

*What Role Should Machines Play In Our Lives?*

As technology increases each year, businesses and agriculture alike become more efficient in their production. This being so, humans in the twenty-first century have come to rely on machines for their daily activities more than people decades ago. While this may be beneficial, I believe it ultimately diminishes human interaction and relationships, costs too much money, and allows jobs to be outsourced to robots. Robots should partake in society and the work force until they take on the distinct characteristics and traits of a human persona.

With more advances in technology come more jobs being outsourced to robots. While the companies may be increasing production, the unemployment rate will continue to rise causing a vanishing of the “middle class” between corporate America and the average man. With Americans being unemployed, they begin to save their money and spend less, causing a downfall in corporate America and the economy of the nation. Also, with the continuation of knowledge as more discoveries take place comes the dilemma of robots being schooled. Robots would have to be up-to-date on current events and innovations for them to be efficient and effective in their roles. Without this, they could be using information from 2010 to attempt to solve problems in 2030; this time difference would not only create unnecessary difficulties such as time delays, but would also have the robots using obsolete knowledge.

One must draw the line to how frequent robots appear in the daily life of society, as they could potentially destroy current human interaction and relationships. Robots don't have any code of ethical conduct; they don't understand the social norms and trends of society. They have the potential to create their own rules and set their own standards if given the chance to dominate. If robots, once given a human persona, are exposed to the public, the dynamics of conversations and values would be changed. While some may argue that people “can't trust

[other] people,” and that robots could be trusted, I would have to disagree. The whole point of trust is to build it; if people can automatically trust robots, no real trust has been formed as the robot has no other choice but to keep one’s secrets. Also, conversations would become very shallow and dull with robots. Instead of talking about one’s journey through life and the struggles he or she is encountering, a conversation with a robot would most likely include topics on the weather, surface feelings, or physical items in the vicinity. Maja Mataric, a professor of computer science at the University of Southern California, stated that “human coaches....might read a person’s facial expression, but even an intelligent robot has difficulty interpreting nuances in lighting and appearance.” In this, a person could mask one’s feelings and the robot wouldn’t notice whereas a human most likely could.

As robots are made more efficiently, their cost in production also increases. The United States of America is currently over \$11 trillion in debt; the cost of producing many robots to perform acts that humans are capable of is absurd. As these robots are most likely partaking in studies with the elderly, the cost of Medicare would especially increase. Instead of the government spending what little money provided on preserving the health of senior citizens through new vaccines and cures, the government would be giving money to create machines to stimulate the minds of senior citizens. While this idea might sound intriguing, one must realize that normal human interaction could perform this job just as well. Corinna Latha, the CEO of AnthroTroniz, stated “robotics ‘has never been hot in the investment community, and I totally get why; it’s hardware, and investing in hardware has a low return on investment when you are comparing it to Internet-based or software-based products.” The cost of creating robots far outweighs the profit and results attained.

While one could argue that the effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency of robots in a community would outweigh all disadvantages, I would have to disagree with him. One must not forget that robots too are flawed; they have the potential to break down and lose all the capabilities they once had. In this, attachments, connections, and products made could be lost in a heartbeat. If nothing is there to replace them, the nation would, in essence, be coming to a halt.

Robots should only be used in society until they take on the personalities of humans. Between the risk of destroying human interaction, the cost to produce, and the outsourcing of jobs, robots cannot be relied on for society's daily activities. Given that there are no concrete long-term consequences, robots right now are a "giant social experiment" and should not be tested when the nation is in such a depressed state.