

“Clara and the Sun” from an ethical perspective

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Abstract: With the development of artificial intelligence technology, robot self-awareness has been widely concerned. From the perspective of ethics, this paper interprets the book *Clara and the Sun*, showing the ethical environment described in the novel. According to the novel, Chrissy hopes Clara to replace her daughter Josie, as the ethical main line, interprets the ethical knowledge involved in the novel, providing a new direction for the study of the ethical issues of artificial intelligence.

Key words: Ethics; *Clara and the Sun*; Kazuo Ishiguro

Introduction:

After Kazuo Ishiguro, a British-born Japanese writer, won the Nobel Prize in Literature, the literary circle has set off a research upsurge on his works, among which *Clara and the Sun* has been widely discussed. In this novel Chrissy and Clara talk, “You will become Josie, and I will always love you more than anything else.” So do it for me, I’m asking you to do it for me. Carry on Josie for me.” “These words reveal Chrissy’s true intention to replace Josie with artificial intelligence, which becomes the narrative core of the novel. From this point of view, this paper interprets the ethics contained in the novel and reflects on the relationship between human beings and artificial intelligence.

I. The ethical choice of artificial intelligence AF Clara

The content of “*Clara and the Sun*” is an interpretation of related works from the perspective of artificial intelligence Clara, and it is found that the narrative technique of the novel is flashback, and Clara combs and reviews her own past after being abandoned. From this perspective, it is not difficult to find that every choice Clara makes is full of human emotions and morality. In Ishiguro’s works, robots have the same thinking ability as humans, and can make more reasonable choices by observing, examining and thinking. In the novel, Clara’s choices not only have the rationality of a machine, but also have the moral sense of a human. In the shop window, Clara makes a deal with Josie, who doesn’t buy her at the time, saying, “I have to go now, but I’ll be back soon... You won’t go, will you?” “; based on this, Clara insisted on waiting for Josie. At this point, Clara’s choice forgoes the value of the artificial intelligence in favor of the human spirit of contract, in which the store manager warns Clara not to easily trust the child’s agreement, although Clara is aware of the uncertainty of language, she still sticks to the promise. As a result, she can’t understand the ending of Josie and Rick, who grew up together, but ended up going their separate ways due to differences in family means and class. Because in the novel, artificial intelligence is powered by solar energy and is exposed to sunlight, it will get energy. The sun is equivalent to the source of life for artificial intelligence. Therefore, in Clara’s world view, the sun can also nourish human beings, so she prayed to the sun, hoping that Josie will get better soon. In Clara’s view, the Kutins machine blocked out the sun, and the sun was fighting the Kutins machine. In the end, with the help of Josie’s father, Clara destroyed the Cutins machine she encountered, but with Josie’s recovery, Clara was eventually abandoned. In the description of the novel, Clara’s selfless dedication, her love and choice are very simple and beautiful.

II. Artificial friends and social reorganization

In Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel *Clara and the Sun*, a highly technological society is depicted, with not only intelligent robots accompanying humans to reduce loneliness, but also their own high-end technology, in which humans are also subjected to technology in the process of using technology.

First of all, in order to get company, human beings choose artificial friends in a scientific way and make them accompany their children to grow up. Scientific choice refers to the choice that human society is making and will make after completing the ethical choice. Scientific choice is to solve the problem of the combination of science and human, including how to use science, deal with the influence of science, and deal with the relationship with science. Clara, the protagonist of the novel, is made as an artificial friend. She not only has the characteristics and abilities of a humanoid robot, but also has more excellent abilities to serve human beings with her own abilities. Her appearance is similar to that of humans, such as Clara, who looks like a Frenchman, with dark hair and “kind eyes”. According to Josie’s comments on Clara’s appearance in the novel, and the fact that many children have robots around them, it is found that the communication between humans and robots is not affected by appearance. In the novel, the robot is very intelligent and enthusiastic, and has the characteristics of sincerity and thoughtfulness. For example, Clara has good empathy and learning ability, and has good qualities such as kindness and selflessness. Josie and Clara make a deal and promise to take Clara home, but they don’t show up, but the kind Clara always sticks to their agreement. And Clara can keenly perceive the changes of human emotions, through Josie’s expressions, language and other feelings to bring her happiness and sorrow, after Josie’s illness to take care of. However, Clara with good qualities still cannot be recognized by human beings, such as Melania’s housekeeper’s bad attitude toward her and Helen’s questioning of her identity. Therefore, from the perspective of scientific selection, the artificial intelligence robot cannot be recognized by human society due to its purpose and tool, and the status of robot has not changed.

Secondly, in primary schools, the changes brought about by the development of science and technology to cities and villages are

depicted, showing the reorganization of society. In the cities, the appearance of many tall buildings blocks the sunlight, and the operation of the Kutins machine produces a lot of smoke, which is accompanied by annoying noises. In depictions of the countryside, scenes such as the dilapidated workplace where Josie's father works and the appearance of genetic cows show the impact of technology. Among them, genetic modification technology has been widely recognized by the society, Josie's sister died due to genetic modification, Josie also became ill, and the transformation has become the threshold of school. By studying the novel, it is found that both the manufacture of artificial friends and the development of science and technology will lead to the alienation of technology and the expansion of technological rationality, which are the products of human-centered concepts.

