TURUN YLIOPISTO

Complex Posthuman Relations

Ideological Contradiction in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* through the Paradigm of Marxism

Paavo Rossi
Master's thesis
Degree Programme in Language Learning and Teaching, English Department
School of Languages and Translation Studies
Faculty of Humanities
University of Turku
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In this thesis I investigate ideological contradiction in Kazuo Ishiguro's 2021 novel *Klara and the Sun.* I analyze ideological contradiction in the characterization of the protagonist, Klara, within three themes: cognitive autonomy, intrinsic value, and post-humanity. I also investigate how ideological contradiction diminishes the novel's critique of capitalism and anthropocentrism.

The theoretical framework of this thesis is Marxist. I utilize Marxist theories and concepts, such as the alienation theory, to study capitalist ideologies within the text. To further analyze the emergence of ideological contradiction, I utilize Gramsci's theories on hegemony and counter-hegemony, and Althusser's theories on ideology and interpellation.

As per my analysis, Klara's cognitive autonomy is limited but not entirely heterogeneous. Her coding encourages capitalist and anthropocentric ideologies, which she is unable to critically examine. Klara can, however, resist her teachings occasionally. Klara's internal value is often diminished by the society, but as she forms interpersonal relationships, she is granted some agency and worthiness by the people closest to her. Klara has some unique skills and features which highlight her posthuman uncanny, but her empathy and kindness are used to challenge the ideals of human superiority and perfectibility. The novel, however, fails to thoroughly challenge the status quo ontology of the identities of the human and posthuman.

I encourage further readings of the novel to better understand our relationship with the posthuman. Feminist and ecological readings can further reveal more about the aspects of nature and gender within technological Otherness. I also advocate for Marxist readings to deconstruct the naturalizing effects of capitalism.

Key words: Marxist literary criticism, Marxism, ideology, ideological contradiction, posthumanism, capitalism, Kazuo Ishiguro

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1 Introduction

"The nature of capitalism itself is changing its model. I do worry that we are not in control of these things anymore" (Allardice 2021) says the Nobel laureate Kazuo Ishiguro when discussing his 2021 novel *Klara and the Sun* (henceforth referred to as *Klara*). The novel is speculative fiction set in an alternative reality where AI-generated robots – artificial friends (AFs) – are used to combat human loneliness. One of these AFs is the ultra-observant and highly adaptive Klara who serves as the unique narrator of the novel. Through Klara's narration, the reader enters a glooming world of gene modified, 'lifted', children, heightened class difference and struggle, environmental distress, and emerging fascism all the while the novel acts as a challenge to our very core notion of humanness. Mirroring back to Ishiguro's words, the story seems to serve as a warning of the dangers of capitalism, but in which ways and to which degree?

Klara is a thematically rich novel as it engages in the topics of love, humanism, posthumanism, progress, technology, environmentalism, capitalism, class, equality, and equity. The novel furthermore comments on the status quo ontology of human–robot identities, relations, and relationships. *Klara's* complexity has offered scholars an opportunity to analyze the story from multiple different perspectives. A good deal of previous studies centers around Klara's identity as the posthuman Other – Stenseke (2022), for example, analyzes Klara's moral agency, while Du (2022) links Klara's position to a feminized affective laborer. Other scholars have focused on the novel's critique of capitalism and class difference. Sahu and Karmakar (2022), for example, inspect Klara as a carefree commodity within a capitalist disposable culture. Overall, the current studies of *Klara* have ideologically focused on its anti-capitalist nature. In my thesis I, however, analyze the ideological contradiction and complexity of the novel. I argue *Klara* is a novel that inhabits two ideologies which contradict and challenge each other – one is more anti-capitalist and post-humanist in nature while the other is in favor of techno-capitalism and anthropocentrism. To study ideological contradiction in the novel, I explore the characterization of the main protagonist and narrator Klara. With my analysis, I focus on Klara's autonomy and agency, her intrinsic and instrumental value through the relationships she has with other characters, and Klara's characterization through a post-humanist and a humanist paradigm. Together these elements come to characterize Klara as a subject who is ideologically contradictory. I

furthermore argue that the novel's contradictory ideologies diminish its critique of capitalism and anthropocentrism. The main research questions for this study are thus:

1. How is ideological contradiction evident in the characterization of the protagonist Klara in *Klara and the Sun*?
2. How does the ideological contradiction affect *Klara and the Sun*'s critique of capitalism and anthropocentrism?

My analysis of *Klara* is rooted within a Marxist theoretical framework, and I utilize Marxist ideas and theories, such as the *alienation theory*, to discuss and expose capitalist tendencies within the text. To further study ideological contradictions in *Klara,* I utilize Gramsci's concepts of *hegemony* and *counter-hegemony*, and Althusser's theory of *Ideology* and *interpellation*. Gramsci defined hegemony as a form of internalized social control of the lower classes to make certain ideas, views, and practices seem natural (Barry 2002, 165). Counter-hegemonic paradigms, conversely, challenge these ideas through a "class-wide rethinking of possibilities for social transformation" (Foley 2019, 106). Together, hegemony and counter-hegemony constitute a terrain where all ideologies are moderately contradictive and "bear internal traces of the opposed understandings of the world" (Foley 2019, 107). With these concepts, I want to highlight Marxism as a theory that is embedded in lived contradictions such as the ones evident in literature. I utilize Althusser's theories to further analyze more nuanced aspects in the novel such as individual word choices which uphold capitalist tendencies or favor counter-hegemonic practices. In his theory, Althusser makes a distinction between ideologies and *Ideologies.* The former refers to conscious modes of thought while the latter encompasses unconscious aspects as well. When discussing ideologies in the analysis, I combine these two terms and thus refer to both conscious and unconscious modes.

Several Marxist critics emphasize the importance of analyzing literature as ideological manifestations. Eagleton (2002, 6) argues that ideology affects every aspect of literature ranging from content and themes to rhythm, style, and ultimately form. Thus, with ideological literary analysis scholars can reveal both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic views about "classes, class conflict and power relations within a society" (Nayar 2010, 124). Foley (2019, 156) highlights the role of analyzing mixed ideological signals in literature instead of solely focusing on the way literature works sustain ruling-class ideologies. She argues for a *symptomatic reading* of literature works where critics can find and expose mixed "rhetorical signals" and "seemingly inconsistent interpretive stance" within seemingly ideologically

consistent works making the analyzed text both “apology and critique” (ibid.). When studying ideologies in literary works, critics can ferret out the multifaceted and often contradictory nature of the work. This is precisely my aim with the present study as well – *Klara* is a text that is seemingly anti-capitalist in nature as indicated by Ishiguro’s comments and the scholarly works introduced in the previous section. When read critically within a Marxist framework with symptomatic reading, however, the text comes to bear contradictory meanings which convey traces of both criticism and favoritism of capitalism and the hegemony of anthropocentrism.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. First in chapter 2, I introduce the theoretical background of the thesis. I discuss the basis of Marxism with the theories and concepts of class, alienation, and reification. I then turn the discussion into ideologies. I start with a general introduction into ideologies within Marxist theory and then discuss Gramsci’s theories of hegemony and counter-hegemony, and Althusser’s theories of *Ideology* and interpellation. I also discuss the role of contradictive ideologies within Marxist literature analyses. I then begin my analysis in chapter 3 by introducing the general plot of the novel. I then analyze ideological contradiction within the novel from three perspectives. I start by analyzing Klara’s cognitive autonomy in section 3.1. Thereafter, I discuss her intrinsic value in section 3.2 and finally explore her (post-)humane characterization in section 3.3. In chapter 4 I discuss how Klara’s ideological contradiction affects the novel’s critique of capitalism and anthropocentrism. In chapter 5 I conclude my findings and suggest further studies.

2 Theory of Marxism: Refiguring the Hegemony of Capitalism

In this section I explain the basic theory and ideas of Marxism and different theories on ideology. These function as the standpoint of my analysis of *Klara* and the ideologies within it. I first discuss the general notion and goals of Marxism, the terms class and alienation, and reification. I then turn the discussion into ideology theories. I first introduce ideology on a general level in Marxist theory. Thereafter I introduce Gramsci's theories on hegemony and counter-hegemony. Finally, I discuss Althusser's theories of *Ideology* and interpellation.

2.1 Basics of Marxism

Marxism is a materialistic theory that has its basis in the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marxism aims to determine the relationship between three major factors: production, (social) structure, and history (Boucher 2012). Commonly, Marxism argues for a connection between productive forces and oppression, and the ways social and societal structures support this connection. Understanding this relationship, Marxism aims not only to understand the world, but to actively change it as well (Barry 2002, 156). The fundamental goal of Marxism is to establish a classless society with a common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange (ibid.). Consequently, Marxism advocates communist societies.

At the center of Marxist theory is the term of class which is the "primary analytical category explaining social inequality" (Foley 2019, 39). For Marx and Engels, class refers to a societal division which is instrumental in questions of political, social, and cultural power (Nayar 2010, 122). Marx and Engels developed their theory of class under industrialized societies where wealth distribution among individuals was asymmetrical. They divided classes by their "productive functions and interests" (Morris 2010, 41). On this basis, Marx and Engels identify two classes: the bourgeoisie who own the means of production and the proletariat who work for the bourgeoisie and own nothing but their laboring bodies (Nayar 2010, 122). Capitalism, then, advocates class struggle by "its unequal distribution of property and wealth" (Morris 2010, 41). Marx and Engels see the dominant class's paramount concern is the quest for profit (Barry 2002, 156), and to attain this goal they need to exploit the proletariat of their time, effort, and labor. Contrary to mainstream sociological theories, however, Marxism does not subscribe to the notion that classes are an inevitable, unavoidable feature in societies (Foley 2019, 36). Instead, the oppressed and oppressive class are in contradictory interrelation. Marx exemplifies this with the two classes he identified in saying "without the

bourgeoisie there is no proletariat" (Foley 2019. 36). The tenet of this statement is that the relationship between the two classes is an arbitrary construction supported by the capitalist order, e.g., in a communist society they would cease to exist and affect. In Marxist literature, then, analysis of the concept of class is paramount. With class as an analytical tool, critics can expose capitalist thought patterns believed to be the "products of processes beyond human creation or intervention" when, in fact, they are often tools for legitimatizing ruling-class ideology (Foley 2019, 153).

The result of capitalist exploitation is alienated labor. Alienation refers to the workers' fragmented or nonexistent relationship to pivotal social and physical relations (Jaeggi 2014, 3). This is due to the capitalist order wherein workers lose all agency and are forced by a foreign command in and into labor (Jaeggi 2014, 13). For Marx, alienation is a multifaceted process which contains four aspects: the alienation from the product, alienation from the worker's own activity, alienation from other individuals and ultimately alienation from species-being which refers to alienation from oneself and of human nature (Jaeggi 2014, 11). As an alienated worker does not control or fully comprehend the processes of capitalism, the system and their work remain opaque to them (Jaeggi 2014, 13). The effects of alienation are immense; to an alienated worker, the world presents itself as indifferent, insignificant, and meaningless (Jaeggi 2014, 3). The theory of alienation can be linked to ideas of capitalist exploitation where workers are drained of their human worth and are perceived solely in terms of economic gain. In Marxist theory, this is known as *reification* as positioned by György Lukács (Honneth 2008). Under the reification process, a (human) subject or an entity that does not possess object-like characteristics "comes to be regarded as a thing" (Honneth 2008, 21). Reification, like alienation, is a multifaceted process. It can be divided to three phases: "Subject and other in commodity exchange are mutually urged to perceive given objects solely as 'things' that one can potentially make a profit on, to regard each other solely as 'objects' of profitable transactions, and finally to regard their own abilities as nothing but supplemental 'resources' in the calculation of profit opportunities" (Honneth 2008, 22). It is thus a process of perceiving oneself but also other subjects as mere objects. As societies become "hyper-technologized and hyper-commodified" with the emergence of AI and robots, reification becomes more and more relevant (Smulewicz-Zucker 2020, 2). It is a question on how to perceive these technological beings – as mere reified objects or as entities capable of being holistic and meaningful? As the main protagonist of *Klara* is a robot with many human-like characteristics both alienation and reification are relevant to my analysis.

2.2 Ideologies as Tools to Produce and Legitimize Power

Ideology is one of the most influential, applied, and contested concepts in Marxist theory. As such, it holds many varying definitions and interpretations both within Marxism and other branches of political, philosophical, economic, and social theory. The term was coined in French Enlightenment philosophy in the 18th century to denote the teaching of ideas (Stråth 2013, 3). Thereafter the term ideology has been adapted and reconceptualized by numerous branches of philosophical and political theory. In this section I first introduce ideology on a general level in Marxist theory. I then turn the discussion to Gramsci's theory of hegemony and counter-hegemony, and Althusser's theory of *Ideology* and interpellation.

There is no universally agreed definition of ideology either within Marxism or outside of it – trying to define it is perhaps impossible. Depending on the school of thought, its denotation can range from "forms of thought motivated by social interest" and "identity thinking" to "action-oriented sets of beliefs" and "semiotic closure" (Eagleton 1991, 1–2). The term, however, can be approached from certain universals, at least in Marxist thinking. Ideologies generally refer to both belief systems and questions of power and especially the ways power is produced, legitimated, and maintained by certain social groups or classes (Eagleton 1991, 6). These ways can be approached with six different strategies as positioned by Eagleton (1991, 5–6): (i) ideology promotes beliefs and values congenial to it, (ii) naturalizes them as self-evident, and (iii) universalizes them. Alternatively, ideology (iv) devalues and (v) rejects opposing ideas and beliefs which ultimately results in (vi) obscured social reality. Ideology, then, can be thought of as contesting world views which affect the way individuals construct their social reality. Capitalism justifies and naturalizes its ascendant position through ideas (Nayar 2010, 130). Ideas here refer to a wide range of values, assumptions, doctrines, theories, and beliefs – i.e., ideologies. For Marx and Engels, social structures and institutions within the superstructure, such as education, culture, and religion, advance the ideology of the bourgeoisie in a way that oppression is naturalized and pre-ordained by society (Nayar 2010, 130). This way, the oppressed do not fully realize how and why they are oppressed (ibid.). This leads to the legitimatization of the capitalist order and the reinforcement of oppressive processes such as alienation and reification.

Marx and Engels initially conceptualized ideology in their work *The German Ideology* (1846) as a metaphorical *camera obscura* which produces images right-side up (Foley 2019, 83). They argue that like the *camera obscura* ideologies, too, construct misunderstandings and

distorted realities that shape the way people view the world (ibid.). Initially they argued that ideologies were a tool only available to the elite to promote status quo relations which benefit the ruling class (ibid.). Some 15 years later, Marx reconceptualized his theory of ideology and argued that both of the main classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, can have their own ideologies (Foley 2019, 84). Ideologies, for Marx, became a fighting ground for different concepts and beliefs that are reflected by class struggles (ibid.). As I analyze ideological contradiction in this thesis, I subscribe to Marx and Engels' latter notion where both classes have their own contending ideologies. I employ a symptomatic reading of *Klara* to analyze both the dominant ideology which legitimatizes capitalism and the opposing ideology which challenges the status quo. Symptomatic reading exposes mixed ideological signals ratified by the social contradictions in real-life societies (Foley 2019, 156). For example, exploitation and alienation can be both granted and papered over within a single text, which creates contradicting ideological signals (Foley 2019, 158). Thus, a text can become both the apology and the critique of an ideology (Foley 2019, 156). It is the task of the critic to uncover these various representations and repressions of different ideologies in literature texts (Foley 2019, 159). With this strategy critics can further understand how ideologies create narratives that influence the everyday life of individuals.

