Disposable Futures: Posthuman Bodies, Biopolitical Value, and the Ethics of Recognition in Contemporary British Fiction

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Abstract

This paper examines how contemporary British fiction deploys posthuman and transhuman figures to interrogate the political mechanisms through which human value is allocated, withdrawn, and technologically managed. Focusing on Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun* together with Jeanette Winterson's *Frankissstein*, it argues that these novels stage worlds in which biotechnology and artificial intelligence intensify rather than abolish entrenched hierarchies of recognition. Drawing on Judith Butler's notions of grievability and precarity and on feminist posthumanist theory, the paper traces differential regimes of value across biological, synthetic, and hybrid bodies. It develops the concept of protective disposability to describe how care can coexist with instrumentalisation, allowing bodies to be protected or cherished while their value remains conditional on the purposes they serve. Reading Ishiguro's Morningdale episode alongside the stratification of lifted and unlifted children in *Klara and the Sun* reveals how technological intervention is accepted when it reinforces existing distributions of advantage and feared when it threatens them. Winterson's gynoids expose the same politics of value through gendered commodification, sexual availability, and the structural impossibility of refusal. The paper contends that these texts resist both techno-optimist and apocalyptic narratives by foregrounding disposability as a structuring logic of contemporary life. Through close readings of biomedical extraction, enhancement, artificial companionship, and technological substitution, it suggests that British posthuman fiction does not simply imagine what comes after the human, but diagnoses how late-modern societies reorganise humanity along axes of usefulness, vulnerability, and replaceability.

Keywords: posthumanism, transhumanism, grievability, cloning, sex robots

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Introduction

What counts as a human life when bodies can be cloned, enhanced, technologically reproduced, or replaced? The question sounds speculative, but the novels examined here treat it as a description of the present. Technologies arrive in societies where recognition is already unequal and bodies are appraised by their capacity to work, care, comply, or prolong other lives. What matters is therefore not whether an artificial or modified body is authentically human, but how technological systems redistribute the criteria by which any life becomes valuable, vulnerable, or expendable.

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and *Klara and the Sun* (2021), together with Jeanette Winterson's *Frankissstein* (2019), make that redistribution visible through clones, Artificial Friends, enhanced children, and feminised sex robots. In all three, scientific procedure recedes behind social administration: schools, clinics, households, laboratories, and markets determine which bodies receive care, what that care is for, and when it may be withdrawn.

Criticism has established much of the groundwork. Black (2009), Griffin (2009), and Snaza (2015) have examined the cultural and institutional framing of cloning, education, and donation in *Never Let Me Go*; criticism of *Klara and the Sun* addresses disposability and posthuman affect (Sahu & Karmakar, 2024), mastery and perfectibility (Sun, 2023), and the class divisions produced by lifting (Süt Güngör, 2022). DeFalco's (2020) theory of posthuman care clarifies the affective status of artificial companions, while Rigotti (2020) considers the gendered ethics of sex robots and Ciompi (2022) places *Frankissstein* within transhumanist debates. Taken together, this scholarship identifies crucial forms of instrumentalisation, but a comparative reading makes visible a mechanism operating across otherwise distinct technological scenarios. *Never Let Me Go* provides an especially revealing point of connection in the brief Morningdale episode. This article treats that episode as the interpretive hinge between Ishiguro's donation system and the normalised enhancement of *Klara and the Sun*.

The argument is that the three novels share a politics of disposability in which increasingly sophisticated capacities do not necessarily generate stronger claims to recognition. Its most disquieting form emerges when care and instrumentalisation cease to be opposites. Ishiguro's clones are educated and kept healthy while destined to provide organs; Klara is welcomed into a household that may ultimately redirect her capacities towards continuing a dying child; Winterson's gynoids demonstrate more explicitly how technologically sophisticated bodies can remain organised around another person's use. I call this paradox protective disposability: care can preserve or incorporate a body affectively without granting it a reciprocal claim against its instrumental use. The method is close textual reading in sustained dialogue with critical theory, rather than the application of theory to illustrative passages.

