Fruitful Intelligence

Reward is what drives mankind to pursue tasks and credit years to a subject of study. No one individual would waste more than an hour of their time if the labor did not produce anything of fruitful value. Technology was created in an attempt to caramelize life, make it simple. However, when man believes the fruits of his labors to be more intelligent than himself, such as technology, life turns into a race for survival.

A machine is created to lessen the load on an individual's shoulders. Manufacturing times have been reduced and the world's economic level has risen rapidly since the first machine. On the other hand, when technological advances are used to inflict fear into the hearts and minds of the everyday Joe, change is crucial. In Ray Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 451," the machine is a fine-oiled engine governing society effectively, keeping them entrapped in an ignorant bliss not unlike slavery. Slaves are naught but people who cannot think or act for themselves. In the novel, society is told what to think, and fed entertaining thoughts instead of being allowed to formulate its own. The hound is the evil machine striking fear into Montag, a technology so advanced it seems beyond the power of man. The rulers of this cynical world created the hound to be effective, even when it threatens the survival of the human species.

Many an intellectual knows the price of his involvement in the birthing of a technology, even before he pursues it. After all, a mind warped with stupidity cannot pull out of the ranks and deliver a wonder unto the world. Of course, even the smartest mind is hindered if he does not first chance fate. In Robert Frost's "A Road Less Traveled," Frost encourages the reader to take note of two paths set before every living man. The well-lit and seemingly simple stone path holds a considerable amount of life's victims, souls who chose safety over adventure and the unknown; the picket-fence life. The other path is much less frequented by travelers, every twist and bump hidden by a perilous gloom that prevents the weary of heart from entering. In relation to technology, the roads are the unknown and the known. New discoveries are impossible without traversing the unfathomable unknown. Therefore, mankind truly has no idea what repercussions reside in tinkering with a smarter machine. It inadvertently comes down to two choices: take the risk and deal with the aftermath, or take the more frequently traveled and live a white picket-life, destined for no adventure.

Human understanding and control over its creations is decreasing every year, beginning with the sap who decided it wise to build a computer integrated with artificial intelligence. Of course, smart machines have not quite reached a point of life-threatening circumstance, and society has not kept a clouded mind on the subject either. Movies such as "iRobot," "The Machine," and "Terminator" have depicted a robot overtaking of humanity. Opposition has also hit the smart machine front, comprised of people who have lived their whole lives without severe technological assistance. It eventually comes down to the individuals who develop the technology. As Steve Jobs said, "The whole idea is not about the choice between using or not using technology. The challenge is to use it right." Mankind cannot be made to stop thinking and innovating what the world already possesses. It's the nature of mankind, to be creative and different from every other individual. We can only hope man will use his creations wisely, keeping us safe from the fruits of our labors.

Reward is the defining factor in a person's willingness to pursue a passion. Passion fruit, although in every sense of the word a fruit, can be broken into two different terms that relate perfectly. Man only pursues if he has passion, and there is fruitful reward at the end of his journey. Technology is mankind's passion fruit, a vast expanse of untapped knowledge we crave, a luxury that will overwhelm its makers if not managed. To keep life from being a race for survival, humanity has to remember, the road less traveled is perilous, although rewarding. Technology isn't evil, but "the challenge is to use it right."