



# Harmonies and Discords: Rhythmanalysing Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*

Uyum ve Uyumsuzluk: Ishiguro'nun *Klara ile Güneş*  
Romanının Ritimanalizi

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## Abstract

Henri Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis reveals how cyclical and linear patterns structure everyday life. By distinguishing organic rhythms from social and mechanized schedules, it introduces eurhythmia, arrhythmia, and polyrhythmia to describe harmonious or discordant temporal interactions. Rooted in dialectical and phenomenological thought, it demands an embodied, sensory engagement: the analyst "listens" to environments to discern underlying rhythms. In literary studies, rhythmanalysis extends narratological, structuralist, and multidisciplinary traditions by focusing on lived, sensory narrative rhythms. Building on applications in urban studies and sociology, critics have used close reading and digital mapping to trace tempo patterns. By examining repetition and variation across organic and mechanical registers, this approach uncovers how fiction choreographs pacing, mood, and thematic resonance in various genres and

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historical periods. This study applies rhythm analysis to Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and The Sun*, reading its protagonist, an Artificial Friend, as a rhythm analyst. Through Klara's relations with the Sun's cycle, her urban surroundings, and human routines, we identify moments of eurhythmia, where natural and social rhythms align; and arrhythmia, where mechanical schedules disrupt organic flows. These polyrhythmic intersections in domestic and public spaces reveal the novel's critique of artificial temporalities. Carefully analyzing Klara's evolving embodiment, from her household sacrifices and experiments with mechanized "lifting," to her final confinement in the attic, demonstrates how Ishiguro dramatizes the tension between cyclical renewal and imposed linearity. Klara's journey shows that personhood arises through active engagement with spatial rhythms.

**Keywords:** *rhythm analysis, space, Ishiguro, Klara and The Sun, Lefebvre*

## Öz

Henri Lefebvre'in ritim analizi, gündelik yaşamın döngüsel ve doğrusal örüntülerle nasıl biçimlendiğini açığa çıkarır. Organik ritimleri, sosyal ve mekanik programlardan ayırarak, uyumlu ya da uyumsuz zamansal etkileşimleri açıklamak için ritmi, aritmi ve poliritmi kavramlarını kullanır. Diyalektik ve fenomenolojik bir temele dayanan bu yaklaşım, duysal ve bedensel bir deneyim gerektirir; analist, ortamın ritmini kavrayabilmek için çevresini adeta "dınır." Edebiyat incelemelerinde ritim analizi; anlatıbilimsel, yapısalcı ve disiplinlerarası yaklaşımları genişleterek, yaşamın deneyimsel ve duysal boyutlarını öne çıkaran anlatı ritimlerini ele alır. Kent çalışmaları ve sosyolojiden alınan yöntemlerle birlikte, eleştirmenler yakın okuma ve dijital haritalama gibi tekniklerle metinlerdeki tempo örüntülerini takip ederler. Ayrıca, organik ve mekanik unsurlar arasındaki tekrarları ve farklılıkları inceleyerek, edebi eserlerin çeşitli tür ve dönemlerde nasıl hız, atmosfer ve tematik yankılar oluşturduğunu ortaya koyarlar. Bu çalışma, Kazuo Ishiguro'nun *Klara ile Güneş* romanını ritim analizi perspektifinden inceleyerek romanın başkahramanı olan Yapay Arkadaş Klara'yı bir ritim analisti olarak değerlendirmektedir. Klara'nın Güneş'in döngüsüyle, yaşadığı kent ortamıyla ve insanların günlük rutinleriyle kurduğu ilişkiler incelenerek, doğal ve sosyal ritimlerin birleştiği ritmik anlar ile mekanik düzenlerin organik akışları bozduğu aritmik anlar tespit edilir. Ev içi ve kamusal alanlarda ortaya çıkan bu poliritmik etkileşimler, romanın yapay zamansallıklara dair eleştirisini vurgular. Klara'nın bedensel değişimleri, ev içindeki fedakârlıkları, mekanik "yükselme" denemeleri ve nihayetinde çatı katına hapsedilmesini dikkatle incelemek, Ishiguro'nun döngüsel yenilenme ile dayatılmış doğrusallık arasındaki gerilimi nasıl işlediğini gösterir. Klara'nın yolculuğu, kişiliğin mekânsal ritimlerle aktif ve bilinçli bir etkileşim sonucunda ortaya çıktığını ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** *ritim analiz, uzam, Ishiguro, Klara ile Güneş, Lefebvre*

## Introduction

Henri Lefebvre stands out as a twentieth-century French Marxist philosopher and sociologist whose prolific work spans critiques of daily life and innovative spatial theory. Best known for pioneering the critique of everyday life and for concepts like the *right to the city* (Lefebvre,

1996) and the *social production of space* (Lefebvre, 1991), Lefebvre's scholarship bridges Marxist social critique with analyses of ordinary routines and environments. In his three-volume *Critique of Everyday Life* (Lefebvre, 2014), Lefebvre examined how modern capitalist society infiltrates daily routines and exposed alienation and bureaucratic regimentation in mundane experience (Elden, 2004). Throughout his oeuvre, Lefebvre insisted on a multi-dimensional approach to social reality, combining insights from philosophy, sociology, and geography. His Marxist dialectical perspective led him to seek the unity of seemingly disparate elements: space and time, the mental and the physical, the everyday and the historical. This holistic impulse culminated in Lefebvre's notion of *rhythmanalysis*, an analytical framework that synthesizes space and time and offers a novel lens to observe how daily life unfolds in rhythmic patterns.