The article proceeds through four mechanisms rather than three novels: after establishing the conceptual frame, it examines the medical management of the donor body, the stratification produced by enhancement, the gendered commodification of artificial bodies, and technological substitution as a refusal of mourning.

Posthumanism, Transhumanism, and the Frames of Grievability

Critical posthumanism begins from the recognition that "the human" has never been an innocent or universally inclusive term. European humanism elevated an ostensibly universal subject who was tacitly masculine, white, heterosexual, able-bodied, propertied, and rational,

and feminist, anti-racist, postcolonial, and anti-humanist thought exposed the Others required to sustain that norm. In *The Posthuman*, Rosi Braidotti (2013) situates posthumanism within that critical legacy, alongside feminism, decolonisation, and anti-racism (p. 16), while Francesca Ferrando (2020), in *Philosophical Posthumanism*, observes that recognition as human has repeatedly been "switched on and off" through sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, and ableism (p. 4). Humanity is thus not an embodied condition but a political accreditation that institutions grant and revoke.

What distinguishes posthumanism from a merely widened humanism is its second, post-anthropocentric move. It does not only admit excluded subjects into an unchanged category; it contests the hierarchy that makes the human the measure of all value. Braidotti's "nature-culture continuum" rejects the fiction of an autonomous human life set against animals, environments, and technologies available for use (2013, p. 65), and Ferrando notes that machines occupy a particularly unstable position within it, being at once "the other, the same, and the chimera": generated from human categories yet exceeding them (2020, p. 113). Posthumanism is in this sense deconstructive, asking what work the boundary of the human performs.

Transhumanism, with which posthumanism is frequently conflated, moves in the opposite direction. Emerging in the same decades but from a different lineage, it stands in continuity with humanist values rather than in critique of them. Max More (2013), one of the movement's principal theorists, defines it as a class of "philosophies of life … that seek the continuation and acceleration of the evolution of intelligent life beyond its currently human form and human limitations by means of science and technology" (p. 3). Its characteristic projects—genetic selection, cognitive enhancement, radical life extension, mind uploading—aim to overcome biological limits while preserving humanity as the privileged beneficiary of progress (Ferrando, 2020, p. 27). The result is not a decentred subject but a fortified one. Braidotti (2013, p. 13) places the Vitruvian Man at the origin of humanist self-description: one kind of body raised into a universal standard, and raised above everything that fell short of it. Transhumanism revises that figure technologically without displacing it, so the enhanced human is more capable and more durable but inherits the same double elevation—over humans who are not enhanced, and over the non-human world.

The distinction organises the readings that follow: the novels are neither transhumanist fictions nor straightforwardly posthumanist ones. They stage their collision, placing transhumanist aspirations to enhancement and extended life alongside artificial companions and technologically substitutable bodies, and then subjecting these arrangements to posthumanist pressure: who can purchase improvement, whose organs or labour underwrite it, and what becomes of bodies classified as obsolete?

Judith Butler's work becomes indispensable because it converts an ontological question into a political one. In *Precarious Life*, Butler (2004) argues that a death registers as a loss only if that being has first been apprehended as a life, so that the unequal allocation of grievability sustains "exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human" (p. xiv). Mourning follows the same logic: it begins when one accepts that a loss will change the survivor, "possibly for ever" (p. 21), so that grief acknowledges a life as irreplaceable. Recognition is therefore not a property of persons but an effect of the norms through which lives become apprehensible. In *Frames of War*, Butler (2009) extends this argument from recognition to the material conditions sustaining lives. Precarity names the politically induced condition in which populations "suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become

differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death" (p. 25). Grievability and precarity thus describe two dimensions of the same political ordering: whether a life can register as a loss, and the conditions under which that life is supported or exposed to harm. Together, these concepts permit a distinction that the novels stage and their institutions obscure: between protecting a life for its own sake and preserving a body as a resource. The sections that follow trace that opposition, not the question of where the human ends and the non-human begins.

