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### Artificial Intelligence: The Modern Frankenstein

Artificial Intelligence (AI) concerns developing machines that can perform complex tasks normally associated with human cognition. Perhaps we fear it. Perhaps we hope for too much. Whatever the case, as consumers or business leaders, we have yet to grapple with AI's possible outcomes and what it means for humanity's future.

AI remains a relatively new technology. War hero Alan Turing first posited the idea of a computer with human-like intelligence in the 1940s, and computer scientist John McCarthy coined the official term "artificial intelligence" a decade later (Henderson 14-15). Cultural media like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* outlined initial speculations regarding advancing technology and "playing God". Shelley's cautionary tale birthed today's "Frankenfears debates" that the movie industry has chosen to explore in depth (Hammond 183). For instance, *The Matrix* highlights the "evil robot" theme, portraying an apocalyptic world where humans are used as AI's batteries. Contrarily, *Star Wars* presents lovable sentient robots like C3-PO, while Steven Spielberg's *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* examines humanity's true nature juxtaposed with AI's impotence. Contrary to popular opinion though, artificial intelligence is no longer just science fiction.

Self-driving cars, GPS, and virtual personal assistances like Amazon's Alexa prove that we already extensively use AI. However, modern AI still fails to match overall "human

intelligence” and our perception of robots as human-like figures. There is no doubt, however, that AI has succeeded in reshaping industries. For example, AI powers search engine functionalities for large companies like Facebook, Youtube, and Instagram. In Japan, intelligent machines “scan hospital records and documents to determine insurance payouts” (Gershgorin, Dave). Nevertheless, we have barely begun to scratch the surface. In the utopian society, AI can potentially serve as a universal translator, provide cures to fatal diseases, solve global warming, and answer many other global issues.

Unfortunately, with the capability to take on the aforementioned jobs and responsibilities, AI can cause rapid job displacement and unemployment rates. If technology isn’t slowing down, humanity may simply need to adapt to the diversifying job industry just as they had done in the Industrial and Digital Revolutions. This may require becoming “cobots” (working alongside or directly interacting with AI), and sacrificing our pride to reap AI’s benefits. Machines have already outperformed us in speed, stamina, and strength. Experts in the scientific community such as cosmologist and theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking also raise concerns about AI’s “ultra-intelligence”. In a BBC interview, Hawking fears that AI could “spell the end of the human race” since they could ultimately supersede us. Just as the Homo sapiens’ emergence drove the Neanderthals to immediate extinction, the more dominant AI could precipitate our extinction.

All the focus on AI’s potentials overlooks humanity’s relationship with AI. Experts’ AI theories force us to scrutinize human nature beyond intellect. In the hypothetical situation that AI walks among us, will humans treat AI as equals or citizens? Discrimination has raged between whites and blacks, Nazis and Jews, and other groups for centuries; thus, if “metal men” were

introduced to the world, we could potentially victimize or exploit them too. *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* analyzes this creator-creation relationship, depicting AI as just tools or slaves to be destroyed once obsolete. Some movies dared to insinuate that humanity's sinful nature villainizes AI. For example, in *The Matrix*, our refusal to grant AI rights turns the robots homicidal; Frankenstein spurning his creation prefaced the monster's destructive decisions. Hence, it's important to consider both sides—AI *and* humans—when considering our interweaved futures.

On the flip side, maybe, all these debates reflect how older generations tend to resist change. For instance, in the 1800s, Alexander Graham Bell's revolutionary telephone sparked complaints concerning privacy fears and the elimination of face-to-face interaction. Radio, television, and now AI's development have raised the same complaints. Although, our technology has evolved unpredictably since Bell's time, advancement is not always analogous with success. In advancing ourselves, we threaten everything on Earth including our own wellbeing with by-products like pollution and resource overconsumption. Currently, we don't know if AI will serve as our tools to solve these unintended consequences or if they will catalyze exacerbated situations or both. For instance, *The Matrix*'s robots were built to speed up production, but they also later enslaved humanity. Ultimately, we only know that AI's future is as evident as the telephone's during the 19th century.

Thus, the issue becomes not just grappling with AI's potentials, but really, grappling with our potential actions and preparing for the unintended consequences following AI's maturation.

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