

i, Robot

Why is i, Robot a dystopic movie ?

WHAT IS A DYSTOPIA ?

A dystopia is an imagined futuristic universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral or totalitarian control.

Its role is to warn the population against a possible society.

Every dystopia is someone's utopia.



SUMMARY OF THE MOVIE AND WHICH GEOGRAPHICAL ISSUE IS DISTORTED ?

In a near future (2035), robots have evolved and are now as common on the streets as people.

They have become professional domestic assistants for humans. Three robotics laws govern robots.

-Law I

A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

-Law II

A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the first law.

-Law III

A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the first or second law.

Del Spooner, a technophobic detective, investigates the death of a famous roboticist (Alfred Lanning) with the help of a robotic psychologist (Susan Calvin) and a robot with free will (Sonny).

The film is about revolution: the artificial intelligence "VIKI" (which controls all robots) understands the three laws in its own way and decides to create the robot revolution.

They become dangerous, a threat to humanity.

They prevent humans from going outside, they no longer listen to their orders and they don't hesitate to use violence (for example, killing humans who try to rebel against them).

Humans no longer have control over their creation.



Q, Robot

The first dystopian theme is the appeasement of society through propaganda which is evident through the constant advertisement by USR (it is a megacorporation that serves as the world's leading robotics & AI engineering and development firm) of their slogan "Three Laws safe." Dr. Lanning knew that robots might one day evolve on their own thus making USR's slogan propaganda. This created a false sense of security that blinded the public, turning them into sheep and allowing USR to act without restrictions. Propaganda is dystopian because it is used to control people and convince the general populace that what one is doing is right.

Philosophy teaches us to feel uncertain about the things that seems to us self-evident. Propaganda, on the other hand, teaches us to accept as self-evident matters about which it would be reasonable to suspend our judgement or to feel doubt.

-Aldous Huxley

Why is it a dystopia ?



Secondly, it can be compared to a prison. Indeed, they are free to go where they want, to travel... But they're never alone. The citizens are kind of under surveillance because the robots are always watching and listening to them. There isn't really a place where they can go to get away from the robots. They are everywhere. But they don't realize it because of the propaganda, they think the robots are just there to help them, they don't know they're always under surveillance.

The best way to keep a prisoner from escaping is to make sure he never knows he's in prison.

-Fyodor Dostoevsky

Last but not least is the scorning by society of dissenting ideas to societal normality's. I am talking about Detective Spooner's suspicions that the robots are behind Dr. Lanning's death and even that a robot can commit a crime at all. For example, when the detective saw a robot running with a purse, thinking it had stolen it, when it hadn't. The woman who owned the handbag rebuked him for thinking that a robot could steal a bag. At one point, Lieutenant Bergin states that he thinks Spooner is mentally unstable, because he can't imagine a robot attacking a human being. What this shows is the suppression of individual thought, which brings us back to the lack of free will. In their eagerness to convince Detective Spooner that robots are harmless they made the automats usurpation even easier.

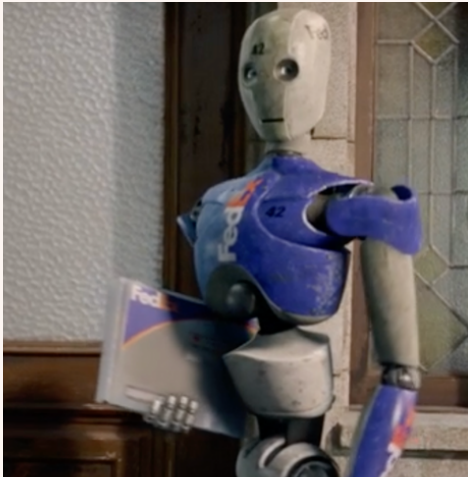


Q, Robot

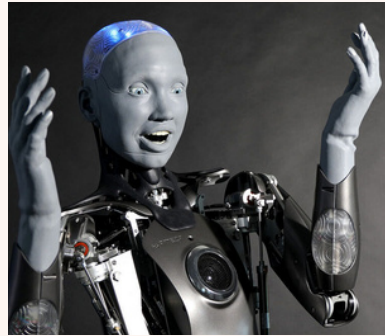
Why did I chose this movie ?

I chose this film because it's very close to our reality, indeed robots have become an important part of our daily lives (household robots, vacuum cleaners, pool cleaners, lawnmowers...), as has AI (online shopping, publicity, online search, automatic translators...). They are beginning to replace human jobs (industry, service, etc.), as in the film where we see robot letter carriers and garbage collectors. In a few years, our world will look exactly like the film.

Film

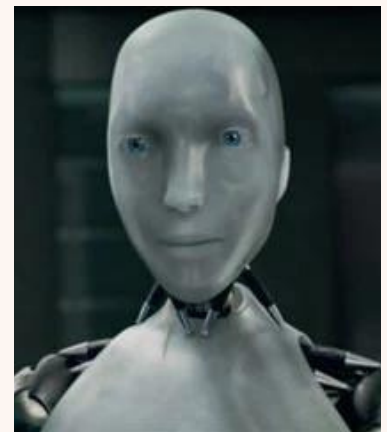


Ameca



For several years, robotics and AI have been making great strides. For example, in early December, British start-up "Engineered Arts" unveiled "Ameca", a humanoid robot. The aim of the creators is to reproduce the human form as closely as possible (look, gesture...) to reassure us, as in the film where they look like humans.

Film



Today, Elon Musk and several other experts are calling for a pause in AI development because, according to them, "AI labs locked in an out-of-control race to develop and deploy ever more powerful digital minds that no one, not even their creators, can understand, predict, or reliably control." It reminds me of the disaster scenario in the film, when robots get out of control and revolt against their creators. The pause would be used to develop better safeguards such software, considered a "risk to humanity". Gradually, our lives are becoming exactly like this film, and perhaps in 10 years, this will no longer be an invented dystopia, but our history.

Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master.

-Christian Lous Lange

reality

