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# Editorial

## Beyond the Realm of Scientific Discovery

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in its simplest form, has been claimed by some authorities as the theory and development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that usually require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision making and translation between languages.

Artificial Intelligence being the theme for the current issue of the Vidurava Science Magazine, has been reviewed from different angles in four illuminating articles. Apparently its initial entry to the scientific foray was its great utility value in military operations and intelligence activities, and in particular for surveillance exercises using what were identified as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV).

Subsequently, its uses in humanitarian causes such as surveillance of disaster affected situations as well as in assessing damage caused by natural or man-made disasters, appear to have generated substantial interest in its further advancement. But its entry into agricultural development activities, provision of emergency health services, contribution and participation in the Smart City concept as well as in technology and industrial development, are now expected to revolutionize lifestyles, work norms and more importantly to adoption and adaptation.

Science and scientific advancement in its very earliest and initial phases had been described as an extension of geographical exploration, and included the appraisal

of natural resources as well as efforts in unraveling the basis of natural phenomena. Nevertheless, the current developments in AI are beyond the realm of such scientific discoveries, and as pointed out by one author, AI has been recognized as the fuel for the fourth industrial revolution. In addition, a futuristic predicament with what has been defined as Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI), is that if and when AI becomes more capable than human beings, it will outperform human capabilities.

However, as a concluding anticlimax, let us ponder over what Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy had to say about machines and machine operators in his mercurial treatise, "*Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*", published in 1908.

*European machines and machine-like men has in the East driven the village weaver from his loom; the craftsmen from his tools; the ploughman from his songs; and has divorced art from labour-----. The craft is for him destroyed as a means of culture, and the community has lost one more man's intelligence, for it is obviously futile to attempt to build up by evening classes and free libraries, what the whole of a man's work is forever breaking down.*

*It is essential then for a re-union of art with labour, that machinery should be controlled --- The place of machinery in a true civilization will be that of a hewer of wood, a drawer of water, a servant not a master ----- !*

**M. Asoka T. De Silva**