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Kai-Fu-Lee (2019): AI Superpowers—China, Silicon Valley and the New World Order

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Dr. Kai-Fu Lee is one of the most influential people in the field of Artificial Intelligence and is the president and CEO of Sinovation Ventures, a China-based technology investment company. Before becoming a full-time investor, Lee held positions at Google, Microsoft, and Apple. Much of his career, Lee has worked in data and Artificial Intelligence ("AI"), both in the U.S. and China.

In "Superpowers AI—China, Silicon Valley and the New World Order", Lee brings together his experiences and insights to describe the progress that China and the US have made and are making in the field of AI.

Kai-Fu Lee explains with impressive clarity how in just 2 decades, AI has become the powerful force it is today, and how China is becoming the world leader of AI. Today, China has everything it takes to be a superpower in AI: an indomitable entrepreneurial spirit; supportive government policies; scientists well trained in the field of AI; and more data than any other country in the world (this is China's true gold). Silicon Valley is getting further and further away from that leadership; China has access to massively increased capital, data, and human resources, and has made a leap in the Western world when it comes to Internet use, online payments, and digital infrastructure.

What is absolutely clear, and this is not just Lee's view, is that the AI will drastically change the nature of human labour and make millions upon millions of jobs unnecessary. The magnitude of this change is unprecedented, both in terms of the speed at which it will happen and the consequences for our social systems. We have had other technological and industrial revolutions that have also displaced many jobs and entire sectors, but it has taken a few generations and several years for these changes to occur. In the current scenario, all this is happening at an exponential speed.

In *Superpowers AI*, Lee presents the four waves of AI, what he calls the "revolution of AI". He argues that AI will impact on society in four waves: Internet AI, business AI, perception AI, and autonomous AI. This part of the book brings to life how AI will probably evolve in the coming years, both in terms of practical applications and related to its own use.

Regarding work, new paths will be taken, creating new jobs; but, no doubt, these will only be a small part of the many to become automated. In this respect, concepts such as unconditional basic income and a guaranteed minimum wage emerge that are increasingly gaining support as systems to redefine what "work" means in the era of AI, and to avoid massive social unrest; a way to comfort workers and impose an acceptance of this new Revolution. However, Lee proposes the creation of a social investment grant for those who invest time and energy in activities that promote a more gentle, compassionate and creative society.

In the book, Kai-Fu Lee also tells of his experience during cancer treatment and how it changed his way of thinking. In this sense, at the end of the book, Kai-Fu Lee introduces a philosophical argument as to whether AI will allow us to "focus on what really makes us human: to love and be loved", and reinforces the notion that "love always wins". This is a profound existential reflection on the fact that the only aspect that is deeply human and that will not be replaced by efficient AI algorithms is love.

Lee further quotes: "I do not want to live in a society divided into technological castes, where the AI elite live in a kind of enclosed world of almost unimaginable wealth, supported by minimal contributions that keep the masses of unemployed sedated in their place. I want to create a system that serves all members of society, but also takes advantage of the wealth created by AI to build a more compassionate, affectionate and ultimately humane society."

The reading of this book is spectacular, but nowadays and in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic that started in China, I think that Silicon Valley will be able to return to

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head the lead in AI, given that China does not seem to me to be the country that is moving towards a world of love and compassion that is so necessary in the current technological context, nor does it have the necessary credibility after the slowness and omission regarding its communications with the WHO. However, the ideal would be that we could live in a world of global cooperation.

I really enjoyed reading "Superpowers of AI" and I recommend it to anyone, because I think that it is extremely important and necessary reading, both to understand the basic principles of AI, how powerful it is, as well as, to

allow us to reflect on the path we may follow in the new world we are walking towards. Read while we can still do something to shape it.

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