

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE VERSUS MODERN DAY ALIENATION: A CRITIQUE

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Abstract

The influence of science and technology in our modern day life is undeniable. This is because science and technology have permeated into every sphere of human lives, through the tool of artificial intelligence. In the wake, politically, economically, socially, religiously and all, human society has developed, making life easier, more comfortable, faster and more qualitative. However as man enjoys these comforts, he also unavoidably runs the risk of dependence on the things that he created to help him. That is where alienation sets in; first from self and then to the larger society where machines displace man from his rights and responsibilities. This work adopts the method of analysis. It was discovered that science and technology through AI has done so much good to man in many ways but at the same time, it is a threat to mankind for some of them are competing with human intelligence. Finally, I recommend that there should be proper check and balance or strict limitation to the use of AI so that human lives will not be endangered.

Keywords: AI., alienation, capitalism

Introduction

The industrial revolution that started in England in the 18th into the 19th century marked a major turning point in the world history and economy. It is widely believed that the 'y emergence of new technologies leading to the revolution influenced daily life in variants of ways. It is a common believe that it orchestrated an average growth in income and population growth as well as stabilizing the standard of living for the general population in Europe. There has been ever since then an accelerated growth and increase in economic production. As' Alvin Toffler rightly corroborates, "Also dramatically evident is the acceleration of economic growth in the nations now racing toward super-industrialism. Despite the fact that they start from a large industrial base, the annual percentage increase in production in these countries are formidable. And the rate of increase is itself increasing." He further notes that behind such prodigious economic facts lies that great, growling engine of change— technology. This is not to say that technology is the only source of change in society. Social upheavals can be affected by a change in the chemical composition of the atmosphere, by alterations in climate, by changes in fertility, and many other factors. Yet technology is indisputably a major force behind the accelerative thrust.

Science, Industrial Revolution and Capitalism

Before the industrial revolution, production was essentially for family consumption. Equally, production required cheaper capital and solely dependent on human labour. Farming was the major occupation and feudalism with lesser tendency of exploiting the labourers, was the prevalent economic system. This system was, however with the emergence of capitalism, overthrown in the dialectic movement of history. With capitalism arose the need for mass production which requires huge capital investment, engendering surplus capital and search for areas of investment of the accumulated surplus capital. It is some scholars' opinion that this necessitated the scramble for the politically and militarily weak Asian and African countries. Although there are other reasons for the European scramble for Africa, it is factual that their voyage to Africa was essentially economically motivated.

The emergence of capitalism engendered the widening of the gap between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It similarly encouraged man's alienation from his labour. While men worked for longer hours at the machines, they earned just enough to survive each passing day; being unable to, sometimes, afford the products of their labour. According to Peggy Thomas (2005:13) it was and still remains an exploitative economic system because estranged from their labour, the worker "finds no purpose, no pleasure or fulfilment, no needs fulfilment, no independence or power, no mental development or physical development" in their work.

In the wake of man's estrangement from his labour came the evolution of machine learning and artificial intelligence. These are machines that can perform virtually all the tasks human beings perform even at greater speed and more precision. The period of COVID-19 was an eye opener to what wreckage artificial intelligence is capable of in the labour force and labour displacement. The World Economic Forum (WEF) had in a report warned that "a new generation of smart machines, fuelled by rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics, could potentially replace a large proportion of existing human jobs."(Harris,2011). The fear of losing jobs and increased unemployment has remained a perennial problem in a world with ever growing population. Although this has been the case, the raging scientific advancements have created reason for more concerns.

In this age of accelerating technological advancement, advancements that possess the potential of displacing man in the labour market and at the same time alienating him from the products of his own hands, it becomes pertinent for an attentive critical thinkers to painstakingly investigate the potency and threats posed by such technological advancements. It is in line with the above that the researcher wonders what becomes of man in the absence of labour or when his products become his greatest enemy. The researcher seeks answers to the following questions: what existential threat does artificial intelligence pose to man? With the furious pace with which artificial intelligence is gaining prominence, what is the future of man? In what ways does artificial intelligence alienate man from labour? How can the challenges of artificial intelligence be balanced with human needs? What role does the government have to play in this?

