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Artificial intelligence: asking about its ontological status

Abstrakt

Sztuczna inteligencja: pytanie o jej status ontologiczny

Artykuł dotyczy statusu ontologicznego sztucznej inteligencji. Czy jest to osoba czy rzecz, a może byt pomiędzy światem ludzkim a materialnym? Koncepcja osoby granicznej jest rozważana jako możliwa przestrzeń konceptualna do przyjęcia AI i jej przyszłych realizacji. Pojecie osoby granicznej zostało pierwotnie ukute w badaniach bioetycznych z zastosowaniem do wyższych zwierząt. W rozumieniu osoby biorącym swój początek od definicji Johna Locke'a „osoba graniczna" jest terminem inkluzywnym i prowadzi do traktowania AI tak, jakby była osobą. W post-Boecjańskiej filozofii „osoba graniczna" ma charakter negatywny i działa jako termin wykluczający; nakazuje traktowanie sztucznej inteligencji i wszystkich jej wcieleń jako wysoko rozwiniętych narzędzi, które być może dochodzą do granic ludzkiego świata, ale nigdy do niego nie wkraczają. Praktyczne przewidywania dotyczące możliwości zastosowania AI sugerują, że to drugie podejście jest bardziej odpowiednie.

Słowa kluczowe: sztuczna inteligencja (AI), status ontologiczny, osoba, osoba graniczna

Abstract

Artificial intelligence: asking about Its ontological status

The article deals with the ontological status of AI. Is this a person or a thing or maybe an entity between the human and material worlds? The concept of borderline person is considered as to a possible conceptual place to adopt AI and its future realizations. The concept of the borderline person was originally coined in bioethical research with an application to higher animals. In the post-Lockean understanding of the person the borderline person is an inclusive term and it leads to treating AI as if it were a person. In the post-Boethian philosophy of the human person, the borderline person has a negative character and acts as an excluding term; it maintains AI and all its incarnations as a highly developed tool, which maybe reaches the borders of the human world but never enters it. Practical predictions about the applicability of AI suggest that the latter approach is more appropriate.

Keywords: artificial intelligence (AI), ontological status, person, borderline person

Artificial intelligence is nowadays at the center of attention in many areas of research and practical application.[1] The number of publications concerning its character, influence, and future development is constantly growing and the volume of writing is now beyond the ability of an average and interested reader to keep up with. Artificial intelligence is not only a subject of curiosity and does not embody unequivocal progress but appears as a controversial phenomenon, which brings about both hopes and anxieties as to its possible role in the life of the individual and the society. For this reason, careful attention should be paid to its promotion and use. However, some deep philosophical and ethical questions and problems are also associated with it and these should be critically considered and addressed. In this article, I will focus on these questions paying particular attention to the ontological status of AI.

The main question at the center of the following investigation is about the kind of being artificial intelligence is or will be; is this a person or a thing only; or is it a kind of entity between these two? This problem is urgent because it is commonly thought that sooner or later AI will catch up with and rival human persons; on the other hand, this is a human invention and thus seems to serve as a human tool only. How then should AI be treated in its fundamental dimension? An attempt to give an answer to this question is risky because it is not known what shape AI will take in the future. Will certain imagined radical scenarios come true? It may happen that AI will never get its independence from the human world and will constitute a kind of sophisticated tool in human hands only. But it is better to consider a more radical scenario that AI will approach substantially what is now typical for humans and a simple distinction into the world of persons and things will be blurred and distorted and will necessitate its revision.

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1   There are various definitions of AI. To provide its preliminary and concise understanding the follow-ing passage can be helpful, "the common understanding of AI is that it is associated with machines and computers to help humankind solve problems and facilitate working processes. In short, it is an intelligence designed by humans and demonstrated by machines. The term AI is used to describe these functions of human-made tool that emulates the 'cognitive' abilities of the natural intelligence of human minds" (M. Cheng-Tek Tai, *The impact of artificial intelligence on human society and bioethics*, "Tzu Chi Medical Journal" 32 [2020] issue 4, p. 339, https://doi.org/10.4103/tcmj.tcmj_71_20).