2.2.1 Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony and Counter-hegemony

Antonio Gramsci is known for his theory of hegemony. Initially, hegemony was popularized in Marxist theory and thinking by V. I. Lenin who associated it to a centralized mass-based proletariat party (Castle 2013, 103). Gramsci operationalized and analyzed the concept of hegemony in more nuanced ways – his theory centers around the power generated and promoted by the state (ibid.). It also involves the ways this operation can be reversed, i.e., counter-hegemonized or alter-hegemonized. For Gramsci, hegemony is the process of force by the ruling class and the consent of the oppressed class (Foley 2019, 105). Consent is the operational term which differentiates hegemony from ideology. Eagleton (1991, 113) exemplifies this with racist ideologies in South Africa during apartheid – these ideologies did not have the approval nor consent of the oppressed groups, but despite this remained in practice. Ideology, then, may function without consent. Furthermore, the ruling class may impose force rule through ideology, but it may do so in other ways, too, for example through tax reforms which increasingly benefit the economically affluent (Eagleton 1991, 113). Ideology, however, can be used as an effective vessel for hegemony and Nayar (2020, 131) exemplifies this through trading arrangements between First World and Third World nations:

it is more effective to persuade the latter of mutual benefits of free trading than to force them to it through, e.g., economic sanctions. However, such arrangements often serve to benefit the economically privileged nations and widen the economic disparity between countries (ibid.). Thus, hegemony may include ideology, "but is not reducible to it" (ibid.). Gramsci himself describes the relationship between force and consent as mobile equilibrium wherein a threatened ideology may always be protected using force (Boucher 2012, 95). Hegemony, then, is a wider-encompassing term; a hegemonic state is more powerful and influential than an ideological state since it can be protected with force and naturalized through consent. The world of *Klara* operates mostly on hegemonic terms – the techno-capitalist ideology is present, for example, in the thought and behavior patterns of the characters.

Through force and consent, hegemony may be divided into two social organizations in bourgeois society (Castle 2013, 103). The first one is political society, i.e., the state which exercises direct domination and command through juridical government and power (ibid.). Political society includes institutions such as the army and law courts (Eagleton 1991, 114). The second social organization is civil society wherein a dominant group exercises hegemony throughout society (Castle 2013, 103.). Civil society entails a wide range of institutions which intermediate between the economy and the state, e.g., newspapers, family, schools, and television (Eagleton 1991, 114). Of the two social organizations, it is civil society wherein hegemony exercises consent whereas political society exercises force (ibid.). For my analysis of *Klara,* encounters in civil society are pivotal in the ways they promote different ideologies through conscious and unconscious choices.

Ideology is key concept within hegemony, especially in civil society. For Gramsci, ideology entails not only a system of ideas but also lived habitus and social practice encompassing the unconscious social experience (Eagleton 1991, 115). Unconscious practices are pivotal for the workings of hegemony since it thrives most effectively through invisibility (Nayar 2010, 132). Hegemony is spread subtly with habitual daily practices and through it the dominant class elicits consent by diffusing its own ideologies and interests with the interests of the whole society (Eagleton 1991, 114–116). Hegemony thrives best when individuals not only internalize the ideology of the elite but also self-govern themselves to naturalize a certain social order (Eagleton 1991, 116). This constitutes a certain *false consciousness* of the bourgeois society where individuals are ignorant and powerless over the aims of the whole society even when these aims contradict with their own goals and desires (Lukács 1923, 60–61). Capitalist hegemony can be exemplified with dental health – according to experts and

advertisements, good teeth promote overall health and safety (Nayar 2010, 1322). However, this discourse is tied to the discourse of consumerism as well (ibid.). To have healthy teeth, you can choose to buy certain products at certain price (ibid.). The discourse shifts subtly from the individual's dental health to the ideology of profit and consumerism and is masked as a genuine concern for the individual albeit the real motive is economical (ibid.). Additionally, hegemony offers a falsified idea of freedom of choice within consumerism.

For Gramsci, education is pivotal in creating hegemony and maintaining the falsified idea of freedom (Castle 2013, 104). Society places educational pressures on individuals and in modern capitalist societies this is often masked a freedom (ibid.). An individual is free, e.g., to choose which education they pursue (ibid.). With educational pressures and education, individuals are forced to consent and follow the capitalist order's desires and educative mission (ibid.). The mission is not one of improving nor civilizing its citizen but rather one of production and capital – society needs skilled workers for maintaining the capitalist order (ibid.). Furthermore, educational institutions are effective in advocating the ideologies of the ruling class. Gramsci sees intellectuals spreading and elaborating cultural forms which advocate seemingly universal ideas of the elite (Boucher 2012, 97). This upholds a social order benefitting the status quo of capitalism and class-division. This phenomenon is also evident in *Klara* where only children who are 'lifted', genetically modified, can enter most colleges and universities thus education acts as a segregating factor for individuals of different class. Education, however, may also be a place for counter-hegemony as intellectuals have a pivotal role in counterhegemonic practices which I discuss next.

Counter-hegemony designates the construction of an alternative state and society without the contradictions of capitalism (Im 1991, 145). This requires "alternative institutions and alternative intellectual resources" which would challenge the status quo ways of the capitalist order (Cox 1983, 53). At the center of this are intellectuals who are pivotal in the ways they spread and elaborate cultural forms (Boucher 2012). Gramsci highlights that traditional intellectuals need be detached from the elite ruling bloc to develop a group of organic intellectuals (Im 1991, 144). They, in change, would "dismantle deceptions of the upper class, but also – even more – their own" (Rehmann 2013, 120). Counter-hegemonic practices are thus processes that challenge the status quo by offering contending paradigms which dismantle the naturalized thought patterns promoted by capitalism. This also requires a rethinking and deconstructing of one's own class and identity. Areas of civil society are apt for these practices. Together hegemony and counter-hegemony constitute a terrain of ideology

"where battles are continually fought out" (Boucher 2012, 107). Ideologies need to constantly justify and recreate their existence to thrive (ibid.). Hegemony and counter-hegemony are also a testament to how all ideologies bear traces of opposing ideas (ibid.). Thus, a seemingly anti-capitalist and counter-hegemonic text such as *Klara* is still influenced by capitalist and hegemonic attitudes.

2.2.2 Althusser's Theory on Ideology and Interpellation

Louis Althusser is known for his theory of *Ideology* and interpellation. Althusser makes a crucial distinction between ideology and *Ideology*. Ideologies represent different doctrines and modes of thought and behavior individuals can consciously adopt or reject (Foley 2019, 101). *Ideology*, however, works mostly on the unconscious level through the ways people live their relations to society (Eagleton 1991, 18). For Althusser, *Ideology* is a subject-centered notion – it designates the ways a system unconsciously shapes an individual into the hegemonic regime and thinking (Boucher 2012, 135). It does so through lived experience, commonsense ideas, and habituated experiences, and is built in social relations (ibid.). In everyday life, people recognize one another as individuals with certain assumptions and qualities (ibid.). These recognitions are not built-in features of humanity but rather the results of socialization (ibid.). *Ideology* is central in said recognitions – it is its role to "generate social subjects and fit them into (economically) functional roles in society" (ibid.) in ways these roles are unconscious and, thus, internalized, unquestioned, and naturalized.

The mechanism of social recognition can be approached with Althusser's term of *interpellation* (Foley 2019, 100). Interpellation refers to the ways people become subjects through certain roles, such as a mother, a student, a heterosexual, and adapt these roles as natural and proper (Nayar 2010, 134–135). It "signifies a kind of 'hailing,' or recognition, as in, 'I know who you are! You are an American!'" (Foley 2019, 101). Althusser exemplifies this with hailing someone on the street – when a person calls "hey, you there" another person usually turns around. With this turn, they recognize themselves and the identity in question in the interpellation – they become the "you" in the street (Rehmann 2013, 156). The theory of interpellation, however, becomes more complicated and encompassing when people are interpellated with certain roles, adjectives, and identities. When, for example, called and hailed a wife for the first time, a person's identity and role shifts. Through interpellation, the function and model of these roles become fixed. Interpellation can, notably, contain some descriptive accuracy and truthful recognition – one may in fact be a heterosexual or a mother

(Foley 2019, 101). These roles and fixed social identities, however, are pivotal in the ways they misrecognize individuals through loaded ideological assumptions (ibid.). This can be exemplified with gender roles – if you are interpellated as member of a particular gender, you should behave in a predetermined way.

When interpellated, it is pivotal to consider which instances of hailing produce a response within us (Rehmann 2013, 157). When seeing a televised political speech wherein a politician addresses law-abiding citizens, do we recognize "yes they are talking to me"? (ibid.). Individuals want guarantees that they are the target of the hailing thus they begin the mutual recognition of themselves but also of others (Rehmann 2013, 157). They recognize other members of the interpellation, but more notably, also the people who are not the addressee of the hailing, i.e., they exclude certain individuals from the hailing. Often, through interpellation, the roles of the hailing are internalized, and individuals begin to "police themselves," i.e., self-monitor to fill the expectations of the role (Foley 2019, 101). This has extensive consequences – hailing acts as an effective tool in maintaining the capitalist order and the roles needed to uphold the status quo of class division. However, it can also be a liberating tool (Rehmann 2013, 177). By not recognizing and accepting the interpellated role, individuals can resist the fixed identities and roles promoted by the state (ibid.). Thus, interpellation can also be a tool for anti-hegemonic paradigms and action.

Ideology and interpellation work through all levels of society. Althusser's division of institutions bears heavy similarities to Gramsci's concepts of civil society and political society (Rehmann 2013, 147). For Althusser, *ideological state apparatuses* (ISAs) are institutions and structures that "convince people of the correctness of ideology by presenting it as a desirable object or idea" (Nayar 2010, 134). Often this is done through interpellation. ISAs are equivalent to institutions within civil society, i.e., institutions such as newspapers, family, and church. In ISAs "individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects" (Castle 2013, 107). Thus, even as infants, individuals are inserted into the ideological scheme and are automatically assigned interpellated roles, such as the role of the daughter, and the fixed behavior and thought patterns that come with the roles (Nayar 2010, 135). Much like Gramsci, Althusser too emphasizes the role of education in the ideological terrain (Rehmann 2013, 150). For him, it is the "dominant ideological state-apparatus" (ibid.). The school system is overpowering in its totality – it forces children to participate in the formulation and maintenance of the capitalist order by forcing them to stay in school up to eight hours per day five days a week (ibid.). The educational system works through ways of ruling ideology

(Rehmann 2013, 150). Althusser sees ISAs varying in three different specificities: regional, power and effectiveness (Rehmann 2013, 151). Regardless of region, the educational system has the potential to be a powerful and effective vessel for the dominant ideology. This is evident in modern capitalist societies but also in societies of literature, such as the one in *Klara.* However, this view of ISAs and their function is frequently criticized – e.g., Eagleton (1991, 147) notes how schools have other purposes, such as teaching students to read and write, than just to advocate the ideas of the elite. Either way, interpellation and *Ideology* are effective tools for literary analysis. Ideological analysis can expose hegemonic and counter-hegemonic attitudes. For my analysis, I combine Althusser's notions of ideology and *Ideology*. Thus, when using the term ideology, I refer to modes of conscious thought and behavior, and the ways society advocates its beliefs through the unconscious. With interpellation, I examine how individual word choices can uphold capitalist status quo or challenge it.

3 Ideological Manifestations in *Klara and the Sun*

In this chapter I introduce the main plot of *Klara,* and then analyze the novel's characterization of the protagonist Klara from three perspectives – cognitive autonomy, internal value, and (post-)humanity. The themes of the analysis arise from the contradictory nature of the novel's ideology. Essentially, I analyze how AFs or other posthuman subjects can be perceived within a hyper-capitalist society. In capitalist societies, robots are generally thought to be mere machines as they can be utilized for different purposes within labor. As technology continues its progress, robots are becoming increasingly advanced, and in many industries, robots have de facto replaced human occupation under the substitution logic. It is the process wherein human workers can be replaced by other workers, or by robots as to minimize costs (Du 2022, 554). Traditionally robots have been utilized in repetitive manual labor in industries such as manufacturing and construction. However, in recent years robots have occupied the position of a care worker i.e., helping, supporting, and supervising people in need. For example, Japan, Ishiguro's homeland, has been developing robots for two centuries to be used in elder care (Wright 2023). These robots are designed to assists patients with essential functions relating to mobility, exercise, feeding, and bathing (ibid.). For more complex care work, robots need not only technical prowess, but humane and social aspects of empathy, communication, reliability, friendliness, and care. *Klara* hypothesizes such advanced care robot with its narrator and protagonist Klara who, in many aspects, resembles a human care worker.

The perception of robotics within care work is currently largely negative. For example, in a questionnaire study by Beetz et al. (2023, 6–7), "care of people" is the leading category when asked occupations where robots should not be used at all. As populations are rapidly ageing in many Western societies, the emergence of robotics in care work and within people's private lives might become inevitable thus raising the importance to speculate the possibilities and identities of posthuman entities. Literary works, such as *Klara* offer a space for these speculations. The first theme of my analysis, cognitive autonomy, is essential as it can create differentiating viewpoints on how to perceive and conceptualize post-humanist entities, such as AFs and other robots. Robots are generally thought to be lines of code masked to a mechanical physical appearance. The decisions, deductions, and recommendations of highly advanced robots, such as Klara, can, however, be substantially complex and creative thus raising questions on their potential cognitive autonomy beyond the scope of their coding.

This, in turn, relates to the internal value of robots. If perceived as cognitively independent subjects, what value do people grant to robots? In capitalist societies, robots are generally valued for their instrumentality, but my analysis focuses on the possibilities of granting robots internal value. Finally, I analyze how robots can challenge ideals of human superiority and perfection with their humane characteristics.

3.1 The Relevant Plot Elements of *Klara and the Sun*

The protagonist and narrator of the novel is a B2-modelled AI-generated artificial friend called Klara who is noted for her observational skills. The story's other main character is Josie who lives with her mother, Chrissie, and the family housekeeper Melania. The family's socioeconomical status is very high – they are referred to as 'high-rank' in the novel which indicates wealth, 'lifted' status, and advanced educational background. A lifted status means a child has undergone a genetic modification as an infant to enhance their intelligence. The novel does not explicitly reveal whether lifting actually makes lifted children smarter. Lifting is done with the consent of the parents albeit it bears some major health risks, and may even cause death. When Josie was a young child, her sister, Sal, died from the complications of lifting. The high socioeconomical background of the family is contrasted most notably in the characters of Rick and Josie's father. Rick is Josie's best friend who does not have a lifted status but instead navigates the world with little privilege. Josie's father lives in a fascist, anarchist group isolated from society to "lead a decent and full life" (*Klara,* 257).

