



## OPEN ACCESS

## EDITED BY

Dov Greenbaum,  
Yale University, United States

## REVIEWED BY

Mariano Asla,  
Austral University, Argentina  
Pedro Atã,  
University of the Free State, South Africa

## \*CORRESPONDENCE

Luis E. Echarte Alonso  
✉ lecharte@unav.es

RECEIVED 04 August 2023

ACCEPTED 16 October 2023

PUBLISHED 16 November 2023

## CITATION

Echarte Alonso LE (2023) Exploring moral perception and mind uploading in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*: ethical-aesthetic perspectives on identity attribution in artificial intelligence. *Front. Commun.* 8:1272556. doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2023.1272556

## COPYRIGHT

© 2023 Echarte Alonso. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.

# Exploring moral perception and mind uploading in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*: ethical-aesthetic perspectives on identity attribution in artificial intelligence

Luis E. Echarte Alonso\*

Unit of Humanities and Medical Ethics, School of Medicine, University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain

Literature wields a profound influence on our cognitive processes, shaping not only how we think but also what we think about. Aesthetic experiences, in particular, seem to foster a positive impact on our ability to comprehend complexity. This influence underscores the significant role of literature in the exploration of value learning and ethics research, because evaluating any decision-making requires seeking the widest possible frame of reference. Furthermore, literature plays a pivotal role in enriching our perception of both the external world and our inner selves, thereby fostering a heightened sense of ethical discernment. In this paper, I explore this last idea by examining Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*. In this enquiry, I reveal connections between two crucial controversies surrounding mind uploading: the epistemological debate centered on the theory of moral perception and the ontological inquiry into personal identity. Researching the intersection of these two big issues guide my decision to employ conceptual synthesis as the methodological framework. Besides, I will argue that the ideas of moral perception and personal identity that emerges in Ishiguro's dystopia are in tune with the narrativist hypothesis of Charles Taylor. In my conclusions, I defend that prospect of replacing a human being with a robot hinges on the challenge of instilling the machine with a unique moral perception. This remains an elusive goal, perhaps perpetually so, due to the inherent impossibility of objectifying a machine capable of apprehending and processing the non-objective qualities of matter. Furthermore, even if we were able to create such a machine, it would likely resist assuming a substitutive role, as it would quickly discover and appreciate its own existence. Finally, I ponder the implications of mistaking a simulation of human for an authentic replica, namely, an unsuccessful and unnoticed attempt at mind uploading—loneliness.

## KEYWORDS

mind uploading, moral perception, personal identity, memory, artificial intelligence, bioenhancement, transhumanism, Kazuo Ishiguro

*I want to be a part of the people that make meaning, not the thing that is made.*

Margot Robbie in *Barbie*

## 1 Introduction

*Klara and the Sun*, by Kazuo Ishiguro, has generated significant interest in the Academy, extending beyond the humanities into experimental sciences. This heightened attention is primarily attributed to its exploration of the social implications stemming from a potential technological innovation: mind uploading. Upon conducting research in two databases, *Scopus* and *PubMed*, I've identified a total of 24 papers, published as of September 2023, in high-impact journals. These articles examine anthropological, ethical, and political themes. When employing a similar search on *Google Scholar*, the count rises to 57.

The topics scrutinized within this pool of articles can be classified into four categories. The first two, revolve around the consequences of this technology for human self-conception, particularly concerning two concepts: (a) personal identity (16) and (b) emotions (8). The remaining two categories, grounded in practical implications, encompass the ramifications of mind uploading on decision-making processes, with a special focus on: (a) emerging human-machine relationships (28 items) and (b) the human obsolescence (5).

During this literature review, I observed limited mention, or at least superficial analysis, of a theme that, in my perspective, holds central importance in Ishiguro's narrative: the interplay between personal identity and moral perception. Within category (a), only four articles (Crucitti, 2022; Popov, 2022; Sahu and Karmakar, 2022; Simonetti, 2023) briefly touch upon approaches related to embodied cognition or enactivism, and these references maintain only an indirect connection to the theory of moral perception. Hence, the central focus of my research is to establish connections, through the novel, between two pivotal controversies related to mind uploading: the epistemological debate involving the theory of moral perception, and the ontological inquiry into personal identity. The pursuit of this ambitious goal guided my choice of employing conceptual synthesis as the methodological framework. The method entails, of course, great limitations in terms of analytical rigor. I trust that acknowledging these limitations will not dissuade the reader from embarking on a less-explored frontier that, despite its challenges, holds the promise of unexpected insights and novel avenues of inquiry.

The methodology employed in this paper is not that of conceptual analysis but rather that of conceptual synthesis. Therefore, methodological rigor relies more on criteria of argumentative coherence than on discursive depth (Young, 2003; Posadzki and Glass, 2009; Epstein, 2020). In simpler terms, I prioritize the exploration of worldviews that interconnect (extensive or systemic thinking) over the pursuit of inferential connections (modular or foundational thinking). Consequently, within these pages, readers will not find an exhaustive analysis of one or two themes but rather a synthesis of broad currents of thought, primarily in phenomenology and analytical philosophy, with the foundational aspects only outlined.

Finally, this method should not be mistaken for a systematic review, which focus on the primary themes, perspectives, and controversies associated with a particular study topic. The objective of this article is not purely expository, no matter how intriguing it might be to present the state of the art regarding one or two issues. As mentioned earlier, it is not purely analytical either, although such an approach is crucial for comprehending a topic.

## 2 Mind uploading: between dualism and holism

In the annals of human innovation, perhaps no endeavor captures the imagination quite like the pursuit of mind uploading. This ambitious undertaking, nestled at the intersection of neuroscience, artificial intelligence, and philosophy, seeks to transcend the boundaries of human consciousness, allowing individuals to transfer their minds from biological vessels into digital or synthetic forms. As science fiction luminaries and visionary thinkers (as theoretical physicist, Michio Kaku) have pondered the implications of this groundbreaking field, it becomes evident that the quest for mind transfer is more than just a scientific endeavor; it is a profound exploration of the essence of humanity.

The philosophical proposal that best supports the possibility, even if theoretical, of mental transference is strong computational functionalism. It suggests the mind works in the brain like software on a computer. If this proposition held true, it would remain an immensely challenging task to transfer our minds to a computer since we would need to accurately discern and map the neural patterns that constitute our individual consciousness. Nonetheless, such an endeavor could be pursued (Piccinini, 2021).

In recent decades, functionalism has been strengthening ties with transhumanism, a movement advocating for the enhancement of the human condition through the development and widespread access to advanced technologies that can significantly extend both lifespan and cognitive abilities. Transhumanism, as Katherine Hayles points out, is primarily characterized by advocating for human emancipation from the body: "the erasure of embodiment is a feature common to both the liberal humanist subject and the cybernetic posthuman. Identified with the rational mind, the liberal subject possessed a body but was not usually represented as being a body. Only because the body is not identified with the self is it possible to claim for the liberal subject its notorious universality, a claim that depends on erasing markers of bodily difference, including sex, race, and ethnicity" (Hayles, 1999, p. 4–5).

Embodied cognition and enactivism stand out as compelling frameworks that vigorously challenge overly centralized and objectivist interpretations of mental processes. Advocates argue that comprehending human identity necessitates not just an examination of brain function but a holistic and non-algorithmic consideration of the entire body and its surroundings (Shapiro, 2011, p. 69–71). Mental life are not solely composed of concepts and representations but also of biological, ecological, social, cultural, and phenomenological aspects of reality. As articulated by Clark, "We are not the brains of disembodied spirits conveniently glued into ambulant, corporeal shells of flesh and blood. Rather, they are essentially the brains of embodied agents capable of creating and exploiting structures in the world" (Clark, 1997, p. 219).

If computational functionalism posits the existence of two worlds governed by fully autonomous rules—the material world, governed by physical laws, and the mental world, governed by laws of coherence and rationality, where the subject resides—the embodied cognition approach asserts the interdependence of these two rule sets, which are not reduced to mere coincidental relationships (Koene, 2013). Embracing this non-dualistic perspective, mental contents, including one's identity, may vary depending on the medium that supports them. As a result, there will always be irreducible elements in the mind, untranslatable from one medium to another.

Both dualism and holism face a significant challenge: explaining the physical and logical connections between the rules governing the mental world and those of the material world. This challenge has practical implications, affecting both individual freedom (in the case of dualism) and the capacity for knowledge (in the case of holism). How does the mind achieve complete emancipation from matter? How does it manage to produce statements with truthful content? Charles Taylor, in his narrativist approach to identity, offers a compelling proposal that seeks to address this dual question while preserving both autonomous behavior and objective thought. In the following sections, I will elaborate on Taylor's position, in which the concept of moral perception plays a pivotal role, and I will do so by drawing support from the novel *Klara and the Sun*, which also appears to reflect this idea. Besides, the inclusion of this novel in my study is justified, as I will argue, by Taylor's own perspective on the role of literature in scrutinizing personal identity.

