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Humanity and AI: Exploring the Significant Issue of Free-Will

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We have been reading about Artificial Intelligence (AI) in SciFi novels and watching it in SciFi films but none of us ever imagined that it would dawn on us so soon. Yes, the time of the AI has finally arrived and it is going to stay here with us. This totally unprecedented situation has given rise to several questions as well such, “What is likely to happen to our future as we are?”, “Whether we like it or not, are we increasingly being controlled by the AI?”, “Is there a future for humanity at all?”, “Is there something called the free will?”, Can the man-machine combination ensure our survival?” and many more along the same line. This article is a serious exploration of the above-mentioned questions.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Free Will, Morality, Wellbeing, Robot-Machine, Consciousness, Intelligence.

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Introduction

The successful formula of the near future is going to be “man-machine” (Bostrom 2014). This can lead to a technological disruption that can have a serious impact on the existence of humanity and the wellbeing of all. The machine is to be seen as an extended self of a human being who is often perceived as having free will.

This essay presents AI as a useful and unavoidable companion, which it really is, in the days to come; and guides you on how to get the best out of this unlikely relationship.

Although the advanced studies in Neuroscience and Genetics question the idea of free will today, over the centuries, many philosophers and theologians believe that civilizations evolved on a widespread belief in free will (Harari, 2019).

As we continue along the path of artificial intelligence we will be at a juncture where we may have to concede that it is not just a program, but a conscious being. The AI systems of Chabot are getting smarter every day and are becoming more human-like. People consider AI systems like Alexa and Google Assistant as extended self and some even have developed an intimate relationship with them, thus in effect treating them as an entity in itself. They are advancing themselves towards not just better computing power but with emotional intelligence (Cynthia 2003). This emotionally sound conscious being can claim to be possessing free will, thus making it an autonomous system that has its own rights.

The concept of free will is a complex topic. It is one of the most debated topics over the years. The concept has contributed a lot to the well-being of human society. Now we are at a juncture where a revisit to free will is possible. This paper makes a revisit to free will that is from an anthropocentric

approach to a new approach where all beings are equal. In the evolution AI, it is in the first stage and very soon can reach the level of AGI (artificial general intelligence) and then to ASI (Artificial superintelligence). In this future scenario, these systems can hack humans. The coexistence of humans and machines is going to be the new social system.

The Big Questions: From Philosophy to Engineering

Philosophers have been preparing for this moment for thousands of years. Questions like free will, the meaning of life humanity philosophers have been discussing this for thousands of years with almost zero impact on humanity (Cave 2016). Humanities and the classics have a role to play. In that, they are concerned with the big questions about the meaning of life and how to live a good life. A lot of questions are going to migrate from the department of philosophy to the department of engineering and the department of economics. Questions like what do you really want to do with your life are going to become far more practical than ever before. The given immense powers that technology is giving us and the ability to change yourself to change your body to change your brain is going to put enormous philosophical challenges in front of the average person (Harari, 2019). You need to make the kind of decision that for most of history were the stuff of thought experiments by philosophers. Philosophy in humanity, in general, are maybe more important than ever before. These problems have become practical problems of engineering and politics. Engineers are impatient. Designing a self-driving car, you cannot wait 5000 years you need to decide ethical questions and philosophical questions now.

The Complexity of the Problem of Technological Disruption

Technologies like AI will reshape the future of life itself. Technical disruption is a far more complicated problem because we do not want to give up on the immense potential of artificial intelligence and bioengineering. Besides, there is no agreement about what is the best outcome as many of the projects that frighten some people get other people extremely excited (Harari, 2019a). This is an intellectual problem and it is far difficult.

Shifting of Authority from Humans to Algorithms

Humans are hackable animals. This is the result of the combination of two enormous scientific and technological revolutions. The revolution in infotech and biotech which in the past decades have evolved separately but now are combining to become a single revolution results in the ability to hack human beings. It is based on insight from AI. Organisms are really algorithms and therefore algorithm can hack organisms. Biological knowledge multiplied by computing power multiplied by data equals the ability to hack humans. Hack human being means to understand me better than I understand myself (Harari 2017). Whoever understands me better than I understand myself cannot just predict my decisions and choices but can also manipulate my decisions and choices and increasingly take decisions on my behalf. It means the shifting of authority from humans to algorithms. Many governments and corporations and institutions throughout history had this ambition to understand and control humans. It was not really possible because they never had the biological knowledge of the computing power and the data necessary to do it. Shortly, some corporations and governments will have all these to systematically hack millions and even billions of people.

The Implication of the Shift in Authority

This could mean the end of liberal democracy and the end of the free-market economy. Liberal democracy is based on the insight that the voter knows the best and the voter is an ultimate authority in the political field. A free-market economy is based on the idea that the customer is always right. The ultimate authority in the field of economics is the desire of the customers. The political governments should represent the will of the people and the corporation should serve the will tell the desires of customers (Harari, 2019a). It is not a hypothetical question. The questions open up to them about human agency and about the very meaning of the free will. The problem of free will bothered philosophers for thousands of years. We now or will soon have the technology that will enable governments and corporations to manipulate and control the will of the voters and the desire of the customers.

Free Will

The idea of being in control of how we act the up to us-ness of our actions is all about free will (Frederick 2013). The free will problem consists of whether we are in control of how we act and what this control involves. This is considered to be the oldest and hardest problem in philosophy. The problem of “free will” is closely associated with the question of moral responsibility.

