the sun's nourishment echoes the surrealist technique of attaching unexpected meanings to ordinary objects, as seen in Man Ray's *Gift* and Meret Oppenheim's *Object (Luncheon in Fur)*, and it does so through depictions of the AFs' social interaction as well as Klara's interiority, adding a dimension to what is already a rich application of surrealist technique.

2.4. Isolation and Space

Moving to the end of the novel, Klara's isolation in the Utility Room and her interactions with space reflect a surreal naivete that highlights her unique perception of the world even after she has spent quite some time in it. Consider how, when Josie's young adult visitors arrive, Klara instinctively moves to the Utility Room, demonstrating an innocent acceptance of her changing role and environment: "Naturally there was not enough space during such visits for me to remain in the bedroom myself, and in any case, I understood that my presence wasn't appropriate as it once had been" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 213). This naive understanding of spatial dynamics is further emphasized when Josie reorganizes the Utility Room to give Klara a view from the small window, reflecting a playful simplicity that transforms the mundanity of looking out a window into wonder. Klara's new vantage point allows her to see the world outside with ever-fresh eyes, continuing to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, the known into the engagingly unfamiliar:

The view was similar to the old one from Josie's rear window two floors below. Of course, the trajectory had altered, and a part of the roof was intruding into the right of my picture. But I could see the gray sky stretching over the cut fields all the way to Mr McBain's barn. (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 219).

2.4. Memory and Reality

Klara's handling of memory and her blending of past experiences illustrate a surreal, naive approach to understanding reality as her memories begin to merge in curious ways, creating composite scenes that defy logical boundaries: "For instance, the dark sky morning when the Sun saved Josie, the trip to Morgan's

Falls and the illuminated diner Mr Vance chose will come into my mind, merged together into a single setting" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 231). Here, the distinctions between different events blur naively, creating a dreamlike narrative. Klara's awareness of the rough borders of these composite memories highlights her unique perspective on reality:

I remain conscious of their rough borders – such as might have been created by an impatient child tearing with her fingers instead of cutting with scissors...Even so, such composite memories have sometimes filled my mind so vividly, I've forgotten for long moments that I am, in reality, sitting here in the Yard, on this hard ground. (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 202-218).

This approach is reminiscent of André Breton's Nadja, in which the narrative structure also does not differentiate between reality, dream, the quotidian, and the impossible. In both cases, the naive blending / bleeding together of different elements creates a surreal experience that challenges conventional perceptions of time Furthermore, Klara's reflection on her ability to and space. differentiate and order her memories despite their surreal combinations highlights her unique, almost poetic understanding of reality: "But I don't think it would have worked out so well. Not because I wouldn't have achieved accuracy. But however hard I tried, I believe now there would have remained something beyond my reach" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 227). Klara's ability to perceive and articulate the limitations of her understanding while embracing the surreal nature of her memories is another means of defamiliarizing what we think we know, that is, out own memories and identities.

2.5. Freud

Freud saw the unconscious is *unheimlich*; it is eerie to us, as we are not acquainted with our own repressions, and it is unpleasant, since it is the origin of neurosis. In this context, Freud wrote that "As soon as something *actually happens* in our lives which seems to confirm the old, discarded beliefs we get a feeling of the uncanny [*unheimlich*]" (Freud, 1919, pp. 248-249). Freud is talking of a sense of horror, but more importantly he means to relate the "old, discarded beliefs" (Freud, 1919, pp. 248-249) with the *unheimlich*.

In *Klara and the Sun*, Klara experiences moments that echo this sense of eerie familiarity intertwined with new and unsettling realities—for example, when Mr. Capaldi visits and discusses the concerns about AFs being too clever, it touches on the human fear of the unknown and the repressed anxiety about technology and artificial intelligence that is articulated in this passage:

'Klara, the fact is, there's growing and widespread concern about AFs right now. People saying how you've become too clever. They're afraid because they can't follow what's going on inside any more. They can see what you do. They accept that your decisions, your recommendations, are sound and dependable, almost always correct. But they don't like not knowing how you arrive at them. That's where it comes from, this backlash, this prejudice.' (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 95).

In Freud's concept of the eerie, discomfort stems from encountering something simultaneously familiar and alien, triggering repressed fears. The societal anxiety about AFs reflects a collective unconscious unease, much like Freud's neuroses, in which the unsettling presence of AFs in human life brings to the surface deepseated fears of the unknown and uncontrollable, which many people feel even more acutely in the present age of AI.