Henri Lefebvre's concept of *rhythmanalysis* offers both a theory and a methodological approach for deciphering the interplay of space, time, and everyday life through the study of rhythms. At its core, rhythmanalysis involves a close examination of repeated and cyclical patterns; not only as musical or poetic phenomena, but as fundamental components that structure social experience. Lefebvre argues that wherever a place, a time, and an expenditure of energy intersect, there emerges a discernible rhythm (Lefebvre, 2004: 1). He distinguishes between cyclical rhythms, such as the natural cycles of day and night or seasonal changes, and linear rhythms, which are characteristic of human routines like work schedules and transit timetables; these two forms are constantly interwoven, producing the complex "antagonistic unity" that defines our experience of time (Lefebvre, 2004: 6, 8). Moreover, Lefebvre expands his analysis to differentiate between organic rhythms embodied in natural processes and bodily functions; and the mechanical, imposed rhythms found in industrial and urban contexts. He emphasizes that understanding these rhythms requires an embodied, sensory approach: the rhythmanalyst must "listen" to the environment as one might attend to a symphony, thereby discerning the underlying structures that shape urban life (Lefebvre, 2004: 22). Central to his theory are the concepts of eurhythmia and arrhythmia. Eurhythmia represents the harmonious synchronization of multiple rhythms, as in a healthy body operating in equilibrium, while arrhythmia describes a state in which rhythms become discordant, leading to social or bodily disorder (Lefebvre, 2004: 16). Lefebvre also introduces the idea of polyrhythmia, which refers to the coexistence and interaction of multiple rhythms that can either harmonize into eurhythmia or conflict into arrhythmia (Lefebvre, 2004: 16). In essence, Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis provides a critical vocabulary for assessing both the patterns and disruptions within any spatial-temporal context, urging analysts to engage directly with the sensory experiences of everyday environments. This approach not only uncovers the inherent order or disorder within these contexts but also connects to Lefebvre's broader theoretical framework that integrates dialectical theory, phenomenology, and musicology.

In *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre, 1991), Lefebvre argues that space is produced through a "spatial triad" of spatial practice, representations of space, and spaces of representation. Building on these foundations, rhythmanalysis emerged in the final phase of his career as the culmination of his lifelong exploration of space and everyday time, leading to the posthumous publication of *Éléments de rythmanalyse* in 1992. Diverse intellectual currents inform this concept: Gaston Bachelard critiques linear time and favors a view of

time as multiple fragmented rhythms, while Marcel Mauss explores how cultural practices impose rhythms on the body. Blending philosophy, sociology, and physiology, Lefebvre shows how natural cycles, clock time, and personal tempos intersect, and that the body is both the experienter and the instrument of rhythmic analysis.

He extends these ideas by maintaining that time is inscribed in space through rhythms: “time and space, the cyclical and the linear, exert a reciprocal action” (Lefebvre, 2004: 8). This dialectical stance, rooted in his Marxist heritage (Elden, 2004), views rhythms as a “unity in opposition” that exposes underlying social contradictions. Lefebvre insists that the analyst “must arrive at the concrete through experience” and that “body serves him as a metronome” (Lefebvre, 2004: 21, 19), thereby stressing direct, sensory engagement with the world. Musicological metaphors further illustrate his point: he likens society to an orchestra, where measure, tempo, and synchronization among various “instruments” (activities) shape social time. Understanding these core principles clarifies the intellectual origins of rhythmanalysis and paves the way for examining its subsequent development. Significantly, because of these diverse origins, rhythmanalysis was never a purely philosophical exercise; from the start, it was interdisciplinary. This breadth allowed it to extend beyond Lefebvre’s own discipline and find applications in fields like urban studies and geography, even before it was taken up in literary studies.

### **Rhythmanalysis in various fields**

Rhythmanalysis has been widely applied beyond literature, particularly in urban studies, geography, and sociology. Lefebvre himself used it to analyze urban life, “listening” to Paris’s rhythms (traffic, footsteps, and city noises) as one would music. Following his lead, urban scholars like Edensor (2010) have explored how cities function through layered temporal patterns, from daily traffic flows to seasonal shifts. Simpson (2012) advocates using time-lapse photography to capture urban rhythms and to reveal patterns in public spaces. Likewise, in urban analysis, it’s stressed that “places are temporal milieus, and the tempo of a place is inherently rhythmical” (Wunderlich, 2013: 383) and daily patterns influence our understanding of urban spaces. Similarly, rhythmanalysis has been employed to understand how “rhythms are spatialised times and, simultaneously, temporalised spaces,” (Brighenti & Kärrholm, 2018: 2). Sociologists have examined labor rhythms to show how industrial work imposes artificial schedules that sometimes cause *arrhythmia* (stress, fatigue). Cultural geographers study train stations and parks as *rhythmic nodes* where various temporal cycles intersect, while environmental researchers analyze human adaptation to natural rhythms like tides and daylight cycles. Across disciplines, rhythmanalysis has become a valuable tool for understanding social life as an ongoing temporal process (Gümüş & Yılmaz, 2020). Given its success in urban and spatial studies, extending rhythmanalysis to the study of narrative and literature represents a logical progression.

