

THE HUMAN BEING AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: CHOOSING RESPONSIBILITIES

Robots do not get sick, they do not need motivating, they do not get depressed. It is tempting to use them in business. But are we prepared for the social consequences of the automation process? Is contemporary man ready for a life without work? - asks the founder of the Humanites, [Zofia Dzik](#)

INTERVIEWER: *Joanna Rubin*

JOANNA RUBIN: John Naisbitt, a futurist, claims that the most exciting breakthroughs will not occur because of technology but because of an expanding concept of what it means to be a human being. And yet there are many worst-case scenarios about the impact of technology on humankind itself.

ZOFIA DZIK: Scenarios under which we shall be completely controllable from the outside, that artificial intelligence will take over control of us and will consider us to be the weakest link and that we may not be able to stop this process. That the love of comfort, and an easy life will prevail, that we will increasingly choose friendship with a machine rather than with another human being. This is what we discussed, among other things, at the Humanites foundation's conference "Leader in 4.0 Revolution. Leadership and Human and Technology". Sixty-five per cent of the conference participants pointed to the risk of mankind retreating into the virtual world because of problems with finding sense and sufficient stimulation in the real world. I fear that due to the social crisis that is feeding the growing wave of populism all this could happen in combination with a huge social revolution on a par with the October Uprising.

Can you also see some positive scenarios?

- Of course, I can see the tremendous opportunities offered by new technologies, e.g. with regard to restoring physical fitness or developing medicines for very rare diseases. It is also about improving many processes, e.g. work that is tedious, repetitive and not very evolutionary. It is just the tip of the iceberg of many possibilities. However, you should look at technological development horizontally, broadly, from different angles. Consequently, I can also see a threat, of course, that is to what extent will technological changes affect man himself, his sensitivities, his various imperfections. All the things that make us human. How much will we start interfering with who man is, with his essence?

What exactly do you have in mind?

- Technology has no ethics. It is neither good nor bad until it is implemented. It is us who give it an ethical marker, depending on the purposes for which we use it. What I have in mind is the advanced use of big data and self-learning systems and any devices, solutions which could be installed in human beings and which would allow control over them. Impulses to the brain will make us even more susceptible to influence and manipulation. It is very real, and it is already happening because today we can influence the way people think, what they should buy, where they should go, who to vote for in the elections without being aware that they are, in fact, being subjected to manipulation.

This is evidenced by the Cambridge Analytica scandal, for example.

- It shows the power of influence. Based on, apparently, 50,000 FB profiles at the beginning (there was talk of 50 million profiles in the final version), various psychological profiles were created, what affects whom, what moves people, what makes them emotional, what they respond to and who is indifferent to what. You can imagine how far we can go if such solutions are placed directly in the human body, in an

individual's brain.

Science fiction.

- It is said, however, that it is not that remote. There are certainly many projects like CA going on in the world, especially in countries where there are less stringent rules regarding the extensive use of behavioural data and influencing people's subconscious. Ethics and greed will always clash with one another. That is why new regulations are urgently needed. Technological changes are inevitable, and they are occurring more and more rapidly. At present we have a dormant period in which we think we are in control of the situation. However, automation processes have started in virtually all industries, and in every sector of the economy investments are being made in this area. The time will come when, practically at the same time, in many places we shall be seeing the effects of automation and more massive layoffs.

What will the benefits and effects be?

- From the business perspective, we shall gain more effectiveness in automation processes (cost savings), reliability and better results. The possibility of an error being made in many activities by a human being is much greater than the possibility of an error being made by artificial intelligence. It is a question of a certain reliability. Robots do not get sick, they do not take time off, they do not need motivating, they do not get depressed, they do not get distracted. It is tempting to use them in business. But are we prepared for the social consequences of the automation process? Is mankind today ready for life without work? There are no challenges relating to the management of human resources. This is tempting businesswise. But are we prepared for the social consequences of that process, is mankind today ready for a life without work which, apart from being a source of income, is also an essential element which gives a sense of purpose to the lives of many people?

Technology is neither good nor bad until it is implemented. It is us who decide what to use it for, and it is us who give it an ethical marker. The advanced use of big data and self-learning systems will make us even more susceptible to influence and manipulation than we are now.

Do you think we are prepared for this?

- According to the report quoted at our conference, employers are focused on internal processes, restructuring, and they can see that today's market is an employee's market. They do not invest much in projects aimed at retraining employees. Unfortunately, without that more than 20 per cent of the people who lose their jobs may remain without sustainable employment opportunities.

What actions would you suggest taking?

- Being aware enough to choose a path of true corporate social responsibility for which digital transformation itself will be a test. Because social responsibility should, above all, boil down to being responsible for one's own people, and not just to the periodical transfers of funds to support external charity organizations.

What will happen if so many people suddenly lose their jobs?

- Research proves that losing one's job is one of the most traumatic life experiences. This experience is on a par with losing a loved one. This will give rise to anxiety that could foster populism and violent political change. You have to stop, notice the problem and think about who can solve it or who can contribute to solving it.

