



Post-Humanistic World Explored in the Selected Episodes of the Netflix Show ‘Love, Death and Robots’

Della Dixon

A Post-graduate in English Literature

Abstract

Human beings are the only species who only caused harm to the planet. We live against the natural mode and this has caused unexplainable destruction. There is a possibility of a world without humans and this can be beneficial for all other species. The presence of creatures beyond the expanse of our planet and the creation of certain living things by humans themselves for the intended development in certain fields is explored in the mentioned animated show. A post-humanistic world can turn out to be beneficial as well as destructive for any living being, especially human beings. With the growth of technology, an AI takeover, a possible creation of a new creature and many more things can occur. A world without humans could be a paradise for other living beings. A transhuman world with limited people and more years of life is also explored in this show. Even if there happens to be a sudden disappearance of all the two-legged beings, the damage caused is irreversible and all the ones breathing will have to face it. This paper presents the post-humanistic world explored in the animated series and the possible ways in which our world could end up in the future. Most of the events include scenarios where humans dig their own grave and to be exact, it has already begun. With the increase in calamities both natural and man-made, the deadline to our existence is soon to be reached.

Keywords: AI invasion, robots, posthumanism, apocalypse, science-fiction

Introduction

'Human beings are the centre and the world revolves around them. Everything is created according to the humans and they are the superior beings.' This is the thought that carries the anthropocentric people ahead. Many people get along with this idea and consider all other creatures to be given either

secondary level of importance or nothing at all. Exploitation of other creatures has reached to a level where the humans would soon curse themselves for believing in this so-called superiority. 'To err is human' but if the errors keep repeating and aren't apologised for or sorted, it will soon be the end of the human race. Technology has improved to a great extent and it has made life so much easier. The improvement of a new world that one species desires for cannot be carried out at the expense of the other being. Unfortunately, this has been the norm for humans who do it at the cost of other living beings. 'Human beings' as the terms say are creatures that need to be living as the word is written in present tense. But what happens, when the 'being' is substituted by artificialness and material advancements? The genre of Science Fiction is something that draws interaction between technology and society.

Posthumanism

The term Post-Humanism has been contradictory for a really long time. The term can refer to a world after humans or a world with better humans who can be called 'Transhumans'. A Post-humanistic world has always been a part of everybody's conversation with the rise of technology. Posthumanism rejects the human traditionally imagined by humans, especially its status as superior or separate to the world around it. Rosi Braidotti says that Post-human is not so much Dystopian vision of the future, but a defining trait of historical context (5). The Convergence of posthumanism and post-anthropocentrism on the other within an economy of advanced capitalism other than non- existence of humans could certainly have an effect on the world. This is beautifully explored in the show by the National Geographic channel called 'Aftermath population zero'. The show explains that even after the humans, the footprint left by them will still

cause incessant harm to the world. Post-humanism holds the view that human beings were never the centre. Humans aren't always the limelight and they do not own this world would be a clear cut description of the Post-humanists. Humans are a part of the livelihood on the planet and the awareness about them being a part of the world and not the centre is reminded by this theory. In the Netflix animated show, 'Love, Death and Robots' by David Fincher and Tim Miller, a post-humanistic world is explored in a few of the episodes. The show has three volumes with episodes ranging from 10 to 20 minutes. The perfect animation used to create this show has made it win many awards and give an almost real experience to the viewers.

Robotic invasion

Robotic invasion or AI invasion, has been a genre in books and movies for decades. The famous films like 'Terminator', 'Megan', 'RA one', 'Enthiran' have proved that robots may bring in easiness to our lives but the end results aren't always beautiful. In the above mentioned show, there are a few episodes called 'Three robots' where robots enter the post-humanistic world which refers to the post-apocalyptic world. All the humans are dead and so these robots keep looking out for any living being in the dark world. They keep bantering about the ways in which humans could have avoided their own destruction. They find out that it is the cats who have survived the apocalypse and have developed human-like verbal abilities. The chances of some other living being to become 'Superior' is also a possibility. Insects are known to survive radiation 15 times more than humans and this makes it a possibility that there can be a possible survival of other beings. Another episode titled 'Automated customer service' shows the house robot going out of control in a world full of elderly people. Every tiny bit of work is done with the help of robots

and a sudden error in their functioning causes them to have a mind of their own (2). The erasure of humans is observed in this area. With the upcoming AI methods that we have been adopting in the present year, these days are soon to arrive. In the present world, the use of AI has raised concerns in the health and job sectors. There can be a possibility when humans would be in excess and orders to erase most of them for the better living of others can happen (3). It can also be a possibility where AI would take up most of the jobs and so the unemployment rate would soar and cause destruction among humans to occur soon.

Invasion by other creatures

Invasion done by other beings is also explored in the show. In the episode 'When the Yogurt took over', the yoghurt is experimented on by scientists and it eventually results in a monarchy led by Yogurt. Humans are seen to live peacefully then as they are no more in control, provided with everything under rule. The Yogurt soon leaves the planet to another area as it gets tired of humans. In the episode named 'Beyond the Aquila rift', people have left the planet Earth and are hundreds of years ahead in the future. The movement of humans beyond the planet and into the universe is explored. The news of humans to be soon travelling to other survivable places in the universe is seen here (1). AI's usage in retaining memory can be observed in the show 'Upload' where death is only a simulation as the synapses in the brain could be used to retain the individual in a parallel world. This is called the 'Concept of mind uploading' where life could be led forever without the constraints of the human body.