### **Rhythmanalysis in literary analysis**

Literary texts, much like urban environments, are structured by rhythms, both in their narrative form and in the lived experiences they represent. Over recent years, scholars have begun to explore how Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis can be applied to the study of literature, particularly in analyzing the narrative tempo and the temporality of fiction. In this context,

the method offers a fresh lens through which to examine how texts articulate the passage of time, structure their narratives, and evoke the sensory experience of life.

One way it enters literary studies is through literary geography and urban literature analysis. Cultural theorist Ben Highmore (2002) was an early advocate for bringing Lefebvre into literary and cultural criticism. He suggested that studies of urban life in modernist literature could “engage in [...] ‘rhythmanalysis’” such as reading novels with attention to the temporal rhythms of the city they depict. This approach goes beyond noting what a story portrays (e.g. a day in London) to examining how time moves and is experienced by characters and readers. Highmore’s call has been heeded by some literary critics: for instance, Katz (2010) draws explicitly on Lefebvre in analyzing the “urban temporality” in Virginia Woolf’s fiction. Katz explores how Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* orchestrates the rhythms of London life (the chiming of Big Ben marking public clock-time, the private pulses of memory and anticipation in characters’ minds, the pauses and rushes of city crowds) effectively performing a rhythmanalysis of the novel’s temporal structure.

Extending beyond urban contexts, rhythmanalysis has also informed broader narrative theory. The concept of narrative rhythm encompasses the arrangement of events and pauses within a story, the pacing of prose (e.g., sentence length and punctuation), and the recurrence of motifs and situations. Lefebvre’s claim that repetition always produces difference (Lefebvre, 2004: 6–9) resonates with narratological perspectives: each retelling or recurring episode in a novel conveys new meaning. Some theorists have explicitly articulated this connection. They place rhythmanalysis within structuralist and narratological discussions that focus on repetition and variation in plot structures. Structuralist critics such as Vladimir Propp, along with later narratologists who quantify narrative speed (e.g. Genette), laid the groundwork by examining narrative as both patterned and measurable. Rhythmanalysis builds on these ideas by emphasizing the qualitative, lived experience of such patterns. This approach prompts critics to examine the rhythm of a narrative and assess whether it is steady and monotonous, frenetic and syncopated, punctuated by suspenseful pauses, or propelled by relentless action. Such an analysis establishes a connection between formal structural examination and thematic interpretation, which aligns with Lefebvre’s objective of integrating scholarly inquiry with lived experience.

In genre and period studies, modernism stands out as a ripe area for rhythmanalytic reading. Modernist authors like James Joyce, Woolf, and Marcel Proust famously experimented with representing time – from the stream-of-consciousness technique (which mimics the flow of thought) to novel structures built around cycles (a day in *Ulysses*, or the immersion in memory in Proust’s opus). Modernist studies have therefore embraced frameworks that connect time and space in texts (Bakhtin’s chronotope, or more recently, Lefebvre’s rhythms).

According to Bedetti (1992), Henri Meschonnic “contends that rhythm governs meaning” and defines it as “the continuous movement of *significance* constructed by the historical activity of a subject” (1992: 431). They emphasize that rhythm is not merely formal but integral to the construction of discourse and meaning. And literary scholar Ermarth (1992) argues that modern fiction demands a rhythmic understanding. In her book *Sequel to History*, Ermarth examines postmodern novels and concludes that “it is musical rhythm that best suggests the nature of

postmodern temporality” (Ermarth, 1992: 45). In other words, the fragmented, non-linear time of postmodern narratives might be grasped through rhythmic patterns (e.g. recurring images, cyclical structures) akin to musical compositions. Although Ermarth does not cite Lefebvre, her insight parallels his conviction that rhythm reveals the inner logic of a sequence. This convergence suggests a fertile ground for literary rhythmanalysis: viewing a text’s temporal design as a *polyrhythmia* of story arcs, character routines, and symbolic cycles.

