Chapter 10
Artificial Intelligence in the Era of Transhumanism Smart Phones

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between humans and machines has been a controversial topic throughout history. In the past, technology was viewed as a mere change in people's living conditions while today it is evident that it affects the nature of humanity itself. This very change can range from microscale structures, such as human DNA, to bigger structures, such as limbs. We have been aware that it is just the beginning for this change. According to the theory of transhumanism, further changes on the human body are expected with the rapid developments in technology. These changes will naturally not be limited to the human body. The increasing amount of interaction between humans and machines will result in the execution of more complicated and difficult tasks by machines instead of humans, which is the focus of the present study. There are many points where the humans and machines meet with technological developments, one of which is the thinking function of humans and its possible transfer to machines. The thinking capacity of machines is known as artificial intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

What was the inventor of the wheel thinking?

It is hard to answer that question as humans' needs and their way of thinking have evolved continuously throughout history, which also affected the attitudes towards technology from time to time. Since the beginning of our existence on Earth, human beings have always struggled to alter and transform the nature, environment and their bodies to improve the living conditions in order to attain more with less energy. The challenges presented by nature have forced humans with relatively limited physical power to transform their environments and produce the essential stuff for survival. As well as food and clothing, humans have built structures for accommodation to protect from the climatic conditions

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making use of various methods and technologies. What they did first to achieve this was to understand their environment to explain the events and facts. Although people have tended to make use of myths during the process of "*noesis*" and "explanation" from time to time, the emergence and glorification of analytic thinking and knowledge has accelerated the pace of technological changes (İlin & Segal, 2000). However, the systematic development of current scientific methods and technologies we know and use today has emerged in a relatively short time compared to the whole history of humanity. Of course, the rapid emergence and development of science and technology can be approached in several different ways. First, the delayed and relatively slow-paced developments in science and technology despite the long history of evolution of human beings and the rise of civilizations can be explained with the social and economic problems, and political relations. From this standpoint, we can say that the attitudes of the holders of economic and political power in societies towards science and technology have been the main cause of the relatively slow pace of scientific and technological developments.

Humanity has gone through different phases and revolutions. Industrial Revolution, one of the milestones in the history of humanity, has unleashed and given acceleration to the power of technology. It is safe to say that economic reasons were the biggest motivation for the sudden interest in technology and science as the machine-made production is much more profitable compared to hand-made products. Secondly, from steam power to Artificial Intelligence, technology has always been something that states and governments want to hold and control and used as "a weapon" from past to present.

Today, technology is an irreplaceable part of life in every aspect. Thanks to technology, the production of goods and services has increased while it has been easier to access to information. The medical advances have improved the living conditions (better accommodation, modern medicine and more accessible food system) and increased life span. In other words, technology has greatly helped humans to manipulate the nature for their survival.

On the other hand, the emergence and spread of technology has not always been welcomed. There have always been people and groups criticizing strongly any new technology. In the past as in the present, it took time for individuals and societies to embrace the latest technologies for social, cultural and economic reasons. For instance, the delayed adoption of the printing press by the Ottomans is seen as one of the main causes of regression and depletion.

The individuals, groups and even societies having and making use of technology remain ahead of the game. There seems to be a huge gap between countries, groups or even individuals who have access to technology and the ones who do not. This means that the ones who have access to technology can develop in every field while the disadvantaged groups are to fall behind. Postman argues that the current gap between the two groups is a kind of social inequality and that it is the very entity of technology which creates this gap. He further states that the development and spread of computers have created "winners" and "losers" as there are people who get stronger by having access to technology as well as the people keeping away from technology and dropping back as a consequence (Postman, 2006, p. 13-31). Therefore, whether one has access and command to/of technology is a decisive factor for both individuals and societies.

Just as today's products with "cyclical popularity", there have been "popular" fields in the history of technology that have been shaped by the military, social and economic needs of the specific periods bringing forth various paradigms as a result. From a historical perspective, there have been certain technological periods, such as Steam Power and it seems that the era we are currently living in is the age of Artificial Intelligence (King, 2016, p. 224).