Looking at the emerging horizon

Artificial intelligence has many applications and facilitates human functions in very many areas including advanced Internet searching, auto-driving vehicles, human speech recognition, medicine, and servicing text-to-speech platforms or LLM systems, to mention a few. There are also advanced studies considering the use of AI in such areas as learning and education[2] and art.[3] Generally, AI can be divided into two versions: weak AI and strong AI. The former concern specific functions narrowly defined, for example as applied in facial recognition, self-driving cars or in Internet Siri search-engine. The latter are considered as artificial general intelligence (AGI), which possesses an ability to learn almost any intelligent task the human being performs; it is claimed that this kind of AI "could outperform humans at nearly every cognitive task."[4]

This strong understanding of AI, which is the subject of article, arises from the concept of "technological singularity." Anders Sandberg offers nine meanings of this term, circulating in literature, and one of them seems to fit current analyses,

> the singularity represents a shift to new forms of organization. This could be a fundamental difference in kind such as humanity being succeeded by posthuman or artificial intelligences, a punctuated equilibrium transition or the emergence of a new metasystem level.[5]

By the concept of artificial intelligence is meant this kind of intelligence that exceeds the level of human intelligence and that is why it is close to the

2　D. Baidoo-Anu, L. O. Ansah, *Education in the era of generative artificial intelligence (AI): understanding the potential benefits of ChatGPT in promoting teaching and learning*, "Journal of AI" 7 (2023) no. 1, p. 52–62, https://doi.org/10.61969/jai.1337500.

3　A. Elgammal, M. Mazzone, *Artists, artificial intelligence and machine-based creativity in "Playform"*, "Artnodes" (2020) no. 26, p. 1–8, https://doi.org/10.7238/a.v0i26.3366.

4　M. Cheng-Tek Tai, *The impact of artificial intelligence*, p. 339.

5　A. Sandberg, *An overview of models of technological singularity*, in: *Transhumanist reader*, eds. M. More, N. Vita-More, Malden 2013, p. 377, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118555927.ch36.

concept of superintelligence; it seems that the latter plays a vital role in AI systems because the strong version of AI is meant to be its embodiment. Nick Bostrom, for example, develops his analyses concerning superintelligence and provides a number of meanings. Initially, he claims that superintelligence is "any intellect that greatly exceeds the cognitive performance of humans in virtually all domains of interest";[6] and then, he provides characterizations (or maybe approximations only) of three of them. First, there will be "speed superintelligence" and Bostrom spells it out in the following way, "a system that can do all that a human intellect can do, but much faster."[7] Second, there will be "collective superintelligence" understood as "a system composed of a large number of smaller intellects such that the system's overall performance across many general domains vastly outstrips that of any current cognitive system."[8] Finally, Bostrom points out that there will be "quality intelligence" understood as "a system that is at least as fast as a human mind and vastly qualitatively smarter."[9]

If all these scenarios came true, we would be dealing with a new phase of world development called a "next stage of evolution," particularly as far as the intelligence is concerned. Part of the new situation would be a conviction that AI (AGI) is a new and genuine intelligence evolving alongside the human intelligence.[10] Of course, AI is here conceived as a machine intelligence in a sense that it is generated by so-called intelligent machines even if it has its beginning in the world of humans, i.e. being instantiated by humans in the first place and further — designed to be incorporated in and developed by machines. Transhumanists and some adherents of AI are convinced that human biology is too limited to give rise to and support a greater level of intelligence. This conviction is clearly voiced by Bostrom who claims that "the potential for intelligence in a machine substrate is vastly greater than a biological substrate. Machines have a number of fundamental advantages that will

6   N. Bostrom, *Superintelligence. Paths, dangers, strategies*, Oxford 2014, p. 23.
7   N. Bostrom, *Superintelligence*, p. 64.
8   N. Bostrom, *Superintelligence*, p. 65.
9   N. Bostrom, *Superintelligence*, p. 68.
10 D. Bashash, M. Faranoush, *Artificial intelligence (AI): the next stage of evolution?*, "Iranian Journal of Blood & Cancer" 15 (2023) issue 3, p. 1, https://doi.org/10.61186/ijbc.15.3.1.

give them an overwhelming superiority. Biological humans, even if enhanced, will be outclassed."[11]

If the strong version of AI (AGI) is permanently present and progressing among humans, and in this way taking control over more spheres of human life, how should it be treated by humans themselves? In other words, a number of competences given to it will be enormous and steadily increasing as it may be predicted; quite quickly a point will be reached when it must be decided whether AI is only a tool to carry out various tasks or a subject of actions. Although it is easy to stick to a former scenario and keep this technology within the borders of useful things, as has been mentioned before, a more difficult and more complicated scenario should be thought over, namely that AI is the subject of actions and it gains a new ontological status in our world. If this is a case, what framework is to be proposed to accommodate this new being?

