IJCRT.ORG ISSN : 2320-2882

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

ANDROID KUNJAPPAN VER 5.25: A PHILOSOPHICAL RENDERING OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Athira Subin
Guest Lecturer
Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Tirur Regional Campus, Kerala

ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence or AI is a field of higher order technology, devoted to the creation of humanlike artificial creatures to be employed in fitting contexts with the ultimate aim to facilitate human development. Such objectives have immediately encouraged considerable interest in the field among philosophers. This tendency has sufficiently been confirmed by their numerous attempts to emphatically affirm the unattainability of at least some of the goals set by AI. On the helpful side, several of the essential techniques and formalisms employed in AI have emerged out of philosophy. Philosophers can also be observed to conduct developmental researches in AI as a philosophical subcategory. This interweaving of AI and philosophy has set stage for innumerable artistic products of popular culture. At the core of the film *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25* is a morally charged dilemma that arises when emotions get intertwined with technology. As conscience and feelings get engaged, the film turns into a poignant tale that actively elucidated the pros and cons of too much involvement of AI in ordinary life. *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25* provides the audience with the experience of a modern technological experiment that begets unforeseen results.

INDEX TERMS: Artificial Intelligence, philosophy, technology, *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25*, popular culture

INTRODUCTION

Is it possible for a machine to possess a mind and consciousness? ‘Mind’, ‘meaning’, ‘mental states’, and ‘consciousness’ are words employed by communities in varying ways. Certain modern thinkers, for instance, view the term ‘consciousness’ to relate to something comparable to the concept of "élan vital"(*plato.stanford.edu*) devised by Bergson: an invisible fluidlike matter which permeates life, particularly the mind. On the other hand, the writers of science fiction use such terms to denote the quintessential properties that classifies one as human. In this light, even an alien or a machine with ‘consciousness’ may arguably be portrayed as a human character, which exhibits will, insight, intelligence, pride, desires and so on.

The Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence is recognized as a field within the larger discipline of Philosophy of Technology which strives to understand artificial intelligence as well as its implications with respect to ideas such as ethics, emotions, consciousness, free will and intelligence. Moreover, the technology of Artificial Intelligence is related to the creation of artificial people, or rather, artificial life. This notion elicits considerable interest among philosophers. It is these factors which effected the emergence and development of Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence as a discipline. The philosophical aspects of artificial intelligence seek answers to such questions as to whether a machine can function intelligently? Whether it is capable of solving the problems that a human being might be able to settle by thinking? Is it possible to find a valid

equation between machine intelligence and human intelligence? Can the human brain be essentially conceived as a computer? Will it be possible for a machine to have mental states, consciousness and a mind in a similar fashion to that of a human being? Can a machine feel emotions like humans do?

Studies reveal that Artificial Intelligence has deep roots in the past, and that it always had a philosophical foundation. The truthfulness of these findings can be validated by remembering the simple fact that the science of computers evolved out of probability theory and logic, both of which are vividly linked to philosophy. Computer science, in today's scenario, is profoundly connected to logic so much so that these two fields are impossible to be separated. This intricate phenomenon has turned into a much sought-after object for close study in itself.

The sub-field of Artificial Intelligence named 'Moral AI', 'Machine Ethics', 'Ethical AI' or 'Moral Robots' deals with researches based on the prospects of generating robots with the capacity to make morally and ethically permissible decisions with autonomy. Hence, Philosophical AI can be deemed to be associated with engineering robots with the ability for sophisticated and ethical decision-making and reasoning. The subject has also suggested a demand to construct friendly and social AI with the implication that the developments and advances already happening with AI must be inclusive of efforts in order to make intrinsically humane and friendly Artificial Intelligence.

