

# MAN, MACHINE

AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

*Where Will Man Take Us? – The Bold Story of the Man Technology is Creating* by futurist **Atul Jalan** is a compelling non-fiction read that prompts the reader to question man's next technologically-driven step, while serving as a reminder that we live in exciting, and terrifying, times.

Text \* **Beverly Pereira**

# R

evolutionary inventions like the wheel, electricity and light bulb, right up to innovations in telephony, computers and the Internet have brought about a radical shift in human society. Up until a few years ago, we got our news from a newspaper, not a smartphone. Now, with just a click of a few buttons we have access to a world of information and beyond. Technology has the power to do a plethora of things. But never did we imagine that its advancement would change the way we operate as a species. Even as you read these words, there's someone out there in the world developing a new invention aimed at making your life easier. While technology is developing at an unprecedented rate and pace, its indispensable role in our lives is fast defining what it means to be human. *Where Will Man Take Us? – The Bold Story of the Man Technology is Creating* takes a deep, long look at where we are headed as a species, in an age that's defined by rapid innovations in technology and science.

The author Atul Jalan is the founder-CEO of an artificial intelligence venture Manthan. Manthan's AI-powered solutions assist various industries—fashion, retail and restaurant—in understanding their consumer base through analytics applications. Technology had always been a source of interest for Jalan since his childhood—a passion that led him to explore the intersection between human life and technology. This book is the outcome of this science storyteller's understanding of how the technology man has built is transforming us.

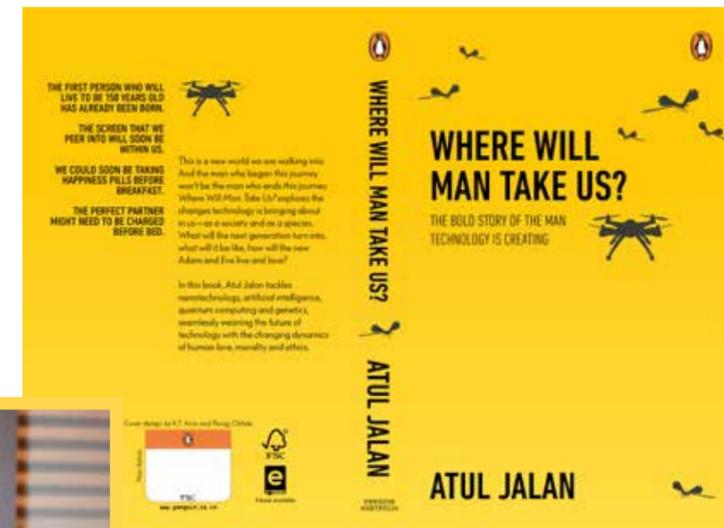


In his prologue, Jalan looks to the past to trace the manner in which man evolved over the millennia. While we as a species are here on the planet because of natural selection, it is artificial selection that will, in all probability, take us forward, he says. This intersection of biology and technology is set to bring about a major shift in the way we as a society operate. In this new world, computers or robots will have the same, if not higher, processing power as the human brain. Is this new world a dystopian nightmare waiting to unfold? Will future generations be humane? The book attempts to answer these questions through the lens of futuristic technology and the changing dynamics of human love, morality and ethics.

The book is divided into four sections, and the first, 'The Drivers of Change', looks at how technology of today is changing us. Jalan starts off with an acknowledgement to mathematician and computer scientist Alan Turing, setting the tone for the matter that follows. Interesting facts about the origins of artificial intelligence emerge as the author delves into early theories that questioned the ability of machines to think. His passion for AI is palpable when he states that if the goal of AI is to make the machine capable of thought, consciousness and emotions, then we must look at how these work in humans.

The reader is walked through concepts like nanotechnology and quantum computing, each very simply broken down as real-world applications. In a chapter that talks about genetics, Jalan eloquently goes back to its roots to explain how genetic

Right: Front cover of 'Where Will Man Take Us? – The Bold Story of the Man Technology is Creating' Below: Author Atul Jalan



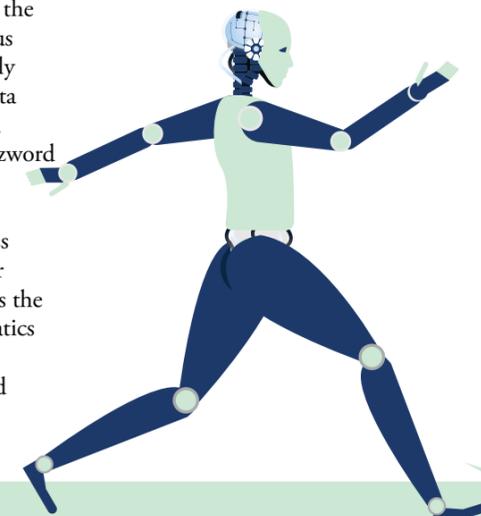
art, to how Neptune—despite not being visible to the naked eye—was 'calculated into existence' by a mathematician. When we create machines, Jalan writes, we are also opening up a whole host of moral and ethical issues. And, this topic has also been tackled with utmost sensitivity and thought.

The book is a page-turner and every chapter is enlightening, even for someone who hasn't quite kept up with our fast-paced times. But most importantly, it encourages the reader to take a step back to understand the inevitable technology-driven transformations that are occurring on the personal and societal level. \*

engineering is reinventing both man and nature.

From there onwards begins a deep dive into every important topic that relates to truly being human—from jobs and education to sexuality and social media. He touches upon our incessant need to share our opinions and how living in the filter bubble can sometimes prevent us from getting exposed to what we really ought to know. He examines how data mining and politics go hand in hand, before he ventures on to another buzzword of today, cryptocurrency.

There's something for everyone across the 272 pages of this book, no matter what one's interests might be. There's the intriguing connect between mathematics and quite possibly everything in the universe and beyond, from music and



*Where Will Man Take Us? – The Bold Story of the Man Technology is Creating*  
Author: Atul Jalan; Publisher: Penguin Random House Books; Price: ₹ 399/-