On the borders of the human world

In recent decades there have been attempts to determine the status of higher animals in relation to the world of human beings. Such attempts were undertaken and respective considerations were carried out by animal ethicists and bioethicists. One of the results of this enterprise was the concept of a borderline person. It seems that this notion can be revived and reconsidered as to a new purpose, namely whether and to what extent can it be applied to AI. First, however, it is necessary to recall what bioethics and animal ethicists understood by this concept and what its applications in bioethics were.

Considerations concerning personhood have long roots in the history of Western thought; recently, they were resumed within bioethical debates with a new force and vigor because of practical reasons having much to do with ethical and bioethical dilemmas. In the naturalistic bioethics, the post-Lockean philosophy has basically influenced an understanding of personhood; in this approach, the person is defined through a set of personal, that is, personality-related characteristics. For John Locke himself, the person is understood

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11   N. Bostrom, *Superintelligence*, p. 63.

as an intelligent, conscious being able to carry out a reflection on itself;[12] thus, these three traits, namely rationality, consciousness, and memory, play here their major roles. Contemporary philosophy, following this way of thinking, adds further characteristics relevant to personhood. For example, David De-Grazia points out that

> personhood is associated with a cluster of properties without being precisely definable in terms of any specific subset: autonomy, rationality, self-awareness, linguistic competence, sociability, the capacity for intentional action, and moral agency.[13]

DeGrazia is aware that it is not necessary for a given entity to have all of these properties in order to be counted as the person nor is it enough to have only one of them; he claims that "a person is someone who has enough of these properties."[14] In this way, the concept is vague and lacks precision but only as far as boundaries of personhood are concerned. Nevertheless, the philosopher acknowledges that the concept allows us to identify "paradigm persons,"[15] such as normal children belonging to the human family.

DeGrazia carries out his analyses in order to establish what status should be ascribed to some animals that exhibit at least certain human-like characteristics, for example, great apes and dolphins. The problem is not only with a number of traits they manifest but with their quality: do these animals perform, for example, activities proving that they are self-conscious? In this case, there are many controversies but there is a certain group of researchers sustaining the idea that this is the case and that "social self-awareness [...] is

12 John Locke gave a new definition of the person, in contrast to the medieval, particularly Boethian definition, in the following words, „[the person] is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it" (J. Locke, *Essay concerning human understanding*, vol. 1, Oxford 1894, p. 448, https://doi.org/10.1093/oseo/instance.00018020).

13 D. DeGrazia, *On the question of personhood beyond Homo sapiens*, in: *In Defense of animals. The second wave*, ed. P. Singer, Malden 2006, p. 42.

14 D. DeGrazia, *On the question of personhood*, p. 42.

15 D. DeGrazia, *On the question of personhood*, p. 43.

evident in apes' natural structure, which feature dominance hierarchies, long-term relationships, and shifting allegiance."[16] Arguing this, DeGrazia draws on the research of such scholars as Richard Byrne, Jane Goodall and Terry Maple. However, animals' person-like abilities still arouse controversies because there is no unequivocal proof that they possess an advanced and fully-fledged self-consciousness typical for human individuals. Consequently, David DeGrazia is cautious over calling higher animals persons but instead introduces the concept of the borderline person; he puts it in the following way, "I argue that normal representatives of the great ape and certain cetacean species are *borderline persons*, lying in an ambiguous grey area between paradigm persons and those who are clearly non persons."[17] The philosopher claims that the concept of the person, with its lack of clarity, helps us to identify paradigm persons and also "other individuals who are sufficiently similar to warrant inclusion under the concept."[18] This brings with it a strong suggestion that the notion of borderline person is but an inclusive term, namely the positive term, which works as an encouragement to count those higher animals as creatures close to human beings.[19]

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16 D. DeGrazia, *On the question of personhood*, p. 44.

17 D. DeGrazia, *On the question of personhood*, p. 44.

18 D. DeGrazia, *On the question of personhood*, p. 42–43.

19 DeGrazia refrains from a final claim as to whether those animals can be called persons; in his own words it is put this way, "my suggestion [...] is that normal, post-infancy great apes and dolphins are *borderline persons*. Given the vagueness of the concept of personhood, that is, there is no definite yes-or-no answer to the question of whether they are persons" (D. DeGrazia, *On the question of personhood*, p. 46). It is worth mentioning as a clarification that using the concept of "borderline person" we do not mean any extreme cases of psychiatric disorders (borderline personality). There is also a huge interest in borderline personhood in legal considerations (e.g. J. Chen, P. Burgess, *The boundaries of legal personhood: how spontaneous intelligence can problematise differences between humans, artificial intelligence, companies and animals*, "Artificial Intelligence and Law" 27 [2019] issue 1, p. 73–92, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10506-018-9229-x). However, the ongoing considerations are conducted on the level of ontology and philosophical anthropology, not psychiatry or legal sciences. Moreover, from the perspective assumed in this article, the latter are secondary.

