THE PERFECT FUTURE: APPREHENSIONS ON TECHNICAL AUGMENTATION AND TRANSHUMANISM

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the simulation of intelligence processes by machines. To put in simple terms it is the ability of a machine to act like human beings. There have been innumerable debates and discussions on the pros and cons on the production and deliberation of such intelligence. There have been a plethora of dystopian fiction which have portrayed only a bleak future where our world would be taken over by machines and robots. Movies outnumber fiction and the portrayal of dystopian future is so horrible that we might even be a bit scared to touch our handy gadgets next time. But it does not mean that there aren't any utopian depictions at all, there are- in both fiction and movies but compared to the negative depictions the positive ones are scanty. But has any one wondered why such a disparity appears? Disparity in the sense that in real science as technology advances there is always a rise in the standards of life. Just take the case of a small vacuum cleaner, it is so convenient to use it for it sucks in the dust compared to our old method of dusting where we get only a semblance of cleaning because the dust only gets displaced from one place to another. But in fiction and movies, everything begins with a positive portrayal and then everything drastically goes wrong and everybody gets hurt. One naturally wonders why this happens. Why are movies and novels so apprehensive about technology? Is it just the natural human instinct to reject everything that is new? If it so then it is fine and good because once he is convinced the other way he will accept it. But if this rejection is part of anything else then we need to be cautious as there would be hidden agendas behind making us blind and stopping us making a huge leap towards perfection.

This study is a small attempt to investigate why there is such an abundance of negative portrayal of technological advancements in movies and fiction while there is really a good number of scientific advancements taking place in real science. Take for example the portrayal of Will Caster in the movie Transcendance, or the character of Tau in the movie of the same name. They are all examples of the so

called technology gone wrong. But how can these few portrayals make one blind to the use of pacemakers, use of artificial limbs, plastic surgeries, and laser treatments. All these have only made human life better.

Artificial intelligence is again another branch of study which is making its presence felt day by day. Earlier people used to be so anxious of the idea of artificial intelligence. They were too scared that it might take over natural human intelligence. To add to it were novels and movies which made the scenario worse. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is said to be the pioneer of the idea of the creature taking over its master and so are the portrayal of characters in I Robot etc.

Now it seems that the attitude has changed a bit, because there is more and more interpellation of information on and about AI through social media news paper etc. People are more open to such ideas now. I remember a news feed that came in the news papers recently with the headline- Future Perfect. It talked mainly on the importance of AI in the field of education today,

> AI offers cutting edge technology to enable students to be more tech savvy and industry fit. We need to find students who are not complacent but filled with passion and willingness to have a better understanding of their life and education. AI offers the opportunity to know who and what is sought after and makes people in the education sector understand what is important.

Till recently no one had thought of effectively making use of AI in education sector for sure. But now we learn that with the help of AI a lot of burden on both teachers and students can be reduced. Research has shown that AI has a variety of roles in education. It allows students to work in their own pace. Slow ones need not worry looking at the fast ones and feel bad. They can practice on their own and get as quick as the others. Here teachers also do not need to be bored of doing the same thing all over again while teaching the slower ones. Some AI can even give good feed back by making the learning experience more interesting. The moment we talk about AI parents are intimidated for they fear that AI is actually replacing the teachers. But teachers are never replaced, AI only helps the teachers. We cannot let AI replace teachers because we know that teachers are not just knowledge providers but life lesson providers. Everyone is aware how the presence of a teacher helps in the physical, mental and psychological growth of students.

In the present era we are so in need of technology that it would almost be a crime on our part not to make use of it or deny the use of it to anybody. It is high time we realized that we have entered the transhumant age. Transhumanism is a cultural and philosophical movement which affirms that the current human condition can be augmented through technology to radically enhance human sensory reception, emotive ability and cognitive capacities. It represents an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and evaluating the ethical, social and strategic issues raised by the present and anticipated future technologies.

Artificial Intelligence is now used in almost every field like agriculture, aviation, market analysis and data mining, heavy industry, hospital and medicine, human resource and recruiting. It appears that AI can aid human beings in almost every field. In spite of all these uses one wonders why people are still apprehensive about the technological advancements? So it is high time that we realised the importance of AI. But the younger generation is more open to technology and has welcomed it with open hands, and the older generation is slowly falling into the sway of the new generation. Once we come face to face with the use of the new technology we could not but accept it.

After all old or young how can anyone not accept the system where the whole knowledge of the world is at your finger tips. Man is ever hungry for knowledge. So anything that can quench his thirst will be acceptable for him. Once technology develops living standards of people also start improving. One saves his time, energy and money. Time and energy can be utilised for more beneficial things which again will bring about more developments in the society. Hence science fiction movies and novels act only as a harbinger of the coming times. They help prepare the mind of people for the new future. As human mind rejects new things it is the movies, novels, and other media that makes human mind a fertile land for the new crops.

So as Michael Rowley says "science fiction is sometimes talked about as the literature ides" (qtd.in Contreras). It is the platform where new and innovative ideas are born and communicated. So there is no need to be apprehensive. Change is inevitable and those changes which are helpful should be encouraged and made available for the public.

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