

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-54580

Title: The Architecture of Moral Collapse: A Medical Humanities Analysis of Keigo Higashino's *The Devotion of Suspect X*

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓,		
Techn. Quality		✓,		
Clarity	✓,			
Significance	✓,			

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

This manuscript presents an interdisciplinary analysis of Keigo Higashino's 2005 novel *The Devotion of Suspect X* through the lens of medical humanities, exploring themes of moral pathology, narrative truth versus forensic truth, and the limitations of scientific rationalism in addressing human vulnerability. The author argues that the protagonist Ishigami's actions represent a "moral collapse" driven by ontological injury and societal alienation, contrasting utilitarian and Kantian bioethical frameworks with the novel's emphasis on narrative competence. The paper draws on concepts from moral pathology, ethics of care, and narrative medicine to critique modernity's impact on interpersonal relationships and ethical decision-making. It positions the novel as a case study for medical humanities, highlighting its relevance to interpreting psychological and social pathologies in contemporary Asian fiction.

The manuscript's primary strength lies in its innovative application of medical humanities to a Japanese crime thriller, a genre rarely examined through this framework. The analysis of Ishigami's character as a case of "ontological injury" is compelling, effectively blending literary critique with bioethical theory to illustrate how intellectual isolation can precipitate ethical breakdown. The discussion of narrative competence as a corrective to scientific hubris is particularly insightful, demonstrating how Yukawa's shift from empirical methods to empathetic interpretation resolves the plot's moral ambiguity. This resonates with broader medical humanities scholarship, emphasizing the role of storytelling in ethical crises.

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The paper's structure is logical, progressing from plot summary to character analysis, bioethical evaluation and broader implications for modernity. Key concepts, such as the "categorical imperative" and "ethics of care," are integrated smoothly, avoiding jargon overload while maintaining rigor. The conclusion's call for incorporating Asian mystery fiction into humanities studies is forward-thinking, highlighting untapped potential for cross-cultural bioethics. Overall, the manuscript contributes meaningfully to the intersection of literature, psychology, and ethics, with clear relevance to fields like narrative medicine.

While ambitious, the manuscript suffers from occasional overreach in its theoretical synthesis. The claim that Ishigami's actions "override moral duty" via utilitarian tendencies is asserted rather than substantiated with deeper textual evidence; a closer reading of specific passages (e.g., his calculus of variables) would strengthen this. The analysis of Yasuko's confession as a "humanistic correction" feels underdeveloped, relying on broad strokes from ethics of care without engaging potential counterarguments, such as paternalistic undertones in Ishigami's intervention.

Methodologically, the paper leans heavily on secondary sources for bioethics (e.g., Kantian deontology), but primary engagement with Higashino's engineering background—beyond a passing reference—could enrich the discussion of "scientific hubris." The novel's Japanese context is underexplored; concepts like hikikomori (social withdrawal) or *mono no aware* (pathos of things) might illuminate Ishigami's alienation more culturally. Additionally, the manuscript's reliance on English translations raises questions of fidelity to the original Japanese; a note on this would bolster credibility. The prose is generally clear but occasionally dense, with sentences like the one on "ontological wound/disease" requiring simplification for accessibility. The works cited section includes a mix of academic and non-academic sources, which dilutes scholarly rigor; prioritizing peer-reviewed materials would enhance authority.

Recommendations This is a strong, original contribution to medical humanities and literary bioethics, warranting acceptance with minor revisions. The paper's thematic ambition and interdisciplinary approach make it suitable for journals like *Literature and Medicine* or *Journal of Medical Humanities*. To strengthen it:

- Expand textual evidence for bioethical claims (2–3 additional quotes).
- Incorporate Japanese cultural context (1–2 paragraphs).
- Streamline prose and refine citations for consistency.
- Address translation limitations explicitly.

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With these adjustments, the manuscript will stand as a provocative exploration of moral ambiguity in modern fiction, underscoring the humanities' role in ethical inquiry. I commend the author's creative synthesis and encourage submission to a specialized venue.