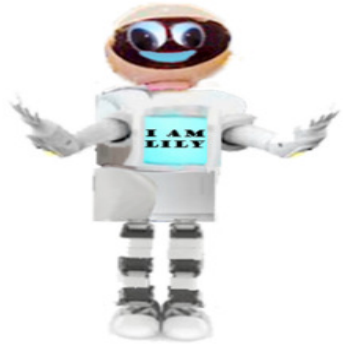


In the year 2020, Thomas & Peter visit a restaurant.

At the entrance, Lily the waitress (a robot) welcomes them.



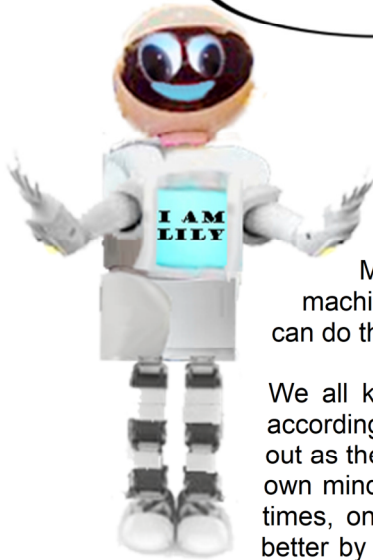
Food punctually arrives.



Finally, a friendly wave of goodbye.

It is a surreal experience without human interaction in a modern, progressive restaurant.

WELCOME TO MY WORLD!



The world is chasing after Artificial Intelligence. Indirectly, people are admitting that their human intelligence is not good enough to pursue goals to satiate themselves with what life should offer them. The rise of robots to take over human work is an attestation to the propensity for Man to subordinate their human abilities to those of machines. Robots are “revered” as superior “beings” that can do things faster and better than efforts of human hands.

We all know that when employers employ workers to work according to their paymasters’ bidding, it does not always work out as the employers desire. The human employees have their own minds that might go against the inputs of instructions. At times, on hindsight, many tasks could have been performed better by the paymasters themselves instead of relying on the paid labour that brings with it a host of unwanted repercussions. Sometimes, bad effects arise not due to the workers’ fault, but because of unwise or inappropriate calls by the masters.

If we replace the human employees by workers that are machines, there is no guarantee that the workers (robots) do not play truant or dissident because of their own independent minds of artificial intelligence (formidable system process) or because of their human masters’ improper calls. There are hazards of faulty programming or misconceived expectations of what machines can be empowered to do whereby humans just sit back and admire the machine prowess. In the example of AI in chess playing, we see the possibility of one robot challenging another to become ever more powerful in its absolute strength to overwhelm all human masters of the game.

Will armies of drones in battlefields resist timely human interventions when they run amok? Even in the civilian space, major disasters can happen with machines simply because of a single critical code, of a single press of a wrong switch or because the AI grows too powerful on its own autonomous capability development to surpass Man’s abilities to bridle it. It could be a dilemma for Man because on one hand, dependency on the machines has become an enslavement that Man simply cannot forgo; and on the other hand, letting the AI

system continues on its programmed trajectory of evolvement carries serious implications of the master losing control of the potentially serious detriments. Everything has pros and cons; so is chasing after higher and higher technologies. It is not that Man should absolutely eschew developing new tools and methods of doing things more efficiently. However, there is ample evidence in the history of Man that human wisdom runs far behind human ego in going after everything that looks new and exciting in the horizon. After one horizon is passed, another one appears and the chasing game continues zealously without thinking about whether it is simply feeding wants rather than needs; that needs cannot be met by alternatives that are less classy hi-tech and profligate.

God tells us through Prophet Isaiah:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." – Isa. 55:8-9

"Progress is good!" people sing unquestioningly. Common sense would tell us that not all progress is good. Not all progress that is intrinsically useful turns out to be good in the hands of foolish Man who follows his egoistic ways instead of the higher ways and purpose of God.

*The world has progressed
From clubs to spears
From spears to bows and arrows
From bows and arrows to handguns
From handguns to big guns
From big guns to ... atomic bombs to hydrogen bombs ...
What comes next?
Apocalypse, Armageddon ... human extinction???*

Advancement in AI and robotics is progress, with potential of a more dangerous world when its utility is hijacked for nefarious purposes – such as power abuse of big data in civilian domains or the heightening of the arms race between countries.

One cardinal rule for the progress of AI and robotics to be good is that it should be beneficial and not harmful; it should be Man's servants and not his master. Can anyone guarantee the harmlessness? The obvious answer to this question means one thing – we cannot over-rely on it and ought to apply wisdom to choose needs over wants. That is to say, we must apply due diligence to be cautious in the chase after it.

Improvement in quality of life (better health, greater peace, lesser air pollutants from industries, etc.) is PROGRESS – which raises the Happiness Index, is good and desirable.

Are leaders of the world chasing after the PROGRESS that is good and desirable more zealously than the progress of AI and robotics? The big problem of humans is that they are putting their energies unbalanced between the good PROGRESS and the pride-based or fiscally-justified chase after unparalleled advancements that correspond with unparalleled evils, not limited to the evil of displacing the human spirit everywhere with the proliferation of cold and non-emotional but super-mechanically-efficient beings.

This is what the Lord says: ‘You say about this place, “It is a desolate waste, without people or animals.” – Jer. 33:10

The immense potential of humans wreaking destruction on themselves (without salvation) with their infatuation with technologies that they know least to handle responsibly is understandable from Biblical warnings about the end days. God tells us through Prophet Isaiah:

“so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” – Isa. 55:11

John Lee



While waiting for the AGM to start, Bishop Kee told me a story from his Thailand days. It was about a Thai Christian woman who only had a son. She had prayed for the salvation of her father for many years and in her desperation, she offered anything for her father’s salvation.

One day while playing in the fields, her son ate some poisonous berries and died. Bishop Terry and his wife Sally were very sad because this lady was a very good help to them. During the funeral services held over a few days, her father attended and he heard the messages. By God’s grace, he came to believe in Jesus.

Bishop drew a parallel, this lady offered her only son for the salvation of her father.