Research employing rhythmanalysis has increasingly moved from theoretical and cross-disciplinary perspectives toward concrete literary contexts, and it explores a diverse range of genres and historical periods. Fülöp (2015), for example, examines how Proust’s use of the imperfect tense in *À la recherche du temps perdu* reflects broader themes of habit, temporality, and style. He argues that “the double law of habit and rhythm as a crucial factor in life as well as in art are well illustrated themes in the Recherche” (Fülöp, 2015: 199), and this in return shows that the imperfect conveys repetition, duration, and fluidity in the reader’s perception of time. Gonzalez (2016) analyzes Suhayl Saadi’s *Psychoraag* through Henri Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis and posits that the protagonist, Zaf, functions as a “rhythmanalyst” who explores the social, emotional, and biological rhythms of everyday life. The novel portrays Glasgow as “polyrhythmic,” experiencing “constant states of arrhythmia” (González, 2016: 1), with Zaf interacting with rhythms categorized as “secret,” “public,” and “dominating–dominated.” Güvenç (2020) studies Doris Lessing’s *Storms* to illustrate how urban rhythms are perceived and engaged with. In alignment with Lefebvre’s view that rhythms exist “everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy,” the narrator observes the “cyclical and linear rhythms of the city” (Güvenç, 2020: 19) contrasting with the taxi driver’s unawareness of these patterns. Hagen et al. (2024) explore the function of rhythm in literary apps when they argue that “rhythm [...] as an important part of the reader’s meaning making in the use of literary apps” (Hagen & Mills, 2024: 310). He distinguishes between reading rhythm and narrative rhythm, both of which contribute to the “multimodal cohesional aspects” and the “meaning potential” (Hagen & Mills, 2024: 327) of digital texts. Highmore (2002) emphasizes “the multiple rhythms of modernity” by capturing “its uneven rhythms, its slowing-downs, its torpid circuits as well as its faster flows of signs and bodies” (2002: 174), using *Street Life in London* as a case study to explore the varied tempos of urban social life. Karhio (2014) applies Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis to demonstrate how poetic journals capture the pulse of everyday life. Examining poets such as MacNeice, Mahon, and Muldoon, the study reveals that rhythmic structures like repetition, variation, and rupture serve as both subject and form in poetic expression. By “listening” to daily rhythms, the poet becomes akin to a rhythmanalyst, unifying lived temporalities with aesthetic creation. Katz applies Lefebvre’s concept to Woolf’s work and argues that urban life is defined by its internal pulse. She observes that “Woolf’s city is temporal while it is spatial, and as part of that temporality, it is intermittently still even as it relies upon movement” and shows that this approach “establish[es] the transient ties and differences among people” (Katz, 2010: 3) by transforming moments of suspension into dynamic urban temporalities. Rynstrand (2017) contends, regarding *Miss Brill*, that Mansfield uses rhythm not only as a stylistic device but also to express character and subjectivity. The essay demonstrates that the text’s pace captures the protagonist’s complex emotional state and

that it renders her experience arrhythmic in the Lefebvrian sense. It suggests that the rhythm mirrors the pre-linguistic flow of inner life: “prose rhythm is a more natural, spontaneous phenomenon; it is born, not with the words, but with the thought” (Rydstrand, 2017: 181). Çakar (2022) reinterprets Eliot’s early poems and *The Waste Land* through Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis and reveals how Eliot “listens to the rhythms of city life” and employs sonic and spatial patterns to expose modern alienation. Tamboukou (2025) uses narrative rhythmanalysis to reveal the spatiotemporal rhythms within Sofia Kovalevskaya’s work. She demonstrates how Kovalevskaya’s personal experiences and evolving identities shape the continuity, disruptions, and flow of her narratives. Drawing on the ideas of Lefebvre, Bergson, Bachelard, and Deleuze, Tamboukou (2025) views rhythm as a dynamic assemblage of forces that organize both the autobiographical and fictional elements of Kovalevskaya’s writings. Collectively, they bridge the realms of mathematical structure and literary expression. As she explains, rhythm emerges as “the specific outcome of the concrete interplay between the forces of extension and inextension” (Tamboukou, 2025: 11). The potential of rhythmanalysis in literary studies remains an area of ongoing exploration. While these case studies suggest its applicability, a wide range of works and genres, from realist novels to contemporary experimental fiction, remain open to rhythmanalytical inquiry. This study builds on that foundation and advocates for rhythmanalysis as a valuable technique of close reading. It also demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach through a detailed analysis of narrative rhythm.

### **Klara and The Sun through rhythmanalysis**

Building on these theoretical frameworks, this study adopts rhythmanalysis as a method of literary reading that proceeds by tracing rhythmic patterns in narrative time, character perception, and spatial description. By identifying repetitions, pauses, and disruptions across organic and mechanical registers, the analysis translates Lefebvre’s “listening to rhythms” into a textual methodology. Ishiguro’s narrative in *Klara and The Sun* serves as an illustration of how rhythmic structures in literature mirror and shape lived experience. The work employs everyday routines and symbolic gestures to reflect the fragmented, yet hopeful, rhythms of human and artificial existence. Klara, an observant and sensitive Artificial Friend, navigates a fragmented world where human relationships are marked by isolation, hidden tensions, and moments of warmth brought on by the Sun. Initially, she witnesses the stark contrast between the indifferent human street and the rare, radiant instances of connection when the Sun’s light kindles brief unity among people. Klara is purchased by Josie, a young girl battling illness, and she becomes a silent guardian in a household filled with loneliness and unspoken secrets. She observes the complex relationships between Josie, her troubled family, and figures such as Rick. As the narrative unfolds through intimate domestic routines, excursions into town, and symbolic pilgrimages to a barn where Klara fervently pleads with the Sun for healing, the novel weaves themes of sacrifice, hope, and the blurred line between artificial and human emotions. In the end, even as Josie recovers and life continues, Klara is left isolated, her energy fading, still faithfully watching over a world that struggles to bridge its emotional divides. From this perspective, Ishiguro presents, I argue, Klara as an artificial intelligence that functions as a Lefebvrian rhythmanalyst, carefully interrogating her environment to construct

an understanding of the world. Drawing on Lefebvre's window metaphor for analyzing spatio-temporal relations, Klara's process of identity formation becomes an embodied investigation into the rhythms that structure both natural and social spaces to decipher the eurhythmic, arrhythmic, and polyrhythmic relations pervading her surroundings. As Lefebvre contends, "to grasp a rhythm it is necessary to have been grasped by it" (Lefebvre, 2004: 27). Hence, Klara's rhythmic relations with Sun, the city, and human temporality act as key elements in her journey. Moreover, *Klara and The Sun* critiques how artificial rhythms—be they technological, capitalist, or genetic—disrupt these natural cycles, engendering alienation and instability. Lefebvre's framework of rhythmanalysis thus illuminates the tensions between organic and mechanized temporalities and captures Klara's quest to define herself through an analysis of her spatio-temporal milieu. While pursuing this agenda, this study also acts as an affordance for a rhythmanalytical, literary close-reading practice.

