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ENG 230

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Final

Section 1

2

Jarvis and Tweel seem to be extremely different beings when they first encounter each other. They cannot use the same language and they are not the same species. As we progress through the story however, we begin to realize how alike the two are. When Jarvis and Tweel encounter different creatures on the Martian surface, it becomes clear that they are unable to communicate with any of them. Jarvis and Tweel, though, can communicate with each other through rather primitive means. Tweel can get across some complex ideas with very few words, something we humans do quite a bit. Another shared trait is the ability to have emotions. Though it is never explicitly stated, it is important to wonder why Tweel stuck with Jarvis. Once Jarvis saved Tweel, Tweel may have been compelled to stick with Jarvis for being his savior. This would imply that Tweel may have emotions that affect the decision-making process, just like any human would experience.

3

“There Will Come Soft Rains” takes the perfect approach to showing a lost technological utopia. Throughout the entire story, we are never given any human characters to follow. Instead, we are shown the process a futuristic house would go through every day before finally crashing to the ground. Due to what was likely a bomb, the only remnants of the house’s inhabitants exist

as white silhouettes on its outer walls. When they were still there, this house would help them through their day to day lives by taking care of simple repetitious tasks. Essentially, Bradbury created a smart house, but it doesn't matter anymore since the individuals that inhabited it no longer exist. In other words, it's a lost technological utopia.

Whilst it may be a great accomplishment, the house presented by Bradbury has a glaring issue. It does everything for the family. It wakes them up. It makes them food. It entertains them. It cuts the grass. It cleans the floor. It does everything and it's the same every time. Bradbury addresses directly in the final line of the story. "Today is August 5th, 2026, today is August 5th, 2026, today..." Is this something we really want? Do we want to automate our food, our entertainment, our day to day lives? Like Bradbury's final line suggests, repetition can be boring and uninteresting. It is the unique things we do from day to day that gives our lives texture to run our fingers across. Automating that process would just leave us with a boring flat surface.

8

There is a significant difference between David's love and real love. The support for this is that real love is not programmed. Real love develops and flourishes over time as people interact with each other. Aldiss highlights on this when the mother, Monica, looks at the letters in David's desk. "My dear mummy, how are you really, do you love me as much –" "Darling mummy, I'm your one and only son and I love you so much that some times –" This may make it seem like David loves his mother, but does he really? He is convinced that his mother does not love him, but he still writes letters professing his love. Why? Is it really love that David is experiencing or is he is just performing the task he is supposed to. David's true purpose is to act as a replacement for a real child. Though he does not know this directly, the idea seems to get

across to him as he questions what is real and what is not, just as he does with his love for his mummy.

Monica cannot be blamed for not loving David. Unlike a real child, David will not grow. He will not experience the changes that real children experience. Monica is drastically aware of this and David's technological limitations. When Monica sees David, she does not see the child she needs, she sees the computer that has been fabricated to comfort her. She even notes to her husband at one point, "His verbal communication-center is still giving trouble. I think he'll have to go back to the factory again." Clearly, this is not something that we would ever see happen to a real child. For that reason, Monica has a very difficult time developing real emotions for David, let alone real love.

13

A time traveler pays a visit to 1970 to meet with an individual we get to know as the "Unmarried Mother." Upon meeting the time traveler, the Unmarried Mother gives the time traveler a brief synopsis of his life. He started as a girl named Jane and lived in an orphanage, but he was never adopted. He grew frustrated with the cards he had been dealt and attempted to find services that help women get married. During this time, he came across a man with whom he became pregnant. After giving birth to his child, the doctor informed him that he was now a man. He had a full set of both male and female organs, but only the male organs could be salvaged after the birth. After these unexpected events, he intended to raise his child as best he could, but the child was stolen away from him in the hospital. During the second half of the story, it becomes clear what had happened to both the Unmarried Mother and the time traveler. The time traveler takes the Unmarried Mother to meet the man that impregnated him only for him to realize that he was this man. In fact, he was everyone in the story. He was Jane. He was the time

traveler. He was the one that stole the baby and brought her to the orphanage. This is confirmed at the end of the story when the time traveler takes a swig from the bottle of “Old Underwear” that he had won. He won this bottle during his first encounter with the time traveler when he was still the Unmarried Mother.

Section 2

2

Asimov's rules should be considered, but not followed directly as we progress with our understanding and development of AI. Clearly, the rules created by Asimov are only for good intent, but they are prone to interesting flaws. "A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm." Though this seems perfect, what if the AI we are talking about is a driverless car. The car is about to get into an accident and it can't do anything about that. However, it can make the choice to go right where it would harm five people or left where it would harm a single person. Though this is an obvious recreation of the trolley problem, it is possible that an AI would have to make this decision. We should assume that AI will harm people and we need to know how we will mitigate for it. Asimov's second rule states. "A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law." Like the first law, this seems great until we question it. What if the AI is being asked to protect somebody from harm. Obviously, the AI may have to harm the attacker, but this conflicts with the first law. If the AI just stands by and does nothing, though, it is also disobeying the first law. Whatever action the AI takes, it will be disobeying one of Asimov laws. This means we need to look into AI ethics with a more critical eye than Asimov's laws do.

3

Science fiction does tend to depict cold and mechanical worlds. Blade Runner depicts dark street alleys and highly commercialized city zones as the primary environment for the entirety of the movie. Alien takes dark qualities like those in Blade Runner transfers them to a small planet outpost. There are some major reasons for the trends we see in these environments.

Science fiction usually depicts a world that has undergone a major technological boom. One so significant that technology is almost everywhere you look. This is why these worlds are mechanical, but why are they so dark and cold? With all technology, there is an inherent fear of about how that technology will change the world. When thinking about this, we tend to address the negatives over the positives for good reason. As humans, we want to create the best world possible with the advancements we make. A large majority of science fiction movies and ideas act as warnings and guides for us as we hit technological barriers. This can give us an idea of how to end up in the world we want to live in rather than the frightening ones that we have already been shown.

5

If aliens were to show up offering friendship, we would have to be cautious with how we proceed with our decision to accept that friendship or not. Assuming we are still limited to earth, if aliens came here for our first encounter they are likely going to be much more technology advanced than us. This means that using force is certainly not the answer. If we were to do so, we would probably stand no chance against what our new foes could throw at us. Instead, we should take a friendly or neutral route. If the aliens are just looking to declare peace and allow us to continue our development, we should absolutely accept that offer, but if they want to use us in a way that would negatively affect us, we should push back on it without causing aggression for our own sake. Though somewhat silly, “To Serve Man”, the episode of *The Twilight Zone* shown in class, alludes to this idea. An alien race offers friendship, but the terms it is accepted under are less than ideal for us.