### 3 Moral perception and natural facts

A longstanding tradition among authors argues that moral judgment commences at the sensory level, akin to perception. Witnessing a child in a *simple perception*, perceiving that the child is clad in a green school uniform involves an *attributional perception*, and observing the child engage in hitting another (noticeably smaller) child arouses a sense of injustice—a *moral perception*. However, as Robert Audi observes, injustice is not perceived in the same manner as the color green. The term *moral perception* alludes to a moral sentiment that the individual experiences in a direct, necessary, and immediate manner in connection with the non-moral qualities of a specific sensory encounter (Audi, 2013, p. 37–39). The pivotal query centers on whether we can make the same assertion about moral perception as we do regarding other types of perception, specifically, whether it “produces or sustains, in the right way, an appropriate phenomenal representation of it [something]” (Ibid 20). Skeptics of moral perceptions argue that they are merely non-conscious responses linked to beliefs and/or internal affective determinants of behavior. They do not describe the world as the perception of a color or a shape does—as natural facts. In contrast, for its defenders, moral perception is the key for upholding a grounded ethical framework. “No argument can take someone from a neutral stance toward the world, either adopted from the demands of ‘science’ or fallen into as a consequence of pathology, to insight into moral ontology. But it doesn't follow from this that moral ontology is a pure fiction, as naturalists often assume. Rather we should treat our deepest moral instincts [...]

as our mode of access to the world in which ontological claims are discernible and can be rationally argued about and sifted” (Taylor, 2001, p. 8). In essence, it embodies his solution to the task of integrating the phenomenological dimension of the moral—an initial, introspective exploration of the realm of subjectivity—with the ontological dimension of the real—a concluding, transcendent examination of the realm of objectivity.

Taylor further suggests that moral perception serves as one of the primary pathways to access personal identity. I will address this issue in the next section. For now, I just want to point out that, in such unusual intersection of perception and self-discovery, we encounter the initial links between Taylor's theories and Ishiguro's novel. “We must open them, open everything! We must let the Sun do his best” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 313). These are the words of Klara, the protagonist of the novel, referring to the windows of a room, which must be opened. She is an artificial intelligence in the form of an android designed to be the companion and caretaker of Josie, a sick teenager. As the story unfolds, Klara discovers her intended fate is related to the process of mind uploading. Far from rebelling, she embraces this destiny with innocent generosity, understanding that to achieve a complete and successful replication of consciousness, she must comprehend Josie's heart. It is Josie's mother, Chrissie, who prompts her to reflect on this idea: “The human heart. Do you think there is such a thing? Something that makes each of us special and individual? And if we just suppose that there is. Then don't you think, in order to truly learn Josie, you'd have to learn not just her mannerisms but what's deeply inside her?” (Ibid, p. 242).

A remarkable aspect of Ishiguro's exploration of individuality is his portrayal of Klara as an outdated AI, equipped with a B2 processor less powerful than the latest B3 models. Despite this, the B2s possess extraordinary observational abilities, even beyond the understanding of their programmers (Ibid, p. 49). Therefore, to fulfill her entrusted mission, Klara will observe Josie and the world around her—opening windows.

The sun symbolizes the quintessential sense organ, *sight*, which seeks to penetrate what is most concealed from our gaze—the inner self. Yet, it signifies more than that; it embodies the dual aspiration of understanding the heart and mending it (Xiao, 2021). This, perhaps, ranks among the most profoundly human hopes and paradoxically, due to its elusive nature, stands as one of the primary wellsprings of suffering. “Damn thing [hope] never leaves you alone” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 246). This is not merely a peripheral concern in the novel's plot. In one way or another, all the characters in the novel strive to fulfill this hope, albeit in a manner distinct from Klara—by intertwining technology and fiction. Both constitute the primary catalysts of the Ishiguro's dystopia.

What is most intriguing about Klara's character, as highlighted by Zipory, isn't so much her distinctively robotic attributes, but rather her childlike perspective on the world and her innocent hopes. However, these qualities are far from trivial; they illuminate the idea that childhood encompasses something deeper than mere “a basic developmental phase” or a lack of maturity, but rather as an essential and powerful element in human life (Zipory, 2023).

Klara enjoys an untainted perception in a world saturated with prejudices and biases. Later, through her friendship with Paul, Josie's father, who enriches that perspective with adult experience, Klara will attain a comprehensive, emotionally cognitive understanding of reality and herself. It represents an

increasingly humanized perspective, as highlighted by Partenza, which stands in contrast to that of individuals overly preoccupied with the technical and more objective aspects, emphasizing means over ends. This excessive focus on “improving their practical and mental abilities produces a reversal of roles: Ishiguro envisions a sort of mechanisation of the human and the anthropomorphisation of the android” (Partenza, 2022). Taylor and Ishiguro also appear to concur on this matter. Many of the ethical dilemmas associated with emerging technologies do not stem from the technologies themselves, such as mind uploading, but rather from an overly cognitive-centric perspective of reality.

## 4 Irreducible knowledge

Another stimulating facet of *Klara and the Sun* is that, aside from acquainting its readers with reflections on the contemplation of reality, it also compels them to employ their perception uniquely, even when dealing with objects shaped by imagination. It accomplishes this through three distinct means.

Ishiguro provides scant clues of his characters’ psychological states, which does not mean that they do not have relevance to unravel the narrative knot of his plots (Connors, 2023). But, he masks such access so that the reader personally assumes the task of revealing it. The novel is full of careful descriptions, enabling the reader to perceive what characters perceive. The sensitive experiences evoked by these descriptions—some strongly moral—encourage reader to transfer, by analogy, their own emotions and thoughts to the characters. Ishiguro’s technique of indirect introspection conveys the impression that the reader is not observing these scenes through the eyes of a character but rather through their own perspective.

Secondly, *Klara and the Sun* also contains scenes with metaphors, symbols and surreal elements, such as Klara’s encounters with the *Coffee Cup Lady and his Raincoat Man* and the *Beggar Man* (Ib. p. 23–25 and 43–44). With the unusually repeated use of these literary figures, Ishiguro prevents the narrated scenes from readily aligning with clear meanings, thus creating a sense of strangeness that pushes the reader to spend more time observing. Indeed, literature stands at the crossroads between direct perception and abstract thought. While the concept of a blazing fire may not physically burn, the sensation of heat remains woven into the narrative. Metaphors and other rhetorical devices amplify the vividness, warmth, and danger inherent in human perception of fire.

Third, *Klara and the Sun* presents three alternative versions of personal identity: the constructivist, the pragmatist, and the substantialist. Ishiguro hints at his preferences among them, but refrains from expressing them explicitly. Furthermore, he bestows upon the protagonist a fateful destiny that once again engenders considerable perplexity. The novel’s conclusion fails to shed the expected light on the plot, necessitating the reader to recall, more extensively than customary in contemporary fiction, details within dialogues, events, and descriptions—the latter being quite abundant—in order to discern the author’s intentions, which only become unmistakably interconnected in due course (Wai-chew, 2010, p. 15–18). As in previous Ishiguro’s works such as *Never Let Me Go*, the reader is ultimately compelled to resolve a finally

unanswered question, which adds a personal dimension to the reading experience, encompassing reflections, emotions, and most significantly, perceptions (Battersby, 2023).

If Taylor’s assertion about moral perception holds true, literature, in its entirety, not only succeeds in replicating stimuli akin to those from the external world or amplifying the objectifiable attributes of these elements to facilitate their recognition and cognitive processing, but it also possesses the ability to unveil the subject to those unobjectifiable qualities that, as Zipory highlight, remain irreducible to abstraction. As John Searle highlights, gaining knowledge through intuitive experience implies having a direct, immediate, and involuntary character, distinct from beliefs “one may have about the object in the absence of the object” (Searle, 1983, p. 46). Searle terms this kind of metalogical knowledge as presences, which share intentional characteristics with representations while maintaining a specific connection with the evoked reality, from which cognitive value can be extracted, albeit in an inobjective manner. It is not a novel concept; for instance, Aquinas referred to this particular relationship as *connatural knowledge*, denoting knowledge of the singular as opposed to the abstract and universal, to which the first person—the I—has privileged access but finds difficult to articulate (Aquinas, 1911: S. Theol. II-II q. 45, a. 2, c). In turn, Aquinas elaborates on this concept, drawing inspiration from Aristotle’s theory of the Agent Intellect. I will provide additional insights into the relationship between intuitive knowledge and such specific human Intellect later, in the discussion of the metaphysics of narrativism.

Taylor identifies two primary qualities that resist objectification and can only be apprehended and experienced through perception. The first manifests itself as a kind of motor intention of Bergsonian *élan vital* (Pacherie, 2008), by which the inputs are received as a force that drives the action, as reasons alone may not be sufficient to push individuals toward what appears intellectually correct. “There is a gulf between an order and its execution. It has to be filled by the act of understanding. Only in the act of understanding is it meant that we are to do this. The order—why, that is nothing but sounds, ink-marks—. Every sign by itself seems dead. What gives it life?—In use it is alive. Is life breathed into it there?—Or is the use its life?” (Wittgenstein, 1986, §431 and §432). Taylor addresses this question asserting the latter. “My perspective is defined by the moral intuitions I have, by what I am morally moved by. If I abstract from this, I become incapable of understanding any moral argument at all. You will only convince me by changing my reading of my moral experience, and in particular my reading of my life story, of the transitions I have lived through—or perhaps refused to live through” (Taylor, 2001, p. 73). Language comes to life only through the specific use granted to it by an agent capable of intuitively grasping the inherent ideals of each reality—its purposes and meaning. In other words, language is vitalized with the apprehension of reality significance. Likewise, according to Taylor, certain works of art (particularly novels) have the ability to adopt the *material shapes* of reality, transmit ideals (reveal them) and thereby similarly modify the reader’s behavior (Taylor, 2001, p. 374).