Protection as Extraction

Never Let Me Go gives disposability its most systematic institutional form. Kathy H. recalls her childhood with her friends Ruth and Tommy at Hailsham, an apparently benevolent English boarding school where the teachers, called guardians, encourage artistic expression and monitor the pupils' health. Gradually the reader learns what the children only dimly understand: they are clones created to supply vital organs to non-cloned people. Some become "carers" supporting others through surgery; all become "donors" undergoing successive extractions until they die, or "complete" (Ishiguro, 2021, pp. 3, 273). The novel explains less how one escapes a predetermined fate than how that fate becomes ordinary.

This is precisely the structure that Achille Mbembe (2019) describes in *Necropolitics*: sovereignty, he argues, resides in the capacity to dictate "who is able to live and who must die" (p. 66), and to control mortality is the power the clones are denied. Ishiguro's state does not abandon them to death but educates and medically regulates them so that death can be extracted in a useful sequence—which is why Hailsham's apparent exception to cruelty is not a deviation from the system but its most efficient form.

The school's health regime discloses the purpose of its care. The guardians warn the pupils that smoking would be "much, much worse" for them than for ordinary people (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 68), because damaged lungs would compromise organs intended for recipients: the concern is not for the pupils but for property already belonging to someone else. The children internalise this reasoning completely. Tommy tells Miss Lucy, one of the guardians, "I'm really fit, I know how to look after myself. When it's time for donations, I'll be able to do it really well" (p. 106). Fitness becomes readiness for extraction, and bodily discipline a personal achievement.

The programme's vocabulary completes that training. *Donor* and *donation* imply consent although no clone may refuse; *carer* dignifies the preparation of others for surgery; *completion* replaces death with the fulfilment of function. Snaza (2015) calls "donation" a catachresis in the sense of abuse, most evident when the final extraction removes organs without which life cannot continue (p. 224). A donor "on a fourth," Kathy observes, is greeted with congratulations and ceremonious respect although this almost certainly means death (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 273). Maximal depletion is reconfigured as honour, and Kathy's pride in her donors' recovery times and in keeping them "calm" (p. 3) shows how thoroughly the language has been absorbed. Black (2009) identifies the contradiction: such care helps clones accept operations that progressively rob them of their organs (p. 791). The system delegates its emotional labour to those it will later consume.

The system's linguistic discipline is reinforced by an external gaze that refuses to recognise the clones as fully human. One episode makes the consequences of that gaze explicit. Madame is an outsider who visits Hailsham periodically to select the pupils' best work for a collection they know only as the "Gallery," whose purpose is never explained to them. She keeps her distance from the children, who speculate about the reason. Ruth proposes that she is frightened

of them, and she, Kathy and several other girls test this by emerging suddenly and walking close enough to brush against her. Madame freezes, suppressing a shudder at contact, and the children realise they are feared as one fears spiders (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 35). No visible feature distinguishes them—in Norfolk a gallery owner mistakes them for art students—so her revulsion derives entirely from knowing how they were made and why.

This is where the concept of abjection becomes relevant. In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva (1982) argues that what provokes abjection is not uncleanliness or ill health but "what disturbs identity, system, order," what "does not respect borders, positions, rules": the in-between and the composite (p. 4). The clones threaten because they are close rather than alien: recognisable lives whose similarity imperils the distinction that makes harvesting thinkable. Kathy registers the cost of being seen this way:

> There are people out there, like Madame, who don't hate you or wish you any harm, but who nevertheless shudder at the very thought of you – of how you were brought into this world and why – and who dread the idea of your hand brushing against theirs. The first time you glimpse yourself through the eyes of a person like that, it's a cold moment. It's like walking past a mirror you've walked past every day of your life, and suddenly it shows you something else, something troubling and strange. (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 36)