Artificial intelligence: person or non-person?

David DeGrazia's analyses and discriminations can be used to investigations concerning the ontological status of AI. A similar question can be put, namely whether AI is a person or a thing or something in between. There are some reasons to apply to AI the concept of borderline person because some of its characteristics, as mentioned in the DeGrazia's definition, can be ascribed to this artificial system. Thus, for example, the apparent level of rationality is typical for AI; self-awareness is also instantiated through an inner control of all operations; there is in place a growing autonomy of AI as well as some linguistic competences (e.g. the Internet assistant) and the capacity of intentional action. Although, at the present stage of the development of AI, there is a problem with sociability and moral agency (can AI be morally motivated?). Nevertheless, not all of these parameters must be manifested to draw on the thinking in terms of the person, as is acknowledged by DeGrazia. Let us elaborate on AI person or a borderline person.

It is rather obvious that AI does not live up to the status of paradigm person; it is not naturally autonomous; its rationality and a kind of self-consciousness (e.g. inner supervision of its operations) are bestowed on it; its capacity of intentional agency is also conditioned (and to some degree controlled) by a human inventor and supervisor. Maybe in the future, it will change to a point that these traits will be more independent and extra-human but at this stage of understanding of AI there is nothing certain about it other than futuristic speculations. Nevertheless, there is a reason to claim that AI is a kind of borderline person, lying in a grey area between paradigm persons and the world of non-persons. Of course, there are striking differences between higher animals as borderline persons and AI; the latter as artificial semi-persons are devoid of some vital properties e.g. autonomous center of life (AI at this stage is sustained by human-invented and supplied systems, e.g. electrical, electronic and the Internet systems and respective sources of energy).

To what extent can it be claimed that AI as a borderline person is a part of the world of persons? In other words, is the concept of the artificial borderline person an inclusive term or rather signaling a clear distance from the world of the paradigm persons? DeGrazia, considering the status of higher animals,

used it as an inclusive term; can it be used this way in the case of AI? The answer to this question depends on a broader understanding of personhood, not restricted to the post-Lockean approach. Thus, a closer inspection of the concept of the person itself is necessary.

The post-Lockean approach characterizes the person through a set of personality-related traits;[20] however, there is no agreement between adherents of this stance as to how many such elements must be in place to recognize a given entity as a person. There are two extreme positions contending with each other: a maximalist approach as represented by Joseph Fletcher[21] and a minimalist approach associated with John Locke's definition (rationality, consciousness, memory). David DeGrazia's definition seems to keep a middle ground but still remains a part of the Lockean tradition. One of the consequences of this approach is that the person is perceived through the prism of active characteristics but not through the mode of being.[22] Thus, the person seems to be understood as a constellation of functions exercised associated with an unknown substratum on which these functions have their platform (i.e. in which they are inserted). If this is the case, then only these characteristics count and a possible vessel or a supporting body seem to be secondary and casual and hence changeable.

Consequently, the person can have this or that body; a transfer of a set of personal traits is a viable option here. Locke himself suggested such a solution while carrying out his thought experiments as to the possibility of two entities being the same person by possession of the same consciousness. In this

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20 John Locke was primarily interested in the identity of the person; however, conducting his analyses as to what makes a given entity the same in various places and times, he formulates a new understanding of the person, namely who the person in fact is. If this was his intention is another thing but a kind of new ontology of the person is sketched in his considerations.

21 Joseph Fletcher pointed out that the person exists when 15 factors are in place; they are following: minimum intelligence, self-awareness, self-control, sense of time, sense of the futurity, sense of the past, capacity to relate to others, concern for others, communication with other persons, control of existence, curiosity, change and changeability, balance of rationality and feelings, idiosyncrasy, neocortical function. See J. Fletcher, *Humanhood: essays in biomedical ethics*, New York 1979, p. 12–16.