First events of the novel transpire in an AF-store where Klara introduces the readers to the setting and world of the story. Klara's narration reveals that AFs are highly intelligent solar-powered robots who all have unique personalities. Only children of high-rank can afford to obtain AFs – one of the many aspects that separates people of different classes in the story. In the first part of the novel Josie notices Klara in the store's window display and immediately wants Klara to be her AF. Chrissie is initially hesitant seeing as Klara is not of the latest model, but ultimately agrees to buy Klara after she accurately mimics Josie's walk which, Klara notices, is hindered by "a weakness in her left hip" (*Klara,* 50) and the fear of a "sudden motion or unnecessary impact" (ibid.). In the second part of the novel Klara adapts to her new position as Josie's AF. She learns that Josie is battling a mysterious illness which is later revealed to be caused by the lifting done to her as an infant. Due to Josie's illness, Klara develops a celestial relationship with the Sun believing its light is the solution in curing Josie. Klara also learns that only children of high-rank individuals are lifted to enhance their

academic success, and most universities and colleges only accept lifted students into their ranks. This is central to Rick who is not lifted but is hoping to enter Atlas Brookings college which accepts some non-lifted students. He attends an interaction meeting, a party where lifted children connect, hosted by Josie and Chrissie to gain insight and connections with the lifted children, but the meeting is a failure on Rick's part. He is socially ostracized from the other attendees due to his status. The meeting also alters the relationship between Rick and Josie as they both notice how the difference in their status and class affects the relationships they have. The second part concludes in Klara and Chrissie's trip to Morgan waterfalls where Klara, due to Josie's absence, imitates and pretends to be Josie per request of Chrissie. Together, they promise to keep this a secret from Josie.

The third part of the novel sees Rick and Josie's relationship being strained – their arguments center around their shared future and the hindrances bestowed upon it due to Rick's non-lifted status. Their argument is ultimately settled by Klara. During Rick and Josie's arguments, Klara visits Mr. McBain's barn where she first worships the Sun in hopes that this would cure Josie. In the fourth part, Klara, Josie, and Josie's parents visit Mr. Capaldi, a doctor, who is said to be in the process of painting a portrait of Josie. Klara soon learns that it is not de facto a portrait Mr. Capaldi is working on, but rather a humanoid body precisely replicating Josie. Chrissie reveals if Josie were to die from her illness, she wishes Klara would inhabit this humanoid and continue living her life as Josie. This narrative turn comes to explain Chrissie's choice of Klara in the store as Klara is noted for her observation and imitation skills and could thus possibly be successful as Josie's 'continuation'. The fourth part concludes with Klara's attempt to destroy a polluting construction machine, the Cootings Machine, as she believes that in doing so, the Sun would heal Josie. Klara is, however, unsuccessful in her endeavors.

The final parts of the novel see Josie's health dramatically deteriorating, but she is ultimately, and rather miraculously, completely healed. Klara believes this is due to the Sun's nutrition and help. Josie then departs to college, and this concludes Klara's duty as Josie's AF – she is left to have her slow fade, i.e., death, at the Yard which is essentially a landfill where other AFs are experiencing the same fate. At the Yard, AFs are left alone with no access to their former families or friends. Despite these being her final days in a crude environment, Klara shows no signs of regret nor sadness as she believes she has successfully completed her life goal of being a good AF. The reader also learns that Rick did not pursue a college education and that the family housekeeper Melania has been let go and now lives in similar conditions as Josie's father.

3.2 Alienated Resistance: The Cognitive Autonomy and Heteronomy of Klara

The question of artificial intelligence autonomy in *Klara* is pivotal when analyzing the character and characterization of Klara. Klara is a hyper-intelligent AI robot who demonstrates sophisticated and profound analytical skills in moral dilemmas. The novel, as indicated by scholars such as Stenseke (2022, 4), does not explicitly reveal whether Klara's decisions and thoughts can be considered autonomous of her algorithmic programming, and Klara offers evidence for both cognitive autonomy and heteronomy. It is clear, however, that Klara herself is missing operational agency in the sense that most of her actions are not independent, but rather she is coerced into doing things by the humans around her. In speaking to Klara, they regularly mask this with a freedom of choice when, de facto, there is none. This can be exemplified with Josie's purchase of Klara. Josie tells Klara of her illness and wishes that despite it, Klara still would want to be her AF: "Please say you still want to come. You'll love my room, I know you will" (*Klara,* 29). As a product, Klara is not in charge of whether Josie purchases her or not, thus linguistically masking Klara as having freedom of choice is a way of Josie seemingly granting Klara power. This notion can be linked to Gramsci's hegemony theory on the falsified idea of freedom of choice imposed by society. Precisely as people in hegemonic regimes, Klara's operational agency is limited and restricted albeit a freedom of choice is seemingly present. This, however, does not automatically indicate she is missing cognitive autonomy as well, and thus I discuss this notion further.

The novel depicts Klara as an ultra-obedient servant always ready to fulfill her duties and serve her owners. For a techno-capitalist ideology, she is the embodiment of the ideal slave – she is tireless, replaceable, manufacturable, recyclable, selfless, and diligent (Banerjee 2022, 9). Klara's devotion is exemplified aptly when she is willing to extract P-E-G Nine solution, a vital chemical for AFs, from herself to destroy the Cootings machine. She believes that in doing so, she would cure her owner, Josie. This bears major risks – it may have major effects on Klara's cognitive abilities and overall performance and so her "mind was filling with great fear" (*Klara,* 251). Eventually she is more devoted to her role as the servant than she is to her own health and thus agrees to the extraction. Later when Klara reminisces her decision she proudly reclaims: "I don't mind that I lost precious fluid. I'd willingly have given more, given it all, if it meant your providing special help to Josie" (*Klara,* 302). Klara comes to be characterized as the alienated worker who does not value her own species-being and cannot separate her own identity from her work and service. Due to Klara's alienation, she never

criticizes the system nor the people in it albeit they ruthlessly exploit her service with no reward. I argue this is due Klara's operational mechanics – she is programmed in a way that prevents consciousness of her oppression. From a Marxist perspective, the anthropocentric capitalist society of *Klara* posits Klara in an ideal situation for the elite. She is a worker who is completely alienated with seemingly no hope, sign, or even capabilities of ever being liberated from the process.

Klara's lack of autonomy in her thinking is perhaps most aptly concretized through her categorization skills. As a highly intelligent AI, her cognitive abilities are not formed with simple pattern recognition but rather with sensory, perceptual, and physical data, i.e., deep learning (Mejia and Nikolaidis 2022, 304). Klara continues to develop as an entity and as a worker as she observes and interacts with her environment. Thus, as with humans, the environment she inhabits highly influences her thinking, but she is unable to critically examine the constructs and categories imposed by the surrounding society. This inflicts moral dilemmas. The world of *Klara* is highly hierarchical as its inhabitants are strictly divided into 'high-rank' individuals and those of lower socioeconomic status (ibid.). Klara's narration clearly visualizes this hierarchy – one the first things Klara notices and mentions about people upon initial encounter is rank (ibid.). On seeing Josie and Chrissie for the first time Klara reflects: "On Rex's third day in the front alcove, a girl came in with her mother. […] The mother was an office worker, and from her shoes and suit we could tell she was high-ranking" (*Klara,* 5). This demonstrates the restrictions the techno-capitalist society inflicts on AFs and the influence this has on their cognitive skills. Klara is so alienated that she comes to be characterized as a cognitively heteronomous subject who cannot control all her thoughts and decisions. Furthermore, the thought patterns promoted by the AFs' programming and alienation are pivotal factors in maintaining class-based division of people; even robots create value judgements about class and recreate narratives about class superiority.

Klara's algorithmic programming and thus the question of her autonomy bears similarities to Gramsci's concept of hegemony and ideological self-monitoring and internalization. The techno-capitalist society of *Klara* cannot monitor and forcefully control all its inhabitants, let alone the AFs. From their perspective, thus, it is effective to program the robots in a way that prevents resistance and naturalizes the phenomena and structures that uphold the prevailing power structures in society. This is apparent in Klara's behavior throughout the novel – she constantly questions, self-reflects, and criticizes the choices she makes as Josie's AF. When trying to amend the relationship between Josie and Rick after their argument, Klara initially

suggests Josie apologizes Rick. Josie, however, strongly rejects this and vocally expresses her disappointment in Klara. Klara feels the effect of Josie's reaction heartily and spirals into a void of self-criticism. She feels she has greatly disappointed her and even thinks the Sun is angry with her too now. Klara, a tireless efficient robot, begins to feel the effect of this physically – she loses her orientation and balance. Klara and the other AFs' programming encourages such constant self-monitoring and self-reflection to enhance their performance as proper servants. Their self-monitoring is, in fact, pivotal in the ways it upholds and spreads hegemonic attitudes through the unconscious – by reflecting how to be the best possible servant for the owner, the AFs adapt thought and behavior patterns promoted by the ruling class. In Klara's case, her critical reactions and self-monitoring often highlight and reinforce her role as the submissive, and I argue alienated, servant (Sun 2023, 507).

A post-humanist paradigm can offer ways to analyze Klara's thinking with a different perspective. Rather than perceiving as Klara as a techno-capitalist slave, she can be considered a holistic entity capable of forming sincere emotions and relationships. Albeit Josie and Klara's relationship reappropriates the traditional master–slave relationship, scholars argue Klara exhibits evidence of true love for Josie (e.g., Du 2022). Through her sacrifices, devotion and service, Klara's love becomes "generous, open and benevolent" (Du 2022, 561). To successfully fulfill her role as an AF, Klara is not compelled to create meaningful relationships and genuine emotions for her owners. The most important role of a care robot is to keep its owner from being lonely. Thus, Klara's authentic care and love towards Josie possibly contravenes her programming and may demonstrate the cognitive autonomy of Klara. However, I argue for an ambiguity on the authenticity of her emotions – they may very well also be the result of her programming if Klara has observed that these emotions are required to aptly fulfill her role as Josie's AF. Thus, her display of 'love' may also be a display of her programming. Even Klara herself highlights the programmed aspect of her emotions: "I believe I have many feelings. The more I observe, the more feelings become available to me" (*Klara,* 111). This indicates that emotions are not necessarily internal within Klara but more a combination of her programming, training, experiences, and, ultimately, 'personality'.

Throughout the novel, Klara demonstrates acts of defiance and rebellion which indicate her cognitive and moral autonomy. Josie's interaction meeting with other lifted children is a place for Josie to make connections and impressions. Klara notices this greatly affects Josie's behavior. When Josie asks Klara to greet a group of boys who have little emotional regard for

AFs – indicated by them bragging how they throw their own AFs in the air as a test for coordination – Klara silently rebels: “I didn’t move at once, partly because I’d been surprised by Josie’s voice” (*Klara,* 86). The scene continues with other lifted children giving Klara orders or questioning her on her observational skills, but Klara gazes past them and disobeys the children with “a pleasant expression on [her] face […], much as the Manager had trained [them] to do in the store in such situations” (*Klara,* 88). Klara explains this is due to her not knowing how Josie desires Klara answer such inquiries. Banerjee (2022, 19–20) argues Klara’s behavior is due to her coding and training thus indicating Klara maneuvered the situation as an apt AF should. By this time, however, Klara had already lived with Josie for an extended period of time and knew Josie’s wishes and desires. Thus, I argue this an example of the conscious resistance on the part of Klara – she wishes not to be objectified and ridiculed, and therefore places her own emotions ahead of those of Josie. Her alienation, too, seems to be fluctuating and not all-encompassing as she is able to occasionally resist her owner and line of duty.

Klara also exhibits cognitive agency and independent thinking in the store before being purchased by Josie and her family. At the store, Klara and the other AFs are reified – they are encouraged to consider themselves and each other as mere products awaiting a purchase. It is thus their duty to present themselves as desirable and worthy investments. When Josie initially notices Klara in the store, she is instantly infatuated by Klara and promises to come back and obtain her. Klara feels the two have made an arrangement and decides to wait for Josie. Before Josie returns to the store, however, another child shows clear interest in Klara, but Klara defies her programming and training to appear as nonchalant as possible: “I didn’t smile at her. I kept my expression blank […]. The girl squeezed my hand twice more, the second time less gently, but I didn’t lower my gaze to her or smile” (*Klara,* 36). This is a clear act of resistance and Klara even exhibits self-indulgent thinking – it is not only Josie who wishes to obtain Klara, but also Klara who wishes to be obtained by Josie. With her actions Klara counteracts the techno-capitalist ideology of her society where profit exceeds the desires and wishes of AFs. The store’s manager promptly reminds Klara of her Othered position and lack of power: “It’s for the customer to choose the AF, never the other way round” (*Klara,* 38). Klara, however, gets a small victory when the child decides to not buy Klara and instead Josie later purchases her. It is furthermore a testament to the cognitive autonomy of Klara as she can again defy her programming and the teachings of techno-capitalism.

Albeit Klara's resistance and emotions show some signs of cognitive agency, I argue her independent thinking skills become most aptly concretized through her relationship with the Sun. AFs are solar-powered and through this link Klara begins to perceive the Sun as a celestial entity capable of performing miracles. She naively believes the Sun's nourishment, i.e., Sunlight has healing powers on humans when she sees a homeless person waking up from what is most likely a hangover: "The Sun was pouring his nourishment onto the street and into the buildings, and when I looked over to the spot where Beggar Man and the dog had died, I saw they weren't dead at all – that a special kind of nourishment from the Sun had saved them" (*Klara,* 44). Seeing this, she believes the Sun is capable of healing Josie as well and begins to pray it for help: "I've come here this evening like this because I've never forgotten how kind the Sun can be. If only he would show his great compassion to Josie, as he did that day to Beggar Man and his dog. If only he'd send Josie the special nourishment she so desperately requires" (*Klara,* 302). Denny (2021, 850) argues that through her relationship with the Sun "Klara is at her most human" as she believes a greater power can guide her though the crisis of Josie's deteriorating health. In sense, this is true: humans tend to reach out to higher power in desperate times. In the context of the novel, however, this is exceptional since no other character exhibits any sign of religious beliefs. Thus, Klara's relationship with the Sun depicts her as an autonomous entity capable of making her own connotations of the world.

The question of Klara's cognitive autonomy is in close relations to the contradictive ideologies of the text. As an actor with no moral nor cognitive autonomy, Klara and the other AFs would be reduced to the role of a product with little to no intrinsic worth. For a techno-capitalist ideology, this makes their oppression naturalized and justified. If AFs are seen as "disposable toys" or "punching bags for dominance and abuse" (Stenseke 2022, 5) with no cognitive autonomy or independent analytical skills, they can be used as such. This raises moral dilemmas within readers, too – should we care about the destiny and affective factors of entities if they exhibit no signs of moral agency and thus are just lines of code? I argue the ambiguity of Klara's autonomy is due to the ideological complexion and contradiction of the novel. Klara is neither mere a product nor a completely autonomous subject. The novel raises sympathies within readers and provokes them to reconsider the status quo conceptualization of non- or posthuman entities and their consciousness. However, it depicts Klara as an actor with limited cognitive autonomy, leaving the readers perplexed on the intrinsic worth of

robots and other posthuman subjects. In the following section I discuss this idea further and analyze how Klara is given value by the other characters and society in the novel.