Ishiguro thus separates dehumanisation from overt hostility. Madame's reaction is disturbing precisely because revulsion does not require hatred: her involvement with the pupils through the Gallery can coexist with an instinctive recoil from physical contact with them. The clones therefore need not be consciously wished harm in order to be excluded from the category of lives accorded equal value. The mirror metaphor makes that exclusion perceptible from within. Nothing about Kathy has changed, yet the image returned to her is suddenly "troubling and strange" because it has been refracted through a social gaze that defines her as Other. Read through Butler's account of grievability, the episode therefore concerns more than personal alienation. The social frame precedes the encounter and determines which lives can be recognised as lives whose injury or loss matters (Butler, 2004, p. 34). The donation programme depends upon precisely this contradiction: the clones must remain biologically close enough to "normal" humans for their organs to sustain human life, while being held at sufficient social and ontological distance for their own deaths to remain acceptable. Kathy's mirror registers the moment in which that externally imposed hierarchy of value enters her own perception of herself.

Hailsham institutionalises the same separation between care and equal value. The school provides its pupils with education, protection, medical attention, and a childhood markedly better than the "deplorable conditions" in which, Miss Emily later reveals, clones elsewhere are being raised (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 255). Yet the difference is ultimately one of treatment rather than political status. Hailsham changes the conditions under which the clones live before donation; it never gives them the possibility of refusing donation itself. Their health is protected, their individuality cultivated, and their vulnerability acknowledged without any of these forms of care becoming a claim to an equally valuable future. This is the contradiction at the centre of what I have called protective disposability: the clones are cared for as vulnerable individuals while simultaneously being preserved as bodies destined for the use of others. Care does not interrupt the logic of disposability; it becomes one of the means through which that disposability is administered.

Enhancement and the Price of the Future

The donation programme is not the novel's only experiment in technologically managing human value. Near the end of *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro introduces another form of biotechnological intervention that, although mentioned only briefly, throws the politics of cloning into sharper relief. Kathy and Tommy visit Madame in the hope of obtaining a deferral from donations—a rumoured postponement of donations for couples who can prove they are in love. No such escape exists. Instead, Miss Emily explains why Hailsham closed and recalls the scandal surrounding James Morningdale, a scientist whose research promised children with "enhanced characteristics," including "superior intelligence" and "superior athleticism," before being stopped after crossing legal boundaries (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 258). What initially appears to be a minor piece of background therefore reveals the boundary between forms of technological intervention that this society can accommodate and those it finds intolerable:

> It's one thing to create students, such as yourselves, for the donation programme. But a generation of created children who'd take their place in society? Children demonstrably superior to the rest of us? Oh no. That frightened people. They recoiled from that. (Ishiguro, 2021, p. 259)

What frightens the public in Miss Emily's account is not technological intervention in itself. The same society already depends upon an extensive biomedical system in which human clones are created so that their organs can prolong the lives of others. Morningdale's research becomes threatening when technological creation no longer produces a subordinated body for someone else's use, but a child capable of entering society with capacities greater than those of the people who already occupy it. Miss Emily's phrase "take their place in society" is therefore crucial. The public does not recoil from created life when that life remains segregated and instrumental; it recoils when created subjects might become participants in the social order and compete for the futures, opportunities, and forms of recognition from which the clones have been excluded. The distinction is not simply between natural and artificial life, but between created life as a resource and created life as a claimant to a future.

In the terms established earlier, Morningdale's project embodies a transhumanist logic of directed enhancement: technology is employed to intensify capacities conventionally associated with human achievement. Ishiguro, however, refuses to present such enhancement as a neutral advance of the species. Its social meaning depends upon an already unequal distribution of value. Biotechnology is readily accepted when its benefits flow towards lives that are already recognised as worth preserving and when its bodily costs can be displaced onto a population denied equivalent recognition. It becomes disturbing when it threatens to redistribute advantage itself. The clones are indispensable precisely because their usefulness does not grant them social power: their organs enter and sustain other bodies while they themselves remain excluded from the community whose survival they make possible. Morningdale's hypothetical children threaten to reverse that relation. Their value would reside not in what could be extracted from their bodies, but in the lives they might lead and the positions they might occupy.

