Minority Report Analysis

Megan Daly

Athens State University

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Introduction

The movie *Minority Report* gives appearances to many emerging and predicted technologies. The film was released in 2002, and with it now being seventeen years later, people are seeing some of these predicted technologies becoming realities. Director Steven Spielberg consulted with many experts in the creation of this sci-fi film. The setting of the film is 2054, and Spielberg wanted accurate, scientifically-researched technologies integrated into his film. Before the film's release, Spielberg stated to Roger Ebert, "I wanted all the toys to come true one day" (Technologies in *Minority Report*, 2019). Some of the predicted technologies introduced in the film are retina scanners, autonomous cars, insect robots, and personalized advertising. The remaining sections of this paper take the technologies and predictions into a deeper examination.

Process of Prediction

Steven Spielberg joined with colleagues, scientific researchers, computer scientists, architects, and journalists to prepare the predictions for the film. The planning and research began over three years before the film release date. The experts joined forces to create what became nicknamed as the "2054 Bible". This 80-page journal is composed of all of the ideas and aspects of the future world for the film: architectural, socio-economical, political, and technological (Technologies in *Minority Report*, 2019). Spielberg and the experts believed it would be hard to bring to life anything in the movie that had no grounding in reality, but they did a pretty outstanding job with the predictions. Some of the predictions have already been made into realities.

Retina Scanners

One of the predicted technologies in *Minority Report* is retina scanners. Although retina scanners have been around for close to forty years, the film predicts the scanners to be far more advanced and able to identify individuals in less than a second. Throughout the film, retina scanners are used for many purposes. They identify passengers boarding subways, identify employees entering buildings, and can locate specific individuals. According to Rawlson King (2019), retinal scans "require a high-quality image" and will not identify an individual unless the scan "captures an image of sufficient quality." In Spielberg's film, the retinal scanners are significantly fast and automatic. The scanners do not even require the individual to look directly into the scanner. Furthermore, when authorities are searching for John Anderton in an apartment complex, they send in spider robots to capture a retina scan of every being in the building. The retinal scans for each being in the entire complex is completed in less than five minutes. Today, retinal scanning is a highly dependable technology, but it is not used often due to "user discomfort and difficult image acquisition" (King, 2019). In my future of teaching in an elementary school, I would highly prefer the use of retinal scanning. When parents and visitors come in the front office, they should go through a retinal scanner to prove that they are who they say they are. This would provide a great amount of safety to our students and our school. The potential process would be quick, accurate, and safe.

Autonomous Cars

The scenes consisting of autonomous cars in *Minority Report* will make one wonder how that kind of technology is even possible. The cars were moving at excessive speeds and traveling in uncommon directions. It was evident that they had "minds of their own." Autonomous cars have been in development since 1984 (Technologies in *Minority Report*, 2019). Some manufacturing companies such as Tesla have made it as far as featuring an autopilot feature in their vehicles. Waymo, a self-driving technology development company, has created autonomous minivans and have made them available to Lyft riders. So far, the rides are restricted to a small area just outside of Phoenix, Arizona, where Waymo has been test-driving their vehicles (LeBeau, 2019). It is believed by Michelle Krebs, an analyst from Autotrader, that a widespread deployment of self-driving vehicles is still years from happening. Autonomous cars are not necessarily going to benefit me in my future career; however, if the future consists of the autonomous cars that were presented in the film, hopefully they will be safe and will keep my students and all others safe on the roads.

Insect Robots

Another predicted technology in Spielberg's film was spider robots. The spider robots were intended to enter buildings and roam until their job was complete. As mentioned earlier, one main job of the robots was to retinal scan everyone in the apartment complex. Authorities were searching for John Anderton, and by sending the spider robots in to retinal search each individual, authorities were able to get the job

complete in less than five minutes. The spider robots are extremely advanced and did not stop searching and scanning until the job was complete. According to Charles Arthur (2010), insect robots are currently being developed by the United States military with the help of British Aerospace. The insect robots are being created so that they may enter dangerous places where humans should not be sent (such as potentially occupied houses). The spider robots will serve as another set of eyes and ears for the armed forces. If this technology were present in my future career field, I would be able to have eyes on my students at all times. This would be beneficial in that my students would be safe at all times.

Personalized Advertising

Personalized advertisements take place throughout the whole film. One example appears when John Anderton walks into a retail store and is retina scanned. The device says to him, "Good afternoon, Mr. Yakamoto (Anderton's eyes had been replaced at this point to disguise his identity). How did you like that three-pack of tank tops you bought last time you were in?" Richard Gray (2010), in an article in The *Telegraph,* states "IBM claims that its technology will help prevent consumers from being subjected to a barrage of irritating advertising because they will only be shown ads that are relevant to them." It is claimed that IBM has already been working on personalized advertising. Gray (2010) also identifies that in Japan, they have developed a billboard that is capable of identifying a shopper's age and gender. If personalized ads become as accurate as they are in *Minority Report*, it will make my job easier in my career field. I

will be able to easily access things that I am needing or in search of. Advertisements for classroom supplies or resources will benefit me.

Personal Interest

As I completed this assignment, I was astonished as to how these technologies are becoming realities as the years pass. While watching the movie, I kept thinking to myself, "There's no way this will become a reality," as technologies would appear on the screen. However, when I went to conduct my research, I was mind-blown by the information I found. I never thought the insect robots would emerge and become a reality (not in my lifetime, at least). When I found that they have already been developed by our armed forces, I was shocked but proud. It is an exciting feeling to see new technologies arising. This assignment opened my eyes to what our world is capable of.

Conclusion

Minority Report is an eye-opening, suspenseful, and exciting film. Almost all of the predicted technologies are emerging in our world today. Retina scanners, autonomous cars, insect robots, and personalized advertising are four of the technologies that are emerging. It is exciting to be apart of such a technology-driven generation and world. I only wish Steven Spielberg could still be here when the year 2054 makes its appearance.

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