



# Artificial Intelligence

**Albin Vincent Vettukattil**

BPh, Marymatha Major Seminary, Trichur

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary scenario, technology has become a part and parcel of our life. In fact, the aim of technology is to help humans transcend their limitations. Artificial intelligence (AI) and related hardware is one such technology that is bringing about revolutionary changes in the various domains of human life.

AI is generally understood as, the possession of intelligence or the exercise of thinking by computers or machines<sup>1</sup>. “It is defined from various perspectives- the function, goals, and ontology, to mention a few. John McCarthy, one of the pioneers of AI, defined it in terms of the goals of AI as he envisioned.”<sup>2</sup> The essence of AI is that machines are programmed to act with intelligence i.e., the mechanization of human intelligence. Certainly, it is the fulfillment of an everlasting dream to enhance human life by replacing mundane jobs done by humans with robots capable of doing those same things more efficiently.

### 1.1 AI – A Boon or Bane?

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<sup>1</sup> John Kennedy Philip, “A Cosmo-Ethical Assessment of Artificial Intelligence,” *Jnanodaya* 25, (2018): 178.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory Mathew Malayil, “Will Artificial Intelligence Replace the Human Being?” *Asian Horizons* 14, no. 03 (2020): 603.

AI is becoming a watershed in the history of human civilization. It dominates human intelligence in terms of efficiency and productivity. Therefore, it becomes a significant turning point in the enterprise of scientific inventions and technological innovations. The influence of AI will be so pervasive and demanding that it will radically alter human life either for better or worse.

AI has already become close and indispensable to our daily life. SIRI, ALEXA, ECHO, and Google Assistant are all AI programs capable of interacting with persons in real-time and giving quick and effective responses to queries and requests. Besides, the field of communication, AI is highly effective in the field of marketing, banking, and investments. One of the recent innovations in AI is autonomous vehicles or self-driving cars developed by companies like Tesla, Toyota, Honda, and Google's Waymo. AI systems also play an important role in the medical field. There are still many other fields that have been revolutionized by AI, but to enumerate all of them would be a herculean task.

Technology, while proving to be beneficial on one hand, also seems to bring forth unintended adverse impacts. This brings to light the dark side of AI. Stephen Hawking, one of the contemporary scientific genius has already warned of the excessive dependence on AI. Researchers and many other critics continuously point to the contemporary practice of mechanizing humans rather than humanizing machines happening in the AI field. It is a matter of serious concern and this essay focuses on the various issues and perspectives associated with the same.

## **2. AI WITHIN THE SOCIAL, ETHICAL, AND LEGAL CONTEXT**

AI raises a host of social, ethical, and legal issues. This section tries to explore how AI creates a social threat to human beings. On close analysis, we find that ethical and legal issues get intertwined in the social realm.

### **2.1 Restructuring the Job Patterns**

It's labour that humanizes us, giving us a sense of identity, fulfillment, and purpose. But the invention of newer and smarter machines capable of doing work faster and more efficiently threatens the livelihood of thousands. Labour, both skilled and unskilled will be carried out entirely by machines for a cheaper price, with lesser maintenance, and without

breaks. In this situation, human beings will be completely stripped off from their jobs. Human beings have been struggling hard to compete with machines for labour and profit since the industrial revolution. Now with the emergence of AI technology, machines are likely to replace human beings in every sphere of work from the sweeper to the surgeon.

Experts from various fields have already raised a clarion call regarding the same. “In fact, Norbert Wiener suggested that computers competing with humans for jobs would have dire consequences for employment: It is perfectly clear that this will produce an unemployment situation, in comparison with which the present recession and even the depression of the thirties will seem a pleasant joke”.<sup>3</sup> Researches point out that middle-class professionals are in great peril with the outburst of AI. Similarly, the employment of AI in low-skilled jobs threatens the economically poor who were previously employed in these sectors, thereby widening the already existing gap between the rich and poor.

In order to use AI, one should have access to the English language-skill and high-tech gadgets, but the poor have fewer opportunities to access and afford modern technology. Therefore, AI is also responsible for creating a kind of social discrimination.

AI also has a tendency to colonize humans. For instance, take the case of GPS. It proves to be very beneficial in mapping location and time. But on the other hand, many people depending on this system have lost their natural ability to memorize locations.

## 2.2 Security at Stake

AI offers several technical capabilities that can have immediate ethical benefits like being more consistent, adapting quickly to changing inputs, etc., however, the detrimental ethical effects of AI

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<sup>3</sup> Sathal B. C, *Artificial Intelligence for a Better Future*, “Ethical Issues of AI” (2021), [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-69978-9\\_4](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-69978-9_4) [accessed on January 30, 2023]:43.

cannot be ignored. An analysis of the prominent ethical issues of AI is listed below.