Interestingly, Klara's own experiences in the house also highlight this eerie sensation. When Josie's friends visit, Klara finds herself pushed into the Utility Room, creating an unsettling feeling of displacement and isolation. This self-imposed isolation mirrors the eerie, as Klara navigates a familiar yet increasingly alien environment. Her relegation to the Utility Room, a space that should be mundane, becomes fraught with the decided eeriness of separation and otherness, much like Freud characterized the hidden, repressed parts of the human unconscious. Giles (1994) succinctly explains how Jung parted ways with Freud over the unconscious: "While Jung accepted the existence of the Freudian personal unconscious, with its painful secrets and repressed desires, he saw it as normally a small part of our total psychological life" (p. 113). The rest of psychic life was rooted in what Jung (1939) called the collective unconscious, a sort of depository of images and feelings collected over our entire evolutionary lifespan and deposited into every newborn child. Jung did not presume to describe the biological mechanisms for the collective unconscious; rather, he deduced its existence from the shared dreams, symbols, and creative expressions of many peoples from all over the world.

To Freud, the unconscious was by default eerie, a place where one could only find neurosis. The memories and other psychic artifacts stored in the unconscious were bad in themselves, and by their essence; we could not, for example, transform them into something better. The best we can do is to keep the repressed as repressed, at the risk of unleashing, according to Brooks, "condensation, displacement, hysterical conversion, compromise-formations," (Brooks, 2001, p. 125) and other damaging psychic phenomena. Jung, unlike Freud, wanted to explore archetypes "in order to restore their contents to the individual who has involuntarily lost them by projecting them outside himself" (Jung,

1939, p. 18); despite the fact that archetypes originate in the collective unconscious, they belong to each of us individually, and a person "is free to impute to them anything he [sic] fancies" (Jung, 1939, p. 25). They are not eerie.

Klara's character embodies archetypal qualities that resonate with the collective unconscious. In particular, her naive perception of the sun as a source of nourishment and her role as a caregiver for Josie are reminiscent of the archetypal caregiver and the sun as a life-giving force: "The Sun was very kind to me. He was always kind to me from the start. But when I was with Josie, once, he was particularly kind. I wanted Manager to know" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 123). Klara's reverence for the sun reflects an archetypal belief in a benevolent force, akin to what Jung identified as the nurturing aspects of the collective unconscious. Next, Klara's role as Josie's protector and companion highlights her embodiment of the caregiver archetype.

In moments of introspection, Klara reflects on her purpose and her connection to those around her, which is relatable to the collective unconscious:

'I did all I could to do what was best for Josie. I've thought about it many times now. And if it had become necessary, I'm sure I could have continued Josie. But it's much better the way it turned out, even though Rick and Josie aren't together.' (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 233).

Klara is here aware of the interconnectedness of her actions and their impact on others, reflecting Jung's idea of integrating archetypes to achieve psychological harmony. Klara's reflections and her role in Josie's life embody the therapeutic potential of engaging with the collective unconscious. Moreover, Klara's

moments of naive insight often lead to profound realizations about the human condition, with her simple yet impactful observations about memory and existence reveal the depth of her understanding:

'Mr Capaldi believed there was nothing special inside Josie that couldn't be continued. He told the Mother he'd searched and searched and found nothing like that. But I believe now he was searching in the wrong place. There was something very special, but it wasn't inside Josie. It was inside those who loved her.' (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 115).

Klara's realization that the essence of Josie resides in the hearts of those who love her reflects an unexpected but demonstrably Jungian understanding of the collective unconscious, where the significance of an individual is intertwined with the collective emotions and memories of others. This insight provides a therapeutic resolution, aligning with Jung's belief in the healing potential of exploring and integrating archetypal symbols.

2.6. AI and Human Uniqueness

AI problematizes what we think we know best, which, in a Cartesian sense, is ourselves (Cottingham, 2008). The essence of the famous *Cogito ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am") is that, even we doubt everything else, we can have direct knowledge of ourselves from our thoughts (Cottingham, 2008). Therefore, one of the most interesting things that *Klara and the Sun* does in terms of defamiliarizing the known is to deploy AI to make us rethink, review, and re-encounter the human experience itself, from the inside out. The close readings that follow in the subsections below explore some aspects of how AI functions to defamiliarize the known in *Klara and the Sun*. Klara's unique abilities challenge the human perception of uniqueness and consciousness. For example,

when the Mother questions Klara, she is confronted with the AF's detailed and precise observational skills:

'One moment, Josie.' Then she asked Manager: 'Every Artificial Friend is unique, right?'