3.3 Commodified Loved One: The Intrinsic and Instrumental Value of Klara

The notion of recognizing an entity's value is a central question in *Klara*. The novel is set in a world where posthuman objects seemingly have the capacity to gain agency and moral autonomy as discussed in section 3.1. From a Marxist perspective, *Klara* introduces a conflicting notion of reification wherein Klara and the other AFs are both the worker and the product. Scholars such as Sahu and Karmakar (2022) and Du (2022) argue that most characters in the novel would place Klara more strongly in the latter category where her agency and intrinsic worth is reduced to the level of a common household item. For the lifted children, AFs are often perceived as "lifeless toys" and "simply programmed machines" (Du 2022, 554). This becomes aptly evident when Josie holds her interaction meeting with the other lifted children, and Klara's agency and intrinsic value get annulled. One of the boys in the meeting insists AFs can be thrown around the room and demands Klara be thrown towards him so he can inspect her. The children then proceed to compare the features of AFs, reducing Klara's role to a mere commodified product: "My B3, […] she'll somersault and land clean on her feet. Back straight perfect. So, let's see what this one can do" (*Klara,* 87). Other children then demand Klara to speak, sing, and greet in a ridiculing manner, reinforcing her status as a "command-following machine designed to entertain Josie and her visitors" (Sahu and Karmakar 2022, 855). The children's habituated responses to Klara reveal their capitalist ideology wherein AFs are just like any other products and thus can be treated with little to no respect. They do not value posthuman entities nor post-humanism as they believe in the supremacy of anthropocentrism and techno-capitalism, i.e., ideologies that rarely grant value and subjectivity to non-humans.

Klara's objectified status can be concretized through her relationships with other characters in the novel. In many aspects, Melania the housekeeper holds a position similar to Klara – they are both Othered, have little to no privilege, and have a common duty of taking care of Josie. Albeit the similarities, Melania has no regard for Klara's feelings and frequently indicates her dislike towards her. When Klara tries to stay in Melania's vicinity to learn more about the ways the house operates, Melania is quick to berate her: "Quit follow me AF get lost!" (*Klara,* 57). Klara herself thinks Melania's coldness is due to the "larger fears concerning what might be happening around Josie" (ibid.), but I argue it is due to Klara's objectified and

commodified status in the eyes of Melania. This can be exemplified with the vocabulary Melania uses often towards Klara – she calls her a robot and reinforces Klara's status as an object that can simply be thrown away in case of malfunctions: "If it make miss Josie worse I come dismantle you. Shove you in garbage" (*Klara,* 198). I furthermore argue Melania's dislike and belittlement towards Klara can be explained with the capitalist substitution logic. The shared duty of Melania and Klara comes to be characterized as a hindrance to the formulation of their interpersonal relationships. Melania fears being replaced by Klara and thus reinforces Klara's commodified status to highlight her own worthiness and prowess as a worker. At the end of the novel, Melania's fears and speculations are sadly proven correct – she is let go, presumably replaced by cheaper labor force, and the capitalist substitution logic continues to operate.

Klara's commodified status is enforced with interpellation. In essence, interpellation relates to the way people – reinforced by the ideologies within societies – recognize each other. When Helen, Rick's mom, first encounters Klara she instantly recognizes Klara's Othered position: "One never knows how to greet a guest like you. After all, are you a guest at all? Or do I treat you like a vacuum cleaner?" (*Klara,* 162). She then continues with the same attitude when pondering the possibility of using Klara to advance Rick's studies: "I suppose I should really ask Chrissie about it first. […] It's so unclear, the etiquette. If one was borrowing a vacuum cleaner… But it's not like that, I know. You must forgive me" (*Klara,* 169). With her interpellation, Helen recognizes Klara as an object who is not in control of her own actions, but rather, it is her owners who decide which individuals can utilize her services. Klara is furthermore compared to a common household item, the vacuum cleaner, which holds no internal value. Interpellation is used to maintain a societal order where AFs can be used to serve the needs of techno-capitalism with no moral considerations for their own desires or well-being. This is evident in Klara's uncanny response to Helen's interpellation – she is so reified that she instantly recognizes and accepts the role of Helen's interpellation.

Klara's objectified status is perhaps most aptly concretized at the beginning of the novel when she lives in the store. Despite the complexion of her emotions, at the store she is, essentially, like any other produce found in supermarkets. As such, Klara and the other AFs are "classified according to their model and series number, and then exhibited and auctioned off" (Banerjee 2022, 15). Despite Klara's occasional resistance, as discussed in section 3.1, the AFs hold practically no power in the store. The manager tells them how to behave, where to be, and how to react. The manager linguistically masks the objectified status of the AFs to the

robots themselves. When placed at the display window, the manager hails the AFs' "'special honor' of representing the store to the outside" (*Klara,* 8) and compliments them for being "wonderful […] representing us to the whole street" (*Klara,* 12). As Gramsci explains, hegemony can be maintained with the illusion of freedom of choice. The AFs in the window display are, de facto, an inducement for customers to come and purchase produce, not some official representatives of the store, but the manager pretends to grant them a more meaningful position to better control them. The manager's treatment and the position of the AFs in the store reinforces, or rather ensures, their status as commodified objects that can simply be bought and owned. This also creates parallels to human trade within capitalist societies. Precisely as (human) life was and is commodified and devalued, the Othered AFs are perceived as merchandise to be used for the desired purposes of their prospective masters.

The only human connection Klara has at the store is the manager. Throughout the novel, Klara exhibits signs of respect and affect towards the manager but does not realize their relationship is highly dependent on the market status and value of Klara. When Klara and Rosa are placed at the display window, the manager praises them for having been "wonderful yesterday" with constant smile on their faces. When their turn at the window comes to an end, however, the manager's attitude noticeably shifts, which alarms Klara: "So it never occurred to me we were doing anything wrong, and when the grid came down on our last day, I was expecting Manager to praise us again. I was surprised, then, when after locking the grid, she simply walked away, not waiting for us" (*Klara,* 30). Klara detects the manager is angry and frustrated and feels she has greatly disappointed her. Klara does not realize this is due to her objectified status and the manager's capitalist quest for high profit sales figures. After her initial disappointment, the manager is determined to gain profit from Klara: "I'll make sure you find a home. […] I'm giving you a special price too" (*Klara,* 42). When Klara proves out to be a monetary asset to the store – "Above-average numbers" (*Klara,* 44) – the manager returns to her smiley and friendly state indicating she perceives Klara and the other AFs primarily as objects to be profited from. This solely gives the AFs monetary but no intrinsic value as is common with objects within capitalist societies.

At the store, Klara lives with other AFs. All of the AFs' programming highly influences their sense of self and their perception of other robots. When a set of the latest model of AFs – the B3s – arrive to the store, they are first trained by the manager and then the older models give them "all kinds of useful advice" (*Klara,* 41). Klara, however, notices how the newer models wish to separate themselves physically and conceptually from the older models in front of the

clients as "the three new B3s were deliberately moving themselves away from the older AFs so that when customers came in, the B3s would look like a separate group on their own" (*Klara,* 41). This gives an indication to the way the AFs value themselves and other AFs – they, too, see each other as mere products competing on who gets purchased and who is left forgotten at the store. Hence, the AFs never seem to form genuine friendships with each other – Klara is reminded by another AF how "girl AFs are always so greedy" (*Klara,* 4) and her friendship with Rosa, seemingly her closest companion, remains surface-level. The two mainly hypothesize a future where they are obtained by their respective children, a future where they would not be together. The AFs' perception of each other is an example of their reification. Under the reification process, workers, in this case the Afs, are encouraged to "regard each other solely as objects of profitable transaction" (Honneth 2008, 22). In *Klara* the techno-capitalist ideology of the society has, through programming, training, and habitus, managed to precisely achieve this: the AFs perceive each other as solely products and nothing else.

Through her encounters with unfamiliar lifted children, Melania, Helen, the manager, and the other AFs, Klara is seldom granted intrinsic value. However, the depicted encounters constitute surface-level relationships as the people objectifying Klara are individuals who have not developed a genuine connection with her. Stenseke (2021, 10) argues the interpersonal relationships of "mutual dependency, affinity, and vulnerability" Klara develops with some of the characters in the novel offer her intrinsic and moral worth. The best example of this is Josie's relationship with her owner Josie. As discussed in section 3.1, Klara exhibits genuine concern and care for Josie, partly through her programming and partly through her cognitive autonomy. At surface-level, the relationship between Klara and Josie appears to reappropriate the traditional relationship between the owner the owned. Josie has purchased Klara and Klara is now in her possession. Their relationship, however, develops beyond this and I argue Josie, too, exhibits signs of genuine care – even love – towards Klara. Du (2022) argues Klara and Josie's relationship (occasionally) resembles that of siblings. They have many "friendly arguments" (*Klara*, 64) suggesting a relation of mutual trust. Josie frequently confines in Klara and tells her intimate and personal aspects of her life, e.g., of her sister's passing. Josie furthermore gives Klara agency, "dignifies her subjectivity" (Stenseke 2022, 10), and, occasionally, Josie and Klara become a unified subject in their shared activities. This can be exemplified with Josie and Chrissie's planned trip to Morgan's Falls. It is a place of great importance to Josie as she has many fond memories from the falls. Josie is excited about

the trip mostly because she wants Klara to experience the magic of the place and promotes the falls to her in advance: "You'll think it's amazing" (*Klara,* 98). When Josie becomes sick and Chrissie forbids her going to the trip to Morgan's Falls, Josie emphasizes Klara's position: "Mom, I swear I'm fine. Please drive us. Klara's never been to a waterfall and she's so looking forward to it" (*Klara,* 106). With her actions, Josie gives Klara agency and intrinsic worth – the trip is important to her solely because of her shared subjectivity with Klara. Josie also frequently highlights Klara's personal subjectivity. During their visit to Mr. Capaldi, the doctor asks Josie if she can use Klara for a small assignment for his project. Josie's reply emphasizes Klara's position as an independent agent: "Fine by me […]. But you should ask Klara" (*Klara,* 221). For Josie, Klara is a being whose opinions, wishes, and desires should be respected – just like a human's.

The novel leaves no doubt on the holistic effect Josie has on Klara's cognition and behavior. This is the purpose of Klara's programming – she has to alter her behavior to accommodate the needs of her owner. Klara, however, alters Josie as well. Chrissie expresses this to Klara: "Josie's so much more calm, so much more cheerful since you got here" (*Klara,* 101). Later, Chrissie says that "she's grown up some since you've been around. She's become more considerate. […] She's definitely more mindful of others these days" (*Klara,* 122). This indicates Klara and Josie's interconnected and interpersonal relationship which is characterized by the mutual effect the two have on each other. It furthermore exemplifies how important Klara really is to Josie and how much she values her. If Josie saw Klara simply as an object, she would not, consciously or unconsciously, alter her behavior due to Klara's presence and care. For Josie, Klara becomes her carer, companion, friend, and even a loved one. Even Klara herself notices how Josie immediately brightens when she sees her beloved AF (*Klara,* 65) indicating a true bond between the two. Josie's affect toward Klara intervenes against the reification and alienation of Klara as it goes against the teachings of the techno-capitalist ideology. Klara and Josie's relationship exemplifies how relations between the human and the posthuman can transcend beyond the traditional dichotomy of the owner and the owned. The novel suggests posthuman entities are capable of loving and being loved thus acknowledging their internal value.

Klara and Chrissie's relationship, too, is seemingly very straightforward as, for Chrissie, Klara is initially an object that can be utilized for several purposes. Klara keeps Josie occupied and entertained, she tends for Josie's declining health and, come worse, would continue living her life inside a humanoid closely resembling Josie to help Chrissie deal with

the potential loss of her daughter. Their relationship, however, progresses beyond Klara's utilization as a commodified object. As indicated previously, Chrissie frequently expresses how much Klara has affected Josie's overall demeanor and spirit. Through Klara's connection with Josie, Chrissie begins to form her own interpersonal relationship with Klara wherein she genuinely cares about Klara's emotions and fate (Stenseke 2020, 10). This is best exemplified with the period when Josie is about to depart to college, and no longer needs assistance and care. Mr. Capaldi visits the family and asks if he could utilize Klara in a scientific experiment wherein Klara's black box would be removed, essentially meaning that she would perish. Chrissie strongly rejects this: "Klara deserves better. She deserves her slow fade. […] Find some other black boxes to prize open. Leave our Klara be" (*Klara,* 329). Chrissie conceptually detaches Klara from other AFs – she does not care whether Mr. Capaldi does his experiment with AFs, but, for her, Klara is no longer a part of this group. She is an entity with intrinsic value who deserves more than a mechanical demolition. With her behavior, Chrissie exhibits signs of counter-hegemonic action and thought as she does not let go of Klara to support the further research and development of AFs which would benefit the hegemonic ideology.

As Klara and Chrissie's relationship develops beyond the traditional owner–product dynamic, Chrissie feels confident enough to confide in Klara as she feels their mutual trust. Chrissie tells Klara about the difficulties of raising Josie, a child with a mysterious illness: "Maybe it looks like I'm being hard. But how else will they learn? […] "Does she think I *like* being away from her, day after fucking day" (*Klara,* 110). Chrissie's confinement is personal and risky – Klara has a more developed and profound relationship with Josie, but Chrissie trusts that Klara does not tell her opinions forward. Klara and Chrissie also establish a shared secret after their visit to Morgan falls where Klara, due to Josie's absence, pretends to be Josie. They promise not to tell this to Josie albeit this is mostly initiated by Chrissie: "So we're agreed? Nothing to Josie about that" (*Klara,* 121) but Klara holds no objections to it. After the trip, Chrissie also expresses her gratitude towards Klara: "I'm grateful to you, Klara. Having you with me made it not so bad" (*Klara,* 121). Together Chrissie's emotions, trust, and affect toward Klara make the relationship between Chrissie and Klara a personal and close one. This gives Klara subjectivity and diminishes her commodified status. For Chrissie, Klara is an entity who she can confide in and experience life in different ways. Ideologically, then, their relationship favors post-humanist ideas where robots can be considered valuable.

Klara and Rick's relationship aptly concretizes how Klara is often initially treated as an object but after the development of a more personal connection, she becomes a holistic entity with internal value to the other party. When first meeting Klara, Rick is cold and impolite – he does not address Klara or raise his gaze toward her. Rick is not lifted and does not come from a wealthy background thus his relation to AFs is limited. He does not recognize the intrinsic value of AFs and, furthermore, does not thoroughly understand their instrumental value either. To him they are a symbol of the segregating effects of hyper-capitalism and a crude reminder of his inferior status as a non-lifted child. Rick's only connection to lifted children and other high-rank individuals is Josie who he believes is not like the other privileged people he finds vapid and cruel. Thus, when Josie finally gets an AF, she comes to closely resemble other lifted children which is disappointing and disheartening to Rick: "'Oh God, I haven't even introduced you! Rick this is Klara.' Rick went on concentrating on his remote and didn't look my way. 'You said you'd never get an AF,' he said" (*Klara,* 69). His coldness is not directly aimed at Klara but rather what Klara is representative of – a cold ideology that segregates children based on false consciousness promoted by lifting.