The preceding questions are the offshoot of this paper. This work will essentially try to answer the above questions to reveal man's predicament before his machines and equally try to strike a balance between human needs and technological advancement. With increasing number of jobless people and poverty, the entire world would be sitting on a

ticking time bomb. It is a fact that there is currently perturbation regarding heightened social, political and economic divide with artificial intelligence.

Thus, the purpose of this work is to peruse the nature of technological advancements and artificial intelligence, their implications for mans existence and equally how in combination with capitalism, they are rendering greater percentage of the people miserable. The quest for a reduced cost of production and surplus gain orchestrate huge investment in artificial intelligence which in turn leads to loss of means of livelihood. With artificial intelligence, the demand for human labour is gradually diminishing; employees need to acquire new skill sets in order to retain their jobs. This work intends to expose the fact that artificial intelligence is an alienating factor that needs to be effectively regulated.

Scientific Advancement and The Modern world

The 21st Century is characterized by unprecedented developments in the field of science and technology. The unbridled advancement of scientific innovations has had far-reaching implications in virtually all ramifications of human endeavor (Adetute et al; 2010). It has been asserted that; Art, in its legal significance, embraces every operation of human intelligence, whereby something is produced outside of nature; and the term 'science' includes all human knowledge which has been - generalized and systematized, and has obtained method, relations and the forms of law(Atchison & co; 1971). In other words, everything known to man, about the material world is science and when such knowledge is applied, it is given the name 'technology'. Such knowledge, at its apex, forms the ideal foundation to a Utopian political system and when utilized to govern human interactions and relationships, becomes the law of the land. This for C.Weiss(2005:297) denotes that "science and technology affect the society, while law reflects the changes in the society, as well as ensure the legitimacy of such changes".

Artificial Intelligence And The Modern World

In the modern world; AI has experienced a revival since the advancements in large amounts of data, enhanced computer technologies, and theoretical understanding. Artificial intelligence has become an integral part of various industries like information technology, marketing, healthcare, cyber security, art, military, etc. AI uses algorithms to execute a problem or situation. The algorithm is a set of explicit instructions that a computer can run. A sophisticated algorithm is built on other simpler algorithms.

Intelligence, simply put, is what a person uses to analyze a situation based on his experience in a similar situation. Artificial intelligence algorithms are capable of learning from data. According to R.A Jaladin(2004:55), "they can evolve by learning new strategies that have worked well in the past or can write new algorithms all by themselves." There are many ways AI or artificial intelligence, along with that of machine learning, has been used indirectly, impacting the lives of people in modem society. Artificial Intelligence or AI has assisted in many areas of life, be it trying to read multiple emails, getting directions while driving along with music or movie recommendations (Katsikeas et al.,2016:7). AI is making it a lot easier for people to communicate with and locate business associates and friends by improving the social media world. In the area of Twitter, there are customized tweet recommendations that are available along with content that helps to fight racist or inappropriate content.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence or sometimes called machine intelligence is intelligence demonstrated by machines, in contrast to the natural intelligence displayed by humans and other animals. For Ziyad Mohammed,(2018:2) some of the activities that it is designed to do is speech recognition, learning, planning and problem solving. Artificial Intelligence is the study and creation of machines that can perform tasks that would require intelligence if a human were to do the same job. It is the science of making intelligent machines that perform tasks as well as, or better and faster than humans can. Harris defined artificial intelligence or AI as “the wisdom of creating machines to break problems and do work that’s too complicated for the mortal brain to do by itself.”(2011:6)

Traits of an AI

AI is capable of predicting and adapting, it uses algorithms that discover patterns from huge amounts of information. Makes decisions on its own, AI is capable to augment human intelligence, deliver insights and improve productivity. AI is forward-looking; AI is a tool that allows people to reconsider how we analyze data and integrate information, and then use these insights to make better decisions. AI is capable of motion and perception.

We have different types of **AI**

Type 1

Artificial intelligence today is accurately known as narrow AI (or weak AI), it is non-sentient machine intelligence, typically designed to perform a narrow task (e.g. only facial recognition or only internet searches or only driving a car).

Type 2 (this type is based on functionalities which is as follows)

Purely Reactive: Reactive machines are basic in that they do not store 'memories' or use past experiences to determine future actions.