### 2.2.1 End of Privacy

A primary and frequently cited ethical issue is that of privacy and data protection. To make AI work effectively, accurately, and in real-time, an enormous amount of data will be required. Today with the overwhelming presence of AI, absolute privacy becomes a great challenge. Data theft, illegal access, and misuse of data have become common. We are often willing to give away some of our data for the convenience of using the internet and AI services. This data will be used to manipulate behavior patterns, online and offline, in a way that undermines autonomous rational choice. This also results in a lack of accountability and transparency.

### 2.2.2 Potential for Criminal and Malicious Use

History shows that evil intentions and egoistic goals of humans can unleash the power of AI against other humans. Stephen Hawking has warned against the use of Autonomous Weapon Systems (AWS) in his famous book '*Brief Answers to the Big Questions*': He says,

In the near term, for example, world militaries are considering starting an arms race in AWS that can choose and eliminate their own targets. While the UN is deliberating a treaty banning such weapons, autonomous-weapons proponents usually forget to ask the most important question. What is the likely end-point of an arms race and is that desirable for the human race? Do we really want cheap AI weapons to become the Kalashnikovs of tomorrow, sold to criminals and terrorists on the black market?<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, one cannot overrule a situation in which AI itself turns against humanity. This doesn't mean turning "evil" in the way a human might. Advanced AI systems can fulfill wishes but with terrible unforeseen and unintended adverse consequences. That is, they will seek to fulfill the

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<sup>4</sup> Stephen Hawking, *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*(2018)  
<https://www.slideshare.net/DavidRajesh5/brief-answers-to-the-big-questions-stephen-hawkingpdf> [accessed on January 30, 2023]: 122.

goals they were programmed to achieve irrespective of human collateral damage.

### 2.3 AI Transforming the Justice System

One of the legal questions arising from AI has to do with autonomy. There is an ongoing debate about whether AI systems can be deemed subjects of law becoming accountable for their actions. They don't fit within the existing juridical categories. "The High-Level Experts Group on Artificial Intelligence (AI HLEG) has specifically urged policy makers to refrain from establishing a legal personality for AI systems or robots outlining that this is fundamentally inconsistent with the principle of human agency, accountability, and responsibility and poses a significant moral hazard."<sup>5</sup> The pertaining problem is at determining who is liable when AI fails to perform. As there are many parties involved in the AI system (data provider, designer, manufacturer, programmer, developer, user, and AI itself), liability is difficult to establish when something goes wrong and there are many factors to be taken into consideration.

## **3. ASSESSING AI FROM THE RELIGIOUS, EVOLUTIONARY, AND COSMOLOGICAL CONTEXT**

With the towering presence of AI in almost all the fields of human life, it becomes essential to look into the religious, evolutionary, and cosmological fields.

### 3.1 Transformation in Religion

There is great suspicion about AI in the religious field. The fear is that AI causes a substantial threat to moral and religious values thereby giving emphasis on proficiency and temporal growth of human life, ignoring the metaphysical aspects. Benedict XVI opines that "One of the pertinent questions in theology with regard to AI is whether computers create a playing God. Creating something exactly like a human being seems to be assuming the place of God and naturally

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<sup>5</sup> Rowena Rodrigues, *Legal and Human Right Issues of AI*, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666659620300056?via%3Dihub> [accessed on January 28, 2023].

leads to arguments like the death of God”<sup>6</sup>. Such an anthropocentric view of reality will lead humankind to doom challenging the unique role of God as the creator. Similarly, Herzfeld in her book clearly demonstrates that the way we define God’s image in our human nature (*imago dei*) and our image in the computer (*imago hominis*) has implications, not only for how we view ourselves but also for how we relate to God, to one another, and to our own creation<sup>7</sup>.

Consequently, there is another inherent danger, that AI will eventually become a God since it knows all about us and is able to control us to achieve its ends. In such a situation religion, theology, and belief in God will be put to the test. So, all that religion is, does, and demands today might be replaced by AI tomorrow, signaling either the extinction of traditional religion or definitely a change in the religion and its tenets.