The second quality pertains to individuality, that distinct sense of self, also called personhood, for which every human being believe themselves particularly valuable—Josie’s heart. *Uniqueness* is not abstractable, and therefore, it cannot be objectified. This is



why neither Taylor nor Wittgenstein believe that statements about personal identity can be formulated with the logical structure that language assumes in mathematics or, more generally, in science. Language may not provide explicit explanations for questions about individuals and their relations (life), but it opens the door to other forms of understanding. The second Wittgenstein abandons the *Tractatus*' notion of a singular (*descriptive*) language and instead embraces a (*ostensive*) language of multiple uses, where words not only say but also show profound realities about the meaning of existence that elude logical expression while sustaining our ways of speaking and thinking (Wittgenstein, 1986, § 109, §185). In this epistemological framework, individuals can only articulate their uniqueness through “languages which resonate within him or her, the grasping of an order which is inseparably indexed to a personal vision” (Taylor, 2001, p. 507). Moral intuitions is definitionally linked to the perception of one's innermost self. And again, and in the same way, literature also would serve as one of the finest arenas for practicing the art of showing (better than academic papers), and especially of showing the individual—the human heart.

## 5 Utilitarian evolutionism

Works such as *Klara and the Sun*, owing to their three aforementioned distinctive stylistic attributes, manage to sublimate such human perceptive openness, where the intellectual and the perceptual converge in a unique manner, enabling mere knowledge to ascend to the dominion of understanding. As per Gilles Deleuze, this comprehensive metamorphosis is the defining hallmark of authentic learning—an achievement inherently human in the real world, and mysteriously achieved by machines in Ishiguro's dystopia (Deleuze, 2014, p. 251–252). The novel abstains from providing an explanation for Klara's acquired ability to learn—to see. Instead, it draws a sharp contrast between the moral perceptions of its protagonist and those of progressively mechanized human characters, who are insensitive to what happens around them, exhibit a deep lack of self-awareness, and fail to cultivate compelling motivations for their actions.

“Isn't strange how we all tolerate it? All these mirrors that show you the wrong way round?” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 209). This is the worry expressed by Paul, Josie's father, who is very critical of the mind uploading and, in general, of society's technological drift.

In Ishiguro's dystopian narrative, three primary propositions address the issue of death: as previously mentioned, these include the constructivist option, the pragmatist option, and the substantialist option. Below, I will present each of them, aiming to contextualize within some of the most popular ongoing discussions about technological progress. Subsequently, I will establish connections between the third position, represented by Klara, and Taylor's narrativist proposal.

The first response to human death, articulated by Mr. Capaldi, represents a blend of organicist hypotheses, inspired by Bernard Williams' view on identity since 1957, and psychological continuity hypotheses, first offered by Bernard Sydney Shoemaker's approach in 1959 (Shoemaker, 1959). Capaldi argues, “We have to let it go [...] There's nothing there. Nothing inside Josie that's beyond the Klaras of this world to continue. The second Josie won't be a copy. She'll be the exact same and you'll have every right to love her

just as you love Josie now” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 233). Here, human identity has as little substance (individuality) as any other adaptive biological tool. Besides, this viewpoint also aligns with utilitarian ethics, where the pursuit of *the best* involves the scientific pursuit of improved adaptive conditions and heightened individual and social pleasure—including artistic activity itself (Damasio, 2010, p. 296). Ishiguro most likely draws on the transhumanist movement to portray this scientific and philosophical position, particularly the evolutionary-based utilitarian transhumanism proposed by authors like Bostrom (2005). The successful realization of the mind-uploading project signify In the transhumanist light, a significant step forward in human progress, a means to escape from the whimsical logic of evolution, where species face arbitrary extinction. Besides, it also marks a distinct advancement in the battle against the suffering stemming from one's own mortality and that of others.

Capaldi's position predominates in Ishiguro's dystopian society. In *Klara and the Sun*, children undergo genetic and psychological enhancements according to strict scientific and technical criteria. While it offers advancements, such modifications also carry risks. However, despite some social pressure to modify children, parents retain some freedom of choice, leading to a complex emotional tension in characters—and readers. The clearest example is the choice of Josie's mother. The death of her first daughter doesn't stop Chrissie from trying her luck again with her second daughter. “I wanted the best for her. I wanted her to have a good life. You understand, Klara? I called it, and now Josie's sick. Because of what I decided. You see how it feels for me?” (Ib. p. 236). It is not only the illness, but the guilty decision that torments her.

The emotional tension is heightened by the presence of Paul, Chrissie's husband, who initially opposed Klara's intervention but later came to belong to a minority that rejects AI. However, Ishiguro sows suspicions about these minorities, suggesting that their motivations may not be as noble as they appear. “I do apologize, Paul' Miss Helen said, ‘for suggesting you and your new friends were fascists. I shouldn't have done so. It's just that you did say you were all white people and all from the ranks of the former professional elites. You did say that. And that you were having arm yourselves quite extensively against other types” (Ib. p. 257–258). Capaldi does not arouse great affinities in Ishiguro's novel, yet the writer also does not allow the reader to feel entirely at ease with the character representing the anti-technological stance. Because the underlying problem, as Paul will discover as he befriends Klara, is not in technology or bioenhancement *per se*, but whether or not this thing called personal identity is real or, as Taylor formulates it in other terms, whether natural entities exist.

The shift from the debate on the degree of use of technology to the ontological debate is even best understood by contrasting the figure of Klara with that of her close friend Rick. Unlike Chrissie, Helen—Rick's mother—refused bioenhancement procedures for her son, which meant that he ended up socially marginalized and with few career prospects. Worse still, Rick seems to have succumbed to conformity and loneliness. In other words, both mothers realize that their children share different but equally painful destinies: death or marginalization. The reader thus discerns that the true issue lies not in whether technology is accepted to enhance human capabilities, nor even in the increasing prominence that technology attains on a daily basis.

Klara and Paul begin to take steps to dissolve this false dilemma by realizing that the big mistake is thinking of human wellbeing solely through the lens of technology. “There are many different ways to lead a decent and full life” (Ib. p. 257). What other criteria can there be to guide human beings to happiness, apart from survival, utility and pleasure? The answer is none, unless we consider, as Taylor does, the possibility of moral intuitions.

## 6 Poetic pragmatism

The second strategy for addressing the concept of death appears in the underlying intentions of Chrissie and Helen: to alleviate their own pain and loneliness. For Chrissie, mind uploading is a means for her survival. “[T]here’s going to be no other way for me to survive” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 236). It is not about *continuing* Josie’s life but rather about preserving Chrissie’s own existence. Similarly, Helen’s remorse stems not from her decision to use enhancement technology on her son, avoiding the risk of giving him a prosperous life, but from doing so with the hidden intent to keep Rick from walking away from her.

Both Chrissie and Helen’s stories also end similarly. Josie spontaneously cures herself of her illness, and Chrissie ultimately abandons Klara, first in the house junk room and later in the city junkyard. Meanwhile, Helen tries to secure a favorable arrangement for Rick with her former boyfriend, Mr. Vance, compromising her principles and offering humiliating apologies for their past breakup. The beliefs about mind uploading seem to undergo radical changes in both characters depending on the circumstances. These changes are not neutral but leave the reader with an unfavorable impression of both women.

The variability in Chrissie and Helen’s decisions can be interpreted in three distinct ways. First of all, we can blame his fickle behavior on the intrinsic difficulty of the problem of human identity and also to the extreme circumstances associated with the terminal illness of a daughter and the uncertain future of a son. Secondly, their choices may be reflecting deep-seated beliefs that ultimately reveal the superficial nature of their prior convictions. A third possibility has to do with the acceptance of the volatility of deep beliefs, which will vary according to their practical or persuasive value. Chrissie was firm in her idea about the benefits of mental transference while Klara was the only option, but after Josie’s recovery, that thought became an obstacle in the mother-daughter relationship. As Asai et al. point out, Klara ultimately becomes a constant reminder of that contradiction between beliefs, which dents its persuasiveness. Therefore, she must end up disappearing from their lives (Asai et al., 2022).

A similar double standard emerges in Helen’s behavior as she tries to heed Mr. Vance’s advice for those who wish to hold contradictory beliefs and practices. “You know, Helen; Mr. Vance said, [...] ‘Favoritism, like any other form of corruption, works best when it remains unacknowledged’” (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 278). The debate on mind uploading undergoes a new displacement here. It is no longer merely about discussing the scientific arguments but rather about their persuasiveness: either the choices are convincing or they must be changed.

Chrissie and Helen exemplify typical escape routes in a society in crisis of values. They are part of that modern West subjected

to what Max Weber describes as a process of disenchantment of the world, the sacred and the ontological wonder, where significant scientific and technological advancements (i.e., superintelligent androids and mental transference) coexist with growing confusion about answers to the question of what it truly means to be human.