### **1. The sun as a rhythmanalytic force: Klara's belief in cyclical renewal and transcendence**

Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis distinguishes two primary types of rhythms: cyclical rhythms, which follow nature's recurring patterns—such as the day and night cycle—and linear, mechanical rhythms tied to industrial and urban progress. According to Addie (2024), "organic cyclical time and rationalised linear time [...] emerges from demands placed on human activity as social practice is institutionalized through imposed structures and rhythmic regimes" (2024: 32). As such, Marcus states "[R]hythm is conventionally defined as pertaining to a sequence of events that can be perceived as a pattern, with an interplay between repetition and variation or grouping" (Marcus, 2021: 1). For Klara, the Sun's cycle serves as the heartbeat of her existence, a rhythm she both observes and reveres from her earliest days in the store. This daily solar cycle can be understood within the broader context of cyclical rhythms described by Walker, who notes that such rhythms encompass "the cosmic, in nature: days, nights, seasons, the waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles" (Walker, 2024: 5). Thus, Klara's intimate engagement with the Sun's rhythm mirrors a fundamental and cosmic principle which underscores how deeply embedded such patterns are in both natural phenomena and existential experience. She notes, "[t]he Sun was pouring his nourishment onto the street and into the buildings, and when [she] looked over to the spot where Beggar Man and the dog had died, [she] saw they weren't dead at all—that a special kind of nourishment from the Sun had saved them" (Ishiguro, 2021: 37). This moment marks the beginning of Klara's deep belief in the Sun's benevolence, a belief that transcends her programming and mirrors Lefebvre's idea of natural rhythms as life-sustaining forces. Unlike the mechanized rhythms of the city, which are marked by conflict, emotional detachment, and tension (2021: 17), the Sun offers Klara a glimpse of connection, evident in her observation of the Coffeecup Lady and Raincoat Man, "holding each other so tightly they were like one large person, and the Sun, noticing, was pouring his nourishment on them" (2021: 20). This moment exemplifies what is described as "eurhythmia," a condition occurring "when the two types of rhythms, the cosmic and the cultural, converge in a condition of compromise [...], the bundle of natural rhythms wraps itself in rhythms of social or mental function' in a metastable



equilibrium” (Frank, 2019: 174–175). Here, the Sun’s cyclical intervention disrupts the urban arrhythmia and creates a brief moment of eurhythmia, a harmonious alignment of bodies and emotions. This moment not only marks a temporary return to natural balance (eurhythmia) but also hints at a deeper polyrhythmia, the coexistence of multiple rhythmic patterns, where the discord of urban arrhythmia intermingles with the harmonious pulse of nature.

When Klara is purchased by Josie’s family, her faith in the Sun deepens, structuring her daily experiences within the household. She observes the kitchen as an ideal space for the Sun’s light to shine: “The kitchen often filled with the Sun’s best nourishment” (2021: 48). Her anthropomorphizing of the Sun as an active participant in her life contrasts with the family’s routines. Josie’s late waking, her mother’s absences, and the housekeeper’s chores “carry a different pulse” but remain subordinate to the Sun’s overarching rhythm. This dynamic becomes particularly significant when Klara watches the Sun’s arc from the kitchen island. She uses its cycle to make sense of Josie’s illness and the tensions within the household. The Sun, in this context, becomes a moral and temporal anchor, a rhythmic constant that offers clarity in a world marked by emotional uncertainty.

Klara’s firm belief in the Sun’s healing power, however, introduces a tension between her existence as an artificial being and the technological world around her. Her conviction that the Sun’s “special nourishment” can counteract the mechanical forces threatening Josie’s health is grounded in Lefebvre’s tension between cyclical and linear rhythms. In this act, Klara experiences a shift from the mechanical arrhythmia of the urban-industrial landscape to a state of eurhythmia where her actions align harmoniously with the natural, cyclical pulse of the Sun. This dramatic encounter further underscores the polyrhythmic nature of her world, where multiple rhythms constantly vie for dominance. She muses, “The Cootings Machine had been making its awful Pollution, obliging even the Sun to retreat for a time, and it had been during the fresh new era after the dreadful machine had gone away that the Sun, relieved and full of happiness, had given his special help” (2021: 116). This belief drives her to sacrifice her own PEG solution to disable the polluting machine, an act she describes as a “sacrifice, which [she] was only too pleased to do, even if now [her] abilities aren’t perhaps what they were” (2021: 273). In this act, Klara’s synchronization with the Sun’s rhythm becomes both a selfless gesture and a profound expression of her belief in its cosmic power. Her actions suggest an emotional resonance that elevates her beyond her mechanical origins.