Josie's interaction meeting alters the relationship between Rick and Klara. The meeting's attendees are all lifted children and Rick is only there as per the request of Josie. Rick's underprivileged status is instantly acknowledged by the lifted children: "It must be so weird for him, being with us," and: "Why'd Josie ask him? He must feel so weird" (*Klara,* 81). The children then begin to treat Rick in a ridiculing manner, paralleling the society's treatment of other underprivileged entities such as AFs. They stereotype and exoticize him for his non-lifted status, e.g., as not having access to entertainment, like one of the children says: "Hey! He likes movies" (*Klara,* 83). The others then continue this banal treatment when they notice Rick does not instantly eat the treat offered to him: "Why doesn't he eat his chocolate? […] He's just holding it" (*Klara,* 84). As the children ridicule Rick, Josie turns their attention to Klara who then is treated as a commodified object that can be exploited and ridiculed as discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.2. This becomes the turning point in Rick and Klara's relationship as Rick begins to understand and relate to Klara's Othered status. Much like Klara is the robotic and socially inferior counterpart to the human and morally superior Josie, Rick is the non-lifted and inferior counterpart to the lifted and high-rank Josie (Sun 2023, 506). Realizing this connection, Rick saves Klara by shifting the focus to a soft toy dog one of the lifted children has – this angers the lifted child and he tries to ostracize Rick evermore, but Klara is nonetheless saved. After the incident Klara remarks to Rick that he "challenged that

boy, [Klara] thinks, for [her] benefit" (*Klara,* 92), cementing the beginning of their interpersonal relationship.

Precisely as with Chrissie, Klara's relationship with Rick is "intertwined with his profound and complicated relationship with Josie" (Stenseke 2022, 10). Rick and Klara want the best for Josie, and as the story progresses, they discover that curing Josie is an important objective for both of them. Klara is the first to notice this connection and remarks she believes "in many ways Rick and I have similar goals" (*Klara,* 94). Rick begins to slowly trust Klara and exemplifies this in two ways. First, Rick believes Klara is truly the solution in curing Josie and wants to help Klara in every possible way, even when he does not fully comprehend Klara's decisions: "[Y]ou're super-intelligent and I'm an idiot kid who hasn't even been lifted. […] If it's really going to help Josie, […] I'd be pleased to help" (*Klara,* 160–161). As the society of *Klara* is highly non-religious, Klara's celestial relationship with the Sun is most likely a novel thing to Rick. Despite this, he open-mindedly helps Klara with her trips to Mr. McBain's Barn where she worships the Sun. Rick's trust in Klara is evident, secondly, in the ways he confides in Klara. He, for example, talks about the challenges of being a non-lifted child – a topic he never discusses with any other character. Rick even begins to consider Klara a "moral support" in times of heightened stress (*Klara,* 196). After Rick's initial coldness, he finally sees Klara as a companion of mutual help and affect. Klara, again, is treated as an entity with internal value.

Klara's position as an entity with mixed internal and instrumental value is closely connected to the ideological contradiction and complexion of the novel. Thus far scholarly work has focused on the ways Klara is exploited for her instrumental value which aptly benefits the techno-capitalist ideology of the society of *Klara*. Under capitalism, a substitution logic is operated to sustain the economy and Klara's position as a slave for the elite is a prime example of this (Du 2022, 554). Klara, just like the other AFs, is "commodified to satisfy the various human needs" thus replacing, e.g., health care workers (ibid.). I have exemplified the commodification of Klara with the encounters she has with people or entities she is not intimate with, but Sun (2023, 507) furthermore argues how Klara is objectified even with her loved ones: "[Klara] is exploited, both by Josie herself and by the people around her. Trusting in her programmed perfection, Chrissie plans to benefit from Klara, who has the skills to observe, imitate, and eventually replace Josie." I share this opinion partly, for especially Chrissie treats Klara with contradictions. At one instance she confides in Klara about the struggles of raising a child with a potentially fatal illness, but as Klara tries to ask more about

her other child who died due to the lifting process, Chrissie strongly criticizes Klara for crossing the boundary on sensitive topics deemed unfit for AFs. However, to view Klara's relationships with Josie, Chrissie, and Rick simply in terms of the owner–owned or the superior–inferior dichotomy takes away Klara's agency and her internal value because she forms genuine relationships of love, affect, and trust. Altogether, Klara's interpersonal relationships are an example of the text's counter-hegemonic ideology which challenges notions of human superiority and the capitalist quest for profit over life and love. Through her relationship with Josie, Rick, and Chrissie, Klara acts as a defiant challenge to the capitalist reification process where her internal value is dismissed and rather, she is simply valued for her instrumentality as an object. Klara demonstrates how post-humanist entities can be loyal companions who find unique solutions to social and human problems.

Albeit Klara is granted internal value by the people closest to her, her moral position is mostly determined by the techno-capitalist ideology of *Klara.* The choices of vocabulary and overall treatment of Klara by the manager, Melania, and other AFs and the lifted children's habitus, illustrate how AFs are generally perceived within the novel's society. Regardless of people's class, lifted status or socioeconomic background, individuals mostly see AFs as objects that can be treated with no value. As the AFs' commodification is so all-encompassing, the triumph of techno-capitalist ideology becomes hegemonic. However, this hegemony bears a strong contradiction within the novel. On one hand, technological entities are the Other in *Klara* – the AFs rarely gain agency and are frequently exploited as techno-capitalist slaves. On the other hand, however, technological entities morally challenge notions of human superiority and humanity. As the elite children are lifted, they, too, become transhumanist entities who are genetically modified thus ever increasingly resembling the identity of posthuman beings. Furthermore, it is de facto the posthuman entities such as Klara who most strongly display emotions, such as empathy, commonly associated with humans. I discuss the contradictive nature of humanism, posthumanism, and transhumanism in *Klara* further in the following section when I analyze the characterization of Klara through a post-humanist and a humanist paradigm.

3.4 A Technological Child: The Humane and Post-humane Characterization of Klara

Klara explores humanity, post-humanity and, to a degree, trans-humanity through the AFs, the lifted children, and the underprivileged people. In the novel these seemingly dichotomic

ideas blend and challenge each other much like in Marxist thinking where contenting ideologies bear traces of the opposite ideologies. I explore these themes indirectly in sections 3.1 and 3.2 where I analyze the cognitive autonomy and internal value of Klara. In this section, I analyze the humanity and post-humanity of Klara in more detail. I discuss how Klara is characterized as both the post-humanist Other and the humane being who challenges anthropocentrism with her kindness and intelligence.

Throughout the novel, Klara's post-humanity is concretized in her highly developed observational and imitational skills. Klara demonstrates her abilities first when Chrissie ponders the possibility of purchasing Klara. Chrissie meticulously tests her: "I want you not to look towards Josie. Now tell me, without looking. What color are her eyes?" (*Klara,* 50). Klara correctly displays her skills and answers they are grey. Chrissie continues: "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?" (ibid.). Klara, again, successfully answers: "Her conversational voice has a range between A-flat above middle C to C octave" (ibid.). Finally, Klara notices Josie has a "weakness in her left hip" (ibid.) and pain in her right shoulder greatly affecting her walking, which Chrissie wants Klara to imitate. Klara passes Chrissie's tests, and the family agrees to buy her. Chrissie's tests not only highlight Klara's role as a commodified product, but also characterize her as a posthuman entity that has unique skills and features which are profitable in a capitalist system. The manager, for example, proudly hails Klara's features as she is excited about a forthcoming sale: "'As you see, Klara has extraordinary observational ability'" (*Klara,* 51). Klara's abilities distance her from the humans around her as her observational and imitational skills are post-humanist in the sense that they are developed beyond (ordinary) human reach.

The way Klara visualizes phenomena, people, and objects is exemplified in the narrative: "Her vision is enabled by image-classification algorithms" which result in high-definition images (Du 2022, 556). Because of this, Klara is able to make such detailed observations as discussed above, but, occasionally, her programming has hindrances, especially in times of heightened stress. Du (2022, 556) exemplifies this with the instance Klara becomes overwhelmed with Chrissie and sees her not in a high-definition image, but rather as eight pixelated boxes representing Chrissie's different emotions. Another example of her unpredictable visualization is when Klara is in a car for the first time and Chrissie confides in her about Josie. Klara is bombarded with rapidly changing visual cues and the personal confinement of Chrissie, which confuse and unsettle her. Again, she is met with the

hindrances of her post-humanity: “At one stage a box became filled with the other cars, while the boxes immediately beside it filled with segments of road and surrounding field” (*Klara,* 110). She is unable to visualize and comprehend the scene, but rather sees the passing landscapes as vague boxes. Sometimes the deductive interpretations derived from her post-humanist observations can also be risky and unpredictable. Sun (2022, 508) exemplifies this with the instance Klara first encounters a bull. She fears the animal’s physical appearance and angrily thinks that the bull should not “be allowed to stand in the Sun’s pattern at all, that this bull belonged somewhere deep in the ground far within the mud and darkness, and its presence on the grass could only have awful consequences” (*Klara,* 113). Klara’s deductions can potentially “have an inkling of violence, possibly even of evil” (Sun 2022, 2008). This creates posthuman uncanny which diminishes the novel’s critique of anthropocentrism.

Klara’s vocabulary and grammar also display traces of her posthuman identity. Albeit she is a super-intelligent android, her vocabulary is often simple and child–like (Du 2022, 556). She names outfits – not people – high-ranking and when confronted with a device she is unfamiliar with, she calls it an oblong (ibid.). Her way of naming unknown people is highly connected to her visuality – thus she uses names like the Beggar Man, the Coffee Cup Lady, and the Raincoat Man to describe pedestrians she sees from the window. Furthermore, she prefers common names over proper names, and, e.g., never calls Chrissie by her real name, but rather as Josie’s mother or the mother. When talking to other people or AFs, Klara never uses the second person singular pronoun ‘you’. For example, when addressing Rick directly she says: “It’s very nice to meet Rick, […] I wonder if he lives in that neighbor house” (*Klara,* 70). Klara’s relates to her programming and her duty as an AF as the robots mostly interact with children thus when addressing younger people, it is expected Klara does not use highly sophisticated language. However, her inner monologue is filled with simple language and child-like observations, too thus highlighting the posthuman identity within her.

Through her position as an AF, Klara becomes something less than human, she becomes the dehumanized servant (Ajeesh and Rukmini 2023, 857). This implies a worker who can be utilized with no regard for their well-being or emotions e.g., the treatment of human slaves in capitalist regimes. As explored in section 3.1, Klara is a worker who is highly alienated. As an alienated individual, she is unable to grasp the totality of her oppression, but rather, finds it natural and justified. This reveals the posthuman side of Klara as humans generally seek to criticize and resist their oppression. Klara’s posthuman alienation can be exemplified with Chrissie’s plan to make Klara inhabit a humanoid closely resembling Josie and continue

living her life closely mimicking Josie in case the child passes away. When Chrissie asks if Klara agrees to the plan, Klara is initially hesitant: "If I were to continue Josie, if I were to inhabit the new Josie, then what would happen to … all this?" (*Klara,* 237) but Chrissie's words convince Klara, and she is on board with the plan: "[U]ntil just now. I believed it was my duty to save Josie, to make her well. But perhaps this is a better way" (ibid.). Were the plan come to fruition, Klara would essentially lose herself completely. She would not be able to inhabit her body, express her own emotions nor display her post-humanity, but rather her whole life would consist of pretending to be someone else. Klara's acceptance to the plan reveals how much reification affects her being – she is willing to lose everything just to make her owners and masters happy, which intensifies her posthuman uncanny.

Klara's post-humanity highly contributes to her oppression. As discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.2, Klara is often treated and perceived as an object. Her posthuman characteristics differentiate her from the ruling humans which is often a contributing factor into oppression in capitalist societies. Precisely as African slaves were oppressed by their white colonizers for looking and speaking differently, Klara, too, is marked for her Otherness. She thinks, talks, visualizes, and behaves differently than her humane counterparts who are the elite in the anthropocentric techno-capitalist society of *Klara.* Albeit Klara's appearance is never directly described – aside from Josie's remarks that Klara looks "almost French" (*Klara,* 47) – it is safe to assume she does not closely resemble a human. She can be thrown around the room in a test for coordination, disposed in the trashcan in case of malfunctions, or placed at the top of the shelf when her services are no longer required. These indicate Klara is small and light much like a play doll. Furthermore, her physical form is often either completely marked or fully disregarded. An example of the former is when Klara, Josie, and Chrissie visit the theater and Klara is immediately ostracized even when she does not address anyone: "[W]e were just wondering if you were intending to bring this machine into the theater. […] First they take the jobs. Then they take the seats at the theater" (*Klara,* 268–269). Strangers see Klara's visual appearance and connotate her to an object rather than a holistic entity with feelings and worth. Klara's physicality is, on the other hand, often disregarded by Josie's parents – Chrissie disregards her physical form when intending to use Klara as Josie's continuation, and when Klara worries about what would happen to her body would she inhabit the new AF resembling Josie, she says, "that's just fabric" (*Klara,* 237) The father, too, utilizes Klara's posthuman physicality without hesitation when he extracts P-E-G nine solution from Klara to destroy the Cootings machine, even with major health risks to Klara.

Klara's physical appearance, thus, comes with its hindrances; it is used as a justification for her exploitation as it marks her Otherness and post-humanity.

Klara, then, is depicted and characterized post-humanely and often she is perceived as such by the other characters in *Klara*. However, Klara also challenges her post-humanity and the generally accepted notion of humanity, and with these, the capitalist ideology her society as well. Sahu and Karmakar (2022, 856) argue that capitalist societies generally do not offer hybrid identities with post-humanist and humanist agents, for "robots are assigned to the object categories, humans to the subject category. No crossover or hybrids are allowed in this modern, dualist ontology." The tenet of their statement is that capitalism highlights the commodified status of robots, such as Afs, so that there is little room for ethical or moral discussion around the agency, value, or rights of post-humanist entities. The dehumanization and exclusion from the human category furthermore are used as justifications for exploitation of the posthuman (Banerjee 2022, 3). As discussed in section 3.2, Klara's relationship with Josie, the mother, and Rick, gives her agency and internal value. Through these, Klara also gains humane characteristics in the eyes of her loved ones, which challenges the dichotomy of human–robot relations. Klara has other qualities, too, which highlight the humane side of her, and I discuss these further next.