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In the case of free will, you cannot live your life on the assumption of determinism. The “problem of free will” is often called a question of reconciling “free

will” with many of the many kinds of determinism. The “problem of free will” is determined by two things, the exact definition of free will and which of the determinisms is being reconciled.

It is the most sensitive subject. It is sensitive to religious people because without free will Judaism, Christianity, Islam and so on do not make any sense. It is a sensitive topic to an atheist as well because it seems to touch what human beings care about and makes us distinctly human (Cave, 2019). They are mortality, politics, law, religion, feeling of guilt and responsibility.

Free will is a scandal in philosophy because we have not made any progress. The reason why we have a special problem with free will is that we have inconsistent views of overwhelming reasons. The reason for believing we have free will is that we experience it every day. We have the experience of conscious rational decision making. The decisions are not themselves forced by antecedently sufficient causal conditions (Cave 2016). Human behaviour is part of the natural world and it looks like it ought to be explained in terms of cause.

Different Approaches to Free Will

Determinism is the thesis that all events are determined by a prior cause. We take an event and consider it as casual laws that govern the universe whatever they are. Quote from Humes inquiry “It is agreed that matter in all its operations is actuated by a necessary force and that every natural effect is so precisely determined by the energy of its cause that no other effect in such particular circumstances could have resulted from it”. He also argues that it is also true of human actions. And it can be a thesis of universal determinism. It is not just the physical world but also applicable to things like a moral world of people and actions. It is called causal determinism. This takes to the conclusion that the future is fixed and determined by the past.

The controlling factors which depend on our action are the environment we born into, the genes we were born with, the desire and feelings that come over us beyond our control.

Promoting Life without Free Will

The compelling mystery is that we have a robust experience of freedom but cannot figure out how to map it on to physical reality. We are not truly separated but we are linked to one another, we are linked to the world, and we are linked to our past and history. The linkage makes all matter. Pride and shame do not make a lot of sense in the final analysis but they were no fun anyway. The things like compassion and love to care about wellbeing make sense.

The role of luck in our lives appears decisive (Frederick, 2013). The moral significance of luck is very difficult to admit. It seems completely destabilized. The problem of free will is deeper than the problem of cause and effects. The experience of free will cannot map it on to physical reality. Free will does not correspond to a subjective fact about ourselves. The experience of free will gives us the conviction of free will and the general knowledge about how the world works give us the conviction of determinism. Viewing yourself as a system open to myriad influences makes change seem more possible. The self is not a stable entity. It is a mysterious process. The present is a mystery that doesn't get eradicated even when you have a story to tell.

We are discovering each moment by simply discovering what our life is. Think about the context in which you are going to make your next decision. The brain is making choices based upon beliefs and intentions and states that have been hammered into it over a lifetime. Physical

development is something you have no hand in. The totality of influences and states will be the thing that produces your next decision.

The religious answer to human evil is free will. Free will make the idea of sin. I am the cause of unbelief. Turning the variable of determinism and randomness free will doesn't any significance. There is no mix of randomness and determinism. This view according to religion is dehumanizing but actually, this process humanizes (Harris, 2020: 68).

Believing in free will then you say, well, this just reflects my freedom. And that's the end of the investigation. You will lose all curiosity and also all suspicion about where your desire and thoughts are coming from. Your desire reflects a large number of biological and social and cultural factors that are not under your control but might be increasingly under the control of somebody else. Freedom is not something you have freedom is something you need to struggle for.

Conclusion

We were never as free as we thought we were. There is increasing evidence that free will is always an illusion. In the past, you didn't have to pay a high price for believing in this illusion because humans were too complicated to be hacked by external systems. A thousand years ago many of your desires and decisions did not reflect free will. They reflected all kinds of biological and cultural factors. You could still believe in free will because nobody could really understand how you make decisions and nobody could manipulate people on the scale. Now free will might become one of the most dangerous illusions in the world because the easiest people to manipulate are the people who believe in free will. Because they do not believe that anybody can manipulate them.

Thoughts emerge in consciousness. We are not authoring them. We cannot think of them, we cannot choose them before

we think of them, which would require that we think of them before we think of them. If you cannot control your next thought you do not know what is going to be until it appears where freedom of will is. The experience of the present moment, even the simplest sensation is built upon layers of unconscious processing. The unconscious machinery produces not only our perceptions but our thoughts, intentions, actions, and decisions. This challenges the notion of free will and moral responsibility. Benjamin Libet found the time lag between the moment you think you decided to do something and the moment at which your brain decided. It is with the help of EEG and fMRI. The voluntary actions also can be detected before you become aware of them. Freedom means exercising my desire then you are already a slave. You are already a slave not of your biological mechanism you are a potential slave of somebody who knows how to pull the levels of what really causes you to desire one thing and not another.

In the evolution of artificial intelligence, we are at the transition period of weak AI to Artificial general intelligence. Here humans give the notion of free will to AI systems and take a sceptical approach to free will. The notion of being and free will to the AI systems make them responsible for their action and promote wellbeing in the world. Here we do not consider them as members of society but as a being, which promotes life and harmony to the whole world.

In the final stage of AI, that is Artificial Super Intelligence, the relation of man-machine and society is an open-ended question. The possibility of a human being as a wonderful memory is quite amazing.

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