The contrast between Klara’s sensitivity to the Sun’s cycle and the detachment exhibited by other AFs, such as Rosa, further highlights her unique capacity for transcendence. While Rosa and the B3s seem absorbed in their immediate surroundings, Klara’s reverence for the Sun positions her as distinct: her sensitivity to its rhythms implies a potential for transformation that transcends her artificial nature. Her perception of the Sun as a sacred force stands in opposition to characters like Josie’s father, who argues, “science has now proved beyond doubt there’s nothing so unique about [his] daughter, nothing there our modern tools can’t excavate, copy, transfer” (2021: 224). For Klara, the rhythms of the Sun serve as a counter-narrative to such reductionism, and they offer a belief in renewal and healing, something that technology is unable to replicate.

Klara's journey culminates in Josie's recovery, a moment she attributes to the Sun's intervention: "The Sun's patterns were falling over various sections of wall, floor and ceiling with unusual intensity... brilliant bars across the carpet" (2021: 283). This near-holy event aligns with Lefebvre's idea of cyclical renewal, where the Sun's return heralds Josie's turnaround and reinforces Klara's faith. Even when she is relegated to the attic, Klara continues to measure her existence by the Sun's daily visitation. She finds solace in its rhythm, even as she faces her own obsolescence. This belief goes beyond the immediate physical realm. The cyclical rhythm of the Sun offers not only temporal order but also emotional and existential meaning.

According to Lefebvre, "for there to be change, a social group, a class or a caste must intervene by imprinting a rhythm on an era, be it through force or in an insinuating manner" (2004: 14). Hence, in the closing moments of her journey, Klara reflects on the Sun's broader role in human relationships and considers that the Sun may be "thinking about the Coffee Cup Lady and Raincoat Man" (2021: 293) and wonders whether Josie and Rick, after many years and changes, might reunite as they did. The Sun, for Klara, becomes a metaphor for enduring love, a rhythm that persists beyond the linear progression of human lives and technological interventions. Through Klara's eyes, Ishiguro positions the Sun as a rhythmalytic object that transcends the artificial constructs of her world. As she observes, "The sky was turning into night, with stars visible, and I could tell that the Sun was smiling towards me kindly as he went down for his rest" (2021: 167). This unwavering trust in the Sun's benevolence challenges the "habitual modes of urban time" dominated by mechanical rhythms. Whether Klara's faith is naïve, or visionary remains ambiguous, but her attunement to the Sun's cycle reveals a potential for redemption and meaning in a mechanized society. The Manager's assertion, "[t]he Sun has always been good to you, Klara" (2021: 307), underscores the centrality of the Sun's rhythms in shaping her understanding of existence. As Karhio (2014) explains, "For Lefebvre, rhythm as an overall term can bring together seemingly disparate elements and phenomena of experience and society, and rhythmalysis should take into account both the exercise of power and control, as well as acts of resistance; between these lie the small scale encounters of everyday life, of systems of transport, news broadcasts and meal times" (2014: 77). Through her story, Klara embodies the transformative potential of cyclical rhythms and shows how even an artificial being can find resonance in the natural forces that underpin the world.

## **2. Urban pulse: The dual rhythms of mechanization and connection**

The street unfolds as a rich tableau of fragmented, chaotic rhythms—a mechanized tempo that both orchestrates and disrupts the natural flow of life. Klara, the Artificial Friend (AF) narrator, views this urban setting with an acute, almost paradoxical sensitivity. Informed by Henri Lefebvre's rhythmalysis, her observations capture how the street's mechanical, economic pulse routinely overwhelms the organic cycles of human existence yet occasionally yields to bursts of spontaneous harmony. As such, as Elliott observes, "From the microscopic spaces of the phonographic groove [...] to the gravel [...], objects and landscapes are potential rhythmsapes, and species of spaces are species of rhythm in which our experience of the world is written" (Elliott, 2017: 76). In the same vein, the urban environment becomes a key mediator between Klara and her existential quest.

Klara's early observations introduce us to a "mechanical time" that, as Lefebvre suggests, replaces the natural, cyclical rhythms. This environment is marked by a complex polyrhythmia; the simultaneous existence of mechanical arrhythmia alongside fleeting moments of natural eurhythmia, revealing the multifarious temporal layers of urban life. Accordingly, as Frank (2019) explains, "cyclical repetition and the linear repetitive [...] interfere with one another constantly" (2019: 171). Klara describes pedestrians who hurry past one another, their paths dictated by an unseen, relentless force. This is starkly illustrated in her account of a violent fight she sees on the street: "Their faces were twisted into horrible shapes... and all the time they were punching each other, they shouted out cruel words" (2021: 17). The rapid dissolution of the conflict—"everything went back to the way it was before"—not only disrupts the urban flow but also hints at deeper social fractures. While Rosa's passive personality makes such episodes almost invisible to her, Klara's heightened sensitivity allows her to interpret these fleeting moments as signifiers of a broader urban malaise.

Further intensifying the sense of alienation is the behavior of the AFs themselves. Klara notes, "AFs did go by they almost always acted oddly, speeding up their walk and keeping their faces turned away" (2021: 14), a deliberate avoidance that mirrors the compartmentalization intrinsic to urban life. This observation extends beyond mere behavior: it underscores how people, bound to rigid schedules and mechanical routines, are reduced to isolated units in a sprawling, impersonal machine. Here, Klara's dual identity as both a commodity in the urban marketplace and an empathetic observer deepens the irony: her mechanical nature does not hinder her capacity for emotional insight; rather, it sharpens her perception of the city's disjointed rhythms.