Limited Memory: Limited Memory machines can retain data for a short period of time. While they can use this data for a specific period of time, they cannot add it to a library of their experiences.

Theory of Mind: Psychology tells us that people have thoughts, emotions, memories, and mental models that drive their behavior. Theory of Mind researchers hope to build computers that imitate our mental models, by forming representations about the world, and about other agents and entities in it. While plenty of computers use models, a computer with a ‘mind’ does not yet exist.

Self-Awareness: Even if a machine can operate as a person does, for example by preserving itself, predicting its own needs and demands, and relating to others as an equal, the question of whether a machine can become truly self-aware, or 'conscious', is best left for philosophers.

Therefore the expression ‘industrial revolution’, as a generic term, refers to the emergence, during the transition from a pre-industrial to an industrial society, of modern economic growth, i.e. a sustained and substantial increase of GDP per capita in real terms. Talking about ‘revolution’ does not mean that this process would necessarily be sudden and fast. It primarily indicates it was deep and pervasive.

Many innovations during the very beginning of the process of industrialization may not have been science-based, but the fundamental breakthroughs in the production and use of energy were. The actual technological breakthroughs that are normally associated with the first industrial revolution almost all originated in Britain.

But in the rest of industrializing Western Europe global connections were less important. Whatever its causes, the impact of the first industrial revolution was not confined to Britain or Western Europe. It was truly global. From then on countries that do not manage to create a modern economy would be regarded as poor and backward.

Artificial Intelligence and the Society

However the entry of AI in the society has brought in major implications for professionals who are used to modern technologies, to the legal practitioners nurturing effects of influence of AI with its regulatory implications, to the technocrats who are frequently taking help of this modern technology to arrive at a precise decision in a complex technological issue. According to Chatterjee (2019), AI is also posing vital implications to the general citizens by providing them enormous help in a cost-effective manner as well as posing some entangled challenges and even jeopardizing their basic rights, including privacy infringement. In this perspective, this study has taken a calibrated, comprehensive and holistic attempt to analyze briefly how the arrival of this AI technology is effectively contributing to the societal changes by providing advantages as well as disadvantages to the humans.

AI for 'Social Good. This capability of AI is expected to help for alleviating several pressing problems of the world. In this way AI can do well to the society. The social good can be in the form of giving useful information on the day to day happenings and providing security tips.

AI is helpful for healthcare industry: There has been immense progress for diagnosis and treatment of diseases by the help of AI. In rural areas there are problems of accessibilities of the doctors or health-care staff. As a result, people living in those remote areas feel insecure regarding treatment of their health hazard (Majumdan et al; 2020,307). AI has come to rescue this problem. AI can predict outbreaks of diseases well ahead so that the healthcare staff can have a scope, to take preventive steps well ahead before the actual outbreaks take place.

AI is helpful to improve work efficiency: Governments of many countries are now using AI technology to improve the efficiency of their employees working in all levels. Governments of different countries are also taking help of AI to improve their financial allotment mechanisms and to help to optimize their budgets. There are other instances

through which society is being benefited by the grace of AI. Be that as it may, AI has also created a lot of challenges to man.

AI And Alienation Of Man

Experts say that the rise of artificial intelligence will make most people better off over the next decade, but many have concerns about how advances in AI will affect what it means to be human, to be productive and to exercise free will.

To alienate means to make someone feel like a foreigner to one whether to a person or a object. Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary defines alienation as "an abnormal condition of indifference to or estrangement from others." Alienation is the process whereby the worker is made to feel foreign to the products of his/her own labor. Marx(1976:152) understands alienation as the domination of a subject by an estranged object of its own creation. Alienation duly understood in this respect, is the disgruntlement of workers from his labour. Putatively, utmost workers produce supernumerary profit for the business owners while they slightly can afford the products of their labour.

On the other hand, Labour is defined as "physical or internal exertion, particularly for some useful or wanted end". Marx describes labour as a process in which we set in and stir the natural forces belonging to our bodies to applicable natural accoutrements in a form acclimated to our requirements. For Marx, labour is thus, both an expression of our subjectivity and the principal medium through which this subjectivity is developed. Through labour, we not only develop ourselves as individual agents but also enter into and develop our relations to nature and to other people. The result of labour is the collective total of the collective relationship between the worker, his product and society at large.