22 Locke's concept of personal identity and arising from that a concept of personhood have been put under critique many times; such philosophers as Thomas Reid, Joseph Butler and recently Robert Spaemann showed many weaknesses of Locke's positions. See e.g. R. Spaemann, *Persons. The difference between "someone" and "something"*, transl. O. O'Donovan, Oxford 2006, p. 104–105, 138–147.

position, what really counts as far as the person is concerned is not being the same substance but having the same consciousness; thus, a transfer of consciousness from one thinking substance to another is the transfer of a main factor making a given entity a person.[23] In contemporary philosophy this possibility was renewed and taken up and elaborated upon; as an example, it can be pointed to an idea of uploading the person as formulated by Ray Kurzweil.[24]

In the light of this approach, AI (AGI) can be recognized as a person-like entity; or even more, in the post-Lockean understanding of personhood, there will be a tendency to include AI into the world of persons. AI possesses functions that can be deemed as having to do with rationality, consciousness, and memory; although problematic is whether, for example, autonomy and moral agency can be plausibly ascribed to it, as was mentioned before. However, what works for the sake of AI person is its loose association with this or that body; it is transferable because it is a part of IT and consequently it can be implanted into various bodies, be they natural or artificial. Similar scenarios have been analyzed by transhumanists for some time (e.g. artificial chips implanted into a human brain to radically improve its cognitive functions). Even if in this position the claim that AI is a person is too strong, ascribing to it a status of a borderline person is fully justified.

Nevertheless, the post-Lockean concept of the person, although widely spread and used, is not the only understanding of personhood and this opens up a possibility to approach the ontological status of AI from a different angle. A starting point for that may be a Boethian definition of the person, where the latter is grasped as an individual substance endowed with a rational nature *(individua substantia rationalis naturae)*.[25] This definition is a deeply

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23 Locke's thinking in this respect goes as follows, "if the same consciousness […] can be transferred from one thinking substance to another, it will be possible that two thinking substances may make but one person" (J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 454).

24 R. Kurzweil, *The singularity is near: when humans transcend biology*, London 2005, p. 125ff.

25 It is worth mentioning that the Boethian understanding of the person is an analogical concept. It was originally formulated for the sake of theological investigations (how to reconcile the problem that Jesus Christ had two natures but at the same time was a unified entity). But it turned out that it can be successfully applied to other spiritual entities (divine individuals, angels, or demons) and then to human creatures. If this is the case, then the analogy can be widened and other applications can be considered.

metaphysical formula focused on the fundamental mode of being. There is no mention here of any personality-related characteristics and it seems that, even if they are taken into account, they play secondary roles. In other words, in the Boethian approach such elements as autonomy, rationality, self-awareness, linguistic competence, sociability, the capacity for intentional action, and moral agency, if understood as functions, do not constitute the person but reveal its rational and individual nature. In the Aristotelian philosophy, close to the thinking of Boethius, all these functions (or rather the potentiality of these functions) are but accidents that depend on and inhere in the substance but do not constitute it in the first place.[26]

In the light of this, the status of AI is more complicated. The artificial system possesses some of personality-related traits but is devoid of individual and rational nature; those traits are deposited and activated in AI by a human agent; although present in the former, they stem originally from the latter and are typical for him. Thus, it is difficult to argue for the personhood of AI; if any, it may be a secondary personhood, namely the personhood that is a projection (or a reflection) of the original and "indigenous" one.[27]

An additional problem arises with an AI body. In the Boethian position, the body seems to be an integral part of the person. The personality-related traits are in a sense anchored in the whole personal nature and the personal body is

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26 Karol Wojtyła gives an account of this metaphysical relation in the following way, "each being has its own essence which we understand quite simply as that which a given being is (*quidditas*). This essence is the basis for all its particular properties, for they are all themselves, that is, they are all the properties of this particular being, exclusively on account of their real connection with the essence: in relation to the essence and to the being, they have the character of accidents, such that in separation from their being and from its essence, they cannot neither exist nor operate" (K. Wojtyła, *Ethics primer. Elementarz etyczny*, transl. H. McDonald, Lublin 2017, p. 63–65).