In sections 3.1 and 3.2 I discuss how interpellation is an effective device to uphold capitalist and anthropocentric ideologies in *Klara*. It can, however, be used in counter-hegemonic paradigms as well. Consciously or unconsciously, almost all the characters in *Klara* contribute to Klara's humane characterization with a simple choice of pronoun. If Klara were completely regarded an object, she would be referred with the pronoun *it*. This, however, rarely occurs in the novel, but rather, regardless social status or relationship with Klara, the other characters use the pronoun *she* when talking about Klara: "I've never known one like *her*," says the manager to which Chrissie replies: "We'll take her" (*Klara,* 51; emphases added). This simple word choice is a form of interpellation – with *she,* Klara is granted some internal value and, to a degree, humanity. It furthermore linguistically challenges the "sociocultural position of a robot" from their Othered status (Sahu and Karmakar 2022, 858). Klara, however, is interpellated also with words of greater semantic importance. Chrissie calls Klara *honey* which carries strong connotations of deep affection and even love. It is a word Chrissie frequently uses also when referring to Josie. It is unclear whether Klara recognizes Chrissie's interpellation but nonetheless it gives an insight into the ways Chrissie perceives Klara. Josie, too, calls Klara with strong emotive words, for example when calling Klara her

"best friend" (*Klara,* 158). The manager further contributes to Klara's humane interpellation when she expresses her disappointment in Klara by saying "you of all *people*," which is a direct manifestation of humanity (*Klara,* 38; emphasis added). As interpellation is used to exclude those not desired within a social identity, Klara is thus often linguistically accepted to occupy the human category.

Albeit interpellation and the relationships Klara have with other characters indicate a holistic entity occasionally capable of occupying the human category, it is Klara's inner monologue, emotions, and habitus with people that truly challenge the dichotomy of post-humanity and humanity. As indicated by scholars such as Ajeesh and Rukmini (2023, 856) and Sun (2023, 507), Klara is highly empathetic. On a textual level, this is highly ironic as the posthuman Klara is the character with most humane personality traits: "Klara, who is programmed to have little empathy, turns out to have more than her human counterparts, who are significantly lacking in empathy themselves" (Sun 2023, 507). She always sees the good in people, even when they arguably do not deserve it. She respects human life above everything and is even willing to risk herself to save Josie (ibid.). Empathy is a characteristic strongly associated with humanity and through her empathy, Klara comes to closely resemble a human. On Klara's behalf, this is a silent and likely an unconscious resistance against the anthropocentrism of the society of *Klara*. On a textual level, however, it challenges the reader to question the status quo conceptualizations of humanity – if non-human subjects can have characteristics solely associated with humanity, what is it that makes people humans?

Klara's complex emotional inner world furthermore highlights her non-post-humanist position. She is kind, curious and naïve. Klara always wants to treat others with care and think of them with kindness, regardless of the person's position to her. She, for example, reminiscences how much she appreciates Melania even when she notices the housekeeper finds her company "puzzling and irritating" (*Klara,* 57). Klara's curiosity is evident throughout the novel. Her favorite past-time is looking out the window where she can observe and learn about the world and the humans with their complexity. As she narrates her story, Klara recounts the many instances she observed curious incidents with by-passers which left her puzzling life's big questions; she wonders "Would I then feel […] pain alongside my happiness?" (*Klara,* 26) after seeing conflicting emotions within human behavior. Sako and Falcus (2023, 131) argue that Klara's kindness, curiosity, observations, reactions, and her naïve and innocent belief in the Sun's celestial healing powers come to characterize her as a "technological or a post-humanist child." Klara is represented as a child and the story

challenges the reader to "read her as child-like" (ibid.). Klara's child-like narration is used as a rhetorical device to raise sympathy within the readers and characterize her as a subject with humane characteristics.

Klara's humane characterization, empathy, and complex inner world and monologue are in stark contrast to the often-cruel behavior and thought patterns of the other characters, especially the lifted children. As discussed, the AFs alongside non-lifted characters are the Other in the society of *Klara.* Lifting promotes false consciousness within the affluent people by creating a class-based, hierarchical world where technological advances can seemingly promise human perfectibility (Du 2022, 559). However, only certain type of technological advancement is approved – the AFs, despite their technological status, are often commodified and mistreated whereas the genetically modified lifted children are hailed as the intellectually and morally superior race. The lifted children are "more than human" while the technological divide grants the AFs with a status of "less than human" (Sun 2023, 3). However, the trans-human identity of the lifted comes to bear a strong contradiction within the novel – Süt Güngör (2022, 1525) argues that the lifted status of the children contributes to a "defamiliarization of human nature." She sees the human nature within *Klara* is one determined of "egoist and utilitarian instincts" (ibid.). This is clear in the ways the privileged children treat those with little privilege, e.g., their treatment of Klara and Rick in Josie's interaction meeting as discussed is sections 3.1 and 3.2. In the novel it is arguably then Klara who demonstrates qualities which should grant her the moral status of "more than human" – she is kind, altruistic, and highly empathetic. Her character is the reason she is often treated cruelly but it also grants her to form close interpersonal relations and occupy the human category.

The novel's strongest challenge to the dichotomy of human–robot relations comes with the mother and father's continuation plan for Josie in case she passes away. In essence, the parents believe Klara would be able to transcend beyond her posthuman identity, inhabit a human body, and live her life as the human child Josie: "We're asking you to *become* her. […] – we want you to inhabit that Josie up there with everything you've learned" (*Klara,* 232) the mother explains to Klara. The parents are initially hesitant about the plan, too, but are eventually persuaded by Mr. Capaldi who argues: "There's nothing there. Nothing inside Josie that's beyond the Klaras of this world to continue" (*Klara,* 233). The father later explains his position to Klara:

> I think I hate Capaldi because deep down I suspect he may be right. That what he claims is true. That science has now proved beyond doubt there's nothing so unique about my daughter, nothing there our modern tools can't excavate, copy, transfer. That people have been living with one another all this time, centuries, loving and hating each other, and all on a mistaken premise. A kind of superstition we kept going while we didn't know better. (*Klara,* 249)

Ideologically the plan is complex. On one hand it is a significant milestone for the possibilities of techno-capitalism – even human life can be created with the means of production and technology. Simultaneously, however, it goes against the anthropocentric, capitalist ideology of the society of *Klara* where AFs are perceived mere machines with no agency nor internal value. With their plan, Klara would inherently become an entity closely resembling a human agent with her habitus, appearance, and relationships. Klara's potential status as Josie's continuation would blur the lines between the human and the posthuman as it would contribute to the commodification of the trans-human lifted children (Sako and Falcus 2023, 129). They, too, would become replaceable and replicable much like the AFs in the techno-capitalist society of *Klara.* Banerjee (2022, 26) argues the biotechnology in *Klara* makes "the human indistinguishable from capital […] as another resource to be harvested". Perhaps, thus, the AFs and the lifted children do not fundamentally differ from one another – both are exploitable and capitalizable. Under hyper-capitalism it is indeed profit that is sacred, not (human) life. This is evident in actual capitalist societies too, e.g., the United States when slave trade was used to boost the economy.

Klara, then, is characterized in complex and partially contradictory ways in terms of her (post)-humanness. Through Klara's humane characteristics, the novel challenges its readers to (re)consider the ontology human–robot relations and identities. Klara's narration is emotive and powerful – yet the reader is constantly reminded that Klara is, de facto, a robot, an object. Her posthuman uncanny is especially palpable in the reactions she has to her own oppression, which falters the novel's critique of anthropocentrism and capitalism during the reading experience. At the end of the novel when Klara's services are no longer needed, she is exploited, alone, malfunctioning, and disorientated. Despite this, she is content with her life now and then: "It was the best home for me. And Josie was the best teenager" she remarks happily (*Klara,* 337). Question arises: if Klara does not mind how she is oppressed and is happy with everything, should we, the readers, care either?

4 Conflicting Ideologies in *Klara and the Sun*

The characterization of Klara reveals the hegemonic ideologies in the society of *Klara*. The world is dominated by the ideas, promises, and thought patterns of capitalism, anthropocentrism, and technology. In Gramscian thinking, *Klara* depicts its society through the areas of civil society – the events of the novel transpire in shops, homes, doctor's appointments, barns, theaters, and restaurants. Klara herself has no comprehensive understanding of the ways the society functions nor the ways it legitimatizes, naturalizes, and maintains techno-capitalism. Through habitus and Klara's inner monologue, the novel, however, reveals how Klara – alongside with all the other characters – have somewhat adapted the paradigms promoted by the dominant ideology. Klara is alienated and reified not only by the privileged lifted children, but also occasionally by the people closest to her, her fellow AFs and, most crucially, herself too. She is often treated with little respect and her status as an inferior commodified product is reinforced throughout the novel – Klara is an entity than can be thrown around the room, interpellated with disrespectful connotations and exploited physically, emotionally and socially. Furthermore, the novel depicts a society where class is a determining factor in the areas of education, work, and moral status. Both Althusser and Gramsci highlight the role of education in maintaining hegemony, and the world of *Klara* ostracizes non-lifted children by blocking their access to higher education. This way, the premise and hegemony of lifting is reproduced and stays in practice.

Albeit techno-capitalism and anthropocentrism are the hegemonic ideologies in *Klara*, they bear some contenting desires and goals. The former advocates for maximal profit with technology whereas the latter promotes human-superiority, and often, these coincide but the novel offers contradictions within dominant ideas too. This is evident in the parents' continuation plan wherein Klara would challenge the human/posthuman dichotomy but also with the general reception towards AFs in *Klara.* Mr. Capaldi's comments to Klara reveal this contradiction aptly:

> A vital source of education and enlightenment. But as you know, there are people out there who worry about you. People who are scared and resentful. […] 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. (*Klara,* 328)

The desires of the two dominant ideologies are contending as the advancements in technology disrupt the notions of human-superiority and human identity. The AFs challenge humans with their intelligence and complexity. The ideas of capitalism and anthropocentrism, however, even clearly challenged by the counter-hegemonic paradigms within *Klara*. In the novel these paradigms and ideologies often materialize in quiet and unconscious ways, e.g., with the humane words Klara is interpellated with.

The emerging counter-hegemonic ideology in the society of *Klara* is foremost a post-humanist one but, on a textual level, the novel employs an anti-capitalist – albeit not precisely Marxist – ideology too. Together, these offer an alternative to the status quo dominance of techno-capitalism and anthropocentrism. The society of *Klara* perceives Klara as a regular object, something to be consumed and used, but her narration, relationships, emotions, and autonomy testify that is something much more. Albeit programmed and AI-powered, Klara can demonstrate qualities which characterize her as a sympathetic being to the people around her, but more importantly, to the readers. Rick's mom's, Helen's, words perfectly summarize Klara's being: "You really are a sweet one" (*Klara,* 172). Her child-like curiosity, empathy, kindness, naivety, autonomy and care make Klara a likable protagonist in a setting which highlights the crude and ruthless ambitions of capitalism. Upon initial reading, many readers are likely met with the same question about technological beings Mejia and Nikolaidis (2022, 304) propose: " 'how do we relate to them?', 'what are the responsibilities of the corporations who profit from producing them?', 'what kind of autonomy and dignity do they have?', and 'are their lives imbued with meaning (and, if so, of what type)?'".

Scholarly work analyzing the novel's blending of human and posthuman identities offer differing perspectives on the issue. Some scholars read Klara's humanity and the lifted children's trans-humanity as a warning against the dangers of capitalism. For example, Hadari (2023, 50) argues the novel's challenge to human-robot relations is a capitalist enterprise to monetize life and disrupt traditional human relations while Xiao (2023, 356) critiques the novel for avoiding "violating the boundaries between human and AF that might trigger unease in readers." Other scholars analyze the novel as a paradigm reconsideration to AI and anthropocentrism. Sun (2023, 510) sees *Klara* challenging the "ideals of human perfectibility" with its sympathetic narrator while Ajeesh and Rukmini (2023, 853) argue the novel explores robots as entities with cognition and empathy thus defying humane notions of posthuman agents. As is often with Marxists readings, *Klara* comes to be characterized as both the apology and the critique of capitalism. The novel employs an ideological critique

which is contradictive and occasionally even confusing. This is common with symptomatic readings as ideologies need to justify their existence by distancing themselves from the contending ideology. Thus, seemingly counterhegemonic works like *Klara* are highly affected by the hegemonic ideology – either consciously or unconsciously.

I argue Klara's characterization does indeed challenge notions human superiority and capitalist ruthlessness as indicated by scholars such as Sun (2023) and Ajeesh and Rukmini (2023). However, the novel's critique of anthropocentrism and capitalism is hindered by its ideological contradiction and complexion. Albeit Klara's narration is emotional and powerful and shows signs of cognitive autonomy, internal value, and humane character, she is ultimately overpowerfully posthuman. She is characterized as an entity possessed by the reification and alienation processes, and in times of great oppression or maltreatment these thwart the characteristics which produce sympathy within readers. Often the cruel behavior of the lifted children is not the most frightening or uncanny aspect of the novel, but rather Klara's reaction to the maltreatment (Ajeesh and Rukmini 2023, 859). This is aptly evident in her tolerance and empathy. Albeit they are positive characteristics, Klara's tolerance and empathy are seemingly limitless which often come to counter-effect the sympathy generated during the reading experience. After the lifted children are done throwing Klara around the room and ridiculing her, she remarks: "They have rough ways, but they may not be so unkind" (*Klara,* 94). This is an uncanny reaction which gives the impression Klara is unable to critically examine or challenge the seemingly morally superior trans-humans nor the hegemony of capitalism. To her, everything is just the way it should be – she is content when she gets to serve her owners and the hegemony of techno-capitalism and anthropocentrism alike. Klara's support of the status quo is often unconscious which might be the most frightening aspect of her narration as ideologies are most effective when spread through the unconscious as indicated by Althusser and Gramsci.

The novel characterizes Klara as entity which closely resembles a human in many aspects but is in no way human. With Klara, the novel seemingly morally challenges the privileged position of the lifted children and the false consciousness created by the lifting process, but its critique is, again, faltered by its ideological complexion and contradiction. Klara is kind and caring which creates a stark contrast to the egotistical and coarse trans-humans. Furthermore, the novel introduces Rick who is not lifted but displays some ethical traits such as altruism and care. The novel encourages its readers to sympathize with the Othered Klara and Rick, but, ultimately, it is the elite class who remain in power while Rick is not accepted to the

Atlas Brookings College thus crushing his dreams of social mobility and Klara is eventually left to die alone in a landfill. When Josie is severely ill, Chrissie vents out her frustration on Rick in a moment which criticizes the idea of human perfection on genetic engineering: “Josie took the gamble. […] She bet high, and if Dr. Ryan’s right, she might soon be about to lose. […] What exactly do you believe you’ve won here?” (*Klara,* 310). Chrissie smugly suggests that lifting is the winner’s way even when it potentially means the death of her child – ultimately, however, she is proven to be right. Klara and Chrissie continue their privileged lives in elite educational institutions and occupations while the marginalized characters’ dreams, hopes, and desires are never fully met. Connors argues (2023, 8) the novel “wears its ideology critique on its sleeve” while “no plot reversals [..] check the status quo” – i.e., those, consciously or unconsciously, challenging the elite gain nothing from their resistance and the novel scarcely offers indications for different readings. The hegemony of capitalism, lifting, anthropocentrism, and technology remain in power while counter-hegemonic ideas occasionally surface but are never fully materialized.

