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Assignment #4

1. **How have human beings been changing and upgrading themselves throughout history?**

Ever since the beginning of humanity, humans have been constantly evolving and upgrading themselves. In the primitive stage of humanity, we built tools and weapons to hunt and survive. Then, we built huge cities that could house thousands of people. Humans then built even better weapons to fight one another rather than just for hunting. Next, came one of the largest changes in human history. The Industrial Revolution was one of the biggest steps forward in humanity because this was the time where we built giant machines that could do our work for us and to give us a better means of transportation. From then until now, we’ve been building and inventing machines that would fit our ever-growing needs and our need for an easier life. We’ve been building things such as motorized cars, boats, and planes to get places faster and to explore the world. In our present day, we have computers everywhere that do many things for us. This includes phones, TVs, laptops, and everything that runs on an algorithm. Now, we are trying to make computers that have intelligence of a human and can do things that a human can do. Humans are constantly changing and are changing at an exponential rate and I believe that we will someday reach the Singularity.

1. **What augments do you currently have?**

I believe that an augment doesn’t have to something that is electronic and can be anything that will make your quality of life better. For example, I wear glasses and contacts that are augments that help me to see and to not bump into things. Clothing is something that I believe is an augment because we see it as an extension of ourselves and we use it to express who we are. I believe clothing is an augment also because I can’t live without clothes otherwise I would probably freeze to death or be very embarrassed to be naked. Another augment I currently have is that I wear a watch. I feel as if a watch is a type of augment because it is attached to my body and that I use it to easily know the time rather than to look around for a clock. One augment that I think everyone has is a cell phone. Although your phone isn’t necessarily attached to you or a part of your body, it is an augment because we carry with it everywhere and that it makes our lives so much easier and helps us with many tasks. There are also many other things that are augments that other people have that I don’t need since it wouldn’t really make my quality of life better. So, an augment doesn’t have to be anything technological but rather it can be anything that makes our lives better.

1. **What does thinking about an artificial mind tell you about your current understanding of the mind?**

An artificial mind is something that we have not even come close to building yet. So, when I think of an artificial mind, I think of how our human minds are very complex and would be very difficult to replicate. Although there are many computers that can do and know way more than me, the one thing that makes them different from me is that they lack a conscience and sentient mind. If this was around ten years ago, I would also say they lack the ability to learn. However, I have seen many instances where a computer can learn and become better at what they do. The human mind is very interesting because it doesn’t really follow any algorithm and learns from experiences and can build things like a personality and a conscience from those experiences. All the “artificial minds” out today, such as Siri and Alexa, all follow some sort of algorithm and don’t really have a mind of their own and have all their actions created by a human. Sure, they can learn things like your usual routine but you can’t sit down and have a real conversation with them like you would with an actual human. Thinking about an artificial mind just makes me see how complex and unique our minds are and that it would be extremely difficult to create an artificial mind. Although I do believe that it is definitely possible to achieve that in the future.

1. **Why are people working so hard to achieve the singularity?**

I believe curiosity is one of the most widespread traits of humans. I believe this is why people are working so hard to achieve the singularity, people want to know what will happen and what the outcomes of reaching the singularity will be. For me, I don’t really want to find out what will happen if the singularity is achieved because there are endless outcomes of it, both bad and good. However, I can understand why others would want to achieve the singularity. Achieving the singularity would mean one of the biggest changes in humankind and if you were the one to do that, then you would go down in history. Achieving the singularity could also mean a much easier life for humans if it is done right. We have already become very dependent with our technology and I could see how some people would want technology to become even more dependent on up to the point where we wouldn’t have to do anything. These people would probably also want a new reality where these super intelligent machines would be the last machines humans would need to make since these machines would end up creating more machines. Although I am not really looking forward to the singularity, I can understand why people are working so hard to achieve the singularity.

1. **If achieved, who will benefit and who likely will not? What are the pros and cons?**

In this explosion of technological intelligence, it is hard to say who would benefit and who would not because there are many ways it could go. I think that only people who can afford that technology would be able to benefit from the singularity. However, I also believe that there could be a way that the technology from the singularity could be made free for everyone if those super intelligent machines could make copies of themselves. For those that would have access to the technology, then it would dramatically change their lifestyles to ones that would be ideal for them. I believe that having this technology would make everyone’s lives become equal and there would be worldwide peace. But for the people that are secluded and excluded from society, they would probably not have access to the technology and be severely left behind. However, I think this peaceful and ideal lifestyle would be short-lived. Since these super intelligent would be more intelligent than us, then it would be inevitable that they would be overthrow humanity and take over; even overriding any safety precautions humans might have placed on them. This would probably end in the extinction of humanity and be the start of the reign of the machines that humans had made. But I think I have this fear because of the many sci-fi movies that I have watched that may have influenced this idea. So, maybe that won’t be the outcome of the singularity if it is achieved and maybe it will be some other completely different. There are thousands of possibilities that could come out of this and it would be impossible to predict because of how much fast the technology would advance.