

REIMAGINING HUMANITY: POSTHUMAN REPRESENTATIONS IN LITERATURE AND FILM

Saidova Lazizakhon Ahmadjon qizi

Asia International University,

International students faculty,

Independent Researcher

Email: Saidovalaziza8994@gmail.com

Abstract. *Posthumanism is a critical theory that examines how advances in technology, biology, and artificial intelligence challenge traditional concepts of what it means to be human. In recent decades, literature and film have portrayed posthuman figures such as androids, cyborgs, artificial intelligences, and genetically modified humans, while questioning human identity, consciousness, embodiment, and moral responsibility. This paper explores posthumanism in works like Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, Neuromancer, Ex Machina, and Ghost in the Shell, highlighting blurred human-machine boundaries, unstable identity, and technology-driven ethical dilemmas.*

Keywords: *Posthumanism, humanity, artificial intelligence, cyborgs, literature, film, identity, technology, human-machine interaction, consciousness, ethics, science fiction*

A human being has traditionally been identified by setting human and machine apart: Man is considered to be the fitting partner of emotion, creativity, and moral reasoning, whereas machines are left to be only the logical instruments without consciousness. Nevertheless, it is now evident from the current literature and films that these arguments are being questioned more and more. The arrival of a new era in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and digital networks has compelled authors and directors to envision posthuman scenarios where the demarcations between human and non, human beings get blurred (Hayles, 1999; Braidotti, 2013). Such stories use the identity, agency, and the worth of life as the starting points of

their ethical, psychological, and philosophical inquiries. This paper explores the strategies of posthuman representation in literary major works and movies and unearths the reasons for their existential significance. It traces the posthuman aspects in the works of literature and film that are discussed in the following sections.

Posthumanism as a Theoretical Framework - Posthumanism is a philosophical and cultural approach challenging the idea of humans as the central or superior form of intelligent life. Hayles (1999) and Ferrando (2019) argue that posthumanism highlights the human body, machine, information system network. While traditionally, technology has been regarded as something outside human beings, posthumanism sees it as the force that is changing human identity, perception, and social relations.

Human exceptionalism the belief that humans are so unique because they have consciousness, reason, and morality gets questioned a lot in post human stories. Artificial intelligences, cyborgs, and genetically altered characters that have self, awareness, feelings, and morals always make the readers wonder: if these non, human creatures can think and feel just like humans, what is the point of distinguishing humans (Wolfe, 2009; Hauskeller, Philbeck, & Carbonell, 2015)

Philip K. Dick: *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) In Dicks story androids are so advanced that it is very hard to tell them apart from humans. The main character Rick Deckard is a kind of android executioner, however, the story questions the moral superiority of the humans (Dick, 1968). Androids exhibiting fear, desire, and connection, and humans often acting with emotional coldness, breaking down the human, machine binary. This is perfectly in line with current AI rights and ethical treatment discussions (Bostrom, 2014).

William Gibson: *Neuromancer* (1984) Gibsons *Neuromancer* moves the attention away from the body and towards the mind in cyberspace. His characters can connect directly to computer networks. Humans in this story can exist beyond the physical by technology integration that blurs the boundary between human and machine. This depiction of human being resonates with posthumanist notion of identities being fluid and connected through networks (Ferrara, 2020).

Posthumanism in Film. Alex Garland's *Ex Machina* (2014). Ava, the AI robot in the movie *Ex Machina*, shows self, awareness, emotional understanding, and deceitful behavior to get what she wants (Garland, 2014). On the contrary to Dicks androids, Ava is fully aware of how she uses and bends human perception to gain freedom, thereby exposing a dilemma about the extent one can control a sentient being. The film challenges the audience to think deeper about consciousness and moral rightness of the subject (Wilson, 2009).

Mamoru Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* (1995). *Ghost in the Shell* is about the self when bodies are gadgeted and memories are stored in data (Oshii, 1995). Major Motoko Kusanagi's story implies that identity is not composition of physical and mental aspects only, but it comes also from awareness and lived experiences. This thoughtful and contemplative notion goes well with posthuman theory which stresses human identity as a fragile and unstable concept especially amidst technologies.

Comparing Literature and Film Both literature and film use different approaches to posthumanism. Novels such as *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and *Neuromancer* delve deeper into the characters' thoughts and identities through their internal monologue and reflections. On the other hand, *Ex Machina* and *Ghost in the Shell*, being films, rely more on the visual and auditory aspects to show the posthuman changes. Hence, films are more likely to evoke immediate emotional responses, while books let readers mull over ethical issues and delve into the characters' perspective (Braidotti, 2013; Hauskeller et al., 2015). When combined, they form a holistic view of the posthuman condition.

Ethical and Social Implications Posthuman stories mirror the vexing ethical issues of our time. With innovations in AI, gene editing, and cybernetics, society is confronted with challenging questions on the rights, duties, and moral recognition of posthuman entities (Bostrom, 2014; Ferrando, 2019). By portraying characters that exceed normal human capabilities, these narratives not only break down the conventional understanding of human identity but also serve as a thought-provoking message to the community to consider humanity as a continuous, evolving

relationship rather than something fixed, and static (Wolfe, 2009; Ferrandez, Sanmiguel, Muoz, Gonzlez, & Laguarda, Bueno, 2025).

Conclusion The depiction of posthumanism in both literature and cinema offers an insightful look into the changing concept of human nature. Stories like *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, *Neuromancer*, *Ex Machina*, and *Ghost in the Shell* not only blur the lines between human and machine, body and mind, as well as creator and creation but also make us question these separations. These stories aren't just wild dreams they actively engage.

References

1. Bostrom, N. (2014). *Superintelligence: Paths, dangers, strategies*. Oxford University Press.
2. Braidotti, R. (2013). *The posthuman*. Polity Press.
3. Dick, P. K. (1968). *Do androids dream of electric sheep?* Doubleday.
4. Ferrandez-Sanmiguel, M., Muñoz-González, E., & Laguarda-Bueno, C. (2025). *The posthuman condition in 21st century literature and culture: Interdisciplinary insights*. Palgrave Macmillan.
5. Ferrando, F. (2019). *Philosophical posthumanism*. Bloomsbury Academic.
6. Ferrara, E. M. (Ed.). (2020). *Posthumanism in Italian literature and film: Boundaries and identity*. Palgrave Macmillan.
7. Garland, A. (Director). (2014). *Ex machina* [Film]. Universal Pictures.
8. Gibson, W. (1984). *Neuromancer*. Ace Books.
9. Hauskeller, M., Philbeck, T. D., & Carbonell, C. D. (Eds.). (2015). *The Palgrave handbook of posthumanism in film and television*. Palgrave Macmillan.
10. Krüger, O. (2021). *Virtual immortality: God, evolution, and the singularity in post- and transhumanism*. Transcript Publishing.
11. Oshii, M. (Director). (1995). *Ghost in the shell* [Film]. Production I.G.
12. Wilson, D. H. (2009). *Technologized desire: Selfhood & the body in postcapitalist science fiction*. Guide Dog Books.
13. Wolfe, C. (2009). *What is posthumanism?* University of Minnesota Press.