'That's correct, ma'am. And particularly so at this level.'

'So what makes this one unique? This...Klara?'

'Klara has so many unique qualities, we could be here all morning. But if I had to emphasize just one, well, it would have to be her appetite for observing and learning. Her ability to absorb and blend everything she sees around her is quite amazing. As a result, she now has the most sophisticated understanding of any AF in this store, B3s not excepted.'

'Is that so.' (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 24).

In this exchange, we encounter Klara's AI ability to perceive and understand her environment in ways that rival human capability. Klara's precise description of Josie's physical attributes and movements further underscores this point:

'Klara,' the Mother said. 'I want you not to look towards Josie. Now tell me, without looking. What color are her eyes?'

'They're gray, ma'am.'

719

'Good. Josie, I want you to keep absolutely silent. Now, Klara. My daughter's voice. You heard her speak just now. How would you say her voice was pitched?'

'Her conversational voice has a range between A-flat above middle C to C octave.'

'Is that so?' There was another silence, then the Mother said: 'Last question. Klara. What did you notice about the way my daughter walks?'

'There's perhaps a weakness in her left hip. Also her right shoulder has potential to give pain, so Josie walks in a way that will protect it from sudden motion or unnecessary impact.' (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 24-25).

Klara's detailed observations, typically considered uniquely human traits, highlight the blurring line between human and artificial intelligence, challenging the Cartesian notion of self-knowledge, and, in this way too, defamiliarizing the known. Klara also undergoes an adaptation and learning process that mirrors human learning and cognitive development. Klara's ability to adapt to her surroundings and her role in Josie's life showcases an advanced level of intelligence and learning capacity that defamiliarizes the traditional understanding of AI. Consider how Klara's adaptation to the constantly changing environment of Josie's house demonstrates her sophisticated and self-updating cognitive abilities:

'The kitchen was especially difficult to navigate because so many of its elements would change their relationships to one another moment by moment... Throughout Josie's house, however, and in the kitchen in particular, Melania Housekeeper would constantly move items around, obliging me to start afresh in my learning.' (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 56).

One of the things that is most defamiliarizing about Klara's narrative is the disparity between her verbal sophistication and her spatial naivete, a disparity that is on full display in the passages that are excerpted above. As she progresses in her altogether brief journey through our world, Klara is learning many things that humans would already have learned long ago, typically in their early

childhoods, but she is also describing this learning in real time and in sophisticated and insightful language. Humans learn to navigate physical space before they can speak, and, by the time we can indeed speak, we have most likely forgotten what it is like to operate in the world. What Klara is describing back to us over the course of the novel is therefore something that is both familiar and alien. It is familiar because we have already done it, but it is alien because we have lost the memory of it and cannot describe it as Klara does. Ironically, then, an AI construct re-introduces us to a key aspect of humanity, spatial adaptation, in a manner that we ourselves cannot. We know ourselves through our intelligence, but, because our intelligence matures so much later than our first steps in the world, there is a gap between some of our most formative experiences and our ability to express / recall these experiences. *Klara and the Sun* fills this gap for us.

3. Conclusion

The frames of surrealism, the eerie, AI, and cosmogony can all be applied to help us understand how *Klara and the Sun* defamiliarizes what we think we know of the world and ourselves. I began by using the surreal frame to explore Klara's naïve but illuminating perception of the sun and her detailed observations of the world around her. The eerie, as conceptualized by Freud, was discussed in the context of societal anxieties about AI, highlighting how Klara's presence evokes both familiarity and alienation. Additionally, Jung's concept of the collective unconscious was examined through Klara's archetypal qualities and her connections to those around her. Finally, I explored how the novel's depiction of AI challenges Cartesian notions of self-knowledge by presenting an AI that forces us to re-encounter the human experience from an outsider's perspective. Through these various frames, Klara invites us to view the world with fresh eyes.

Lefebvre wrote of surrealism that:

The marvelous is supposed to turn everyday life inside out, to discover its other, infinitely more interesting side. (Lefebvre, 2008, p. 115).

Here, then, is what it means to defamiliarize the known: Not to do so in a nihilistic or intrinsically destabilizing way, but to do in a manner that shows us the new, the fascinating, and the wonderful. This is precisely what happens in *Klara and the Sun*. The novel thoroughly defamiliarizes the known, albeit under the guise of a standard science fiction / dystopia novel, and future critiques should focus on exploring how and why Ishiguro achieves these defamiliarizing effects.

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