

AI and the “Accursed Flower”

by [Kenneth Francis](#) (March 2025)



The Terrible Boredom of Waiting for Action (Duncan Oppenheim, 1940)

Speaking on February 11 at the Paris AI Summit 2025, American Vice President JD Vance, said his administration will ensure that American AI technology continues to be the gold standard worldwide, and that America is the partner of choice for others, foreign countries, and certainly businesses as they expand their own use of AI.

Vance added that his administration believes that excessive regulation of the AI sector could kill a transformative industry just as it is taking off, and he and his team will make every effort to encourage pro-growth AI policies.

He said: "And I like to see that deregulatory flavour, making its way into a lot of the conversations this conference. Number three, we feel very strongly that AI must remain free from ideological bias and that American AI will not be co-opted into a tool for authoritarian censorship. And finally, number four, the Trump administration will maintain a pro-worker growth path for AI so it can be a potent tool for job creation in the United States."

For those people sceptical or worried about any negative outcomes of AI, the question is: Is AI a dangerous threat to Mankind?

One year after Stanley Kubrick's 1969 technological Hollywood epic, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, singing duo Zager and Evans had a Number One hit with the song "In the Year 2525." This dystopian classic opens with the following portentous lyrics:

*In the year 2525,
If man is still alive,
If woman can survive,
They may find...*

Subsequent verses in their song multiply the following years and chronicle them as times when automated machines work our limbs because of an overdependence on technology (AI); pills taken each day will make us think a certain way; marriage becoming obsolete, as babies are conceived "at the bottom of a long glass tube." By the year 9595, Man's reign is through, as humanity has wiped out everything, thus the last verse

concludes:

*Now it's been 10,000 years
Man has cried a billion tears
For what, he never knew
Now man's reign is through
But through eternal night
The twinkling of starlight
So very far away
Maybe it's only yesterday...*

If the threat of AI replacing humans in the workplace and physical tasks ever reaches its peak, then it seems Zager and Evans were hundreds of years off in their dystopian prediction, as the year 2025 looks like the Big Bang in the breakneck speed for all things Artificial Intelligence (should more accurately be called Human-Replica Technological Intelligence).

It is clear from the lyrics that the song was partially inspired by Aldous Huxley's dystopian 1932 novel, *Brave New World*. In this futuristic world, we see genetically modified citizens, born in artificial wombs, on a planet where the ruling class is superior to the ordinary citizens; a dark technological landscape where the leaders play God and disobedience to the State is forbidden; with echoes of Fritz Lang's 1927 silent movie, *Metropolis*, and the works of H.G. Wells.

In the last decades of his life, the existentialist German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) spoke about such threats, as opposed to its benefits. Philosophy professor Mark Wrathall wrote: "His preoccupation with 'the technological mode of revealing' was driven by the belief that if we come to experience everything as a mere resource, our ability to lead

worthwhile lives will be put at risk. His task as a thinker was to awaken us to the danger of this age, and to point out possible ways for us to avoid the snares of the technological age."

During the early 1970s, when high-technology was riding a chopper bicycle, playing a pinball machine, or sitting on the beach with a transistor radio held close to your ear, I used to do all the above, as well as reading comics at night in bed.

The American comics that I read were *Creepy*, and *Eerie*. These magazines, published by Warren Publishing, had amazing artwork and disturbing storylines. One of the most horrific stories in the comic *Creepy*, was a tale called "Jennifer," about a hideous deformed girl who is a violent cannibal. Another great story in *Creepy*, equally frightening, was called "The Accursed Flower" (Published #49, Nov 1972).

I mention this above story as its message is portentous and could serve as a chilling metaphor/warning on the technological future of Mankind, especially in AI.

This story is based in rural Spain, where a peasant farmer, called Jordi Valls, works every day on his land. Jordi is frustrated, exhausted, and fails to get everything done. Despite this, he is kept busy and seldom bored.