In the area of information and technology, as much as it has made the world a global village, it has in the same vein robbed man of his privacy and peace of mind. In the banking sector, as much as it has made transaction easier, it has also created many avenues of fraud and online robbery. In big industries, it has deprived man of his privileged position and rendered him jobless, leading, leading to poverty and hunger; for man is no longer needed in the advertising and marketing of products or ideas even in the small and medium enterprises. This is because, the social media can do it better and faster. In the area of politics, stronger nations have; through the aid of I.T, fueled by capitalism, globalization and principle of subsidiarity, suppressed and annexed weak nations. Thereby alienating them from the fruit of their labour and the resources of their land.

The concept of alienation as relates to technology goes beyond Karl Marx definition of science and technology in this paper. Marx alienation is mostly relevant to production, but I perceive consumption, particularly consumption of technology, as a core agent of alienation. Generally, alienation as a psychological condition that refers to the breakdown of the natural interconnection among people and their production and feeling of disconnectedness from social settings as the individual views his/her relationships from social context as no longer reasonable. It is an objective and subjective feeling of isolation, unhappiness, lack of involvement, or only instrumental involvement with work and with others. Technology and advancement in technology not only limits workplace interaction, but also increases employers' control of workers using monitors at computer terminals. Hence for Ritzer(2008), Technology alienates people from their actual work, potential, and their fellow human beings. As the result of technology, we no longer need to talk to clerks in shopping centers, post offices, and grocery stores because there are self-check-out stations. We no longer need to interact with tellers in banks, because we are increasingly interacting with ATM machines or using online banking. We do not have to interact with salespersons in bookstores because we are more likely to order our books online.. He stated that technology could free us or enslave us. Technology, the internet, for example, can link individuals and communities together and also makes it possible for people to obtain any information on almost any topic imaginable.

In capitalist society, people are dominated by a thing - capital. Not only does capital constitute the primary medium of social intercourse, it both empowers and disempowers. This is not to say that capital itself possesses this power. Instead, for Hurst(2000:12) "capital constitutes a form of exchange involving living, breathing human beings - it is, in fact, a process through which money and use values are converted, through labour, into surplus value". And technologies are core components of this process as, typically, the capitalist puts his money to use by converting it to capital, and machines and technologies are used by workers to do this.

What is the fundamental basis of alienation? The answer, for Marx, is still to be found in the production process (a process involving four interrelated moments - production, distribution, exchange and consumption). This entails the need to exploit labour - the need to get more for less out of the people employed in one or more aspects of the process. For the proletarian, despite the rights and freedoms associated with the wage labour contract, resisting this exploitation has been the source of ongoing class conflict (indeed, this resistance has compelled capital's generation and application of evermore sophisticated technologies).

It is precisely this ascent of 'dead' labour and its implications for the 'living' that Marx believed propelled capitalism's tendency to dehumanize workers, making them into little more than appendages of the techniques and technologies applied in the production process.

Cohen Smith(2006:990) implicitly disavows the notion that alienation stems from the worker's use of machinery and technology. In reality, the use of everything from knitting needles to computers, to a pencil and paper in many instances, may further the worker's realization of her self-creative essence. Rather than humanity's essence being denied as a result of using technology, a person's essence is lost when she becomes merely a tool. To quote Marx (1976:151) directly: "Every kind of capitalist production, in so far as it is not only a labour process, but also a process of creating surplus-value, has this in common, that it is not the workman that employs the instruments of labour, but the instruments of labour that employ the workman."

The Future Of Man And Machine

We are so surrounded by gadgetry that it is sometimes hard to tell where devices end and people begin. From computers and scanners to multifarious mobile devices, an increasing number of humans spend much of their conscious lives interacting with the world through electronics, the only barrier between brain and machine being the senses — sight, sound and touch — through which humans and devices interface. But remove those senses from the equation, and electronic devices can become our eyes and ears and even our arms and legs, taking in the world around us and interacting with it through man-made software and hardware. This is no future prediction; it is already happening.

some human studies suggest that full control of artificial limbs in real time could further offer the paralyzed an opportunity to grasp or even to stand and walk on brain-controlled, artificial legs, albeit likely through invasive means, with electrodes implanted directly in the brain. This could be seen to challenge our notions of personhood and moral agency. And the question will certainly loom that if functions can be restored for those in need, is it right to use these technologies to enhance the abilities of healthy individuals? It is essential that devices are safe to use and pose few risks to the individual.

