



Aviation Meltdown: Robots To ‘Replace Human Pilots’

Most commercial airliners already fly mostly on autopilot and are able to land and take off with little pilot assistance. The next big wave of AI will be to replace human pilots altogether. Thus, aviation will follow the lead of automotive transportation giving way to autonomous vehicles. □ TN Editor

Dr Subhash Kak - a professor in computer engineering - previously warned that advanced machines could “replace humans at literally all jobs”.

He said robots will one be able to absorb more information, access it more quickly and compute it into actions “more complex, and yet more logical, than any person ever could”.

Now Dr Kak has exclusively told Daily Star Online that one area of the economy that could find itself under threat from AI is aviation.

This comes after we reported how a robot take over could plunge the

world into a hellish dystopia.

He told us: “Robots and cognitive machines are already more advanced than humans at most jobs.

“Recognising faces, for example, or analysing traffic on the internet, or making sense of ones likes and dislikes and using that for marketing, or in the flying of the plane.

“They have overtaken humans at intellectual games likes chess.”

He referenced reports last year, published in Wired, that jet manufacturer Boeing were targeting the production of jetliners that fly themselves, making the decisions currently made by humans.

Technology already carries out a number of aviation tasks, such as autopilot, but the future could see humans taken out of the equation.

Although this would cut costs for industries including aviation, Dr Kak adds it is likely to result in global depression.

He said: “There will be massive unemployment. People want to be useful and work provides meaning, and so the world would sink into despair.”

Luckily, however, Dr Kak believes we are a long way off having the technology to replace the human pilot just yet.

He continued: “I don’t believe complete control from take-off to landing will be given to robots any time soon.

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Joseph Fletcher's Dark Dreams Becoming Our Reality

This is a thoughtful article and an important part of the history of modern ethics: Fletcher was an Episcopalian priest who converted to atheism before launching into situational ethics in the early 1970s. This twisted system of ethics has enabled modern Technocrats to do anything their mind can dream up. □ TN Editor

Joseph Fletcher (1905-1991) was one of the most influential philosophers and bioethicists of the twentieth century. His advocacy blazed the path for many of the radical social transitions we are experiencing today. He gained fame as the prime proponent of "situational ethics," popularly known as social relativism. But his work in bioethics eroding the sanctity of human life and promoting a utilitarian hedonism was just as society-altering.

Starting in the early 1970s, and continuing for the rest of his life, the Episcopalian priest turned atheist mounted a frontal intellectual assault on the Judeo-Christian ideal of universal human equality.

His 1975 essay "Indicators of Humanhood" was profoundly persuasive in

this regard. Published in the *Hastings Center Report*, an influential bioethics journal, Fletcher argued that people should be divided between “truly human beings” and the “subpersonal”—those among us whom we should deem of little consequence because of their lesser capacities. Fletcher even proposed a loose formula with fifteen “criteria or indicators” by which an individual’s moral worth—or humanhood—could be judged. These included:

- minimum intelligence (score too low, and one is deemed “mere biological life”)
- self-awareness (“essential to the role of personality”)
- a sense of futurity (“subhuman animals do not look forward in time”)
- memory (“It is this trait alone that makes man . . . a cultural instead of instinctive being”)
- communication (“Disconnection from others, if it is irreparable, is dehumanization”)
- neocortical function (“In the absence of the synthesizing function of the cerebral cortex, the person is non-existent. Such persons are objects, not subjects”)

Fletcher was not coy about the consequences that would follow from society’s acceptance of his premises. In another 1975 essay, “Being Happy, Being Human,” he described participating in a panel discussion of the treatment of seriously disabled babies. A physician who cared for a developmentally disabled boy reported that though his patient had a very low IQ, the lad was clearly happy and, without doubt, a fully human being. “So what?” Fletcher essentially said, as he coldly dismissed the worth of developmentally disabled people:

Idiots are not, never were, and never will be in any degree responsible [because they cannot understand the consequences of action]. Idiots, that is to say, are not human. The problem they pose is not lack of sufficient mind, but of any mind at all. No matter how euphoric their behavior might be, they are outside the pale of human integrity.

There was a purpose to such blatant dehumanization: to gain support for

killing these “subpersonal” beings, the decisions about which Fletcher described as a merely “clinical” matter. In the case of disabled infants, he wrote elsewhere, infanticide should simply be considered “postnatal abortion.”

In Fletcher’s last book, *The Ethics of Genetic Control*, he prophesied that breakthroughs in biotechnology would generate a transformation “of such a radical nature” that biotechnologists would become more powerful agents of change than “Presidents and Parliaments and Pentagons.” How would this new awesome power be exercised? Through “quality control” via genetic screening:

There is no such thing as a right to bring crippled children into the world. If we choose family size, we should also choose family health If the State is morally justified in repelling an unwelcome invader . . . why shouldn’t the family be protected from an idiot or terribly diseased sibling?

This may sound awful to readers, but Fletcher’s influence was so pronounced that Albert R. Jonsen, author of *The Birth of Bioethics*, once described him as the “patriarch of bioethics.” He could also be called its most prescient prophet. Indeed, it is stunning to consider how fundamentally society has accepted Fletcher’s philosophical advocacy.

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