III. The ethics of anthropocentrism

In the novel, Clara's life can be divided into two stages, including the shop stage and the life stage with Josie. In the first stage, Clara simply watches and learns in her place, waiting to be bought. In the second stage, Clara accompanies Josie and takes on the task of caring for her. At first, Clara followed her basic duties as an artificial friend, paying attention to Josie when she became ill and taking care of her. When Josie and Rick get into trouble, she helps them get back together. As Josie's health deteriorates, Clara takes on more than her fair share of responsibility. Chrissy hopes that Clara can be a "continuation" of Josie, and the novel climaxes with descriptions such as a model Josie walk and a test of how well she knows Josie. Clara is faced with the difficult choice of whether to become Josie.

In the history of western science fiction, most of the descriptions of robots follow the "three laws of robotics" proposed by Isaac Asimov. Among them are: robots need to do their best to protect humans, obey human instructions, and protect themselves in the above premise. In *Clara and the Sun*, Clara never breaks the relevant laws, but now she is confronted with the dilemma of breaking the "three laws". From the perspective of ethics, Clara falls into an ethical dilemma at this time. The dilemma consists of two moral propositions, each of which, if judged independently, is reasonable and consistent with moral principles. However, if the selector chooses between the two, the other will be unethical and inconsistent with universal moral principles. In the face of this dilemma, Clara follows the "Three Laws" of anthropocentrism, contributing her body's solution to destroy the polluting Kutins machine, praying to the sun, and working for Josie's recovery. Ishiguro does not stop there, but Clara breaks through and transcends the "three laws" in his description, that is, Clara realizes that Josie has something that she cannot replace, as the novel says: "Mother, Rick, Melania housekeeper, father -- I will never be able to touch their feelings for Josie." Clara is not according to the relevant laws, just desperate to save Josie, but to protect the love contained in her heart. In the end, Josie's body was healed by the sun's rays. In the novel, Clara makes a series of efforts to recover Josie, showing her love for Josie. The praiseworthy part of human nature can be found in Clara, and it gradually becomes a symbol of love. In the novel, after the recovery of Josie went to the ideal school, but Clara was abandoned after the completion of the task, where Clara saw many of her peers, because of the loss of value, and slowly withered, through the description of the novel, it is found that no matter how intelligent robots, they can not escape the fate of abandonment. So, when the era of human-machine coexistence arrives, how to realize the true consciousness of coexistence between the two is a question worth pondering.

IV. Man-machine coexistence of thinking

With the development of science and technology, the coexistence of humans and robots has become a key issue, among which Kazuo Ishiguro expressed concern about the development of artificial intelligence. In his work *Clara and the Sun*, he reflected on the possibility of human-machine coexistence under the human-centered concept. On the one hand, the development of artificial intelligence occupies more and more living space, and leads to the rise of unemployment, which leads to the reduction of human belief in work. Just as in the novel, Josie's father is replaced by AI and can only comfort himself instead of finding a suitable solution. On the other hand, when artificial intelligence develops and far exceeds human beings, human beings will be increasingly worried about it. As the novel puts it, "they are afraid because they can't understand how it works", in which robots receive hatred and are constantly taken apart for inspection, but the problem has not been fundamentally solved.

The problem of human-machine coexistence is highly complex, which is rooted in the existence of human-centered ethics. How to solve this problem is the premise of building a human-machine coexistence world. Kazuo Ishiguro will not give a simple answer in the novel. It gives Clara, the protagonist of the novel, rich emotions. Through observing human beings from her perspective, readers can see a machine with human emotions. It shows that artificial intelligence is not a denial of human beings, but an inquiry into the future development of human beings in the era of science. Although artificial intelligence will have a great impact on human life, it is certain that the particularity of "human heart" can not be replaced by any machine. Through the study of relevant scholars' theories, it is not difficult to find that in the future man-machine coexistence era, human's attitude toward robots will gradually become one of the criteria for judging good and evil.

Although the world will change, but love is always the most fundamental core, Clara in the novel has this kind of core, she is not only a robot, but also the sun, with their own light to warm the world, no matter how the development of the world, and their own identity changes, need to stick to their own "human heart".

V. The conclusion

To sum up, the novel *Clara and the Sun* reveals the background of the development of science and technology. With the development of science and technology, ethical conflicts are intensifying. First of all, the development of science and technology intensifies the solidification of social classes and highlights the gap between classes. Secondly, the development of artificial intelligence has brought about new

contradictions and conflicts. In the novel, Rick and Josie have a bond that goes beyond friendship, but they end up going their separate ways, and their endings reveal the differences in the American class system. From the historical point of view of the novel, genetic modification becomes an important basis for class classification. In fiction, “substitution” occurs more frequently, linking the plot to each other. Chrissy wants Clara to replace her daughter Josie, so as to make up for the lack of emotion. The appearance of robots leads to the increase of unemployment rate, and the conflict between human and artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly fierce. The purpose of “Clara and the Sun” is to help human beings from the perspective of ethics, to provide a moral paradigm for the current society and life, and to provide moral experience for human development. Gradually form a moral warning.

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