IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE A THREAT TO HUMANITY?

Nowadays, one of the topics that is discussed more and more in time is artificial intelligence and its possible effects for humanity. With the developments in the era of technology and Artificial Intelligence, it is very popular among people to think that artificial intelligence will get their jobs from their hands and make them jobless, it will be out of control for humans to control artificial intelligence, and later on they [Artificial Intelligence] will get their own independence from humanity. According to this idea of Artificial Intelligence, it might even cause to end of the Humanity. For example, in an interview with BBC, Stephen Hawking has said: “The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race.” (Cellan-Jones, “Stephen Hawking Warns Artificial Intelligence Could End Mankind.”) Of course, this is not the only case when famous people in a certain topic warns us about artificial intelligence. Most people actually have real worries about the subject. But which degree of these concerns are logic-based? Are humans tend to have concerns about Artificial Intelligence’s possible bad outcomes just because it is highly popular these days? In order to answer such questions, we must first examine the root core of these concerns about artificial intelligence. Firstly there is a rule called Moore’s law, which can be described as Wikipedia says: “Moore's law is the observation that the number of transistors in a dense integrated circuit doubles about every two years.” (“Moore’s Law.”) What this means is that the continuous development in the era of computers -since computers are built from transistors at its fundamentals-. Second thing is the improvements in the era of Artificial Intelligence that we can easily observe in our daily lives, we use google translate to translate some texts, we use navigators to find the best way for us to get where we want to go, and we also use voice recognition technology when we try to search things quickly. We also know that Artificial Intelligence has already won some battles against humans like the Deep Blue example where an Artificial Intelligence wins on chess against the world champions. Although at some point, it is understandable that these examples give us a good reasoning about artificial intelligence’s rise, it does not seem like it shows artificial intelligence’s threat to human lives. Since we need to first understand our own minds while trying to develop a real conscious artificial intelligence, since it is not that easy to pass the law side of the artificial intelligence’s development and since there are also some possible technical problems for against strong artificial intelligence it seems like artificial intelligence is not a real threat for humans.

In Why Artificial Intelligence is Not an Existential Threat, Michael Shermer argues that most AI doomsdays are based on a false analogy between humans and machines. Machines do not have emotions while we do have them. And the problem arises when we tend to think artificial intelligence as an emotional being like ourselves (32). This argument from Michael Shermer is actually one of the biggest misunderstandings of people when they are arguing about Artificial Intelligence. Indeed people tend to think machines like human beings, they do tend to search intention for Artificial Intelligence’s acts. When people think about an artificial intelligence they are unconsciously putting themselves in the Artificial Intelligence’s place and see humans in a way that humans see ants, then they think their life would be in threat since their life is not valuable for AI. But this does not give any reason to think that it is highly possible AI to end humanity. Since AI does not have emotions comes naturally, we do not have any reason to think that they care about wiping out the human race. Notice that the problem is not about Artificial Intelligence, rather it is about human nature again. As long as we do not teach Artificial Intelligence to hate humans, it is not reasonable to think AI would ever want to be the end of human life.

Secondly, another problem with arguing about Artificial Intelligence is as Alan Bundy suggested in the Smart Machines are Not a Threat to Humanity, is that many people’s tendency to ascribe too much intelligence to narrowly focused AI systems (41). Most people forget the technical difficulties when researchers try to build an artificial intelligence. Besides that we are not even close to building the thing that is called Strong AI, we are also struggling while we try to build Narrow AI’s. Narrow AI is an artificial intelligence that focuses on one task, like playing chess or navigating roads etc. This has nothing to do with consciousness. On the other hand, Strong AI is completely another problem which involves philosophical questions too. First, there are technical problems which we must solve these problems in order to surpass the problem of Strong AI. While we conceptualize artificial intelligence, we look at humans’ brains and use these informations that we gained from neuroscience to develop our own artificial intelligence models. The problem is, we are not even sure how our brains work. So the question arises: How can we build a real conscious artificial intelligence even though we don’t know how our own brains work. So it is not surprising that we cannot build strong AI right now, but it is not the same thing as saying “we cannot build Strong AI in the future” nor “we will build Strong AI in the future”. What this situation shows is actually a skeptical attitude towards whether or not Strong AI is possible. However, it indeed shows us that many of the worries that are discussed today are the results of misunderstandings of people’s concept of artificial intelligence.

Lastly, we could say that developments in the era of artificial intelligence, would also increase human intelligence and humans capability of doing things. Because in order to create intelligent beings, we must also gain some level of intelligence and we must be capable of adapting a new kind of technologies. Actually, there is a view called “transhumanism” which says humans will adapt and embrace new technologies as it develops. Rather than AI taking over humans it is more likely for humans to evolve to other intelligent beings like cyborgs which use technology in their favors.

So according to these reasons above, it seems that Artificial Intelligence is not necessarily a threat to humans lives. As long as we are careful about the problem of Artificial Intelligence it is not likely for Artificial Intelligence to be a threat to our lives since we are also adapting new technologies as they develop, we do determine the Artificial Intelligence’s rules of action and their purposes and finally there is a long way to attain Strong AI.

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