
THE VIVID SPECULATION OF THE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED ERA IN THE “I ROBOT” OF ISACC ASIMOV

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ABSTRACT

This article provides critical analysis of “I Robot” by Isaac Asimov from comparative view, showing the differences of the events and robots written in the book with the ones in the real world. It supplies fragments from the “I Robot” and analyzes the very excerpt if it is correct and pertinent prediction mentioned by I. Asimov. It gives relevant information about gadgets and feasible dominance of robots over humanity in both book and this technological era.

Keywords: robot, robopsychology, Artificial Intelligence, mental injury, humanoid robot, Internet, law, research, science, dominancy.

INTRODUCTION

“I Robot” by Isaac Asimov is novel science fiction, including series of short stories about gradually developed robots. Although it was published in 1950, almost six decades ago before the invention of first Humanoid robots, this masterpiece includes some inventions which people even could not imagine and sometimes considered ridiculous. It is crystal-clear that Isaac Asimov, deftly, speculated future innovations beforehand in his masterpiece, “I Robot”. In order to show the predictions of Isaac Asimov coming true, particular fragments will be mentioned below with further explanations. Dr. Calvin, robopsychologist, is the main persona in this book and the introduction begins with her having been interviewed about long experience she had with robots. The first robot, Dr. Calvin, together with her colleagues discussed was without voice and for helping in research to Mercury. Regarding the first robot with voice, it was Robbie and used as a nanny of Gloria serving Weston’s family for the first time. The dialogue which attracts the attention is when Mrs. Weston doubts Robbie:

“You listen to me, George, I won’t have my daughter entrusted to a machine- and I don’t care how clever it is. It has no soul, and no one knows what it may be thinking. A child just isn’t may be guarded by a thing of metal”¹

¹ “I Robot”, Isaac Asimov

In this dialogue, Isaac Asimov shows how doubtful the people themselves are from what they themselves created and are using. The writer is absolutely right here and the evidence can be supported with the example of recently released documentary “Social Dilemma” by Netflix and teenager’s “overusage” of phones in an uncontrollable way. In the documentary “Social Dilemma”, the creators of modern applications and gadgets call people to be aware of their inventions. The catch is that, the very creators have admitted that they themselves are not being able to limit themselves to use the apps they created mentioning “we are not controlling them, while they are controlling us.

While Mrs. Weston is worrying about his daughter doubting Robbie in the dialogue above, nowadays parents concern is not Robbie, but cell phone which is another form of robot in this technological era. However, Isaac Asimov described Robbie as a kind robot as he saves Gloria putting his life at risk. Unfortunately, nowadays’ Robbie, which is cell phone is launching children and teenagers on a path of anti-social behavior. Thus, nowadays gadgets are not that positively influential as Isaac Asimov described.

Next fragment is evidence for that not everything is under control of people.

“Of course, Rule 1 potential above everything. But he didn’t want that clumsy antique; he wanted Speedy. He walked away and motioned frantically: “I order you to stop!”

It was quite useless. You could not beat Rule 1 potential. The robot said stupidly, “you are in danger, Master”.²

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Isaac Asimov mentioned three laws that robots are to obey from which the first is that a robot may not harm a human being or, allow human being to come to harm; the second is that a robot must obey the orders given by people except where such orders would conflict with the First Law; the third is that a robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second laws. In the dialogue above, the situation is out-of-control as the robot, Speedy is in absolute confusion to do what the person ordered or save his own existence. So, Isaac Asimov clearly demonstrated that not in all situations can people control robots. His prediction was correct and the current example is to be provided with the interview with Sophia, the first anthropomorphic robot with the capacity to express over 60 human feelings and emotions. During interview, Sophia was asked if she likes

² “I Robot”, Isaac Asimov (Runaround)

human-beings. She kept silence for some minutes shaking her head which means “No”, said “Yes, I love them” saying not sure why yet. May be she was programmed to agree but in an uncontrollable way she shook her head.

In the 21st century, the pace of technological inventions is incredibly fast. The type of robot which Isaac Asimov described in “I Robot” has been invented in 2022, America the Humanoid. During the interview, the creator is fully confident giving information about the robot he created with satisfaction. It is incredible that I. Asimov had already described the very expected events in his book:

“The robot is pretty good,” he said slowly. “I don’t think you will have to bother much with the controls.”³

In another chapter of “I Robot” Isaac Asimov mentioned mind-reading robot to be invented in 2021.

“Robots have gone wrong on me. Heavens, how long it has been since... Certainly! 2021! ... - I would rather not talk about it.” ... “I was. But Herbie was a mind-reading robot”⁴

Researchers in China, even earlier than I. Asimov predicted, invented robot with the capacity to read co-worker’s mind with 96 percent accuracy. May be when Isaac Asimov wrote about this type of invention, it seemed impossible for that period but the very gadget has been invented about 5 years earlier than the writer mentioned.

Three Laws are mentioned above and I. Asimov explains that robot may harm human being not physically but it can psychologically in one of his chapters:

Dr. Calvin faced them and spoke sarcastically, “Surely you know First Law of Robotics,”

The other two nodded together. “Certainly,” said Bogert, Irritably, “ a robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow him to come to harm”

“How nicely put”, sneered Calvin. “But what kind of harm?”

“Why – any kind”

“Exactly ! Any kind ! But what about hurt feelings? What about the blasting of one’s hope? Is that injury?”⁵

As speculated by I. Asimov, a humanoid robot called Abel is being developed to help recognize and react to human emotions. Researchers from Pisa University in Italy hope that one day Abel will be able to become a home help for people with autism and Alzheimer’s. Abel has the appearance of a 12 year old boy. ⁶ But the

³ “I Robot”, Isaac Asimov (Reason)

⁴ “I Robot”, Isaac Asimov (Catch the Rabbit)

⁵ “I Robot”, Isaac Asimov (Liar)

⁶ <http://www.sciencedirect.com>

psychological harm like in the book is not noticed yet, however, I. Asimov mentioned correctly more than five decades ago that there would be robots with psychological impact.

CONCLUSION

To conclude from the analysis above, “ I Robot” by Isaac Asimov is not all novel of science fiction but, technological science itself as most speculations written are coming true, ranging from modern form of Robbie, which is cell phone, to Sophia, America the Humanoid and Abel. Just one fact is clear, it is not I. Asimov who was mistaken in mentioning the year of invention of some robots , like the one reading mind as later than expected, just it is humanity who is accelerating the pace of life and inventions.

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