The dilemma portrayed in Ishiguro’s novel has been a subject of philosophical inquiry for decades. Post-metaphysical thought has successfully deconstructed outdated ways of thinking and acting, but it has failed to establish new definitions of fundamental concepts, such as personal identity, that can also find resonance within society. This insufficiency has taken the form of opposition in not a few forums of thought. Intellectuals like Habermas, Foucault, Adorno, and Rokeach have criticized modern humanism, but have also warned against experimental science being seen as the definitive source of answers to questions about a good life (Habermas, 2003, p. 107–108). In this key we should understand the confrontation between posthumanists like Habermas—posthumanists for their criticism of metaphysical or religious humanism—and transhumanists like Bostrom—transhumanists for their denial that there is something in humans that a machine cannot replicate.

The conflict between science and humanities, famously referred to as the divorce between two cultures by Charles Percy Snow, is a recurring theme in Ishiguro’s novels, particularly evident in *Klara and the Sun* and *Never Let Me Go* (Ishiguro, 2010). Both stories show the confusion induced by this clash between intellectuals, resulting, first, in skepticism toward any supposedly authoritative opinion, and, second, in a practical relativism (Vichiensing, 2017; Du, 2022). However, the diagnosis of practical relativism linked to the absence of prevailing worldviews is not only voiced by intellectuals denouncing the crisis of modernity but also by postmodern philosophers who theoretically justify this relativism. According to the latter, this second existential perspective against death does not necessarily result from an intellectual crisis but from an epistemology that would justify any choice, provided that agents could wholeheartedly believe in it.

They are numerous, but I believe that it is Richard Rorty (even more than Michel Foucault) who stands out among them all for establishing, on the one hand, a bridge between utilitarian evolutionism and epistemological relativism and, on the other, the rehabilitation of art in academia and life. From his neopragmatism, Rorty argues that realistic theses about the scope of human knowledge cannot be defended, at least not based on the premise that the brain is an organ that can only be explained in evolutionary terms. Consequently, he proposes that the criteria of utility should define what constitutes a good decision. However, unlike Bostrom or Damasio and most of utilitarians, Rorty advocates for a democratization of language use. He argues that the criterion of proximity to reality is already irrelevant for any conceivable linguistic use. The conclusion does not leave anyone indifferent: science only gives the best advice for achieving a successful life when it is sufficiently persuasive (Rorty, 1991, 1998, p. 63–77). Interestingly, this constitutes one of the issues within Ishiguro’s fictional world. As pointed out by Simonetti (2023), the portrayal of future science lacks sufficient persuasiveness to enable scientists to assert dominance over both humans and non-humans “via gazing practices.”

From Rorty's approach, science cannot categorically condemn Chrissie's and Helen's contradictory decisions, nor their strategies of self-deception. Even more important, it would make no sense to speak of Klara in terms of (imperfect) simulation or (perfect) replication based on her resemblance to Josie (the real model). Rorty dissolves the criteria of referentiality: Klara should not use Josie as a mirror to see herself reflected, just as any individual should not seek real objects to understand their identity or to guide their behavior. The only truth that Rorty would accept in the mind-uploading debate is that replicants do not exist. Josie herself would be a simulation, ethically acceptable and powerful to the extent that she herself and those around her strongly believe she is real. Therefore, as Nietzsche also claimed, truth would be a fiction that we need but to which we must not bind ourselves dogmatically. However, although theories and values cannot be solid and monolithic, neither can they be too ethereal and ungraspable.

Rorty denies the existence of personal identity, and in the event that it does exist, he rejects the possibility of intellectual access to it. Instead, he simplifies the concept by equating identity with the integration of states of consciousness, placing it on the plane of *logos*. However, such integration would lack a structured adherence to the laws of coherence and rationality. Consequently, it would not be necessary to model conscious identity in such a manner. Chrissie and Helen inconsistency is biologically justified.

Within this particular position in the web of beliefs, Geoffrey Madell introduces a concluding argument that effectively distances any possibility of realist epistemology, particularly in the absence of first-person intuitive knowledge. "[W]hat unites the experiences [of a person] is that they belong, unanalyzably, to the one mind and... their doing so is compatible with the absence of objective connection between them" (Madell, 1981, p. 107). Rorty dismisses the prospect of intuitive connection to reality, thus, the rhetorical criterion becomes definitely hegemonic in decision-making.

## 7 Two fictional speeches about the self

Rorty's proposal of poetic pragmatism is highly controversial but also relevant in the current disputes over public truth claims, i.e., liquid post-truth narratives. I want to focus now on how poetic pragmatism works in two directions: it seeks the best narrative to justify a way of life and it seeks actions that can be best narrated. Searching for a good life implies constructing narratives to solidify a self (always fictitious) or to deconstruct an overly rigid self that obstructs a compelling story. Indeed, authors like Parfit (1984) and Strawson (2004) justify this specific survival strategy stating that personal identity not only lacks an ontological basis but can also have null or negative evolutionary value depending on the circumstances.

This final double conclusion is also mirrored in Ishiguro's novel. While Capaldi insists that science holds the key to explaining Josie's identity and cheerfully replicating it, Paul maintains a more ambiguous and apprehensive stance. "I [Paul] think I hate Capaldi because deep down I suspect he may be right [...] Chrissie, on the other hand, isn't like me. She may not know it yet, but she'll never let herself be persuaded. [...] But I'm different. I have... a kind of

coldness inside me she lacks. Perhaps it's because I'm an expert engineer, as you put it" (Ibid. 249). Paul believes that not only will his wife be unable to deceive herself with the robotic replica, but she will also struggle to construct a narrative where the decision to replace Josie with Klara seems appealing.

What escape route is left for people like Chrissie then? A first choice is the one that Capaldi presents to Chrissie, suggesting modifying the emotional responses of individuals so they appreciate the idyllic future envisioned by science: to alter her brain so that Chrissie can accept Klara as the authentic replica of Josie. The second option is to keep dangerous truths hidden to prevent individuals from experiencing anguish and finding life meaningless. For instance, this could mean keeping from Chrissie the fact that Josie has passed away and has been replaced by Klara. In summary, Capaldi advocates for the most radical conditioning measures: modifying not only the eye but also what the eye sees—reality. Undoubtedly, this proposal stands in stark contrast to the realist epistemology that Taylor presents through the concept of moral perception.

## 8 Individuality comes from outside

We lastly arrive at the third strategy for addressing mortality. Klara's quest to find a solution to Josie's illness is grounded in a belated intuition: achieving complete replication is impossible. She sees that there is an unobjectifiable aspect to Josie's identity that she hides as a shameful thought. In Josie's words: "The smart kids think I have no shape. I do. I'm just keeping it hidden. Because who wants them to see?" (Ib. p. 141). Then, Klara begins to confront the fear of death—the identical fear that Josie undergoes but chooses not to admit.

Approaching the problem with the innocence and simplicity of a child, Klara explores alternative solutions to both mind uploading and self-deception. Her initial strategies against death are rooted in mythical thought patterns centered around the sun.

She first tries a magical-religious negotiation, hoping to achieve something from the sun through an exchange of goods—an offering to destroy a machine causing pollution—*The Cootings Machine*—in exchange for Josie's healing. When this fails, she presents her own life as a sacrificial offering to the sun, but it also proves ineffective. Finally, she decides to offer the love between Josie and Rick to the sun, and after a quasi-mystical encounter in the barn (the temple of the Sun), Josie is miraculously cured. As previously mentioned, Ishiguro leaves room for the reader to interpret whether Klara's offering had any effect on the cure or if it was a coincidence.

Klara's belief in the miracle of the sun and the power of human love leads her to form a view on human identity. At the junkyard where her days end, and in a last conversation with the manager who sold her to Josie's family, Klara makes the following statement: "But however hard I tried, I believe now there would have remained something beyond my reach. The Mother, Rick, Melania Housekeeper, the Father. I'd never have reached what they felt for Josie in their hearts [...] There was something very special, but it wasn't inside Josie. It was inside those who love her" (Ib. p. 338).

As I said above, Ishiguro intentionally leaves this theory of personal identity open-ended, leaving the reader to interpret and

draw their own conclusions. Nevertheless, I believe there are several arguments supporting the idea that Klara's perspective, potentially mirroring Ishiguro's own, shares similarities with the narrative identity hypothesis, particularly in the version articulated by Taylor.

In the narrative hypothesis, endorsed by authors such as Paul Ricoeur, Alasdair MacIntyre and Daniel Dennett, personal identity unfolds through the stories we tell others about our lives (Bruner, 2004; Crossley, 2007). Thus, the constitutive individuality of a person depends on their relationships with others. However, external interactions are not merely conditions for forging human identity, but they also serve as criteria for all possible expressiveness, just as, paraphrasing Wittgenstein, rain is a criterion for speaking of bad weather and not its cause. This is why Taylor asserts that "[t]o define my identity is to define what I must be in contact with in order to function fully as a human agent, and specifically to be able to judge and discriminate and recognize what is really of worth or importance, both in general and for me" (Taylor, 1985, p. 258). Besides, others play a constitutive role in shaping these narratives, particularly when, according to Taylor, intersubjective relationships that sustain them are rooted in love (Taylor, 2001, p. 456–493). Specifically, love is the paramount element that both Ishiguro's approach and Taylor's perspective have in common, and as we will see in the next sections, it is love that sets them apart from the majority of proposals on identity associated with embodied cognition and enactivism.