27 That secondary personhood shows a qualitatively difference in comparison with the natural one too. AI personhood is, in fact, an object-like reality, which Robert Spaemann calls "something"; it cannot be made and transformed into "someone." The German philosopher claims that "a person is […] not just 'something,' but 'someone.' Someone is never something. To be 'someone' is not a property of something, not the property of a thing or an organic being, which could already be adequately described as such and such in non-personal terms. Rather, we identify distinctly from the start either someone or something. We identify an exemplar of the species homo sapiens from the start and without consideration of any factually possessed characteristics as someone, thus, as a person" (R. Spaemann, *Is every human being a person?*, "The Thomist" 60 [1996] no. 3, p. 467, https://doi.org/10.1353/tho.1996.0013).

a part of this nature. For example, Karol Wojtyła, conducting his philosophy along this line of reasoning, claims that the person "has a body and in a sense 'is a body.'"[28] The human person cannot be separated from his body because to its essence (nature) belongs that he is a bodily creature; consequently, such an understood person cannot be transferred to other vessels, be they natural or artificial. In the light of that, AI is a sub-personal reality and there are no justifications for calling it a person. Maybe the concept of a borderline person can be employed here but in a quite specific way.

If the concept of borderline person is referred to these two approaches to personhood, some interesting conclusions can be drawn. In the light of the post-Lockean position, AI is the borderline person but it means that it is close to the world of paradigm persons and this concept works as an inclusive term; then there will be a tendency to count AI as if it were a person, of the artificial character. Of course, it will bring with it a need to reconsider the whole set of relationships in this just enlarged world of persons. Opposite conclusions stem from a comparison with the Boethian position. AI may be considered as a borderline person but in a negative sense, namely as an entity which maybe reaches the borders of personhood but never enters it because it does not live up to it; then, the term has a clear excluding character. AI as the borderline person stands for the realm of tools understood as human creations. Consequently, it is really difficult to argue that it enters into special relationships with the human persons.

Thus, the two opposing meanings of the borderline person appear and the answer as to which one is correct depends on the underpinning philosophical theory. This dilemma may find its clearer solution when the assessment of the borderline person is carried out within a practical order. Then, one of the important considerations which must be thought over is a matter of human rights. Thus far, the latter have been bestowed only on human persons; the appearance of AI persons (or semi-persons only) will change that radically. For example, rights to life, liberty and free development, to mention but a few, must be also given to those new creatures. Such a situation will bring about a lot of problems and confusion in the world as it is known already. The basic

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28   K. Wojtyła, *Love and responsibility*, transl. H. T. Willetts, San Francisco 1981, p. 23.

question is whether AI borderline persons understand the language of rights; and by defending their own rights will they respect the rights of the human persons?; or maybe demand more rights for themselves?

This last possibility leads to a new scenario where AI borderline persons will be willing to get more power and dominate the world of natural persons. Such a picture is presented by Nick Bostrom who at the beginning of his highly acclaimed book sketches a following narrative,

> if some day we build machine brain that surpass human brain in general intelligence, then this new superintelligence could become very powerful. And, as the fate of the gorillas now depends more on us humans than on the gorillas themselves, so the fate of our species would depend on the actions of the machine superintelligence.[29]

Despite the intention of the author, which is rather optimistic, this is a chilling warning which should be treated seriously; it suggests that the uncontrolled development of artificial realities can bring with it a real danger for human existence. Are we really ready to pass a rudder to AI and put it at the helm of our human world?

Conclusions

AI bring with it a lot of strong emotions and expectations as to the possibility of a radically improved world. There is a tendency to bestow on it a high status among creatures to the point that it will be counted as a partner of the human being. The concept of a borderline person can be a tool to implement it. However, a fair dose of caution is necessary in order not to introduce into the human world something which does not possess the same ontological status; it is still a human product and it is far from the reality of the subject who creates it. AI is indeed for the sake of human persons, for their well-being and comfort; it is rather risky to put it on the same level with the world of natural

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29 N. Bostrom, *Superintelligence*, p. v.

persons and inevitably — contribute to its impairment. The warning of Hans Jonas should be treated with the utmost seriousness, namely that the survival of the human person is a real priority in the world[30] and everything else should be assessed in the light of that. Thus, new technologies must be judged not one-sidedly but possibly in all their dimensions and ramifications. It may lead to an attitude that, on the one hand, all promising paths of development are followed, including further development of AI, with hope and real curiosity, but on the other hand, all these enterprises are to be patiently scrutinized and thought over through the prism of real human goods, which encompass also goods that are non-instrumental and non-material and spiritual.

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30 Hans Jonas put it this way, "the existence of mankind comes first, whether deserved on its past record and its likely continuation or not. It is the ever-transcendent *possibility*, obligatory in itself, which must be kept open by the continued existence" (H. Jonas, *The imperative of responsibility: in search of an ethics for the technological age*, transl. H. Jonas, Chicago 1984, p. 99).

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