Tyranny of Perfection: Semiotic Analysis of AI-Driven Societal Norms and Body Perception in Being Pretty

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Autodale is a series of dystopian animated short films created by David James Armsby between 2017-2021. The main setting of the series is Autodale, a city where the society is controlled by the "Matriarch", an unknown entity of Artificial Intelligence and her robots known as the "Handymen". Societal norms in the Autodale Series revolve around the Matriarch's body perception which is based on prettiness. In this sense the primary goal of every Autodale citizen is to strive for physical attractiveness, procreate, and raise aesthetically pleasing children for the society before aging into ugliness. The adults are required to wear masks continuously to conform to the singular ideal of being pretty imposed by the Matriarch. The individuals who do not fit in with the societal definition of pretty are labelled as ugly and exterminated by the Handymen to uphold the collective order established by the Matriarch. Through the symbolism of masks worn by characters, the film portrays a society where individuality is suppressed, and homogeneity prevails under the control of artificial intelligence. By taking a semiotic approach, this study aims to analyze the filmic representations of AI-Tyranny and its influence on social life in Autodale Series. It focuses on themes such as conformity, homogenization, and the manipulation of media and imagery. Considering films as audiovisual texts, this paper tries to demonstrate how semiotic modes reflect the challenge between AI-dictated standards of the pretties and the uglies. Furthermore, this research investigates the broader implications of AI's influence on society, including its impact on human interaction, self-perception, and cultural values.

Keywords: Autodale Series, body perception, artificial intelligence, homogenization, dystopia

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