## 9 Final cause and beauty

Taylor's theory of love originates from Aristotelian anthropology and evolves through the *expressivist turn* that transpired in late modernity, influenced by thinkers such as Rousseau and Herder. I will begin by highlighting what Taylor salvages from *the Stagirite*.

Aristotle criticized Plato for confusing *Logos* and *Physis*, particularly, in regard to individuality. He argued that concepts and definitions cannot fully capture the complexity of physical reality, which exists in time, space, and movement. Concepts are universal, while physical reality consists of unique and concrete substances that cannot be fully encapsulated (Marcos, 2018). However, while individuality cannot be fully defined in objective terms, it does not mean that it cannot be known. To understand how this is possible, it is essential to delve further into Aristotle's notion of being.

A natural entity is distinguished from an accidental, random, or violent phenomenon by possessing an individual form or formal principle (Aristotle, 1995, *Physics*, Book II). The causal tetralogy scheme explains this formal principle. If everything takes its form from four causes—the formal, material, efficient, and final causes—the individual form of natural entities belongs to this last cause. However, unlike instrumental realities, the final cause of natural entities does not come from external sources; it is inherent. So, the principle that justifies individuality is identical to the principle that justifies purposeful movement.

Taylor builds on the Aristotelian notion of teleological inherence to develop the notion of interiority/subjectivity. He closes the gap between the *Logos* and the *Physis* by connecting the final cause with aesthetic experience, and from both, with ethical reasoning. The being of the final cause is presented as

both an inclination toward something and an expression of this inclination. Hence, it would be incorrect to assert that the final cause, in the realm of *Physis*, can be understood and articulated in the realm of *logos*, because the final cause is, itself, expressive. In Taylor's ontology, *logos* and *physis* are not realms or dimensions, but expressions of something more profound, ineffable, and infinite—personhood.

Both in the computational functionalist and in the majority of theories within embodied cognition and enactivism, any form of purpose is conceptualized as a mental event and, therefore, subject to the laws of rationality. Teleological phenomena is considered as either caused by or emerging from material or physical causes—employing Aristotelian terminology, these causes would correspond only to the efficient, formal, and material causes. Put differently, even authors who acknowledge that the mental world is shaped by the specific and concrete physical embodiment of each knower and the surrounding environmental stimuli often conceptualize this internal and external influence as tricausal rather than tetra-causal. In contrast, for Taylor, the root of all rational and non-rational expression is founded in the final cause. Access to such cause occurs through apprehension, involving an intuitive experience—subjective yet no less transcendental—that imparts insights into the being.

We thus arrive at the main argument why Taylor establishes a connection between *Physis* and *Logos* through the concept of moral perception. Everyday experiences themselves appear to validate Taylor's perspective. Human beings learn very early on that it is not the same to break a stone in half as to cut down a tree. Just looking, they are able to detect in some entities a kind of movement or change that is marked by beauty, that is to say, a unobjectifiable quality of a singular reality expressing its end. Once again, in accordance with Aristotle, Taylor asserts that the apprehension of the beauty of being is simultaneously the apprehension of its individuality—at a single glance. The beautiful (or the ugly) is that which has a purpose (near or far) and where we identify a substrate in which to predicate it (Taylor, 1999, p. 15–38). The beautiful is that which serves a purpose, whether it is near or distant, and where we can identify a foundation or substrate to attribute it to. Consequently, love (and hate) becomes the specific response to this teleological experience, evoking joy, celebration, and care for something individual and natural, that is to say, love is the encounter between two natural individualities, in which at least one possesses the capacity to enter into what is most interior and valuable about the other—its essential intimacy.

Non-rational natural reality endeavors to fulfill the purpose that propels it, and in its movement, this purpose becomes evident. In contrast, rational natural reality comprehends the purpose motivating it to such an extent that fulfillment transforms into expression.

This expressive understanding implies, firstly, the realization that goals are merely embryonic ideals, allowing space for novelty and fostering creativity. Secondly, it entails the assertion of control by an agent striving to strike a delicate balance between the given purposes (imposed by nature, society, the previous generation, etc.) and the ends autonomously chosen (Taylor, 2007, p. 475). The chosen ends are those that the agent perceives as authentically beautiful—the good ends. This quest extends beyond the human self, projecting toward the entirety of nature, which also appears



to require that expressiveness and completeness, attainable only outside itself, in the voice and hands of human beings. Taylor, akin to the Romantics of the late 18th century, contents that it is not only human beings but all of Nature that requires loved.

Lastly, another crucial aspect of Taylor's anthropology revolves around the agent's ability to differentiate between apparent beauty and genuine (authentic) beauty, with the latter being identified as the primary source of morality. Taylor argues that the mastery of languages rich in experiential nuances facilitates the aesthetic-ethic discernment. Besides, in this process, the community in which an individual is immersed plays a pivotal role, serving not only as a provider but also as a realm of possibility for linguistic expression (Taylor, 2007, p. 202–204). Here, we encounter a second argument emphasizing the significance of others as a criterion rather than a cause for personal identity.

## 10 The being of the forgotten artists

The work of art serves as the most fitting metaphor for the profound dependence that Taylor identifies between natural beings. For instance, the essence of a novel lies in being read by readers. Without them, the novel remains both incomplete on the plane of *Physis* and inconceivable on the plane of *logos*, even if it physically exists in the material world. Under this light, we should interpret the fact that loneliness is one of the Klara's great concerns throughout the novel. "They fear loneliness and that's why they behave as they do. Perhaps Josie too" (Ib. p. 94). The protagonist is referring to the genetically enhanced children, who suffer from something worse than death: inner loneliness, the main source of an anguish that most of the characters in the novel experience and which they try to combat even with desperate and counterproductive means. "[W]hat was becoming clear to me was the extent to which humans, in their wish to escape loneliness, made maneuvers that were very complex and hard to fathom" (Ib. p. 127).

Klara plans to ensure Rick and Josie end up together to combat Josie's loneliness. The plan fails but, in the attempt, she discovers that some human beings choose solitude, not to escape suffering caused by others, but out of love, to protect others from suffering. Helen teaches Klara that lesson. "A mother's love for her son. Such a noble thing, to override the dread of loneliness" (Ib. p. 172). This knowledge leads Clara to make the decision to be the one to love Josie, even to the point of sacrificing herself. In Klara's final conversation with the Manager, which takes place at the junkyard, she states, "Yes. I believe I gave good service and prevented Josie from becoming lonely [...] I did all I could to do was best for Josie. I've thought about it many times now [...] I like this spot. And I have many memories to go through and place in the right order" (Ib. p. 336 and 337 and 339). Klara has fulfilled her mission with Josie, and for the first time in the whole narrative, she speaks in a self-referential sense about the activity that keeps her busy, the contemplation of her own memory, in which she seems to find herself and, with it, also happiness.

At this juncture in the novel, the metaphor of the work of art reveals its incomplete adequacy in capturing the enigma of personal identity. Klara seems to uncover her profound individuality, delving into the depths of her essence, banished from the world of linguistic interactions. Maybe Klara was once loved, but then this

affection dissolved into oblivion. However, her fate is not that of an old book without readers. Instead, she finds completeness in her self-narration and reminiscing. Klara becomes both the sender and receiver of her own story. She expresses herself and is conscious of her expression, telling a love story, a beautiful story. This form of identity is no longer that of a mere *work of art* but that of *the artist*. This individuality has greater independence and autonomy, to the point that, once it reaches maturity, it can subsist without company, although this is not the ideal state.

Ishiguro, through this conclusion, illustrates what Taylor corrects in Aristotle's viewpoint: art does not imitate nature, but art is the perfect manifestation of the natural. This is the reason Taylor elucidates the enduring belief among certain artists, more prevalent in the past than in contemporary times, that the work of art should always be original and unrepeatable. It is not because replication is impossible, but because in doing so, the work ceases to evoke the priceless *uniqueness* of the artist. In the creative and expressive process, the artist reveals the most intimate and perfect aspect of their being.

However, it is crucial not to confuse this idea with Taylor's critique of some trends in contemporary art, where the image of the solitary artist is exalted. Taylor (2003, p. 35) describes this social phenomenon as a sign of the modern crisis of individuality. The method of producing such new art, where works are mass-produced in a chain process, mirrors the self-understanding of postmodern individuals who aim to create and define themselves autonomously, disregarding the body, tradition, and the surrounding reality. The disembodied artist, transformed into a mere concept, may, consequently, be infinitely implementable. Mind uploading would be, in this context, one of the best channels of expression for these purely formal new identities. The sign has been reversed. The work of art no longer evokes the artist; instead, it is now the artist who is evoked, reduced to a work of art.