Amid the relentless pace, Klara catches a rare counterpoint. In one poignant moment, she describes an embrace: "she and the man were holding each other so tightly they were like one large person, and the Sun, noticing, was pouring his nourishment on them" (2021: 20). As the characters are bathed in sunlight, this spontaneous union interrupts the monotonous mechanical flow. It symbolizes a brief return to an organic sense of connection. For Lefebvre, such moments disrupt the linear progression of time and hint at the possibility of reclaiming a more humane, communal rhythm, even if only momentarily.

The contrast between Klara and Rosa is sharpened by their responses to urban life. Whereas Rosa seems resigned to the ordered chaos, Klara perceives a breakdown in organic, communal rhythms, sensing the invisible weight each pedestrian seems to carry. This divergence not only highlights Klara's unique empathetic insight but also frames her ongoing struggle to decode the hidden patterns of a city ruled by both alienation and occasional tenderness.

Ultimately, the street is portrayed as a dual space; one dominated by alienation and inattentiveness, yet punctuated by transient, almost miraculous moments of warmth. Klara's recurring observation that "The Sun was pouring his nourishment onto the street and into the buildings" (2021: 37) revives even the most overlooked figures, such as Beggar Man and his dog, echoing the resilience of human feeling amidst urban rigidity. These moments, though ephemeral, suggest that beneath the hard, mechanical surface of modern life lies the potential for a reawakened communal pulse.

In Ishiguro's narrative, the street emerges as a crucible for examining the social consequences of modernity. Klara's ambivalent position, as simultaneously an integral part of the urban mechanism and a perceptive critic of its discontents, reveals a tension between the impersonal and the intimate. Her empathetic gaze, capable of tracing subtle shifts "from tension to tenderness," affirms that even within mechanized flow of the city, human warmth endures, however briefly. This interplay of alienation and connection not only defines the street's rhythms but also becomes central to Klara's evolving understanding of humanity in a mechanized world.

### 3. Artificial rhythms and human temporalities

*Klara and The Sun* interrogates the tension between artificial and human rhythms, weaving together the concept of "lifting," Klara's fragmented mode of perception, and the possibility of Josie's robotic replacement. In doing so, the novel questions whether technology can authentically replicate the natural cycles of human life. Here, the notion of "lifting" functions as an artificial rhythm that disrupts the traditional progression of birth, growth, and aging. Instead of following an organic developmental arc, the process of lifting reengineers children like Josie to enhance their capabilities. It prioritizes societal utility at the expense of biological continuity. This imposed linear rhythm disrupts the inherent polyrhythmia of human development, where natural cycles (eurhythmia) and unpredictable emotional cadences coexist—a dynamic that technology, with its rigid arrhythmia, struggles to replicate. This engineered timeline supplants natural milestones—as evidenced by Josie's fragile health and her mother's obsessive focus on performance—illustrating Lefebvre's claim that cyclical, body-based rhythms are increasingly overridden by linear, mechanized schedules (2021: 27).

Klara's cognitive processing further illuminates this artificial rhythm. As an Artificial Friend (AF), her perception compartmentalizes reality into grid-like patterns; a methodical division that stands in contrast to the fluid, intuitive flow of human experience. Ishiguro captures this mechanical view in his observation of the street: "The street outside had become partitioned into several vertical panels... The amount of dark smoke appeared to vary from panel to panel" (2021: 27). This segmented vision reflects her mechanical nature, parsing the world methodically rather than holistically. When Klara observes Josie's family, she registers subtle cues such as the Mother's tense posture, "arms crossed over her front, fingers clutching at the material of her coat" (2021: 22). Yet, she struggles to coalesce these observations into a cohesive emotional narrative, and thereby highlights the limitations of her artificial rhythm.

Further deepening the inquiry, the artificial birds manipulated by Rick embody another facet of this mechanized tempo. These machine creatures mimic organic flight, yet their movements adhere to pre-programmed patterns that lack the spontaneous rhythms of migration or instinct. Ishiguro describes them: "He had in his hands a circular device... the birds responded by changing their pattern" (2021: 59). This mechanical imitation of nature forces the reader to consider whether artificiality can ever truly replace the organic. In parallel, Klara's evolving empathy, evident when she reflects, "I believe I have many feelings. The more I observe, the more feelings become available to me" (2021: 98), hints at a tentative desire to bridge the gap between her engineered existence and the unpredictable pulse of human emotion.

The narrative tension culminates in the prospect of Klara replacing Josie, a scenario that crystallizes the clash between imposed technological rhythms and the inherently messy, cyclical nature of human identity. The Mother's plan, which envisions an AF seamlessly assuming Josie's life, imposes a rigid, linear framework onto what is fundamentally a dynamic, organic process. Klara herself voices uncertainty about her role:

I did wonder. If I were to continue Josie, if I were to inhabit the new Josie, then what would happen to . . . all this? I raised my arms in the air, and for the first time the Mother looked at me. She glanced at my face, then down at my legs (Ishiguro, 2021: 213)

This apprehension is echoed by the Father, who laments, "Science has now proved beyond doubt there's nothing so unique about my daughter... That people have been living with one another... on a mistaken premise" (2021: 224). For, "differing historical rhythms pulse and flow through the back alleys, institutions, and public places" (Boes, 2008: 775). If human rhythm (love, growth, and individuality) can be reduced to replicable algorithms, the depth of human experience risks being irretrievably lost. Yet Klara's introspection, "A human heart is bound to be complex. But it must be limited... there'll be an end to what there is to learn" (2021: 219), suggests that even advanced technology cannot fully capture the organic depth intrinsic to human life. And this, in return, reinforces Lefebvre's distinction between lived and imposed rhythms.