According to N.Mukunda(2005:15), Science has brought a lot of predicaments to man, resulting from biological evolution which occupy an incredibly tiny niche in an immense universe, with elementary particles at one end and clusters of galaxies at the other. We inherit the abilities as well as the limitations fashioned by phylogenetic evolution, and then seek to understand something far grander than ourselves in every sense. And yet we seem - at least to ourselves - to be succeeding surprisingly well. This way of viewing ourselves in relation to Nature shows us how lonely we are as species, how small a part of immensity outside. Judged against the vastness of Nature, it is difficult to believe that we are central to it.

In spite of this realization, we may try to find a basis for moral and ethical principles - so important to govern our collective existence - in our scientific understanding of the universe. This is a swing from an external to an internal view of the situation, of our predicament, but here we find no solace. In Erwin Schrodinger's eloquent words: "the scientific worldview contains of itself no ethical values, no aesthetical values, not a word about our ultimate scope or destination, and no God..."

I am inclined to conclude that, though science itself as an intellectual effort is unable to lead to feelings of a moral or ethical nature, these can arise from a feeling of compassion that each of us should have towards every other, since we are each in the same predicament. For Albert Einstein "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind". However I feel a sense of starkness in these words. Expand 'science' to the more inclusive word 'knowledge', and replace 'religion' by the more gentle word 'compassion'.

Existential Risk And Threat To Labour And The Work Force

Most scholars toady believe that the rising number of researchers worried about the near perfect predictions about when machines will take over the job of man in all sectors of life, justifies the reason why the subject of AIM threat to mankind, should take the center stage, alongside other

current issues such as global warming, etc., which presently have been identified as one of the highly politicized subjects of the 21st century(Misra,2018:3).

This notwithstanding, some scholars believe that the impending threat of ‘mass unemployment’ and ‘job apocalypse’ are threats that may be much closer than most governments and concerned authorities are willing to accept as a reality of life soon to take place. These categories of scholars believe the existential threat of massive job annihilation may have already begun in most industrialized nations of the world like America. Stephen Hawking expressed the fear that the future of humans would come to nothing, especially in the area of retaining jobs, if governments fail to take drastic steps to align the goals of AIMS with those of humans.

Today’s machines however, seem to have perfected the act of acquiring higher level intelligence via the acquisition of what is best referred to as intentionality or intuition, a feature that allows intelligent machines the capacity to learn on their own by simply applying deep machine learning algorithm strategies, which invariably allows them to mimic complex human features and characteristics for its own good.

In time artificial intelligence will just be a better doctor than you. Robots will run companies better than you do. In Artistic works, Robots will paint and write and sculpt better than you. Think you have social skills that no robot can match? Yes, they can. Within 20 years, maybe countless number of people will be out of jobs. A couple of decades after that, the matter will be worse. The above reality being espoused paints a fair picture of the existential risk fears which this study reveal, have already started alienating thousands of individuals from the work force who have lost their jobs to advances in AI technologies.

Conclusion

Having examined the development of automation, artificial intelligence, robotics and smart machines, the worrisome challenges created by artificial intelligence, that is, the capability of artificial intelligence to displace man from his job, the picture before us now is a humanity squarely seating on a ticking time bomb. Hence we should thread with caution on the use of these Thus, the work illuminates the inherent dangers of artificial intelligence in a world that is currently battling with abject poverty.

Therefore as we praise the ingenuity of man through science and technology to produce AI which has helped man in so many ways and in all fields of endeavours, man has also suffered and is still suffering alienation from these man-made machines. The greater risk is that these machines have the tendency of depopulating the world for as man comfortably does not need his fellow man to perform certain task, social life and relationships will be greatly affected. Very soon it will affect the family, for as gay relationship is rising, AI that can perform the role of women in marriage are also being designed. And those who do not want to be bothered by the responsibility of the family are keying into that. The resultant effect will be depopulation which is the final alienation; the alienation from the specie-being or self.

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