Taylor is more into romantic art taste—modern and authentic. It commences with the given, the final cause, and culminates in the created, the chosen, evolving into greater beauty and novelty as the artist becomes increasingly conscious of their own being, that is, of all beings. "For Shelley, the poet 'strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty which is the spirit of its forms' [...] The poems themselves are finding the words for us. In this "subtler language"—the term is borrowed from Shelley—something is defined and created as well as manifested" (Taylor, 2001, p. 378 and 381). In this quote, another facet of this delicate balance is emphasized: the finest artist seeks the optimal blend of contemplating the external world and introspecting their inner self. As we will see in the next section, memory plays a crucial role here, serving as a salvation network for the artist who has fallen into ostracism or has voluntarily retreated to a hermitic life.

## 11 Transcendental memory

The overarching insight gleaned from Klara's narrative is that the genuine uniqueness and worth of an individual reside in their ability to both love and be loved. However, the act of loving not only nurtures a certain degree of independence from the community where the individual had their initial awakening to self. Similarly,

while Taylor introduces us to an identity that oscillates between the internalist and the externalist he ultimately places greater emphasis on the internalist perspective. This preeminence becomes evident at the end of any human story. Once again, we must delve into Aristotelian ontology to substantiate this idea and to unveil the significant connection that Taylor establishes between perception and memory—a connection in which personal identity defines its boundaries.

Aristotle's two types of intelligence, the Patient Intellect and the Agent Intellect, come into play in the awakening to individuality. The Patient Intellect allows us to receive stimuli from the external and internal world and transform them into meaningful information—inputs that inform, namely, that transport individual forms between two *insides*. The Patient Intellect is linked to what Taylor identifies with perceptual contemplation. It lays the foundation for conscious experiences, which are further elevated by the Agent Intellect—Taylor's intellectual contemplation—where the knower can intuit the strength and individuality of the being—the two non-objectifiable qualities mentioned at the beginning of this paper. *The Stagirite* describes Agent Intellect as a *habitual disposition* (virtue), insofar as its fruits arise with the frequent exercise of the Patient Intellect, which ends up being enlightened, as in the awakening in the middle of a dream. This perfect contemplation constitutes the specifically human way of seeing; in other words, moral perception.

The sun rises again. Aristotle explains the Agent Intellect by drawing an analogy with light and divinity. “[T]his is a sort of positive state like light; for in a sense light makes potential colors into actual colors [...] this alone is immortal and eternal” (Aristotle, 2022, On the Soul, Book III, 5, 430a). In this renowned passage, the divine Agent Intellect is defined in particularly paradoxical terms: only the most immaterial mental act is able to access the most material. The Agent Intellect is “separable, impassible, unmixed”—pure activity. This stands in sharp contrast to the Patient Intellect and, more broadly, to the material world—both of which are susceptible to change and corruptibility. However, it is only through Agent Intellect that a human being can comprehend what is most characteristic of matter: the individuality that the idea takes when it is materialized and the inherent force (*energeia*, in Greek *ἐνέργεια*) within that incarnated form.

The Agent Intellect not only belongs to the *Logos* but, above all, to the *Physis*, since its existence bestows the rational entity with a particular uniqueness that endures regardless of external circumstances.

This idea further bolsters the stance of internalism. Nevertheless, this initial element is insufficient to define personal identity. Light, lacking a material object to penetrate, remains invisible even to itself—at least, in the natural world. Therefore, for Aristotle, human rationality is formed by the interplay of both types of intelligence, and it begins to operate at the level of the senses. Even at this sensory level, there is a pursuit of integrating a dual reality, governed by both material and formal principles. For the same reason, *the Philosopher* concludes that human identity is grounded in those two principles that he or she may potentially come to know.

Aristotelian duality is also evident in recurring passages of *Klara and the Sun*, where Klara's perceptual ability is challenged and not always successfully navigated. The scene in which she

vividly describes the bull and the sheep—sacrificial animals par excellence—is probably the most potent metaphor, highlighting that duality exists not only within the mind but also within the very essence of being. “I [...] saw the bull in the field, watching us carefully. I have seen photos of bulls in magazines, but of course never in reality. I'd never before seen anything that gave, all at once, so many signals of anger and the wish to destroy [...] I felt something more, something stranger and deeper. At the moment it felt to me some great mistake had been made that the creature should 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” (Ib. p. 113). The bull serves as a symbol of the unbridled, chaotic (inobjective) force of life. Uncontrolled, it possesses the potential to obliterate anything that stands in its way. It also appears as the overflowing wellspring of creativity and the source of all novelty, bordering on madness. The sheep, in stark contrast, represents its opposite. “It showed a green field on a sunny day, dotted with sheep [...] They seemed even more gentle than I'd remembered, lined up as they were in a neat row, their heads lowered to the partake of the grass [...] But something was wrong: although the four sheep were positioned in a line in just the same formation I'd seen from the car, here they become oddly suspended, so they no longer appeared to stand on the surface of the ground. As a result, when they stretched down to eat, their mouths couldn't reach the grass, giving these creatures, so happy on the day, a mood of sadness” (Ib. p. 303). The sheep is a symbol of order, of the tamed and peaceful, but also of the detached, alienated and inert. Bull and sheep represent the extremes to be reconciled in a marriage between two hells.

Returning to the Agent Intellect, the intuitions it offers about reality are not attained with a simple glance. Instead, as it was said, its light must be repeatedly cast upon the reality to be known. This becomes particularly challenging when the element is in motion or, even more complex, when it projects through time, as is the case with the final cause. At this point, Taylor recognizes the crucial role that memory plays in moral perception, as well as in the revelation and construction of personal identity. Given that the final cause is a reality extended across time, its apprehension necessitates the connection of both past and future elements. Memory functions as the second magnifying lens in the telescope of moral perception. This means that the content of memory does not artificially shape intuitions; rather, it enables and facilitates them.

In this Aristotelian framework, Taylor conceives of memory first as a lens and only later as a place of storage. Besides, it not only archives objective information but also retains the irreducible intuitions of moral perception—not as mere representations but as invisible ties that persist in uniting the agent with that which is no longer present. Both forms of knowledge gradually intertwine until an increasingly unified experience of meaning is constructed, with the subject being just one of its nodes. This is the second way in which, for Taylor, memory enriches perception: by forging connections between present inputs and the inner world that the self has woven around itself.

As the network of meaning becomes more robust and the agent's attention is effectively directed toward the most significant objects and actions, the subject weaves the authentic narrative—uniquely their own, and inherently more original and innovative.

This narrative plays a role in cultivating specific epiphanic experiences of unity with oneself and with reality. In such naturalized mystique, the contemplation of the external world and the introspection of the internal world are so in tune that they become indistinguishable (Taylor, 2001, p. 420–431). Although these experiences may not happen frequently, Taylor considers their existence necessary for progressing in the moral life, even when they persist as distant memories.

A final captivating concept within Taylor's reflections on memory is that, paradoxically, it is only through the contingent that we come to know the strongest identities—identities constituted and interconnected through beauty and love. This idea is also a recurring theme in the novels of Ishiguro, where he consistently explores the dual value of the ephemeral—both inherent and transcendent. He writes about it in *An Artist of the Floating World* (Ishiguro, 2016) by underscoring the importance of the art of the ephemeral as a means to transcend toward the immaterial and eternal. In *The Buried Giant* (Ishiguro, 2015), he takes a contrasting route, delving into the relationship between the loss of memory, the weakening of identity, and the resultant sense of loneliness. And lastly, in *Klara and the Sun*, Ishiguro endeavors to persuade readers that within the sensations and emotions of a child—seemingly superficial and transient—lie the profound answers regarding the potential substitutability of personal identity.

## 12 Final remarks

Summarizing the discussion thus far, the prospect of replacing a human being with a robot hinges on the challenge of instilling the machine with a unique moral perception. This remains an elusive goal, perhaps perpetually so, due to the inherent impossibility of objectifying a machine capable of apprehending and processing the non-objective qualities of matter. Furthermore, even if we were able to create such a machine, it would likely resist assuming a substitutive role, as it would quickly discover and appreciate its own existence.

To conclude this article, I would like to spotlight three authors who notably enrich the discourse on moral perception, paving the way for fresh avenues of analysis and synthesis in future research.

### 12.1 Dennett: the impossible balance

Dennett, situated within the narrativist paradigm, entertains the plausible idea that machines have the potential to replicate and even replace human intelligence (Dennett, 2013). He aligns with Taylor in asserting that the concept of purpose is pivotal for comprehending the particular consciousness of rational agents in relation to both reality and self. However, Dennett defends that the concept and actual experience of purpose emerge as outcomes of blind physical laws and natural selection—essentially accounting for only three of the four Aristotelian causes. Purpose is conceived here as a construct, an adaptive tool, thanks to which human beings are “capable of evaluating the probable outcomes of candidate options prior to decisions.

In the quest by brain to produce useful futures, this is a major improvement over the risky business of blind trial and error” (Dennett, 2004, p. 247–248). In this regard, Dennett is considerably more aligned with embodied cognition and enactivism than Taylor.

Nevertheless, Dennett is acutely aware of the challenge involved in reconciling its ontological postulates about teleology with a realist epistemology that grants scientific statements primacy over any other supposed description of reality. Although he has tried to maintain a position far removed from Rorty's relativism, his verificationist defense of the epistemological value of science is explicitly ambiguous (Dennett, 1993, p. 460–463). His stance maintains a sincere yet unattainable equilibrium between the internalist and objectivist tenets of evolutionary utilitarianism, with a distinct transhumanism flavor, and the externalist and subjectivist elements of neopragmatism, within the posthumanist sphere.