John Haugeland is a philosopher who propagates the need for humane robots with reasoning ability. He defines AI as "the exciting new effort to make computers think … *machines with minds*, in the full and literal sense" (*plato.stanford.edu*). It can be claimed that, by far, his view is what most narratives of popular culture explore and articulate. Films, TV series and books have been released depicting the products of AI with independent intelligent behavior. Such futuristic imagination in arts is scientifically supported by researchers like Alan Turing, who formulated a test that has been passed by certain AI systems that were able to sufficiently act like a human being. In his research paper titled "Mind", published in 1950, Turing says: "It is customary... to offer a grain of comfort, in the form of a statement that some peculiarly human characteristic could never be imitated by a machine. ... I cannot offer any such comfort, for I believe that no such bounds can be set."(*plato.stanford.edu*)

Android Kunjappan Version 5.25 is a critically acclaimed Malayalam film which artfully raises certain questions that have increasingly been occupying the minds of filmmakers worldwide. Is it possible even for the smartest machines to experience and fulfil the undeniable human need for love? *Her* is an acclaimed directorial venture by the American film maker Spike Jonze which Oscar-nominated in 2013. The film portrays a lonesome man falling for his formless virtual assistant. *Ex Machina*, is another equally interesting British film which presents a robot undergoing tests to discern whether it can replicate human intelligence. *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25* is comparatively a small scale and less technologically driven film that explores the organic relationship that gradually evolves between a grouchy old father and a robot who becomes his sole companion.
The entry of a humanoid robot into a normal and ordinary household in a remote village called Payyanur in Kerala, and the interesting incidents that ensue make up the plotline of *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25*. For the purpose of looking after his ailing and stubborn father, Bhaskara Poduval, while being employed aboard as an engineer in Russia, the protagonist, Subhramanian brings in a robot. Though the father is initially repulsed by the piece of technology, he gradually loses his reluctance and gets warmed up to the artificial man, who later gets named as Kunjappan by the local people. The synopsis of the film can be condensed into a single line as a poignant exploration of myriad emotions, conflicts and themes.

The incorporation of technology in *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25* is extremely impressive precisely due its quality to not overtly depict futurism to merely impress the audience. It is conspicuous that the director has placed humanity and human emotions as matters of precedence over presenting his creation as a mere modern, high end, sci-fi film with a warping budget. This ensures that the film, despite being light-hearted in its overall tone, deftly paints an emotional portrait of abandonment and loneliness as well as shows a human-machine relationship defined by the auteur's profound understanding of the undecipherable nature of love.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLEGENCE: PHILOSOPHICAL DIMENSION

The discipline of artificial intelligence is officially believed to be emerged in 1956 by the pathbreaking conference held at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire under the sponsorship of DARPA. Though the coinage 'artificial intelligence', however, was technically made at the conference, most certainly, the seeds of artificial intelligence, operationally defined, existed long before the year 1956. For instance, in the much-scrutinized 1950 research paper titled "Mind", Turing suggests that beyond enquiring whether a machine can think, its high time to research as to whether a machine can be linguistically indistinguishable to a considerable extend from a human being. In this regard, Turing invented a test commonly referred to as the 'Turing Test' or TT.

In the Turing Test, a woman as well as a computer were sequestered in two separate sealed rooms so that they could be judged by a person, sitting in the dark, based on the answers they give to a fixed set of questions via teletype to see whether the woman and the computer could be identified correctly. However, based on the returned answers, the designated judge was unable to deliver a clear-cut verdict regarding the identity of the supplier of the answers. This evidently implied that the machine in question had successfully passed the Turing Test. Here, the passing denoted a sense linguistic indistinguishability between the woman and the machine. Furthermore, the American film director, Steven Spielberg's film *A.I.* can be identified as a cinematic interpretation of Turing's ideas.