While the novel fails to thoroughly challenge the dichotomy of the human–robot ontology, it offers a shifting paradigm on the relationship humans can have with robots and other posthuman entities. Klara is no human, but she is just human enough to form relationships of mutual respect, affect, and trust with the people she serves. Albeit the people closest to her occasionally exploit her Othered, commodified and alienated status, they also grant her agency and exhibit signs of genuine care and even love towards Klara. Despite Klara’s uncanny posthumanness, she is characterized as an entity with potential to love and be loved. As AI, technology and posthuman entities such as robots continue to rapidly develop in modern societies, the novel challenges its readers to consider their position to robotics. Do we want to treat AFs as lifeless objects with no internal value precisely as the lifted children at Josie’s interaction meeting or do we give treat them with integrity and respect their autonomy? I argue the novel successfully employs Klara's semantically rich narration to advocate for the latter option. However, as in the novel, people place humanism above the counter-hegemonic post-humanism, and thus the questions of human–robot relations and Klara’s internal value can potentially be nonchalantly “dismissed in favor of profit and convenience” (Banerjee 2022, 1). At the end of the novel, when Josie had grown up and Klara’s services are no longer needed, these questions become all too relevant. First Klara is left to spend her days alone in the Utility Room, i.e., a closet before she is finally let go to

meet her death, again alone, at a landfill. For Josie and her mother, this is the convenient method but the novel challenges its readers to ponder whether it is a morally sound one.

5 Conclusion

Klara and the Sun is a complex novel. Kazuo Ishiguro's story speculates that a hyper-capitalist hegemony wherein profit and money thwart moral dilemmas. Perhaps the most uncanny aspect of the novel is its resemblance to modern Western nations – the United States, for example, may well be very similar to the society of *Klara* in twenty years. The development of technology emphasizes the position and possibilities of the posthuman. As robots begin to increasingly occupy space and positions within our everyday life, humans need to consider their position to these posthuman entities – do we treat them as friends or foes, as objects or as autonomous agents? How do we relate to them – can there be something more than coding inside robots that grants them internal value and rights? *Klara* speculates these questions with its sympathetic narrator Klara who offers ideologically contradictive answers to the dilemmas. With my thesis, I have analyzed the ideologies within *Klara* from the viewpoint of Klara's characterization and focused on three themes: Klara's cognitive autonomy and heteronomy, her intrinsic and instrumental value, and her humane and post-humane characterization. As the novel introduces a world where capitalism thrives, I employed a Marxist reading of the novel, and utilized Althusser's theories on ideology and Gramsci's theories on hegemony as well as common Marxist theoretical concepts such as alienation and reification.

My first thesis question relates to Klara's ideologically contradictive characterization. As per my analysis, Klara's cognitive autonomy is limited but not entirely heteronomous. Her programming comes with its hindrances – she for example cannot critically examine the constructs imposed by the hegemony of techno-capitalism. Klara does, however, exhibit signs of resistance which counteract the dominating ideology and her algorithmic programming and training. Furthermore, she is the only character in the novel who displays religious tendencies with her relationship with the Sun, which characterizes her as an entity capable of forming her own connotations. Klara's cognition is closely related to her intrinsic and instrumental value. If characterized and perceived as cognitively subjected, she is essentially a product. Klara simply becomes lines of coding that can be manipulated to conform the specific needs of the ruling ideology. This is how most characters in *Klara* perceive the AFs – their intrinsic value is often devalued to the minimum. In Klara's characterization this is evident with the ways, e.g., the lifted children and the Manager exploit, ridicule, and commodify Klara. With Klara, they see an object that can be utilizes in different ways. The novel does, however, offer

differing ways to perceive Klara. Rick, Josie, and Chrissie all form relationships of mutual affect, respect, help, confinement, and love with Klara. They dignify her subjectivity and treat her as entity with internal value. Their affect can be contributed to Klara's humane characterization. The novel portrays her as an entity with complex inner life – she is kind, caring, and sympathetic. In many ways, Klara is the ultimate protagonist the readers want to root for and the other characters notice her positive traits as well. Despite her human-like characterization, Klara is ultimately posthuman. She visualizes, looks, behaves, and thinks very differently than humans. In the end, it is her reaction to her own oppression which marks her as the uncanny posthuman.

All in all, the three themes explored in this thesis – cognition, value, and (post)-humanity – characterize Klara in contradictory ways. She has some autonomous cognition, she is valued by some characters, and she has some humane characteristics. These traits are the novel's way to critically examine the constraints of techno-capitalism and anthropocentrism. *Klara* challenges its reader to consider the human–robot ontology and our relationship with the posthuman. As per my second research question, I have argued that *Klara* fails to fully challenge the dichotomy of human–robot identities due to its ideological contradiction. Albeit Klara is a sympathetic narrator, she appears all too posthuman for a complex reconsideration of humanity and post-humanity. In the end, it seems her reification and alienation have gone too far and she herself has accepted her role as a commodified product. This diminishes the novel's critique of anthropocentrism, and, in fact, may even reinforce hegemonic attitudes. The novel, however, successfully encourages its readers to reconsider the possibilities of human–robot relations – Klara's relationships with Rick, Chrissie, and Josie seem genuine and affectionate. *Klara* demonstrates how respect and tolerance can potentially create meaningful encounters with the posthuman and the Other. When analyzed with a Marxist symptomatic reading, *Klara*, then, comes to appear as both the apology and critique. Some counter-hegemonic attitudes and paradigms materialize in the novel while some hegemonic attitudes are recreated and reproduced.

As post-humanity affects our lives at an increasing rate, literature, science, and the arts will have to further explore our relationship with the technological Other. While post-humanist theories offer a grounding paradigm for the study of these, I argue for a holistic exploration of post-humanity with other modes and paradigms of literary analysis. I have demonstrated how Marxist theories and paradigms aptly suit the analysis but encourage scholars to utilize different theories too. In the case of *Klara,* ecocritical dimensions of the novel have yet to be

thoroughly explored – what does Klara's relationship with the Sun and the polluting Cootings machine reveal of our relationship with both the posthuman and nature? Furthermore, a feminist reading of *Klara* could analyze the aspects and effects of gender within the novel more thoroughly. Similarly, this study has demonstrated the need for Marxist readings and studies. As capitalism embeds our everyday life, its naturalizing effects on oppression and class hierarchy need to be deconstructed in literature and the arts. This way, we can better understand the narratives and discourses that shape our consciousness and to amend injustices for the benefit for all – the posthuman and non-lifted individuals included.

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Appendix 1 Finnish summary

Tarkastelen tässä tutkielmassa ideologista ristiriitaisuutta Kazuo Ishiguron romaanissa *Klara ja aurinko* (2021, translated by Helene Bützow). Romaani sijoittuu hyperkapitalistiseen yhteiskuntaan, jossa huippuälykkäät robotit huolehtivat yksinäisistä varakkaista lapsista. Romaanissa kyseisistä roboteista käytetään nimitystä keinotekoinen ystävä. *Klara ja aurinko* -romaanin kertoja ja päähahmo on keinotekoinen ystävä Klara, joka erottuu muista roboteista erittäin kehittyneiden havainnointi- ja imitaatiokykyjensä takia. Romaani on temaattisesti monipuolinen – siinä käsitellään mm. rakkautta, inhimillisyyttä, teknologiaa, tasa-arvoa ja kehitystä. Monipuolisuudesta huolimatta aikaisemmat tutkimukset romaanista ovat tarkastelleet lähinnä teoksen kapitalismin vastaista ideologiaa. Argumentoin, että romaanissa aineellistuu kaksi hyvin erilaista ideologiaa. Ensimmäinen näistä on kapitalismin vastainen ja posthumaaninen, kun taas toinen on kapitalistinen ja ihmiskeskeinen. Väitän, että kyseisten ideologioiden esiintulo tekee teoksesta ideologisesti ristiriitaisen, ja että tämä konkretisoituu erityisesti romaanin päähahmon, Klaran, luonnehdinnassa ja analysoinkin Klaran pääpirteitä kolmesta näkökulmasta. Tutkin Klaran kognitiivista autonomiaa, itseisarvoa sekä (post)humaanisuutta. Argumentoin, että kyseiset kolme piirrettä tekevät Klarasta ideologisesti ristiriitaisen hahmon, mikä heikentää romaanin kapitalismi- ja ihmiskeskeisyyskritiikkiä. Tutkielmani tutkimuskysymykset ovat seuraavat:

> (1) Miten ideologinen ristiriitaisuus näkyy *Klara ja aurinko* -romaanin päähahmon luonnehdinnassa?
> (2) Miten ideologien ristiriitaisuus heikentää *Klara ja aurinko* -romaanin kapitalismi- ja ihmiskeskeisyyskritiikkiä?

Tutkielmani teoreettinen viitekehys on marxistinen. Hyödynnän tutkielmassa perinteisiä marxistisia teorioita ja käsitteitä, kuten sosiaalisen vieraantumisen eli alienaation teoriaa. Tutkielman pääteoriat ovat kuitenkin Louis Althusserin ideologiateoria ja interpellaation eli kutsuhuudon käsite, sekä Antonio Gramscin teoriat hegemoniasta sekä vastahegemoniasta. Althusser määritteli ideologian ideoiksi, johon sisältyy yhteiskunnan ja yksilöiden edistämät tietoiset ja tiedostamattomat ajatusmallit. Gramscin määritelmän mukaan hegemonia on alempien luokkien ideologista kontrollia, jonka ansioista yläluokan edistämät ideat, näkemykset ja käytännöt vaikuttavat luontaisilta. Vastahegemonia puolestaan haastaa hegemonian edistämiä ideoita. Näiden teorioiden ja käsitteiden avulla tutkin *Klara ja aurinko* -romaanin ideologista ristiriitaisuutta. Ideologia-analyysi on keskeinen marxistisessa kirjallisuudentutkimuksessa, sillä ideologia vaikuttaa teoksien sisältöön, tyyliin, teemoihin, rakenteeseen ja rytmiin. Usein ideologia-analyysin kautta teos saa uusia merkityksiä, ja näin ollen esimerkiksi kapitalismin vastaiseksi mielletyt teokset voivatkin sisältää myös merkkejä kapitalismia

suosivista ajatusmalleista. Teos voi siis olla yhtäläisesti kritisoiva ja anteeksiantava vallassa olevalle ideologialle. Argumentoin, että juuri näin käy Ishiguron romaanissa.

Marxismi on materialistinen teoria, jonka kehittäjinä pidetään Karl Marxia ja Friedrich Engelsiä. Marxismi tutkii tuotannon, sosiaalisten rakenteiden ja historian välistä yhteyttä, ja pyrkii luomaan yhteiskunnan, jossa tuotantovälineet ovat yhteisesti jaettuja. Marxilaisen teorian keskipisteessä on luokan käsite. Marx ja Engels jakoivat luokat niiden tuotannollisten intressien ja mahdollisuuksien kautta, ja argumentoivat täten, että luokkia on kaksi: porvaristo, joka omistaa tuotantovälineet, sekä proletariaatti, jonka yksityinen omaisuus on olematonta tai vähäistä. Porvariston tärkein päämäärä on tuotannon kasvattaminen, ja sen saavuttamiseksi porvaristo riistää proletariaatin aikaa, työtä ja ponnistelua. Kapitalismi ylläpitää tämänkaltaista järjestelmää, jossa luokkajaot ovat jyrkkiä. Kapitalistinen riisto ja suuret luokkaerot johtavat proletariaatin sosiaaliseen vieraantumiseen. Sosiaalinen vieraantuminen on monimutkainen prosessi, joka sisältää neljä puolta: vieraantuminen tuotteesta, vieraantuminen työntekijän omasta toiminnasta, vieraantuminen muista yksilöistä sekä vieraantuminen ihmisluonnosta. Sosiaalisesti vieraantunut yksilö mieltää maailman merkityksettömänä. Sosiaalisen vieraantumisen sisarteoriana voidaan pitää esineellistämisen eli reifikaation teoriaa. Marxilaisessa teoriassa reifikaatio viittaa prosessiin, jossa ihminen tai ihmisen kaltainen olento mielletään objektina. Niin sosiaalinen vieraantuminen kuin reifikaatio vähentää yksilöiden ihmisarvoa, sillä yksilö nähdään ainoastaan taloudellisen kasvun välineenä, eikä subjektina, jolla on itseisarvoa.

Ideologialla on useita hyvin erilaisia teoreettisia lähtökohtia, ja täten sen määrittäminen on lähes mahdotonta. Marxilaisessa viitekehyksessä ideologia liittyy kuitenkin usein valtaan sekä tapoihin, joilla valtaa luodaan, oikeutetaan ja ylläpidetään. Ideologia on olennainen yksilöiden sosiaalisen todellisuuden rakentumisessa. Ideologia liittyy vahvasti Antonio Gramscin teorioihin hegemoniasta sekä vastahegemoniasta. Hegemoniassa yhdistyy vallassa olevan luokan tai ryhmän voima sekä sorretun luokan tai ryhmän myöntymys. Hegemoniaa voidaan ylläpitää voimalla, mutta usein on tehokkaampaa hyödyntää myöntymystä. Esimerkiksi ensimmäisen maailman valtiot voivat käyttää voimaa neuvotellessaan kolmannen maailman maiden kanssa liikevaihtosopimuksista – voimakkaammat maat voivat kiristää heikompia muun muassa ekonomisilla sanktioilla. Usein on kuitenkin tehokkaampaa suostutella heikommat maat sopimuksiin vetoamalla muun muassa sopimuksien yhteishyötyyn. Näin niille saa toisen osapuolen myöntymyksen, vaikka usein tämänkaltaiset sopimukset hyödyttävät vallassa olevia maita huomattavasti enemmän. Vaikka hegemonia liittyy vahvasti myös valtaan, se ei ole sama asia kuin ideologia. Hegemonia kattaa suuremman osa-alueen kuin ideologia, sillä hegemoniaan liittyy voima sekä luonnollistettu suostumus.

Hegemonia voidaan jakaa kahteen toiminta-alueeseen: siviiliyhteiskunta sekä valtiollinen yhteiskunta. Siviiliyhteiskunta kattaa monenlaiset instituutiot valtion ja talouden sisällä, esimerkiksi perheet, koulut, sanomalehdet ja televisio. Valtiollinen yhteiskunta viittaa puolestaan valtiollisiin instituutioihin, kuten armeija ja oikeusistuimet. Hegemonian kannalta siviiliyhteiskunta on olennaisempi, sillä sitä kautta valassa oleva luokka voi levittää ideologiaan tiedostamattoman mielen kautta. Hegemonia leviääkin siviiliyhteiskunnassa päivittäisten käytänteiden kautta ikään kuin näkymättömästi. Näin vallassa olevan luokan intressit vaikuttavat olevan koko yhteiskunnan intressejä. Vastahegemonia pyrkii osaltaan haastamaan hegemonian luomia mielikuvia yhteiskuntaluokista. Vastahegemoniassa on olennaista, että sorrettu luokka purkaa vallassa olevan käsityksen niin yläluokan identiteetistä kuin omastaan. Yhdessä hegemonia ja vastahegemonia luovat tilan, jossa ideologiat taistelevat jatkuvasti toisiaan vastaan. Lisäksi ne todistavat, miten näennäisesti vastakkaiset ideologiat vaikuttavat jatkuvasti toisiinsa.

