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Investigating the Possibilities of Negating "AI as a Threat" Narratives: A Case Study on James Cameron's The Terminator

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Humanity has thought of themselves as a superior form of entity when compared to other forms of life. This human-centred perspective has been injected in every walk of life by showing a hierarchical standpoint in establishing our relationlity with other human and non-human entities. This stratified mindset also makes itself apparent when we deal with technology and artifical intelligence. Hence, we tend to approach AI by limiting it within a dual logic of master/ slave dichotomy. In this line of thinking, many fictional depictions of AI present it either as serving passively to their human masters or rioting against them by plannig to rule over humanity. This either-or logic is consolidated in a cinematic representation, The Terminator (1984) directed by James Cameron. The film visualizes humanity's shared fear regarding robots'taking the control in their hands with an intention to wipe out humanity as humans are believed to constitute a serious threat for the future of AI. Skynet, which is presented as a significant AI defense system in the film, evolves into a hostile force fighting against humanity. This paper aims to problematize human and AI relationality respresented in the film by maninly taking into consideration the evolution of Skynet from a defense mechanism into a serious threat for the existence of human race. In doing so, I aim to question the probabilities of going beyond this dual logic by establishing a flat ontology in Bruno Latour's sense of the word in our fictional worlds. Since, in this way we will be able to resolve the boundaries of human-centric mindset by erasing residues of identity. As Serpil Opperman and Serenella Iovino highlight with their term storied matter: "Every living creature, from humans to fungi, tells evolutionary stories of coexistence, interdependence, adaptation and hybridization, extinctions and survivals. Whether perceived or interpreted by the human mind or not, these stories shape trajectories that have a formative, enactive power"(Opperman & Iovino, 8). By acknowledging how stories form our ways of existence, I aim to question if we can find a way to literalize human and AI relationality positioned beyond monolithic logic as exemplified in Cameron's cult film The Terminator (1984).

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