Human reproduction and AI

Post-humanism also poses a new being called the Post-human. As we are aware that average human beings live till 70 or 80 and we get sick, get injured etc. The Post-humans survive irrespective of their health or even death. In one of the episodes, 'Pop squad' where humans have achieved immortality and are no longer into reproduction are seen. The ones who reproduce are called 'Breeders' and are marginalised from society. The rich people live and monitor the areas with children and make sure that they get killed. The show explains that a saturation level on the number of human beings is soon to be reached and by achieving immortality, one needn't worry about their children or their future. With the rise in usage of IVF methods to create babies, the parent's desire may soon eradicate any deformities in a baby. Humans taking creation into their hands can soon be a nightmare if mindless experiments are carried on.

Transhumanism and Post-Humanism have been contradictory terms. There are various (7) interpretations of these terms. It is basically a possibility when homosapiens would be replaced by biologically and technologically superior beings. The use of technology to prevent ageing, enhance human intellectual, physical and psychological capabilities. Kevin Warwick, an English engineer had declared that being born as humans was merely an accident of fate. He believed that humans have the power to change it. There are also views that Post-humanism needn't refer to a world without humans specifically.(8) Just like evolution, there could be the survival of the fittest. We could soon develop and evolve ourselves and become better versions of humans technologically (4).

Empathy and AI

The journey towards a machine dependent world has already begun with the availability and dependence on machines to influence our thinking. We may be actually living in the post-humanist era. To think like humans and to take decisions like humans is what we expect of humans to be in the future. Antonia Damasio, a Portuguese neuroscientist said that humans aren't thinking machines that feel, we are feeling machines that think. Machines are considered to be able to replace the position of a friend. In the Malayalam film, *Android Kunjappan ver 5.25* the robot actually replaces the human on whom one can rely on. The sense of security provided by any machine cannot end on good terms because they are not humans (8). Even with the sense of emotions which humans indulge in a lot of crimes, the status of emotionless creatures riding every field in the world can certainly be expected to be in ruins. The feeling of empathy for anything can be programmed but it cannot be induced for the long run. This is again beautifully shown in the animated film 'Big Hero 6' where a machine turns out to be an emotional guard but a state of neutrality is achieved by the character himself. All the emotional healing was only supported by the machine, all the efforts to improve oneself had to be taken from within.

There are also reports where people reject any robotic invasion to happen in the future. Stephen Marche, a Canadian writer said that the apocalypse isn't coming and we must resist the cynicism about AI (9). The fear of any invasion is from the lizard part of our brain as it resists anything new or strange. This pessimistic feeling is also partly because of the movies where AI turns out to be the angry God which takes over humanity.

Environment and AI

The show is a complete package as the last episode 'The Drowned Giant' shows the basic natural thing that is to happen to all living beings. We are all to be laid in the six-foot hole on one fine day. The body of a giant man is washed on the shore and the people of the land gaze at it. The strangeness at first makes us understand that once you are dead, you are called a 'Body' and you lose your significance soon. The children there, start playing on the body of the giant and take it to be a mere material. Soon, they cut and remove the parts of the body and the bones are used by some people for several purposes. This shows the consumerist attitude that people have in general. We consume other creatures without any emotions attached. The killing of them is taken to be essential and is considered to be a right by self-centred humans. The consideration of to be a mere utility is also explored in the episode 'The Fish' where the protagonists experience the ghosts of sea creatures in a desert which shows the attractive nature of everything. Once the individual gets into nature and starts exploiting it, the creature eats the man. The ghosts of the creatures could be the ones of a water body which used to be in that place. Nature surely knows to give karma. The usual post-apocalyptic world which we see in the films and read in the books could be for real but the effect on humans can clearly be questioned. Environment in the post-humanist world stands to be of big question mark as its exploitation is the reason for such a world. It is also studied that nature may not get erased just unlike humans. Technological developments and the efforts to make human life better, has neglected the greenery around. The lack of knowledge is not the reason for such a thought, rather it is the priority given to human lives above nature. Humans are the only living creatures that produce waste and this has made the greenery around to be dark and polluted. With the coming of electronic

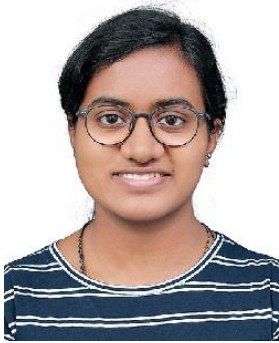
machines, the waste produced is going to double. The electronic gadgets are already flooding the environment and the toxins produced are immeasurable. The clear rejection of nature around us can either be destructive or may allow us to grow in a world without pure nature. The growth of technology may even lead to a time where humans wouldn't need an environment to thrive. There can be humans who wouldn't need oxygen to breathe and these humans can evolve. Our natural body is known to adapt to the changes around it. Though this sounds to be fictional and of belonging to the imaginary world, the pandemic movies proved it in the recent years.

Nick Bostram, a Swedish philosopher said that Machine intelligence is the last humanity will ever need. Life on the planet has been different for us human beings and we are capable of tuning our lives to our needs. However, changing the pattern for everything around isn't the right of any living being. Changes are always a welcome but it can be disastrous if the changes alter everything on its way. The reports of rejecting such a doom by robots are also available as people just consider it to belong to the world of imagination. The end of the planet can never be known but the irreversible damage done by humans will surely be asked for. Artificial intelligence opens up so many opportunities for the betterment but turning a blind eye to the terrible side of it cannot be justified. The limited usage of anything will only bring good and the increase above the limit can become apocalyptic.

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Della Dixon

Della Dixon (b. 28 April, 2001) is a Post-graduate in English Literature. She hails from Thrissur and is an aspiring teacher. She did her graduation in English literature from Vimala College (Autonomous), Thrissur and post-graduation from Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Thevara, Kochi. Her literary interests include Indian and African works.

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