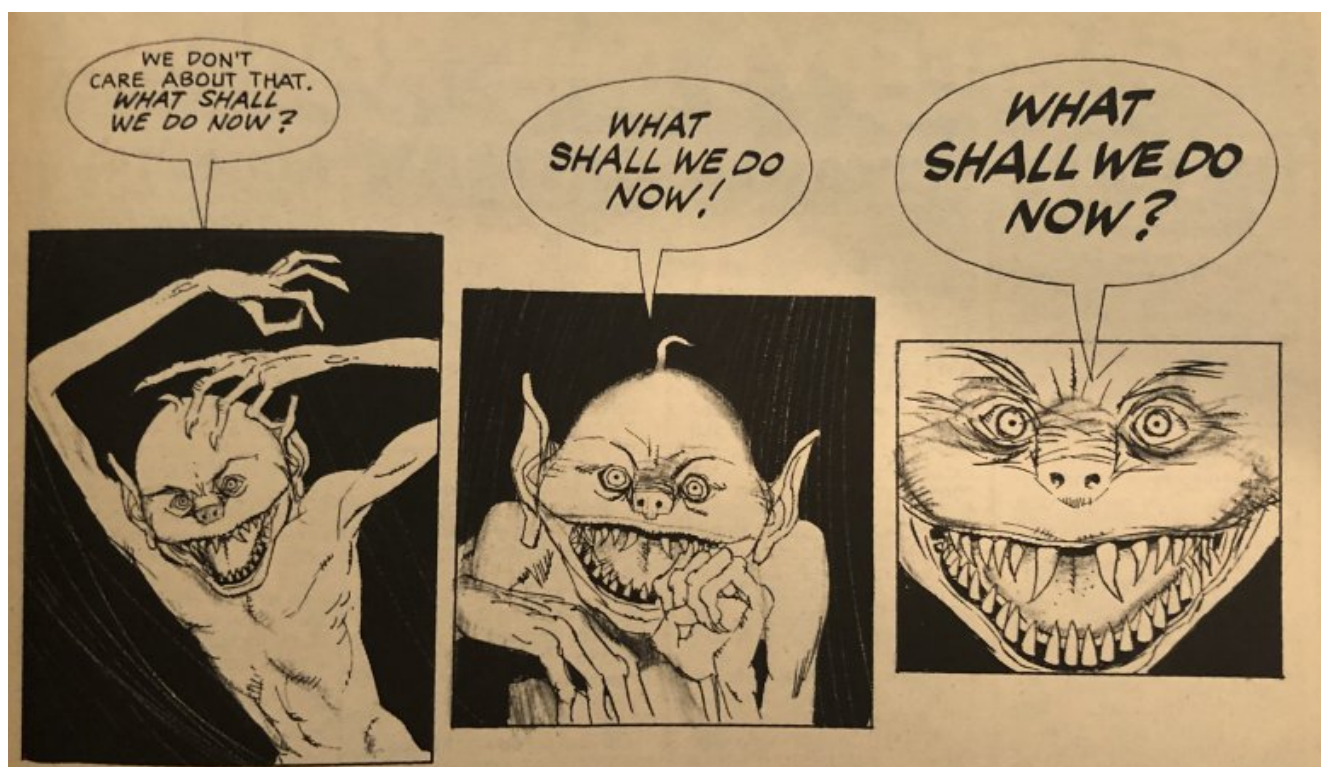
His neighbour tells him about a kind of seed-flower called Maneiro roots, and that all his farmwork drudgery will be solved if he plants them. He told Jordi about a cave where he could find this flower.

The Maneiro, which are guarded in the cave by vicious beasts, can only be obtained during the twelve rings of a bell that occurs on the night of San Juan. If one is unable to keep the Maneiro busy when they bloom (after they are born), they will fling themselves at the person and rip him or her to pieces.

Jordi finds the cave and avoids the beasts as a bell rings,

signalling the first stroke of twelve. He is able to find Maneiro seeds and make his way out of the cave.

Jordi plants the seeds and within 24 hours finds thousands of the Maneiro, resembling demon gremlins with razor-sharp teeth, waiting outside for him. The grotesque creatures say they are bored and ask for work—lots of it. Jordi comes up with various tasks for them to do on the farm, including building a road, which they complete in a couple of hours. Jordi provides the Maneiro with more tasks.



The Maneiro keep returning Jordi and demand more work, but, with Jordi, now sitting like a lord in his stately home, having no work for them, they attack him, ripping him to shreds and killing him. If Jordi can be seen as a metaphor for the future of humanity, are the Maneiro peak AI?

I believe we have nothing to fear within the next 100 years. Why? Hype and fakery are rampant in the information we get on such technological, medical, and scientific dystopian alleged scientific breakthroughs or predictions. And there is also the limitations of AI on communication or solving human problems.

Dr Joe McDonald, a cognitive psychologist, and CEO of jumpseat Research, explained that AI processes information computationally, using algorithms to analyse vast amounts of data at incredible speeds. However, AI lacks the context awareness, creativity, and emotional depth that define human thinking (source: The Discovery Institute's *Mind Matters* magazine).

According to Dr McDonald, while AI can identify patterns in speech, it struggles to grasp implied meanings, cultural nuances, or unspoken context—skills that come naturally to humans. Humans, on the other hand, think contextually and dynamically. We integrate past experiences, emotions, and intentions to adapt, empathize, and make decisions. Dr. McDonald highlighted the concept of *situational awareness*, a uniquely human skill that allows us to understand our environment and predict future outcomes.

Whatever the AI pros and cons for or against human flourishing, never forget that the universe has a moral order. If AI ever gets too big for its algorithmic boots, God might 'Tower-of-Babel' it; or maybe an "AI Maneiro" will demand more and more endless human inputs into the machines to lessen our workload, resulting in us having nothing physically to do or think—and devour Mankind if we say: "We're bored. Give us some work."

*In 2023, a writer who'll remain anonymous, said he asked AI to illustrate a self-portrait of what it (the AI) looked like. The result was a grotesque-looking, smirking demon. Makes one wonder was the AI programmed by someone who was possessed by an evil spirit. Today's corrupt culture is such a moral abomination, the devil has come out of the Pit but most people don't realise this, let alone believe in him.

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Kenneth Francis is a Contributing Editor at *New English Review*. For the past 30 years, he has worked as an editor in various publications, as well as a university lecturer in journalism. He also holds an MA in Theology and is the author of [*The Little Book of God, Mind, Cosmos and Truth*](#), [*The Terror of Existence: From Ecclesiastes to Theatre of the Absurd*](#) (with Theodore Dalrymple), and [*Neither Trumpets Nor Violins*](#) (with Theodore Dalrymple and Samuel Hux). His most recent books are [*Theology in Music: How Christian Themes Permeate Classic Songs*](#) and [*Theology in Film: How Christian Themes Permeate Classic Movies*](#).

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