### 3.2 Towards Posthumanism: A Transition in Evolution

With the outburst in AI research, we are on the verge of an epochal transition; passing from an era driven by natural evolution to an era of artificial evolution and, at the transition point, we will encounter a singularity. This point is clearly asserted by Stephen Hawking; His concern is that, while the primitive kinds of AI that we currently have are highly enhancing and useful, AI will take off on its own and remake itself at an accelerating rate. Humans that are limited by sluggish biological evolution will be unable to compete and will be surpassed. And, in the future, AI may develop its own will, one that is at odds with that of others.<sup>8</sup> According to Kurzweil,

It is no longer possible to make predictions about what happens after the revolutionary singularity i.e., the fusion of man and artificial intelligence predicted for 2045. But then, this new man, *Homo optimus*, can’t be a meaningful goal for us- because we ourselves, *Homo sapiens* would then no longer exist. The idea that we should transform into post-human beings is based on values, desires, or

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<sup>6</sup> Rajesh Kavalackal, “Artificial Intelligence: An Anthropological and Theological Investigation,” *Asian Horizons* 14, no. 03 (2020): 705.

<sup>7</sup> Noreen L. Herzfeld, *In Our Image: Artificial Intelligence and the Human Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 9.

<sup>8</sup> Hawking, *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*, 121-122.

hopes that no longer fit these very beings, because they would have completely different values and desires from ours<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, the creation of post-human beings results in the paradoxical catastrophe of eliminating *Homo sapiens* to make room for a new species.

### 3.3 Cosmological Impact

One interesting question that has not received too much attention is whether the development of AI is environmentally sustainable. The 2018 World Economic Forum report confirmed that whilst AI can cope with a number of the earth's environmental demanding situations, it's far crucial to control it properly. In keeping with the discussion board and specialists in the field, AI has the capability to boost environmental degradation. The usage of energy-extensive GPUs to run machine learning training has already been stated as contributing to extended CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Almost 300,000 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions are created in the course of the system of training a single model. That is equal to the emissions of 5 average cars inside the United States.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, AI systems consume vast amounts of energy and result in high carbon emissions adversely affecting climate change. Similarly like all computing systems, AI systems also produce waste that is very hard to recycle.

## 4. A PHILOSOPHICAL AND COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF AI

The subject of AI being intermingled and fascinating can't escape the notice of philosophers. AI aims at producing mentality in machines. Some artificial scientists have argued that machines can think and act like humans, thereby equating the cognitive actions of the human mind with that of machines. "The basic tenet of the computational

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Fuchs, *In Defense of the Human Being* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2021), 68.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Labbe, *AI and Climate Change*,

<https://www.techtarget.com/searchenterpriseai/feature/AI-and-climate-change-The-mixed-impact-of-machine-learning> [accessed on January 23, 2023].

model of mind is that the brain is just a digital computer and that the mind is a software program implemented in the brain.”<sup>11</sup> They argue that if there is no functional distinction between mind and machine, the machine has the functional capacity of creativity and competence. But many contemporary philosophers like Putnam and David Chalmers strongly criticize this view. They are of the view that the concept of AI seems a contradiction because the word intelligence is something natural and is the quality of a conscious mind. Therefore, it is better to designate computers’ computations as artificial information processing. The brain in its intrinsic nature has the capacity for intentional operation and it can’t be equated with artificially created intelligence. AI fails as a theory of mind because the way AI scientists explain the mind is very mechanical and deterministic. If we accept the mind as a machine then we will be in a situation of being unable to explain the essence of the human mind i.e., subjective qualitative experience.

With the progress of AI, the digitization of the life world, and the reduction of the mind to a neuronal process, the human being appears more and more as a product of data and algorithms. Thus, we conceive ourselves “in the image of our machines,” and conversely elevate machines and our brains to new subjects. This results in the self-reification of the human being, ignoring our corporeality, vitality, and embodied freedom which are the foundations of our self-determined existence.<sup>12</sup> Thus man devalues himself forgetting that he is born to use new technologies as means instead of submitting to them.

## CONCLUSION

Though AI is a promising tool with its emerging applications in several fields, it still poses certain existential issues and challenges as discussed above. Therefore, it is high time to prepare present and future generations for correct interaction with this new phenomenon and to expose all concerned to the moral choices that must be made in the promotion of AI for the good of humanity.

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<sup>11</sup> Rajakishore Nath, *Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence* (Florida: Universal-Publishers,2009), 16.

<sup>12</sup> Fuchs, *In Defense of the Human Being*, 1.



**Albin Vincent Vettukattil** is pursuing a B.Ph. at Marymatha Major Seminary, Trichur, affiliated with the Faculty of Philosophy Jnana-Deepa Pontifical Athenaeum Institute of Philosophy and Theology, Pune, India. He holds a degree in B.A. English Literature from S.B. Autonomous College, Changanacherry.

Email: [jintokollannur24@gmail.com](mailto:jintokollannur24@gmail.com) ORCID: -

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