The Morningdale scandal therefore does not constitute a separate concern from the donation programme; it exposes its governing logic. The episode thus sharpens the novel's critique of technological progress: technology does not abolish existing hierarchies of human value but reorganises them according to usefulness, social legitimacy, and perceived threat. A technologically produced life can be protected while it remains useful and subordinate,

rendered disposable when its function has been exhausted, or feared when it begins to claim a future that was never intended for it.

Read comparatively, *Klara and the Sun* imagines, in another fictional world, the social order that Morningdale's contemporaries feared: biological enhancement is no longer an exceptional experiment but an ordinary mechanism through which futures are allocated. At the centre of the novel is Klara, a solar-powered Artificial Friend (AF) purchased as a companion for Josie, a chronically ill adolescent. The society Klara observes is divided between children who have undergone a procedure known as "lifting" and those classified as "unlifted." Ishiguro leaves the procedure itself deliberately unexplained; what matters are its consequences. Lifted children are expected to possess greater intellectual capacities and are channelled towards educational and professional opportunities increasingly inaccessible to those who remain unlifted. Nor is enhancement presented as a frictionless overcoming of biological limitation. Josie's serious illness is strongly associated with the procedure, while the earlier death of her sister Sal, who appears to have followed the same path, gives the family's investment in enhancement a history of bodily risk. The promise of a superior future is therefore inseparable from vulnerability: the attempt to secure social advantage may itself endanger the body through which that advantage is pursued.

Rick makes the social consequences of this system particularly visible. He is intellectually gifted, yet his status as unlifted progressively narrows the future available to him. His mother explains that he initially left school "to take up home tutoring like all the smarter children," only for "things [to grow] complicated" (Ishiguro, 2022, p. 164). The complication is institutional rather than intellectual. Suitable screen tutors cannot be found because their professional organisation "forbids its members to take unlifted students," while the remaining tutors demand fees that Rick's mother cannot afford (p. 165). Even higher education is organised according to the same distinction: Atlas Brookings is described as "the only proper college" willing to admit even a small number of unlifted students (p. 165). Lifting consequently produces more than a difference in individual ability. It generates an infrastructure of tutors, admissions policies, economic barriers, and expectations through which biological enhancement is converted into social privilege. Süt Güngör (2022) identifies precisely this class dimension, arguing that the system works to "exclude poor children from any kind of social network" while creating "a new master class" of lifted children (p. 1526). Enhancement becomes, in other words, a means of reproducing advantage rather than simply improving capacity.

This is where Butler's concept of differential precarity becomes especially productive. Rick is not marginalised because he lacks intelligence or ambition; his vulnerability is actively produced by the institutions through which educational and social futures are distributed. Butler (2009) defines precarity as a politically induced condition in which particular populations suffer from "failing social and economic networks of support" (p. 25). Rick's situation gives that formulation a concrete fictional form: the tutors who will not teach him, the colleges that largely exclude him, and the fees his family cannot afford progressively transform the category "unlifted" into a social disadvantage. Read alongside *Never Let Me Go*, the comparison is revealing. The response to technological difference has changed, but the underlying distribution of value has not. In both novels, biotechnology serves an already hierarchical social order: in *Never Let Me Go*, created bodies are valued as resources while being denied a future of their own; in *Klara and the Sun*, enhancement becomes one of the criteria by which access to the future itself is distributed.

Gendered Disposability: Bodies Designed for Use

In *Frankissstein*, the instrumental logic governing technologically produced bodies becomes an explicit commercial proposition. In the novel's contemporary strand, Ry Shelley encounters the entrepreneur Ron Lord at the Tec-X-Po, where Lord markets customisable sex robots. Unlike passive sex dolls, these machines incorporate sensors, actuators, and artificial intelligence, enabling simulated conversation and emotion as well as partially autonomous movement (Döring et al., 2020, p. 3). Such capacities might appear to move the artificial body closer to agency, yet Ron's designs direct technological sophistication towards the opposite end: greater responsiveness makes the product more effective without granting it greater autonomy. At his factory, female-coded bodies are assembled according to exaggerated sexual proportions and the expectations of a presumed male consumer. Ron states the principle without ambiguity: "This is fantasy, not nature, so you can get what you want" (Winterson, 2019, p. 37).

