

Soc 105-002

Prof. Elliot

29 September 2021

THE WORLD VS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The world of technology has only gotten smarter and more intelligent. Intelligence is the keyword for technology that is slowly starting to take over called artificial intelligence. Some think this is a good thing but some view this technology as dangerous, which it can be. There are several views on the good and the bad of newly emerging technology that will be analyzed in this essay. Some points that some people may view as beneficial could be viewed by others as harmful or even dangerous to humans. AI may be better at telling us what we like and better at certain jobs than humans are but is this something that humans should be okay with? This point is up for debate but the fact that AI even has a place to take over in the world is concerning to some. The government is playing a part in devaluing its workers so much that people barely want to work, and the ‘existential function of the social’ is taking a beating due to the AI taking over so many of humans’ jobs that it is seen to be dangerous.

The point of human life is to have meaning. Whether that means putting meaning into your own life or others around you, you still need to have meaningfulness in your life in order to live a happy life. This is the description of “the existential function of the social” which is described in “Microfoundations” by Fligstein and McAdams. Collectively as a whole community and species we make each others lives meaningful. “Weber viewed humans as voracious meaning makers and collaborative symbolists” (Fligstein & McAdams, n.d.). This is explaining the concept of the existential function of the social. This is saying that humans were seen to be

done on their own and something was only made meaningful because others thought of it as meaningful as well. The function of humans living was because they made their lives and others around them meaningful. This is the purpose of humans lives, the purpose of the existential function of the social, to make lives meaningful. The thought of the existential function of the social is due to humans “ability to inhibit self-consciousness by embedding the individual in a system of socially constructed meanings” (Fligstein & McAdams, n.d.). This means that we separate our inner-view from our outer-perspective in the world. Our outer perspective, the one that experiences life directly is held in check by our inner perspective. Our inner perspective is the meaning making operations which is taking our outer perspectives and putting meaning to them by our inner perspective.

In Karl Marx’s article, “Estranged Labor” he is describing how the government is devaluing its workers so much that how could anyone want to work anymore. Everything in the economy is becoming increasingly more expensive so what are the causes to the workers for this happening? The workers are caused to work more to meet the demands of the economy. Because of this, “the worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and range” (Marx, 1844). The government is basically wanting workers to produce more and work harder while the workers are doing so, they are becoming less valued and are just making less money. An example of this is “with the increasing value of the world of things proceeds in direct proportion the devaluation of the world of men” (Marx, 1844). The harder the economy is pushing the workers to work the more the workers are going to be devalued so why should the workers want to work anymore? This is the real question which is

humans.

In Harari's article "21 Lessons for the 21st Century" he explains how Artificial intelligence or, AI, is taking over work places and just overall typical human jobs. Things like driving and factory jobs are being overtaken by robots who Harari claims to be bettering the human kind. Robotic driving cars can be seen as bettering humans by providing less danger. The robots who operate the cars have the potential to communicate with each other which could prevent accidents where as human drivers don't have this capability. Another positive point that Harari brought up that having AI would be good is with health care. If everyone had a virtual doctor that they could ask questions to all the time without having to take time to go to the actual doctors office we could be healthier as a whole. Yes there are downfalls to both of these points but they are also not full developed yet. Allowing AI to take over some human jobs may have a huge benefit to humans which could possibly allow us more free time and more.

The argument between Fligstein & McAdams the existential function of the social and Harari's point on how AI can be good for humans is that AI takes away the whole point of the existential function of the social. The point of the existential function of the social is once again to put meaning into your life and others by making things or doing jobs or just helping out. How is someone supposed to put meaning into their life if AI is doing everything for people? It doesn't work like that. When AI is telling us what we like to do and makes decisions for us we as humans don't have anything to look forward to. There is no longer the option to get up and go to a job that is going to benefit the economy, humans can't just get up and drive somewhere alone because they will have something driving for them. Humans will basically become trapped in themselves because robots are taking over every activity that humans used to do. How can

possible job? They can't. The disagreement in the article and the book between Harari and Fligstein & McAdams is that the existential function of the social is for humans to make their lives purposeful. The point made in "21 lessons for the 21st century" is that AI is good for human kind because it is possible that it is safer. The existential function of the social can't be fulfilled by humans if AI is completing all of the tasks like jobs and just fun activities that humans normally do.

In Marx's article he is explaining how the government is devaluing its workers so much that they will barely want to work the more demanding the economy gets. This in turn will leave a lot of unemployed jobs in the market which people can solve by creating AI that will take the spots over. The cohesiveness that is found with Harari is him stating how AI taking over is a good thing and can possibly save lives of workers. Jobs that may be overly demanding or jobs that no one wants to do can be taken over by artificial intelligence. Now Harari thinks this is a good thing because it can possibly bring increased free time to humans and keep some safer but again this also brings drawbacks that were previously discussed. When "objectification appear[s]. . . the worker is robbed of the objects most necessary not only for his life but for his work" (Marx, 144, pg. 33). This is explaining how objectification may seem like something as simple as the workers being pushed out of their field but it is actually something more complicated. The workers are being forced out of their field and out of their jobs because they are being objectified so much that they can no longer do the job that they were hired to do. The workers are explained to be "related to the *product* of his *labour* as to an *alien* object" (Marx, 1844, pg. 33). The workers are just becoming inanimate objects that are just doing to the job for the company that hired them. They are no longer valued and they are no longer getting the

things they need to work, why should they work? They will scoot over and find a different job in a different field or town and that is going to make way for the AI to take over and work for no wage and work without complaints which will be easier on the employer.

In conclusion, the work force is becoming something that is debatable over between different people. People like Marx and Harari are explaining how workers should either find different jobs or not work at all because AI taking over is good for humans and their safety. Harari also states how he thinks that humans are in need of more free time and this comes with letting the artificial intelligence take over jobs of others. On the other hand people like Fligstein and McAdams are explaining how if we let the AI take over too much it could be detrimental to the human kind and what we were created to do. Humans are supposed to make their own lives and others meaningful by partaking in some sort of activity towards the economy. If AI is taking over majority of the jobs how are people supposed to put in their share of the work for the economy. How are people supposed to feel like they are putting meaning into other peoples lives and their own. When people will have no tasks to wake up and do how are they supposed to view their lives as valuable? It will definitely be hard to do. Harari, Marx, and Fligstein and McAdams all either agree or disagree with some point of each others points but until AI takes over I guess people will have to continue to put in their share of work into the economy.

Fligstein, N., & McAdam, D. (2015). *A theory of fields*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Harari, Y. N. (2019). *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*. Vintage.

MARX, KARL. 1844. "Estranged Labour." Pp. 32-38 in *Social Theory: The Multicultural Readings* (2010) edited by C. Lemert. Philadelphia: Westview Press.