

## ANTHROPOMORPHISM IN A ROBOT - A ROBOT IN THE GARDEN BY DEBORAH INSTALL

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*Science fiction is central to everything we've ever done, and people who make fun*

*of science fiction writers don't know what they're talking about.*

*– Ray Bradbury*

Language and communication are the forerunners of literature. Literature is mainly used for communicating and transferring cultures, ideas, and information from generation to generation. English as a language has its development since thousand five hundred years ago. Today's world has experienced change in communication not only with human to human communication but also human to robot communication. Literature is a whole part of reality and imagination that it depicts the happenings of life, and the dreams and wishes that are ought to become reality.

Science fiction is a sub-genre of fiction in which the plot and the characters revolve around the science and technology of the future. It is one of three sub-divisions of fantastic literature and the other two are fantasy literature and supernatural horror literature. Some famous examples of fantasy literature are *The Princess Bride* (1973), *Beauty and the Beast* (1740), *Labyrinth* (1962) and *Snow White and the Huntsman* (2012) and major examples of

supernatural horror literature are *Dracula* (1897), *Frankenstein* (1818) and *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959).

Science fiction has its origin in 1940s. Jules Verne, who is known for his fantastic voyage is considered to be the first major author of science fiction. Stories in this genre mostly focus on marvellous invention with superficial characterization. H. G. Wells has introduced the major themes of this genre. Jules Verne and H. G. Wells are considered to be the pioneers of science fiction. During the 1940s, a large number of writers showed great interest in writing stories with the themes of science fiction which filled the pulp magazines. Science fiction is mostly involved with Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Artificial intelligence is when machine impersonates cognitive functions that humans associate with other human minds in terms of learning and problem solving. It can also be defined as the programs which make the machines externally behave as human. The term was coined by John McCarthy in the year 1956 in the academic conferences (peace) on artificial intelligence at Dartmouth College. In the present age, artificial intelligence is merged with day to day life of the human beings. Research has been continued till age in all possible areas to be explored. AI systems are expected to do perception, learning, language understanding and problem solving.

The important purpose of AI is to reduce human workings in wars, natural disasters, etc. and to help human beings with the task of cleaning, shopping and transportation. AI is also a software that gathers information about the environment and takes action based on the ideas for example, robots, web shopping program, factories, traffic control system, etc.

Deborah has been writing fiction since childhood. She joined the writing group in 2012. Her debut novel, *A Robot in the Garden*, was first published in 2015 by Transworld. She has served as a journalist in web and a copywriter at a designing and marketing agency.

The novel is an inspiration from her only son and backed up by copious technological research. She lives in Birmingham. The novel *A Robot in the Garden* is set in a world where robots are commonly used for cooking and driving.

Ben the human protagonist of the novel is a dropout from the vet school and Amy, Ben's wife is constantly annoyed with him. Tang is the robot who is found in the garden with crooked parts. Tang proves to be more than a normal robot to Ben. Ben takes Tang to California to fix him after Amy leaves him. They are better companions together. They realise that Tang can be more than a robot. They try to fix Tang by finding the manufacturer and finally they found him, in their journey but after finding him they are in a hurry to escape from him. They come back home and then Amy rejoins with Ben and they have a child and they live happily ever after. Tang involves in all the activities like humans. He is socially interactive and behaves like human. He is of much help to Ben and Amy.

Anthropomorphism is a literary device that can be defined as a technique in which the author inscribes human traits, emotions, ambitions or behaviours in the animals, non-human beings, objects or natural phenomena. It is not an act of personification, but literally the objects behaving like human beings. This concept is used in robots with embodiment which will help them in behaving like humans and they can be one with humans which develops harmony between robots and humans.

The novel *A Robot in the Garden* is a story of a robot in which the protagonist of the story 'Ben' narrates the story to the audience. The story does not abruptly start with the robot in the garden but it goes round the situations of the family and then narrates whether this robot is a disturbance or a help to the family. This robot is also a bot which learns on its own to adapt to the situation around it and it survives through the survival instincts provided to it.

This novel expresses the phenomena of anthropomorphism, to see the personality in an inanimate. In this novel the name of the robot is 'Tang' which wonderfully textualizes the phenomena of anthropomorphism. Personality of human is seen in inanimate things, where Tang is animate but cannot express himself. Tang is a rusty, broken heap of retro robot standing four feet and two inches tall, shabby which looked like a school project which can socialize. The story revolves in the age where robots occupy a greater place in everyone's life. People are acquainted with more domestic robots which help them in doing repetitive jobs.

They were mostly domestic servants – shiny chrome and white-plastic artists' dummies who pottered round your house doing the vacuuming and making breakfast, and now and then maybe picking up your children from school. . . . Cheaper ones were available, too, which were not as shiny and had less functionality. (10)

He was built in the shape of a human which is one of the characteristics of anthropomorphism. He is built with a nose as human, though he cannot breathe.

Below his eyes sat a nose the size and shape of a Lego brick, which seemed to me to serve no purpose other than aesthetics. His mouth was a dark rectangular gap that looked to be an old CD drive; the marker had obviously had one spare and gathering dust somewhere, and so put it to good use. (10)

Tang finally becomes an updating humanoid which exhibits the human qualities like socializing, learning, perceiving, speaking, etc. A robot with augmented cognitive devices can help them learn things.

In *A Robot in the Garden*, the robot Tang socially connects with humans and learns to interact with humans, where finally it acts as a human. The novel expresses the concept of 'anthropomorphism' which denotes the personality of humans in an inanimate thing. This story tells its importance and how the robots have influenced the humans in day to day life. This portrays the world with AI which has become a major household need.

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