Ultimately, Klara inhabits both realms: her mechanical cognition aligns with the artificial, while her emerging compassion connects her to human vulnerability. For, "These two rhythms, the former, linear—rhythms imposed on life, and the latter, cyclical—the rhythms of life itself, coexist" (Galam, 2010: 484). Her reverence for the Sun as a life-giving force that revives Beggar Man with a special kind of nourishment symbolizes a deep-seated yearning to harmonize with natural cycles. Although Ishiguro leaves unresolved the question of whether artificial rhythms can replace human ones, the novel suggests that technology, despite its capacity to reprogram bodies and simulate cognition, cannot completely override the organic rhythms that define humanity. Even as one might argue that technological advances could eventually integrate these disparate modes of existence, Klara remains a poignant observer of an enduring, unresolved clash.

#### **4. The rhythmic crisis: The attic and stagnation**

The final chapters portray Klara's confinement in the attic as a rhythmic crisis that mirrors her physical and emotional decline, as well as the collapse of the Sun's structuring cycle. When viewed through the lens of Lefebvre's rhythm analysis, Klara's transition from active observation to stillness illustrates the breakdown of the natural rhythms that once gave shape to her existence. Initially, Klara's perceptions pulse with vitality, as seen when "the Sun was pouring his nourishment onto the street and into the buildings" (2021: 37), which is in perfect alignment with the Sun's rejuvenating cadence. This rhythm, rooted in nature, structures her early interactions, echoing Lefebvre's view of cyclic patterns as essential to experience.

Yet, in the attic, this vibrancy fades. Klara's once-active engagement slows to minimal head movements, her world reduced to a stagnant space where "the Sun's patterns on the wall

were just as [she]’d remembered them” (2021: 178), but now static, devoid of renewal. In the attic, the absence of the Sun’s nourishing cycle results in not only a persistent arrhythmia, a disordered, static rhythm; but also a collapse of both eurhythmia and the richer polyrhythmia that once animated her existence. The attic isolates her from the external rhythms of light and life. And this separation marks a shift from dynamic interaction to a state of entropy. Lefebvre argues that without natural cycles, time oppresses rather than renews, and for Klara, the Sun’s absence (as its light is diffused and inaccessible) ushers in existential stillness.

This crisis symbolizes the loss of the Sun as a life-giving force. Where it once animated her, as when “the Sun evening rays had started to fade, leaving the beginnings of darkness inside the barn” (2021: 276), its retreat now mirrors her decline. Klara’s stagnation critiques a world where technological rhythms, divorced from nature, fail. Her existence in the attic, where her capacity for observation gradually fades, underscores the vulnerability of a life detached from organic cycles. This embodies Ishiguro’s exploration of the disintegration of rhythm.

### Conclusion

In summary, this study demonstrates that Henri Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis offers a rigorous, if demanding, framework for literary criticism by foregrounding the temporal structures that underlie narrative form. By tracing the convergence of cyclical and linear rhythms in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Klara and The Sun*, it shows how the novel enacts Lefebvrian concepts of eurhythmia, arrhythmia and polyrhythmia and, reveals its engagement with natural forces, mechanized schedules and the interplay between organic and artificial temporalities. As Lefebvre insists, rhythms can only be captured through bodily participation: by “listening” with the body, the observer becomes unified with the spatio-temporal environment (Lefebvre, 2004: 67). In this vein, Klara herself functions as a rhythmanalyst. By attending acutely to mechanical patterns, she integrates her emerging identity with her surroundings and attains an authentic selfhood, even as an Artificial Friend. By directly engaging with the Sun, the urban environment, and human temporal rhythms, she, as a mechanical being, aligns her identity with that of her human companions. In doing so, she achieves personhood even as her human counterparts, in contrast, become mechanized. Ultimately, Ishiguro’s goal is to contrast the natural and the artificial by examining the rhythms that shape each. In this view, humanity isn’t an innate or granted quality, but an agent discovered and defined through spatial rhythms. Thus, as the Artificial Friend grows more human, the humans in the story become increasingly robotic. Moreover, this application of rhythmanalysis validates it as a method of close reading which can surface the sensory and socio-political dimensions of narrative. However, because it depends on bodily “listening” rather than clear measurements, it makes it hard to compare texts systematically. In addition, by focusing only on physical rhythms, it can overlook more abstract or symbolic senses of time. If rhythmanalysis is to gain wider traction beyond individual case studies, further studies must refine its methodology, perhaps by developing empirical procedures or digital tools for mapping narrative tempo, while remaining true to its phenomenological roots. In doing so, critics can extend Lefebvre’s legacy, using rhythm not merely as metaphor but as a critical lens through which literature’s intricate choreography of time and space becomes both visible and politically resonant.

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