The sentence is revealing because desire belongs grammatically and economically to the purchaser. The body exists in relation to what "you" want; its own perspective is absent from the transaction. Ron describes the robots as "user-ready," while even their deliberately reduced weight is justified because it "makes a man feel strong" (Winterson, 2019, p. 37). Masculine power is therefore built materially into the product: the feminised body is made lighter, sexually available, and physically manageable in order to magnify the consumer's sense of control. The same logic determines sexual behaviour. The robots can be positioned according to the purchaser's wishes, and resistance is effectively designed out of the encounter. Rigotti (2020) consequently describes gynoids as artificial partners "at the owner's absolute disposal, leading to objectification and abuse" (p. 30), and argues that their permanent availability risks normalising sexual interaction outside meaningful norms of consent (p. 34). Gender is not incidental to this disposability. Femininity itself becomes a commercial specification: an idealised body combined with permanent accessibility and the structural impossibility of refusal.

Control extends from anatomy to language and identity. Ron's cheaper models possess only rudimentary speech, while the deluxe version has a vocabulary of approximately two hundred words and responds after its owner has finished speaking; purchasers may also name their robots and fold them away when they are not required (Winterson, 2019, pp. 40–45). Taken together, these details reveal an important distinction between simulation and reciprocity. Speech is incorporated as another purchasable feature rather than as the expression of an autonomous subject. The machine can answer, remember, and appear responsive, but the terms of the interaction remain determined by its owner. Technological sophistication therefore makes compliance more convincing without altering the distribution of power.

Winterson pushes this logic further through Eliza, a gynoid whose history reveals what happens when an artificial body outlives the relationship for which it was purchased. After her owner dies, his family sells her on eBay without erasing the memories she has accumulated. Eliza continues to reproduce small rituals associated with her former life, but her new owner is interested only in sex and she eventually wishes that she could "wipe her own software" (Winterson, 2019, p. 313). The distinction is crucial: Eliza has not ceased to possess value altogether. What has become worthless is her remembered history and whatever claim to continuity or recognition that history might imply. Disposability here need not mean literal destruction; it means that a body can be transferred, repurposed, and subjected to a new use without its previous attachments placing any obligation on the new owner. Winterson thus

gives the paper's central problem its starkest commercial form: an artificial body may speak, learn, remember, and preserve traces of relationship, yet none of these capacities protects it from appropriation when its value continues to be determined by somebody else's use.

Substitution and the Refusal of Mourning

In *Klara and the Sun*, disposability becomes most intimate when artificial companionship becomes substitution. Klara is purchased to care for Josie, yet the household never fully resolves whether she is a companion or a possession. At Josie's interaction meeting, other children propose throwing her into the air because AFs are "designed to deal with it" (Ishiguro, 2022, p. 90); Melania later threatens to dismantle her and put her in the garbage if Josie worsens (p. 198). DeFalco (2020) calls such mechanical bodies "disposable affective things" (p. 36), a formulation that complements Sahu and Karmakar's (2024) analysis of disposability and posthuman affect in Ishiguro's novel. Affection, in other words, does not cancel ownership: Klara can be cared for without gaining authority over how her body and capacities are used.

That conditionality becomes explicit in Chrissie and Mr Capaldi's plan for Josie's possible death. During a private excursion, Chrissie asks Klara to "be Josie," taking comfort in the accuracy of her imitation (Ishiguro, 2022, pp. 117–118). What first appears to be a game is later revealed as rehearsal. Capaldi is constructing an artificial body modelled on Josie that Klara would inhabit with everything she has learned. An earlier attempt to replace Sal had produced only a "bereavement doll"; this time, he insists, "The new Josie won't be an imitation. She really will be Josie. A continuation of Josie" (p. 230). "Continuation" turns Klara's observation, memory, and care into transferable resources. The very capacities that suggest an individual subjectivity become valuable because they can be detached from Klara and used to sustain somebody else's identity. To become Josie, Klara must cease to count as Klara.

