Utopia or Mirage? Why WALLE's Axiom Exposes The Line

In the seemingly idyllic linear city displayed in the Axiom in WALLE, humans travel in hover chairs, and are tended to by the mass amount of articificial intelligence on the ship. However, with a deeper look, the movie subtly reveals how this paradise actually resembles more of a human trap.

These depictions of the transportation, entertainment, and architecture of the Axiom closely resemble something that is under construction today: The NEOM project.

Led by the Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the NEOM project promises a "hub for innovation", with different sectors allowing for vacation, trade, and for living. Healthcare and overall management has a strong emphasis on artificial intelligence, and the city puts environmental conservation above all else.

However, this city of our dreams poses a few big questions, centered around the restriction of its resident's personal freedom, that can be explained through the depictions in WALLE. Firstly, with a city with no cars, and no emissions, transportation pops up as the question at hand. The argument is that everything that the citizens need is within five minutes of their home in the Line, and a high speed railroad will be able to bring citizens to each other within 20 minutes.

Paralleling this, WALL-E's Axiom restricts its inhabitants' mobility, delivering necessities via robots and confining them to hovercraft chairs.The Line is cenetered around this exact idea in a different light, imposing a standardized approach to transportation. With a linear city, comes the underlying assumption that the transportation requires everyone to do the exact same thing, in order to compensate for the diminishing efficiency. In other words, the success of the city is based on citizen restriction.

Secondly, it's hard to imagine that the Line is successful without meticulous planning for each development in human coordination, and with its emphasis on AI, the depiction in the Axiom may not be far from the future reality in the Line.

"Throughout history, cities were built to protect their citizens within confined spaces. After the Industrial Revolution, cities prioritized machines, cars, and factories over people." The important thing to remember with the Industrial Revolution is that the introduction of machines caused rapid urbanization, and it is because of the flow of people that the living conditions regressed in large cities. However, most cities were built on the attempts of sustaining the growth.

Much like the Axiom, the Line doesn't have much opportunity to grow, as the identity of a Line city only allows it to grow on two sides, quickly limiting expansion. This brings into question the legitimacy of the city, as a city that prioritizes control over growth, potentially leading to the sacrifice of individual freedoms.

The Line is expected to be finished as near as 2030, and have it's full population filled by 2045, only 21 years in the future.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXEnS-u3fAY
https://www.neom.com/en-us
https://observer.com/2023/06/wall-es-15th-anniversary-what-the-movie-got-right-and-wrong/

The Changing Face of Education: Examining the Impact of Pressures and Technological Advances on Teachers

Dana Brickner spends her afternoon to speak out on rising pressures

Education is one of the best predictors of the future of a nation, and its economy. In the United States, the performance of the nation's future is declining. With this education crisis, what holds for the future of the nation, and education?

One of the best ways to see this direction is from the teachers, the glue of the education system. I discussed this with a multitude of teachers, all expressing concerns about what's next.

'Rising Pressures'

In a Tuesday interview, Dana Brickner, a 5th and 6th grade teacher of 27 years both in the private school sector and public education, shared her opinion.

"There is much more pressure on teachers…It used to be very simple, cut and dry…we could teach our lessons and be done"

With the advance of technology, there seems to be an endless amount of knowledge that seems to be important for the development of children and to keep them safe, with the rise of the internet. However, this poses an issue for teachers.

"We are having so many more things added onto our plates, social emotional learning is now a curriculum we now have to carve out time for weekly, in 6th grade, we have the anatomical sexual gender education..music and the arts…computer engineering and tech."

Additionally, she comments on how teachers are controlled by the district, using Common Core as a very real example.

"Common Core was a huge shift for teachers. … No longer did teachers have the freedom to use creative thinking…we had to stick to the curriculum."

"We are getting students of all spectrums of behavior…and our hands are tied with how we can discipline and classroom manage."

So, it becomes increasingly clear that new technologies and educational reforms in the past decades have only seemed to cause havoc on the overall structure of education, and with each attempt for change, the pressures on teachers only rise.

Now, in a time where artificial intelligence is on the rise, another large change seems inevitable. In order to prevent past mistakes, and to overall benefit everyone involved, we must have the teachers speak out.

I discussed this with Anne Phung, a middle school teacher, who is relatively new in the education field.

Anne Phung, talkies about incorporating technology into her classroom

"I can't be afraid of AI, I mean there is a little bit of fear, since I don't really know it too well, and since we're moving there in the future, well what can happen with AI, I don't know."

There are plenty of beneficial ways to use AI in the classroom. In fact, incorporating AI into the classroom could be a form of relieving pressures on teachers.

"There was this website called Curi.pod…I've used that to make slides or lessons in class."

Of course, there are issues as well.

"It's the same with AI, if you look at it, and the minute you look at it you just believe it, you're going to be in for a loss… If I'm integrating AI more into my classroom, I'd find a way to teach my students how to check if what I'm reading is real or not."

These issues have been discussed between teachers, as Ms. Phung shares about the gap between older teachers and younger teachers with technology.

"I think the more veteran and older teachers are a little bit more afraid because first of all they have never had to use chromebooks in the classroom all the time, and then after the pandemic, it was full technology, and everything seems to be high tech."

With this, comes a responsibility for funding, for training, and for more overall support for the education system in the United States. We must involve the teachers of the nation in these discussions. The solution and future are unclear as of now, but there are ways to mitigate the worst, and to make the most and best of the opportunity that AI provides.

As we contemplate the future, it's important to understand that spreading the word is the first step to overcoming, and only time will tell for the future of education.

Ms. Brickner ends off with a word of advice, "You do what you keep doing and add a little bit each year, instead of trying to do it all at once."