The seminal propositions with regard to the philosophical aspects of AI include the Dartmouth proposal, Herbert A. Simon and Allen Newell's hypothesis on 'physical symbol system', John Searle's hypothesis on 'Strong AI' and Hobbes' mechanism. However, the most important of the developments in AI remains the Turing Test, according to which, a machine that can behave as intelligently and capably as a human, should essentially be recognised as at par with any human with the same intelligence and capacity. According to Dartmouth proposal, "every aspect of learning or any other feature of intelligence can be so precisely described that a machine can be made to simulate it" (*hbr.org*). The hypothesis of 'physical symbol system' proposed by Herbert A. Simon and Allen Newell says that "a physical symbol system has the necessary and sufficient means of general intelligent action" (*hbr.org*). John Searle's hypothesis on 'Strong AI': "The appropriately programmed computer with the right inputs and outputs would thereby have a mind in exactly the same sense human beings have minds."(*hbr.org*) Finally, according to the mechanism by Hobbe, "for 'reason' ... is nothing but 'reckoning,' that is adding and subtracting, of the consequences of general names agreed upon for the 'marking' and 'signifying' of our thoughts..." (*theguardian.com*).
Hubert Dreyfus scientifically opines that "if the nervous system obeys the laws of physics and chemistry, which we have every reason to suppose it does, then .... we ... ought to be able to reproduce the behaviour of the nervous system with some physical device"(*theguardian.com*). This argument was first introduced in 1943 and later was lucidly explained in 1988 by Hans Moravec. Today, this claim has also been attributed to Ray Kurzweil, the futurist, who approximates that by 2029 the power of a computer will be enough for a full brain simulation. Also, Searle, the American philosopher, says that in principle, absolutely anything will be able to be simulated using a computer system; as a result, the definition ultimately leads to the concept that all process can be technically regarded 'computation'.

Herbert A. Simon and Allen Newell, in 1963, jointly proposed the idea that 'symbol manipulation' was the core or essence both of machine and human intelligence. They said: "A physical symbol system has the necessary and sufficient means of general intelligent action."(*theguardian.com*) His implication suggests that the human thought process can be understood as a symbol manipulation of sought and that a machine can be equipped to be intelligent for "a symbol system is *sufficient* for intelligence" (plato.stanford.edu).

Is it possible for a machine to be creative and original? Turing alters this question to that of whether an electronic machine is capable of surprising humans and claims that this could obviously possible. He marks that, with the aid of sufficient capacity for storage, it is feasible for a computer to behave and perform in astronomically different ways. It must even be trivial for a computing machine to combine unrelated ideas in novel ways. The Automated Mathematician is a technological invention by Douglas Lenat which is capable of merging ideas to reveal undiscovered mathematical truths. Scientists suggest that scientific creativity can be displayed by machines, while humans may seem to have superiority in terms of artistic creativity. In the

year 2009, University of Cambridge had joined hands with the University of Aberystwyth in Wales, United Kingdom to design and build a robot whom they named Adam. This product of AI is believed to be the first ever machine that is independently capable of new scientific inventions and discoveries. In the same year, a computer programme called Eureqa was developed by researchers at Cornell for extrapolating various formulas to suit the fed data.

Moral reasoning ability is inevitably quintessential in robots that possess the ability for lethal undertakings. Ronald C. Arkin, the author of "Ethical Robots in Warfare" gives an introduction as to how the scientists can regulate and control different machines that is built to exhibit lethal behaviour. Moral AI, as a subdiscipline goes beyond the realm of lethal situations to the possibility of having a wide spectrum of morally sound machines. James H. Moor provides insights into one of such moral agents. A 'lying machine' would serve as an apt model for an ethically-charged but non-lethal machine. Andy Clark uses the concept of the 'computational theory of the mind', that is, the capacity to reason about impersonal agents, to create the lying machine which can be employed for successfully persuades humans into accepting falsehoods. Selmer Bringsjord and Paul Bello had given an overview regarding the requirements for building a machine that is morally robust. One of the primary ingredients is a mind theory. The general outline for producing a machine that has the ability to reason ethically lies in providing a moral code in the machines. In the current scenario, there also exist robots built to suit the criteria for expertly taking care of physically incapable or differently abled members of the society. They too are made to provide optimum support and mental peace for their patients. Moral and ethical qualities are essential for these robots to function appropriately with the well-being of their patients as their ultimate priority.