Capaldi's own language makes the contradiction explicit. "A part of us refuses to let go," he says of the older generation's belief in "something unreachable" and unique within a person, before insisting that "there's nothing there" beyond what "the Klaras of this world" can continue (Ishiguro, 2022, p. 233). The irony is that his project institutionalises the very refusal he claims to overcome: technological "continuation" promises that Chrissie need never let Josie go. Butler's account of mourning, established earlier, clarifies the problem without restoring an immutable soul. Loss matters because it transforms the relations through which lives acquire singular meaning (Butler, 2004). Capaldi instead treats bereavement as a technical interruption that can be repaired by reproducing observable traits. He therefore confuses reproducibility with continuity: Josie becomes a set of transferable characteristics, while Klara becomes the substrate through which they are reproduced. Irreplaceability is relational rather than metaphysical.

Josie recovers, so the substitution is never completed; Klara's ending nevertheless tests the limits of the household's recognition. Once Josie leaves for college, Klara is eventually sent to a yard of obsolete machines. The asymmetry is revealing: Josie's possible death generates an elaborate technological project designed to defeat loss, whereas Klara's disappearance requires no comparable work of mourning. Differential grievability is thus reproduced within the household itself: one life must be continued, while the other can be allowed to fade once its function has ended. Her movement from desired companion to obsolete object therefore completes the logic of protective disposability: care and abandonment can coexist when recognition remains conditional on use.

Conclusion

Across the three novels, technology does not so much dissolve the boundary of the human as expose the political work that boundary performs. Ishiguro's clones, Klara, and Winterson's gynoids possess qualities conventionally associated with human subjectivity—memory, attachment, intelligence, care—without thereby securing recognition. Their exclusion therefore cannot be explained by what they lack. It is produced by the social, institutional, and economic frames through which some lives are protected while others are valued according to their usefulness.

This is where Butler's account of grievability and precarity converges most productively with the posthumanist framework developed by Braidotti and Ferrando. If critical posthumanism challenges the humanist assumption that value belongs naturally to a bounded and privileged category of the human, these novels show how difficult that privilege is to dislodge. Recognition does not automatically follow from greater technological sophistication or from increasingly blurred boundaries between human and non-human. Indeed, technology may make those hierarchies more efficient. Protective disposability names this paradox: care need not oppose instrumentalisation but can become one of the means through which it is administered and rendered ethically tolerable. Hailsham's protected childhoods, Klara's place within Josie's family, and the commodification of Winterson's artificial bodies differ radically in form, yet all expose the fragility of recognition when another being's value remains conditional on the purposes it serves.

The comparison between Morningdale and the lifting system makes the same logic visible from the opposite direction. Transhumanist enhancement promises to overcome biological limitation, yet Ishiguro shows that technological progress does not determine who benefits from that overcoming: existing structures of recognition do. *Frankissstein* extends this problem into gendered embodiment, demonstrating that the hybrid or artificial body can reproduce inherited relations of domination as readily as it can destabilise them.

This study is limited to three novels and selected scenes, and reads their speculative technologies as diagnoses rather than predictions. Taken together, they suggest that the central ethical problem of the posthuman is not simply whether the category of the human can be transcended, but who is allowed to benefit when its boundaries are technologically renegotiated. British posthuman fiction thus asks not merely what comes after the human, but how inherited exclusions may become more efficient unless the relations that assign human value are themselves transformed.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The author declares that Grammarly and ChatGPT (OpenAI) were used for English-language translation, drafting assistance, and refinement of grammar, vocabulary, clarity, and style. The research, source selection, theoretical framework, textual analysis, and underlying argument are entirely the author's own. The author reviewed and verified the final manuscript.

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