

Discuss
posthumanism and
the fears concerning
it that are addressed
in pop cultur...



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Popular culture (or pop culture) is considered to be the widespread cultural elements in any given society that are perpetuated through that society's common language or lingua franca. It comprises the daily interactions, needs and desires and cultural 'moments' that make up the everyday lives of the mainstream or the common masses in society. It can include any number of practices, including those pertaining to cooking, clothing, consumption, mass media and the many facets of entertainment such as sports and literature. Pop culture finds its expression in the mass circulation of items from areas such as fashion, music, sport and film. The world of pop culture has had a particular influence on art from the early 1960s on, through Pop Art. John Storey in his book " Cultural Theory and Popular Culture" defines popular culture as a culture that is related to masses and can be defined as an " authentic" culture of the people. It is commonly seen as a commercial culture that is mass produced for mass consumption. Items of popular culture most typically appeal to a broad spectrum of the public.

So a culture that is related to masses consequently represents the common ideas, practices, theories, customs, traditions and values of the people in all aspects of life, or in other words, it represents all that is truly human.

As compared to the theories of Pop culture, Post humanism, as the name of a discourse, suggests an episteme which comes " after" humanism (" post-humanism") or even after the human itself (" post-human-ism"). Post humanism, therefore, might be the study of formulations of various apocalyptic scenarios, especially when these are approached according to certain distinct associations involving " the post human condition." This is seen by Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston, in an inaugural text, as "

denoting a world in which humans are mixtures of machine and organism,
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where nature has been modified by technologies, which in turn have become assimilated into "nature" as a functioning component of organic bodies."

Post humanism is the discourse which articulates our hopes, fears, thoughts, and reflections at a post-millenarian time haunted by the prospects of technology's apparently essential and causal link with the finiteness of the human as a biological, cognitive, informational, and autonomous integrality. There has been a lot of debate in the recent times on the theory of Post Humanism and its clash with the theories of popular culture which can also be termed as the 'mass culture' or the 'human culture'.

The idea of Post humanism or post human has been commonly propagated by the modern TV and film media, especially portrayed in the Alien films where all that is super natural, superficial and beyond human, is portrayed using high-tech machines and in many cases, showing some factors that annoy the theorists and the followers of humanism and pop-culture like the mixing of biological with the mechanical.

In the Alien films, characters are shown to be a mixture of machine and organism, and not the real biological living beings. These films propagate the ideas that are cathartic to our fears related to postmodernism like cloning, artificial intelligence and other super human forms of life. In one of the series of the Alien films the character of Mother represents the post human because she is not a real human being but a computer and so just a machine devoid of the human emotions and feelings and unable to acknowledge and practise the human responsibility and morality. She betrays her own children in the movie which shows that the Post human factor in her character is responsible for her uncompassionate attitude. It supports our fears that a post human or Bio-mechanical being cannot develop a society of

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compassionate, humane and gentle human beings.

Almost all the characters of the film show some quality which is inhuman and revolting to human sensibility and so the pop culture. The relationship between the main characters in the film i. e. between Ash, the android and Ripley also highlights the post human qualities among them. Ripley inhumanly betrays his crew members and ultimately proves himself to be a mechanical company man devoid of any good human values.

Looking at some other visual aspects of Alien, we find out that characters like the pilot, being elephantine in shape and size appear to be very unseemly and inhumanly. It is difficult to distinguish the pilot from his ship due to his strange mechanical shape. Machines and organisms are blurred to the point of confusion in a post human scenario. Another strong point that is obvious in the Alien quartet is that all life form no matter whether they are absolutely real organic humans or a mixture of machines and organs, they are all helpless and weak in front of the aliens which represent the real post human.

Looking from another angle at the post human aspect of the Alien and its revolting and fearful effect on the human mind and human culture, we see that the post human forms arouse our feelings of fear, horror, confusion and disgust. All the post human characters in the series have confused and indistinguishable sexual identity, having no genitals and producing without any sexual coupling of the mates. The alien reproduces by entering a natural biological host and mixes its genetic material with the host's body, thus going against the idea of natural human process of reproduction and procreation.

Every alien post human character possesses unlimited power to destroy, and <https://assignbuster.com/discuss-posthumanism-and-the-fears-concerning-it-that-are-addressed-in-pop-culture/>

eliminate all that is good and human, representing the dangers of unchecked technology, mechanics and uncontrolled recombination of life such as cloning or creation of artificial gene mutations can always result in unlimited disasters for humanity.

It can be easily concluded from the example of the Alien films and the theories related to post humanism that it goes beyond all that is human, promoting and approving artificial, super human and unnatural things that are to a great extent horrifying, repulsing and confusing to normal human mind and thus against the set norms and values of human society and culture which are the major factors of pop culture or the people's culture in any human society, thus resulting in the view of the followers of popular culture (pop culture) that post humanism is a danger to the human society. Hannah Arendt's 1961 essay 'The Crisis in Culture' suggests that a " market-driven media would lead to the displacement of culture by the dictates of entertainment." Susan Sontag argues that in our culture, the most ".. intelligible, persuasive values are (increasingly) drawn from the entertainment industries", which is " undermining of standards of seriousness".

Thus the fear of destruction, loss of all good human values and all the inherent natural high qualities from human life, are all the fears associated with post humanism by the pop culture.

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As in the words of a post humanist Kevin Warwick himself, " Using implants to help a person with a disability is one thing, but using them to upgrade a perfectly healthy individual is something else".

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