ANDROID KUNJAPPAN VER 5.25: AN OVERWIEW

Android Kunjappan Version 5.25, the 2019 Malayalam drama, is a profoundly philosophical tale about the emotional attachment between a father and son. The film marks the directorial debut of Ratheesh Balakrishnan Poduval. The script of the film was written by Poduval himself. Santhosh T. Kuruvilla is the producer of the critically praised film. The cast of the film comprised of Soubin Shahir, Suraj Venjaramoodu, Saiju Kurup and the Japanese actress Kendy Zirdo. Bijibal was the music director of the film. The endearing robot set against the lush greenery of Kerala as well as the decaying house owned by Bhaskaran shot by Sanu John Varughese, the cinematographer, provides a unique and interesting visual combination.

Android Kunjappan Version 5.25 was accoladed with much positive critical comments and was also hailed as a commercial success of the year in the Malayalam film industry. Venjaramoodu received the Kerala State Award for Best Actor along with the two other state awards the film was bestowed with.

The film is artfully packed with the nuances and snapshots of life in a remote village in Kerala – the greenery, regular tea stalls, village ponds, gossip talks, and motely characters that range from being curious to being painfully intrusive. The disinterest among the native village members to leave the comforts of their close-knit community are all skilfully depicted by the film maker. Bhaskaran Pothuval says, "Naatil nilkkaan dhairyamillathavara naadu vittu pokunnathu" ("only those who don't dare to live in their own native land are the ones who migrate to foreign lands")(*Android Kunjappan Version 5.25*). The troubles of old age, both mental and physical, including loneliness are also depicted through the character of Bhaskaran. A son's panic in leaving behind his old father to seek better opportunities in life is also poignantly portrayed in the film.

ANDROID KUNJAPPAN VER 5.25: EXPLORING THE PHILOSOPHICAL PORTRAYAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLEGENCE

If Emotions may be defined solely in terms of its function in an organism or its effects on behaviour, then they can be observed as a kind of mechanism utilized by intelligent agents for maximizing the scope of their actions. According to this definition, it is believed by Hans Moravec that "robots in general will be quite emotional about being nice people" (*theguardian.com*). Moravec points out that the quality of empathy is absolutely a necessary ingredient of good and friendly interaction between humans and computers. He maintains that robots "will try to please you in an apparently selfless manner because it will get a thrill out of this positive reinforcement. You can interpret this as a kind of love." (*theguardian.com*)

Is it possible for a machine to be hostile or benevolent? Like the numerous questions that emerge out while examining the philosophical properties of artificial intelligence, this question too can be approached in two ways. 'Hostility' may be explained in terms of behaviour or function, according to which hostility becomes

one with being dangerous. In another sense, 'hostility' can be understood based on intent: will a machine be able to deliberately mean to harm? The latter question is an alternate form of the question as to whether a machine can experience conscious states or intentions?

The questions as to whether extremely intelligent and fully autonomous machines can pose a threat, be dangerous, or cause harm to mankind have been explored in depth by futurists. The subject has also been made popular in science fiction, which has dealt with different possible as well as impossible scenarios wherein intelligent robots pose or cause harm to mankind.

The opening scene of the film *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25* shows a robot having emotions of anger and vexation at its master when faced with ill-treatment. This results in the robot, that was meant to provide care and support for the unwell man, to harm him to death. It exactly resembles the extreme emotional response of humans to a similar stimulus. The facial expression of the robot also changes from happy to angry, in resemblance to a human.

Later depicted, in an entirely different context, is the character, Bhaskaran, who is utterly repulsed by all kinds of technology. This results in him rejecting the presence of the robot brought in by his son in the house. However, the robot's capacity to understand the needs and demands of its master attracts the old man. It is this ability of the robot that finally makes Baskaran accept the 'metal man'. Despite severe insults from Bhaskaran, the robot continues to serve him unconditionally. The robot says, "Pedikkenda, oru robot athinte udamasthane upadravikkilla" ("Don't worry, a robot will never cause harm to its owner") (*Android Kunjappan Version 5.25*). This quality of the humanoid robot endears Bhaskaran who gradually begins to love it.

When Baskaran's son is unable to be by his side for care and support, it is the robot that he entrusts his father with. The robot serves as Baskaran's personal security guard. Moreover, it also possessed the ability to provide medical assistance like a home nurse to Bhaskaran. When Baskaran falls down and hurts himself, it is this robot that gives him all the care and support. It relentlessly stives to make Bhaskaran's life better by providing him with respect, companionship and even love. It plays chess with Bhaskaran and laughs with him. It willfully does all the daily chores like cooking, buying groceries, cleaning the house and so on.

