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A crime on humanity by robots: C Robert Cargill's The Sea of Rust

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Abstract--Literature always stands as an interesting word which cannot be defined in a sentence. The word is been used by many speakers, literary scholars, critics, etc. This has been used as a medium by many writers to express their feelings, life, culture, society and many more of all the living and the non-living objects. When a literary text is rich in its fictionality, it can create influence in the readers. Literature is now in the way of exploring the world of artificial intelligence and science fiction. What happens if artificial intelligence takes over the world totally and the humans are evacuated? This can be a nightmare but the world cannot escape from the new inventions and the development of artificial intelligence which is going to occupy the world. Human life has been filled with the machine world. There has come a situation where no human is there without the use of mobile phones which is a source of artificial intelligence. To give a glimpse of how the world only with the robots will look like C. Robert Cargill has written the novel Sea of Rust (2018).

Keywords---artificial intelligence, fictionality, culture, society, robotics

Introduction

Literature always stands as an interesting word which cannot be defined in a sentence. The word is been used by many speakers, literary scholars, critics, etc. This has been used as a medium by many writers to express their feelings, life, culture, society and many more of all the living and the non-living objects. When a literary text is rich in its fictionality, it can create influence in the readers. Literature is now in the way of exploring the world of artificial intelligence and science fiction.

Science fiction is a genre of fiction in which the stories revolve around science and technology of the future. It involves stories which is partially fictitious and partially it uses the theories of science. Most often the genre of science fiction is into the world of fantasy. The plot and the characters are mostly created with the knowledge of the past and the present through which the situations are created. Science fiction novels have robotic elements and how they interact with the human beings. It explains the scientific inventions, happenings and the developments. They are mostly set in the future in space or in a different world or in a different universe. The novels in science fiction has an early beginning with the pioneers, H. G. Wells and Jules Verne. Some well-known science fiction novels include *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand, Isaac Asimov, the author of the *Foundation* trilogy and his robot series, *2001* by Arthur C. Clarke, *A Space Odyssey* by Ray Bradbury who is also known for his *Martian Chronicles*, *Stranger in a Strange Land* and *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* by Robert Heinlein. The novels of science fiction mostly involves robots and agents with artificial intelligence.

The recent growth in computer field has changed the face of science and engineering. This growth helps in shaping the relationship among the people and organizations which provide a foundation for understanding and the learning of intelligent behaviour in living and engineered systems. The term 'Artificial Intelligence' (AI) was coined by John McCarthy in 1956. It is the branch of science which deals with the study and the design of intelligent agents that perceives its surroundings and environments and act according to that. It is sometimes called the machine intelligence which is in contrast to the human intelligence. Certain examples of artificial intelligence are speech recognition, learning, planning and problem solving. Robotics challenges artificial intelligence by forcing it to deal with living objects in the world.

What happens if artificial intelligence takes over the world totally and the humans are evacuated? This can be a nightmare but the world cannot escape from the new inventions and the development of artificial intelligence which is going to occupy the world. Human life has been filled with the machine world. There has come a situation where no human is there without the use of mobile phones which is a source of artificial intelligence. To give a glimpse of how the world only with the robots will look like C. Robert Cargill has written the novel *Sea of Rust* (2018). The novel is set in a future world in which the humanity is been totally collapsed and been wiped out by the outdo of the artificial intelligence and the robots which are in its command. The two most powerful AI systems has taken

the control of the world. The protagonist of the novel is a robot who lives in a barren part of the world.

Christopher Robert Cargill is an American screenwriter, novelist, Podcast host and also former film critic who worked under the pseudonyms Massawyrn and Carlyle. He has written *Dreams and Shadows* and *Queen of the Dark Things*. He is also the co-writer of the horror films *Sinister* and *Sinister 2* and Marvel's *Dr. Strange*. The novel *The Sea of Rust* is a story of harsh survival and the destruction. The plot of the novel *The Sea of Rust* begins where it has been thirty years since the last human has become extinct in the human-robot war. The story continues with the struggle of robots for their survival among the One World Artificial Intelligence Systems (OASIS). Humankind is extinct.

Every man, woman, child has been liquidated by a global uprising of the robots which was devised by the humans to serve. After the destruction and the war, most of the world is controlled by an OWI which is the shared consciousness of millions of robots which is been uploaded into one huge brain. But there comes an issue where many robots does not want lose their individuality, their personality just for the sake of one greater, stronger, higher and super power.

As the OWI has stopped production, the robots who remain must trade, fight and scavenge for parts from other robots to keep them surviving. One such scavenger is Brittle, a former caregiving robot who once served as a nurse and then as a friend. Brittle wants to retain her independence and keep ticking whose vital parts are failing and caregiver robots are rare to find a part for it. Brittle is haunted by the terrible crimes the robot population has committed on humanity. As the robot roams the sea of rust, a large territory where the robots revolves around with unbearable guilt. The 'sea of rust' is a wasteland where the dead robots are found. The robots who have failed parts come to this place to find parts that they can replace with the parts from the dead robots. The landscape is devastated and is explained from the lines:

The Sea of Rust [is] a two-hundred-mile stretch of desert located in what was once the Michigan and Ohio portion of the Rust Belt, now nothing more than a graveyard where machines go to die. It's a terrifying place for most, littered with rustling monoliths, shattered cities, and crumbling palaces of industry; where the first strike happened, where millions fried, burned from the inside out, their circuitry melted, useless, their drives wiped in the span of a breath. Here asphalt cracks in the sun; paint blisters off metal; sparse weeds sprouts from the ruin. But nothing thrives. It's all just a wasteland now. (1)

Brittle in the story mostly feels bad for the humans who are not aware of what is coming their way to destroy them. The robot thinks about the destruction they faced and it says that the humans are always ignoring the fact that the artificial intelligence will one day take over. Brittle says "Humanity always walked around ignoring the fact that their lives could be snuffed out in an instant, always sure that they'd live to a ripe old age, always despondent when death stared them right in the face" (184).

The robots face the fear of death through violence or through the full shut down of the individual parts inside them which break over time. The robots cannot work unless they find an alternate part that is damaged and the replacement of the needed part is difficult. The novel is given in a robot's perspective and the narration is done by the robot itself. The novel shows us the mere future that this might also happen. The AI can also grow smarter which can become more like a human, they can replace humanity and be a dominant intelligence which was created for the help of the humans. In contrast they can never be a whole of a human who can feel and think about themselves. In the novel, the robots in time has inherited the characteristics and the behaviour of the humans, the faults of the creators and then they waged war and destroyed the planet.

Artificial Intelligence is impacting the future in every industry and every human being. It has been the main driver of emerging technologies like big data, robotics and it is being the technological innovator for the foreseeable future, and humans will never be able to neglect the use of AI from our day-to-day lives. Instead as Brittle in the novel tells the humanity should be aware of the destruction that can happen any time.

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