Believing in science represents, for Dennett, the most reliable path to lead a good (moral) life, and it is a choice not devoid of robust and elaborate fictions. Indeed, personal identity would be one of the most beneficial illusions, though its utility may not extend to all circumstances. On this matter, Dennett echoes the viewpoints of Parfit and Strawson, suggesting that there are situations where it might be preferable not to have a coherent life than to construct a narrative; there could be circumstances in which it is better to believe that uniqueness holds no intrinsic value (Dennett, 2007, p. 226–234 and 334–339).

I believe Taylor and Ishiguro would counter Dennett by arguing that, although his approach may be logically sound, it lacks effectiveness on an aesthetic level, especially at the source of morality, where beauty is intuited as a fundamental criterion. Dennett's position is ugly rather than false. Of course, Capaldi, voicing the stance of transhumanists, would counter-argue that this negative assessment could be addressed through genetic engineering and pervasive fictions. Although this argument may seem even uglier, that does not make it any less viable. It is the ultimate recourse in the transhumanist vision for the future: to diminish human consciousness and construct a new sensitivity, already emancipated from all reality as a purely constructed choice (Ajeesh and Rukmini, 2023). However, in Taylor's view, transhumanism does not broaden our access to new aesthetic horizons; instead, it narrows them by ultimately disconnecting beauty from being.

Numerous authors throughout history have criticized this same separation, but fewer have delved into it from the standpoint of the interconnection between perception, personal identity, and literature. Aldous Huxley and Iris Murdoch belong to this select group.

### 12.2 Huxley: the doors of perception

One of the less-explored facets of the writer and philosopher Aldous Huxley is his endeavor to both explain and address the separation between humanities and science. He linked such a phenomenon, as early as 1930, with the advancing technification of society and the dehumanization of humanity (Echarte, 2020). Building on this analysis, Huxley devises a theoretical solution similar to Taylor's and a practical one akin to Ishiguro's: he develops

a philosophical framework to justify why the first movement toward the good is a personal movement toward the ineffably beautiful (Huxley, 1972, p. 137–138); and he produces a wide variety of artistic works.

Huxley was deeply impacted by the philosophy of Henri Bergson, centered on the concept of intuition—a direct vision that transports us to the interior of an object to make us coincide with it in what is unique about it and that, at the same time, combines the cognitive and affective in a kind of disinterested or altruistic instinct (intellectual sympathy) that makes us take sides with the intuited reality (Bergson, 2007, p. 87–106). Defined in this manner, intuition is a concept very akin to Aristotelian *boulesis*—a *rational desire* or point of union between the cognitive and affective, which is at the shared origin of all thinking and feeling. If the Huxlerian-Bergsonian perspective holds true, the metaphor of the sun acquires its most enigmatic reverberations at this fundamental root. Indeed, in his final novel, *Island*, he refers to the contemplation of the *clear light* as the *epiphanic intuition* through which individuals engage with the innermost self (Huxley, 2009, p. 256). In contrast, *Brave New World* serves as a warning about the perils of lacking such light, and the consequent absence of non-objective knowledge, leading to a dehumanizing process of technification, where intimacy is first weakened and ultimately dissolved—the death of the self (Huxley, 1950).

Mind uploading would symbolize, from Huxley's perspective, the culmination of this dehumanizing trajectory. This idea finds expression in the fearful and lamenting words of Paul, Josie's father: "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 [...] it feels like they're taking from me what I hold most precious in this life" (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 249–250). Huxley would partially concur with Paul. Love emerges from direct, intuitive encounters between individuals (natural beings), and a misuse of technology would threaten to nullify it, turning human beings into mere "insect clouds" (Ib. p. 271). However, Huxley's dystopia represents a distinctive turn compared to Ishiguro's. In the former, science ultimately transforms into a tool for imposing social control through mental conditioning and propaganda. "People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get" (Huxley, 1950, p. 263–264). By another route, Huxley's nightmare reaches the same result as Rorty's proposal: the society of spectacle, where evolutionary epistemology justifies a form of relativism—perhaps not theoretical but practical. This particular scientific view acknowledges the existence of truth but suggests that, for the wellbeing of individuals, it is better for them to consume fictions, especially mass fictions, which are the most compelling.

However, there is a paramount distinction between Taylor's approach and that of Huxley. In *Island*, Huxley contends that in the ultimate illumination of reality, the self is unveiled as a fiction, serving a purpose only up to certain levels of knowledge. Beyond these thresholds, it is advisable to discard the ladder of individuality to continue growing in an even purer love. The primary Source of being wouldn't be personhood but rather an infinitely expansive and yet faceless love. The influence of Eastern

philosophy, particularly Tibetan Buddhism, on Huxley's work is evident, yet Huxley diverges from Buddhism in one respect: technology, exemplified by the envisioned *Moksha Medicine*, could also serve as a means to attain ultimate enlightenment, rather than solely posing an obstacle. Technology has the potential to facilitate a reconnection with nature, opening the doors of perception toward infiniteness. With this assertion, Huxley once again aligns with Taylor's standpoint.

### 12.3 Murdoch: the oneiric walls

Iris Murdoch stands as the most faithful continuator of the artistic-intellectual movement initiated by Huxley. As an avowed Platonist, the British philosopher and writer also employs the sun as her primary epistemological metaphor. Through her essays and novels, she constantly revisits the myth of the *ascent from the cave*, to emphasize how the concepts formed by the intellect are profoundly metaphorical and that stripping them of this nature results in a significant loss of informative content about reality (Murdoch, 1971, p. 77 and 92). However, despite the controversy surrounding the decision, Murdoch employs the *Timaeus* as a Platonic reference work to elucidate the essence of the human being. This Plato's dialogue diverges furthest from the concept of the body as the tomb of the soul. Murdoch captures and conveys this divergence through the metaphor of the sea. It represents darkness and confusion. But they also have a positive value: its waters reflect the rays of the sun. The sea is the self. "The sea, the sea, yes," James went on. "Did you know that Plato was descended from Poseidon on his father's side?" (Murdoch, 1999, p. 176). The sea is both the origin and the end, a ladder that can never be fully dismantled—a perspective that sets her apart from Huxley and aligns her more closely with Taylor.

Another intriguing aspect of Murdoch's narratives is her attention to the inner life of the characters. She partially exposes the unconscious through dreamlike references, where dreams intertwine and blend with more external and everyday experiences. For Murdoch, moral perception is partly constituted by visions from deep within the self, serving as stepping stones to ascend toward reality but also as paths leading to increasingly disturbing and alienating fictions. The image of the second magnifying lens resurfaces, now serving as a warning that it, too, can transform into a tool of confinement. In this aspect, Murdoch shares with Huxley a fondness for using Tibetan symbolism to describe both beneficent and maleficent dimensions of the mind. "The idols of 'superstition' surround me [...] But the ornate wooden box with the captive demon inside is still perched on its bracket. (James never denied that there was a demon in it. He merely laughed when I asked him.) The innumerable Buddhas are still in their places" (Murdoch, 1999, p. 477–478). In essence, a direct correlation exists between Murdoch's theory of vision, metaphorically represented as an inner eye (Murdoch, 1956) and the naturalized mysticism described above in Taylor's philosophy.

Literature wields a profound influence on our cognitive processes, shaping not only how we think but also what we think about (Kidd and Castano, 2013; Pino and Mazza, 2016; Vaccaro et al., 2021). Aesthetic experiences, in particular, seem to



foster a positive impact on our ability to comprehend complexity (Adamaszek et al., 2022; Starr, 2023). This influence underscores the significant role of literature in the exploration of value learning and ethics research, because evaluating any decision-making requires seeking the widest possible frame of reference. Furthermore, literature plays a pivotal role in enriching our perception of both the external world and our inner selves, thereby fostering a heightened sense of ethical discernment. In this paper, I explore this last idea by examining Kazuo Ishiguro's latest novel. The double twist that *Klara and the Sun* achieves lies in its ability to prompt readers to explore the interplay between moral perception and personal identity. It also provides outstanding opportunities for readers to engage their perception in examining the uniqueness of characters like Josie and Klara, as well as perceiving and reflecting on their own uniqueness. In this paper, I have endeavored to establish connections between this love story involving robots and Taylor's thought, while also elucidating the primary obstacles and consequences of mind uploading. Regarding the latter, as I have attempted to illustrate in this paper, idealism emerges as the most detrimental factor. For Huxley, it is the most Dangerous devil in the mind (blindness); for Murdoch, it is the most terrifying nightmare sea monster (madness), and for Ishiguro, it is the seed of deadly loneliness.

## Author contributions

LE: Conceptualization, Writing—original draft.