Gradually, Bhaskaran begins to accept the robot as a part of his family. Bhaskaran begins to treat it as a human being. Being an old school man of eighty, Bhaskaran even decides to go to the astrologer to look into the horoscope of the robot. For that matter, he enquires his son Subhramanian for the time and date of birth of the robot. At another instance, Baskaran unconsciously tells the robot that was fetching the clothes hung outside since it was raining to come inside fast, because of the fear of it catching cold. Then, Baskaran also wipes the robot's head to prevent it from catching fever as if it was a human being. Baskaran also says, "Nee poya enikku aarondeda?" ("If you die, whom else will I have?") (*Android Kunjappan Version 5.25*). These words are enough to express the establishment of Bhaskaran's love and attachment towards the robot. When Bhaskaran privatises the access to operate the robot in order to prevent his son from knowing his little secrets, Subhramanian says, "achanu njanum robotum thamillulla vyathyasam manasilavaande aayi nna thonunnathu." ("I think father has begun to forget the difference between the robot and his own son") (*Android Kunjappan Version 5.25*) When Subramaniyan come back home, he asks his father to switch the robot off for some time so that they can spent time together. However, Bhaskaran refuses and says, "offeethu vakkan ithentha machina?" ("Do you think it's a mere machine to be switched off?") (*Android Kunjappan Version 5.25*) This vividly depicts the idea that Bhaskaran has clearly forgotten that the robot is nothing but a product of technology made of metal. Rather the father had begun to replace his own son with the robot, whom was being conceived by him as a human companion to love and to be loved.

The villagers who curiously come to visit the robot also treat it as a human being. They chat with it and takes photos with it. Two elderly women who came to visit the robot name it 'Kunjappan' – a very common native name around Kerala. They also insist that 'Kunjappan' should wear clothes and that it is shameful for him walk around nude. This is very much indicative of their acceptance of the robot as a fellow being and more than a mere machine.

When the municipal authorities confiscate the robot claiming that Bhaskaran possesses no licence to keep it, he gets immensely disturbed and panics whether the robot will be safe with the officers. He vexedly says to Subhramanian: "Engane aa *chekkane* kondupooyi?… Municipalitykkaaru avane pidich vallathum chaithalo? Onnu karayan poolum pattuvo, aa mindapranikku? Avanillathe njan santhoshathode irikkumnnu nee karuthanda." ("How could they take the *boy*? What if the municipal authorities harm *him*? Will *he* be able to even cry? You should not think that I can ever be happy without him") (*Android Kunjappan Version 5.25*). Later, when the robot returns home with the help of Subhramanian, Bhaskaran regains peace and feels happy to reunite with his sole companion.

In the successive scenes we witness the robot helpsing Bhaskaran to renew his old romance with Soudhamini which makes his otherwise dull and lonely life exciting. The robot also urges and succeeds in letting Bhaskaran dispose his caste related prejudices from his mind. With time, Bhaskaran who used to be utterly repulsed by technology, begins to support and endorse it. At one instance, when others were discussing the demerits of technology, Bhaskaran interferes and even defends it.

Towards the end of the film when Subhramanian reveals to his father that the robot should be taken back to his office and that its time with Bhaskaran was just a part of an experiment, Bhaskaran breaks down and says to his son:

> "Kazhiinja moo-naalu maasamayittu, aa irumbu kashanamanu enne nokkunnathu. Sakala thereem kettittu enikku vendi bakshanamundakkithannathu, kuluppichathu, chirippichathu… parayunnathu anusarikkukayallathe, maruthonnum samsarichittilla. Enne peedippichittumilla ithuvare…nee Russiayilum Americayiulum pooya samayathu eevde njan jeevichiruppondu ennu enikku thoniyathu oonivide odayathukonda. Oon ninakku alakkanum, vakkanumulla machinaayirikkum, enakkathu moonanu." ("For the past three-four months, it was that metal piece that used to take good care of me. Despite listening to all my reprimands and upbraiding, it still cooked for me, bathed me, made me laugh…it has never gone against my word till the moment… When you went away to Russia or America, it was because of him that I felt alive here. For you, he might just be a machine for washing and cooking, but he is a son for me"). (*Android Kunjappan Version 5.25*)