Louis Althusser tunnetaan ideologian ja kutsuhuudon eli interpellaation teorioistaan. Althusser erottaa teoriassaan ideologian ja *Ideologian*. Ideologia viittaa tietoisiin valintoihin ja ajatusmalleihin, ja *Ideologia* käsittää yksilön tiedostamattomat yhteydet yhteiskuntaan. *Ideologia* muovaa yksilön yhteiskunnan vallassa olevaan ajatusmalliin. Sen tarkoituksena on luoda sosiaalisia subjekteja, jotka sopivat taloudellisesti toiminnalliseen rooliin yhteiskunnassa. *Ideologia* myös tekee rooleista tiedostamattomia, niin, että niiden olemassaolo on kiistaton ja sisäistetty. Tässä tutkielmassa yhdistän Althusserin ideologia-termin kahtiajaon, ja täten termiä käyttäessäni viittaan sekä tiedostettuihin että tiedostamattomiin ajatusmalleihin. Kutsuhuudon teoria liittyy vahvasti ideologiaan. Kutsuhuuto tarkoittaa tapaa, jolla yksilöt muovautuvat ideologian edistämiin rooleihin. Tämä tapahtuu yksilön tunnistamisen kautta. Esimerkiksi, kun henkilö huutaa kadulla ”hei sinä siellä”, toinen henkilö yleensä kääntyy huutavan henkilön suuntaan. Näin kääntynyt henkilö tunnistaa ja hyväksyy huutavan henkilön roolin, ja hänestä tulee ”sinä” kadulla. Kutsuhuuto luo rooleja, joilla on ideologisia käyttäytymismalleja. Esimerkiksi jos yksilö tunnistetaan tietyn sukupuolen edustajaksi, hänen odotetaan käyttäytyvän ennalta määrätyllä tavalla. Usein yksilöt alkavat myös omavalvomaan toimintaansa, jotta he täyttävät kutsuhuudon edustaman roolin odotukset.

Klara ja aurinko -romaanin päähahmo Klara asuu romaanin alussa kaupassa, jossa myydään Klaran kaltaisia huippuälykkäitä keinotekoisia ystäviä. Klaran ostaa lopulta Josie, joka on varakkaasta perheestä. Josie on ’nostettu’ lapsi eli hänelle on tehty geenimuutoksia vauvana älykkyyden parantamiseksi. Nostamisprosessi on mahdollista ainoastaan sosioekonomisesti varakkaille lapsille, ja se on erotteleva tekijä koulutusmahdollisuuksissa, sillä useat yliopistot hyväksyvät oppilaiksi ainoastaan nostettuja yksilöitä. Nostamisprosessissa on kuitenkin vaaransa, kuten Klara oppii asuessaan Josien kanssa. Josiella on salaperäinen tauti, jota hän sairastaa nostamisprosessin takia. Klara toimii aurinkovoimalla, ja täten uskoo, että auringonvalo pystyisi parantamaan myös Josien.

Klara muodostaa uskonnollisen suhteen auringon kanssa ja rukoilee sen apua. Josien äiti, Chrissie, on niin huolissaan tyttärensä sairaudesta, että hän on päättänyt tilata humanoidirobotin, joka muistuttaa ulkonäöllisesti tarkasti Josieta. Jos Josie kuolee, Chrissie kertoo Klaralle, että Klaran tulee täyttää kyseinen humanoidirobotti, ja elää sen sisällä esittäen Josieta. Romaanin lopussa Josie kuitenkin parantuu sairaudestaan kokonaan. Klara uskoo, että parantuminen tapahtui auringon avun takia. Parannuttuaan Josie aloittaa yliopisto-opintonsa, ja Klara jätetään kuolemaan yksin kaatopaikalle. Romaanin muita tärkeitä sivuhahmoja ovat Josien isä, perheen taloudenhoitaja Melania sekä Josien paras ystävä Rick, jota ei ole nostettu.

Klaran kognitiivisen autonomian taso vaihtelee romaanissa. Klara on ideaali palvelija, jopa orja, joka on valmis tekemään mitä tahansa, jotta hänen omistajansa ovat tyytyväisiä. Klara esimerkiksi poistaa itsestään elintärkeää polyetyleeniglykolia, koska uskoo, että näin hän tyydyttäisi auringon, joka voisi puolestaan parantaa Josien. Klaran omistautuminen palvelijan roolille tekee hänestä sosiaalisesti vieraantuneen työntekijän, joka ei osaa arvostaa omaa identiteettiään. Sosiaalinen vieraantuminen vaikuttaa myös vahvasti Klaran ajatteluun. Hän on omaksunut vallitsevan luokan ajattelumallit, ja esimerkiksi huomaa ihmisistä aina ensimmäiseksi heidän yhteiskuntaluokkansa. Klara ei osaa reflektoida kriittisesti yhteiskunnan kategorioita tai rajoitteita, vaan hyväksyy ne täysin. Hän myös jatkuvasti valvoo omaa toimintaansa, jotta hän täyttää omistajiensa ja vallitsevan ideologian odotukset. Epäonnistuessaan Klara moittii itseään rankasti. Romaani tarjoaa kuitenkin myös todisteita Klaran kognitiivisesta autonomiasta. Klara esimerkiksi ei aina tottele omistajiensa käskyjä tai seuraa koulutuksensa käyttäytymismalleja, vaikka keinotekoisten ystävien tulisi tehdä näin aina. Romaanin alussa eräs lapsi vaikuttaa olevan selkeästi kiinnostunut Klarasta, mutta Klara kohtelee häntä kuin ilmaa, koska ei halua kyseisen lapsen ostavan häntä. Tämä osoittaa, miten Klara osaa ja uskaltaa tehdä omia päätöksiä, koska keinotekoisten ystävien tulisi aina esittää itsensä mahdollisimman myyntikelpoisina. Lisäksi Klaran uskonnollinen suhde aurinkoon todistaa, että Klaralla on edes jonkin verran kognitiivista autonomiaa. Romaanin yhteiskunta on hyvin maallinen, eikä yksinkään toinen hahmo osoita uskonnollisia merkkejä. Klara on siis tehnyt omat konnotaationsa auringon parantavista voimista. Klaran vaihteleva kognitiivinen autonomia liittyy vahvasti romaanin ristiriitaisiin ideologioihin. Jos Klaran kognitiivinen autonomia mielletään rajallisena, hänen julma kohtelu ja hyväksikäyttö voidaan nähdä hyväksyttävänä. Jos puolestaan Klaraa pidetään kognitiivisesti autonomisena, hänen tulisi saada yhteiskunnallisia oikeuksia, kuten muidenkin tiedostavien olentojen. Argumentoin, että lopulta Klaran vaihteleva kognitiivinen autonomia luo hämmennystä lukukokemuksen aikana, mikä heikentää romaanin ihmiskeskeisyyskritiikkiä.

Klaran arvottaminen riippuu vahvasti suhteen tasosta toiseen osapuoleen. Klara on usein täysin esineellistetty, mikä vähentää hänen itseisarvoansa. Esimerkiksi vieraat lapset kohtelevat häntä komentoja tottelevana esineenä, jota voidaan huoletta heittää ympäri huonetta. Myös Josien perheen

taloudenhoitaja esineellistää Klaraa – hän esimerkiksi korostaa, että aikoo heittää Klaran roskiin, jos Klara tekee virheitä. Klaraa myös kutsuhuudetaan tavalla, joka korostaa keinotekoisten ystävien alisteista asemaa. Esimerkiksi Rickin äiti, Helen, vertaa Klaraa pölynimuriin, jota voi huoletta lainata, kunhan vain saa luvan omistajilta. Klaran esineellistetty asema konkretisoituu selkeimmin romaanin alussa hänen asuessaan keinotekoisia ystäviä myyvässä kaupassa. Kaupassa keinotekoisia ystäviä luokitellaan mallin ja sarjanumeron mukaan ennen kuin ne myydään tai huutokaupataan pois. Kaupanjohtaja hallitsee keinotekoisten ystävien jokaista päätöstä. Klara tykästyy kaupanjohtajaan, sillä hän ei ymmärrä, että kaupanjohtaja arvottaa häntä ainoastaan rahallisesti. Kaupanjohtaja esimerkiksi kohtelee keinotekoisia ystäviä hyvin ainoastaan silloin, kun myyntiluvut ovat hyvät. Kaupassa keinotekoiset ystävät arvottavat myös toisiansa pelkkinä esineinä, jotka kilpailevat siitä, kuka ostetaan ja kuka jää kauppaan. Klaran itseisarvo korostuu vasta silloin, kun hän on muodostanut toisen osapuolen kanssa interpersonaalisen suhteen. Josie korostaa usein Klaran subjektivisuutta – hän esimerkiksi haluaa mennä luontoretkelle sairaudesta ja sen oireista huolimatta, koska haluaa Klaran kokevan luonnon taianomaisuuden. Josie arvostaa ja jopa rakastaa Klaraa, ja pitää tätä hänen parhaana ystävänään. Chrissie huomaa, miten Klaran seura on positiivisesti muuttanut Josien käytöstä, ja alkaa tämän seurauksena muodostamaan myös oman interpersonaalisen suhteen Klaran kanssa. Hän luottaa Klaraan ja kertoo tälle salaisuuksia ja henkilökohtaisia paljastuksia. Rickin ja Klaran suhde on aluksi jännittynyt, sillä Rick näkee Klarassa julman muistutuksen omasta alisteisesta asemasta – Klara on ikään kuin teknokapitalistisen ideologian symboli. Rick kuitenkin huomaa yhtäläisyyksiä itsessään ja Klarassa, ja vähitellen heidän suhteensa muuttuu parempaan suuntaan. Rick ja Klara puolustavat ja auttavat toisiaan, ja Rick uskoo Klaran voivan pelastaa Josien. Klaran arvo ja arvottaminen on olennainen romaanin ideologisen ristiriitaisuuden kannalta. Romaani tarjoaa mahdollisuuden ja tilan käsitteellistää robottien ja ihmisten välisiä suhteita uudella tavalla, mutta myös todistaa, miten robottien status on helposti alennettavissa yksinkertaiseksi esineeksi.

Klarassa on sekä humaanisia että posthumaanisia piirteitä. Klaran posthumaanisuus korostuu erikoisissa piirteissä - hän osaa esimerkiksi imitoida Josien äänenkorkeutta sekä kävelytapaa täydellisesti ensitapaamisesta lähtien. Klaran kerronta paljastaa, että hänen visualisoinnissaan on posthumaanisia piirteitä, sillä esimerkiksi korkean stressin tilanteissa Klara näkee vain epätarkkoja pikseleitä. Klara myös puhuu eri tavoin kuin ihmiset. Hän käyttää yksinkertaista sanastoa ja nimeää ihmisiä visuaalisuuden kautta. Esimerkkejä Klaran käyttämistä nimistä on kahvikuppinainen tai sadetakkimies. Klaran posthumaanisia piirteitä käytetään usein perusteluna ja pohjana Klaran sortamiseen ja hyväksikäyttöön. Osittain Klara on tosin itsekin osasyyllinen tähän – hän on hyväksynyt roolinsa dehumanisoituna palvelijana, joka ei piittaa omasta hyvinvoinnistaan, vaan haluaa ainoastaan miellyttää omistajiansa. Klarassa on kuitenkin myös humaanisia piirteitä, jotka haastavat romaanin yhteiskunnan ihmiskeskeisen ideologian. Klaran luonnehdinta muistuttaa teknologista lasta – hän on utelias, naiivi, kiltti ja erittäin empaattinen. Nämä piirteet erottavat hänet vahvasti romaanin

nostetuista lapsista, joiden käyttäytymistä leimaa utilitarismi ja itsekkyys. Vaikka Klaran status on alhaisempi kuin nostettujen lapsien, hän on moraalisesti näiden yläpuolella. Näin romaani haastaa lukijoitansa pohtimaan robottien ja muiden posthumaanien toimijoiden identiteettiä erityisesti suhteessa ihmisyyteen.

Klara ja aurinko -romaani sekoittaa ihmisyyden ja posthumaanisuuden identiteettejä keskenään. Osa tutkijoista argumentoi, että näin romaani varoittaa lukijoitaan kapitalismin vaaroista, kun taas toiset korostavat, että romaani pyrkii näin haastamaan ihmisen täydellisyyttä koskevat ihanteet. Argumentoin, että romaani haastaa ihmiskeskeisyyttä, mutta sen sanomaa heikentää ristiriitainen ideologiakritiikki. Vaikka Klara on sympaattinen kertoja, hänen posthumaanisuutensa luo outoja, jopa kammottavia hetkiä lukukokemuksen aikana. Klara ei vastusta sortoansa, vaan hyväksyy sen avoimin mielin. Klara on myös sisäistänyt häntä sortavan ideologian opit tiedostamattomasti, mikä vähentää lukukokemuksen aikana kertyneen sympatian vaikusta. Romaani myös tarjoaa musertavan kuvan tulevaisuudesta – he, jotka vastustavat vallassa olevaa ideologiaa ovat romaanin häviäjiä, kun taas vallassa olevat hahmot vaikuttavat onnistuvan kaikessa. Vaikka romaani epäonnistuu osaltaan kritiikissään ihmiskeskeisyydestä ja kapitalismista, argumentoin kuitenkin, että se tarjoaa lukijoilleen onnistuneesti tilan pohtia ihmisten ja robottien välisiä suhteita uudessa valossa. Romaani rohkaisee lukijoitansa pohtimaan asemaansa posthumaanisuuteen ja kannustaa kaiken elämän kunnioittamista.

Analyysini perusteella vastaukset tutkimuskysymyksiini ovat monimutkaisia. Klaran luonnehdinta on ideologisesti ristiriitaista kognitiivisen autonomian, itseisarvon ja posthumaanisuuden teemoissa. Hän on osittain kognitiivisesti autonominen, häntä arvostetaan ajoittain ja hänellä on joitakin uniikkeja piirteitä, jotka korostavat niin humaanisia kuin posthumaanisia puolia. Romaanissa konkretisoituu kyseisten teemojen kautta vastahegemonisia ajatuksia, mutta näille ei anneta tarpeeksi huomiota tai tilaa, minkä takia romaanin yhteiskunta- ja ideologiakritiikki on usein vaisua. Tutkielma on kuitenkin todistanut tarpeen niin marxistisille kirjallisuusanalyyseille kuin posthumaanisuuden laajemmalle tutkinnalle. Argumentoin, että teknologian merkityksen kasvaessa yhteiskuntamme on väistämättä ryhtyä pohtimaan laajemmin suhdettaan teknologisiin kokonaisuuksiin. Yksi keino tähän on kirjallisuusanalyysit, joiden kautta teknologian moraalisia puolia voi tutkia monipuolisesti. Kannustan lisäksi marxistisien tutkimusasetelmien laajempaa hyödyntämistä, jotta voimme paremmin ymmärtää kapitalismin luonnollistavia vaikutuksia sortoon ja syrjintään, ja näin muuttaa yhteiskuntaamme parempaan suuntaan kaikille.