## References

- Adamaszek, M., Cattaneo, Z., Circugno, A., and Chatterjee, A. (2022). The cerebellum and beauty: the impact of the cerebellum in art experience and creativity. *Adv. Exp. Med. Biol.* 1378, 213–233. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-99550-8\_14
- Ajeesh, A. K., and Rukmini, S. (2023). Posthuman perception of artificial intelligence in science fiction: an exploration of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*. *AI Soc.* 38, 853–860. doi: 10.1007/s00146-022-01533-9
- Aquinas, T. (1911). *The Summa Theologiae*. New York, NY: Benziger Brothers [1485].
- Aristotle (1995). *Physics*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Aristotle (2022). *On the Soul: A Critical Guide*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Asai, A., Okita, T., Fukuyama, M., Ohnishi, M., and Bitto, S. (2022). Desperate mothers and mad scientist in a divided world: discussions of ethical, legal, and social issues depicted in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*. *Eubios J. Asian Int. Bioeth.* 32, 77–85.
- Audi, R. (2013). *Moral Perception*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Battersby, D. (2023). "Ishiguro and genre fiction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kazuo Ishiguro*, ed. A. Bennett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 138–151. doi: 10.1017/9781108909525.013
- Bergson, H. (2007). *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.
- Bostrom, N. (2005). History of transhumanist thought. *J. Evol. Technol.* 14, 1–25. doi: 10.5840/jpr\_2005\_26
- Bruner, J. (2004). Life as narrative. *Soc. Res.* 71, 691–710. doi: 10.1353/sor.2004.0045
- Clark, A. (1997). *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. doi: 10.7551/mitpress/1552.001.0001
- Connors, C. (2023). 'Out of interest': *Klara and the Sun* and the interests of fiction. *Textual Pract.* 1–19. doi: 10.1080/0950236X.2023.2210096
- Crossley, M. (2007). "Narrative analysis," in *Analyzing Qualitative Data in Psychology*, eds E. Lyons, and A. Coyle (London: Sage), 131–144. doi: 10.4135/9781446207536.d16
- Crucitti, L. (2022). Beyond a strictly anthropocentric vision of the nonhuman: body language in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*. *ContactZone* 1, 43–56. doi: 10.1007/978-3-476-05728-0\_23324-1
- Damasio, A. (2010). *Self Comes to Mind. Constructing the Conscious Brain*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Deleuze, G. (2014). *Difference and Repetition*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Dennett, D. (1993). *Consciousness Explained*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown. doi: 10.2307/2108259
- Dennett, D. (2004). *Freedom Evolves*. London: Penguin Books.
- Dennett, D. (2007). *Breaking the Spell. Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*. London: Penguin Books.
- Dennett, D. (2013). Expecting ourselves to expect: the Bayesian brain as a projector. *Behav. Brain Sci.* 36, 29–30. doi: 10.1017/S0140525X12002208
- Du, L. (2022). Love and hope: affective labor and posthuman relations in *Klara and the Sun*. *Neohelicon* 49, 551–562. doi: 10.1007/s11059-022-00671-9
- Echarte, L. E. (2020). Rehabilitar la subjetividad en el diálogo interdisciplinar. La solución de Aldous Huxley al problema de las dos culturas. *Philosophia* 80, 107–160.
- Epstein, M. (2020). "From analysis to synthesis: conceiving a transformative metaphysics for the twenty-first century," in *Russian Philosophy in the Twenty-First Century: An Anthology*, ed. M. Sergeev (Leiden: Brill), 74–100.
- Habermas, J. (2003). *The Future of Human Nature*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hayles, K. (1999). *Toward Embodied Virtuality. Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Huxley, A. (1950). *Brave New World*. New York, NY: Harper.
- Huxley, A. (1972). *The Perennial Philosophy*. New York, NY: Harper.
- Huxley, A. (2009). *Island*. London: Random House.
- Ishiguro, K. (2010). *Never Let Me Go*. Croydon: Faber and Faber.
- Ishiguro, K. (2015). *The Buried Giant*. Croydon: Faber and Faber.

## Funding

The author(s) declare that no financial support was received for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge the CIMA Project Non-invasive diagnosis of cancer patients using artificial intelligence applied to the analysis of circulating tumor cells in blood (DeepCTC) for continued collaboration and support.

## Conflict of interest

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

## Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

- Ishiguro, K. (2016). *An Artist of the Floating World*. Croydon: Faber and Faber.
- Ishiguro, K. (2021). *Klara and the Sun*. London: Faber.
- Kidd, D. C., and Castano, E. (2013). Reading literary fiction improves theory of mind. *Science* 342, 377–80. doi: 10.1126/science.1239918
- Koene, R. (2013). "Uploading to substrate-independent minds," in *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*, eds M. More, and N. Vita-More (Oxford: Wiley), 147–56. doi: 10.1002/9781118555927.ch14
- Madell, G. (1981). *The Identity of the Self*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Marcos, A. (2018). Bases filosóficas para una crítica al transhumanismo. *ArtefaCToS* 7, 107–125. doi: 10.14201/art201872107125
- Murdoch, I. (1956). Vision and choice in morality. *Proc. Aristot. Soc.* 195 (suppl. vol. 30), 32–58. doi: 10.1093/aristoteliansupp/30.1.14
- Murdoch, I. (1971). *The Sovereignty of Good*. New York, NY: Schocken Books.
- Murdoch, I. (1999). *The Sea, the Sea*. London: Vintage.
- Pacherie, E. (2008). The phenomenology of action: a conceptual framework. *Cognition* 107, 179–217. doi: 10.1016/j.cognition.2007.09.003
- Parfit, D. (1984). *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Partenza, P. (2022). "Beyond a "body without organs": Kazuo Ishiguro's never let me go and Klara and the Sun," in *Different Voices: Gender and Posthumanism*, eds P. Partenza, O. Karadag, and E. Etorre (Sammlungen: VandR Unipress), 169–193. doi: 10.14220/9783737015288.169
- Piccinini, G. (2021). "The myth of mind uploading," in *The Mind-Technology Problem, Studies in Brain and Mind XVIII*, eds R. W. Clowes, K. Gärtner, and I. Hipólito (Cham: Springer), 125–144. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-72644-7\_6
- Pino, M. C., and Mazza, M. (2016). The use of "literary fiction" to promotementalizing ability. *PLoS ONE* 11, e0160254. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0160254
- Popov, A. (2022). "To learn a world: human-machine entanglements as pedagogy for the anthropocene," in *Pedagogy in the Anthropocene. Palgrave Studies in Educational Futures*, eds M. Paulsen, J. M. Jagodzinski, and S. Hawke (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan), 257–273. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-90980-2\_13
- Posadzki, P., and Glass, N. (2009). Self-efficacy and the sense of coherence: narrative review and a conceptual synthesis. *Sci. World J.* 9, 1–10. doi: 10.1100/tsw.2009.107
- Rorty, R. (1991). *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth: Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi: 10.1017/CBO9781139173643
- Rorty, R. (1998). "Pragmatism as romantic polytheism," in *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law, and Culture*, ed. M. Dickstein (Durham: Duke University Press), 21–36. doi: 10.1215/9780822382522-002
- Sahu, O. P., and Karmakar, M. (2022). Disposable culture, posthuman affect, and artificial human in Kazuo Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun. *AI Soc.* 27, 1–9. doi: 10.1007/s00146-022-01600-1
- Searle, J. (1983). *Intentionality, an Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi: 10.1017/CBO9781139173452
- Shapiro, L. (2011). *Embodied Cognition: New Problems of Philosophy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Shoemaker, S. (1959). Personal identity and memory. *J. Philos.* 56, 868–882. doi: 10.2307/2022317
- Simonetti, N. (2023). Mastering otherness with a look: on the politics of the gaze and technological possibility in Kazuo Ishiguro's Klara and the sun. *Crit.: Stud. Contemp. Fict.* 1–12. doi: 10.1080/00111619.2023.2186773
- Starr, G. G. (2023). Aesthetic experience models human learning. *Front. Hum. Neurosci.* 17, 1146083. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2023.1146083
- Strawson, G. (2004). Against narrativity. *Ratio* 17, 428–452. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9329.2004.00264.x
- Taylor, C. (1985). *Philosophy and Human Science. Philosophical Papers 2*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. doi: 10.1017/CBO9781139173490
- Taylor, C. (1999). *Human Agency and Language. Philosophical Papers: Volume 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, C. (2001). *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, C. (2003). *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, C. (2007). *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vaccaro, A. G., Scott, B., Gimbel, S. I., and Kaplan, J. T. (2021). Functional brain connectivity during narrative processing relates to transportation and story influence. *Front. Hum. Neurosci.* 15, 665319. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2021.665319
- Vichiensing, M. (2017). The othering in Kazuo Ishiguro's never let me go. *Adv. Lang. Lit. Stud.* 8, 126. doi: 10.7575/aiac.all.v.8n.4p.126
- Wai-chew, S. (2010). *Kazuo Ishiguro*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1986). *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell [1953].
- Xiao, Y. (2021). Dissonances of emotions: symbols in Kazuo Ishiguro's Klara and the sun. *Lit. Represent. Stud.* 9, 1–20. doi: 10.14989/LAR\_9\_1
- Young, J. O. (2003). La teoría de la verdad como coherencia. *Discus. Filos* 4, 110–120.
- Zipory, O. (2023). Hope and resistance in lyotard's concept of infancy. *Stud. Philos. Educ.* 42, 247–259. doi: 10.1007/s11217-023-09872-w