During the climax scene of the film, the robot, in a long dialogue, explains that it will neither be able to feel human emotions nor will ever be able to replace Bhaskaran's own son Subhramanian. The robot also tells that it is a mere programme designed by scientists to assist weak people in their daily life. This concept of self-awareness, as depicted by the aforementioned machine, can sometimes be observed to be used by writers of science fiction which grants the machine certain essential humanlike properties.

At the very end of the film, Bhaskaran can be seen to slip into a delirious state of mind. His mind shuts down and he begins to randomly laugh and cry in an attempt to escape the reality that the robot is just a machine. Later, out of his mental instability, Bhaskaran even begins to view and call Subramanian, his own son, as Kunjappan, the robot.

CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence, in its current form, has its roots deep in philosophy. Even though Philosophical Artificial Intelligence cannot be viewed exactly identical to philosophy, it can be scientifically claimed to have emerged and flowed from the discipline of philosophy. The American philosopher, Daniel Dennett has corroborated the idea by arguing that several parts of AI are intimately linked to philosophy. Thus, it is of utmost importance to scrutinise and examine the various philosophical renderings of artificial intelligence in films and other products of popular culture.

In this light, the Malayalam film *Android Kunjappan Version 5.25* by Ratheesh Poduval gains relevance. The intimate and loving relationship that gets fostered between an old man, living in a remote village called Payyanur in Kerala, and a humanoid robot, brought in from Russia by his son to look after his ailing father, deftly carves a unique theme in Malayalam cinema. The emotional intricacies that unfold in the film provides profound and helpful insights into the manner in which the various philosophical and futuristic aspects of Artificial Intelligence are conceived by popular culture.

REFERENCE

Android Kunjappan Version 5.25. Directed by Ratheesh Balakrishnan Poduval. Performance by Soubin Shahir and Suraj Venjaramoodu. Moonshot Entertainments, 2019.

Davenport, Thomas H., and Rajeev Ronanki. "Artificial Intelligence for the Real World." *Hbr.org*, 12 Jan 2018, hbr.org/2018/01/artificial-intelligence-for-the-real-world.

Deutsch, David. "Philosohy Will Be the Key that Unlocks Artificial Intelleigence." *Theguardian.com*, 3 Oct 2012, theguardian.com/science/2012/oct/03/philosophy-artificial-intelligence.

Dietrich, Eric. "Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence." *File:///C:/Users/athira%20subin*, 24 Nov 2020, file:///C:/Users/athira%20subin/Downloads/trondheim.pdf

Frankenfield, Jake. "Artificial Intelligence." *Plato.stanford.edu*, 12Jul 2018, plato.stanford.edu/entries/artificial-intelligence/.

Shrijith, Sajin. "Android Kunjappan Movie Review: A Witty and Competently Made Cautionary Tale." *Cinemaexpress.com*, 10 Nov 2019, cinemaexpress.com/reviews/malayalam/2019/nov/10/android-kunjappan-movie-review-a-witty-and-competently-made-cautionary-tale-15405.html.

Soman, Deepa. "Android Kunjappan Version 5.25 Movie Review: A Sci-fi Tale with an Impressive First Half." *Timesofindia.indiatimes.com*, 8 Nov 2019, timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/malayalam/movie-reviews/android-kunjappan-version-5-25/movie-review/71968233.cms.

Vetticad, Anna MM. "Android Kunjappan Version 5.25 Movie Review: A Crotchety Old Man Bonds with a Robot in Kerala." *Firstpost.com*, 18 Nov 2019, firstpost.com/entertainment/android-kunjappan-version-5-25-movie-review-a-crotchety-old-man-bonds-with-a-robot-in-kerala-7668821.html.

.