But you need time, a different perspective to stop like this. How should we put this into practice, where should we start?

- Choose with awareness, start with yourself. If you are a leader, you manage teams of people, a company, ask yourself to what extent you are ready to lose your job overnight? What could you do for yourself now if you knew that you were going to be out of the job market the next day? Would you be afraid, would you feel lost and confused or, on the contrary - would that be an opportunity for a change?

What would have to change in the way you live your life, so that you would not be afraid in such a situation? All of these conclusions and reflections must then be translated into the people we manage. Prepare them for changes so that they can use their own internal resources. So that they have a life outside work. So that they have their own social ecosystem in which they will feel loved and which will support them, but also with reciprocation, so that they will be able to contribute to this system.

There are not many such leaders, are there?

- Only a person who is aware will ask themselves such questions; one who knows how to make a choice that is important to him and which concerns his values. A few years ago I coined the term “tunnel development”, where we are focused only on very fragmentary reality, development that is exclusively mental, professional, etc. The point is not to rush through the tunnel but to be an active participant in life. Not to be passive, to motivate oneself and other people to ask questions, to set boundaries.

What else could today's leaders do?

- Choose cooperation rather than competition. People who manage are often responsible for thousands of people, they can get together, come up with initiatives as part of the changing legal regulations or standardizing certain phenomena, e.g. in the context of risks in the area of the development of new technology, the extent to which data can be used, the scope of experiments combining humans and technology. Large technology companies are competing for cloud power, but they can decide to join forces in the struggle for humankind. Just as in the past we had to create international road traffic regulations, at the time of the development of motorization, so today we urgently need such regulations - warning, prohibitory and mandatory signs in the area of new technologies, and especially with regard to the use of artificial intelligence and big data.

Why do you think that the struggle for humankind is so important?

- Because today it is often reduced to consumption; people live in a culture of too many choices. It is obvious they cannot keep up, they are lost and confused and increasingly lonely; this is something that is already being talked about not only in psychotherapists' offices. Testimony of this, among other things, is the fact that loneliness was one of the most important topics at the latest World Economic Forum in Davos which showed that in many Western civilizations more than 30 per cent of the population are already feel the lasting effects of loneliness. The creeping phenomenon of loneliness in young people is also generating a huge cost for the global economy. This is also discernible in Poland, for example in the growing number of cases of depression. In 2018, even the Supreme Audit Office took an interest in this phenomenon, when it transpired that the number of suicides in Poland is greater than the number of casualties in car accidents.

What benefits will we gain if we all come together in the discussion about humans and technology?

- We will strengthen our responsibility and influence in this way. Let me quote a passage from the book titled *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl: “Freedom is only part of the story and half of the truth. (...) That is why I recommend that the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast”. We need to join forces, and not just compete, but also cooperate for higher values. Discuss, share reflections.

A think tank?

- I believe in the power of thoughts and words. But today it is very important to move on to taking action, which is why nine years ago I established Humanites as an organization that takes a systemic approach to the subject of man in the contemporary world. But not only as a think tank, but more as a “Do Tank” which launches projects in search of the leverage effect of social change and promotes the need for Coherent Leadership™, based on the worked out by me model.

For example?

- An example is a project called “Two Hours for the Family” which is now in its eighth edition and is turning into an international social movement to bring people closer together. I am looking for

courageous leaders who are not afraid to look into the future from the perspective of at least another one hundred years. The Humanites Social Investor Circle, which I created one and a half years ago, is also a beginning. We meet regularly, and it is already bringing together many leaders, businessmen who are aware, who see the opportunities in the development of new technologies as well as the threats, and therefore the need for action to awaken the humanity in people and provide financial support for such projects. We also talked about this at the annual conference spreading the idea of Coherent Leadership™: “Leader in Revolution 4.0. Leadership and Human and Technology” to which I invited people who have real influence on their employees and the community as well as on trends in technological changes. These included heads of the major new technology companies in the world, as well as philosophers, scholars, theologians, people from the world of music and art. Because the world is extremely complicated, complex and unpredictable.

You like to bring different worlds together.

- Yes, I do, because it is the only way we can we find answers to difficult issues in which the human being is a part of a larger whole. Let me go back to the quote from John Naisbitt with which you opened our conversation, that the most exciting breakthroughs will not occur because of technology, but because of an expanding concept of what it means to be a human being. At the conference, I was very curious about the answers to the questions about what they were happy with, and what the creators of new technologies were themselves afraid of. How to prepare for changes and not be surprised by them? How to start a race for human beings within the race for technological changes? I would like to thank those who, despite quarterly challenges and the great pressure on results, are widening their perspective, thinking and way of acting. They are courageous, and they feel responsible. I wonder, if one of them will become the most widely read-about historical figure in the 21st century in “Wikipedia” in 100-200 years from now, and not necessarily because of their business achievements?

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