

Philosophical Anthropology And Artificial Intelligence: The Need To Redefine Humanity

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Abstract: The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) has posed profound challenges to traditional philosophical conceptions of human nature. Philosophical anthropology, which seeks to define the essence of humanity, must now grapple with the existence of non-biological intelligences that simulate human cognition, creativity, and interaction. This article explores how AI compels a reevaluation of classical anthropological assumptions, particularly those concerning rationality, consciousness, embodiment, and moral agency. Drawing on the insights of leading American philosophers and scientists such as Ray Kurzweil, John Searle, Martha Nussbaum, and Shannon Vallor, the article argues that the boundaries between human and machine are no longer clearly defined, urging a reconfiguration of philosophical anthropology to accommodate hybrid, post-human realities. Rather than resisting change, this paper advocates for a dynamic, value-centered conception of humanity that integrates technological evolution while safeguarding the ethical and existential dimensions of human identity.

Keywords: Philosophical anthropology, artificial intelligence, human nature, posthumanism, consciousness, ethics, embodiment, personhood.

Introduction: Philosophical anthropology has historically centered on the question: What does it mean to be human? From the rational animal of Aristotle to the symbolic animal of Ernst Cassirer, answers have varied, but they have generally presupposed a biological, embodied, and conscious subject. With the rise of artificial intelligence, particularly in the form of generative language models, autonomous systems, and affective computing, many of these anthropological constants are now in question. The increasing presence of AI in daily life is not merely a technical phenomenon but a deeply philosophical one. Machines now perform tasks once thought uniquely human—writing poetry, playing music, making diagnoses, or even simulating conversation with emotional nuance. This convergence forces a reassessment of humanity's defining traits and the ethical implications of creating entities that appear to share them. The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) has not only transformed how societies function but also challenged some of the most fundamental assumptions

about what it means to be human. Philosophical anthropology—the study of the nature of humanity through a philosophical lens—is now confronted with an unprecedented situation: humans are creating non-biological entities that exhibit traits long considered uniquely human, such as problem-solving, creativity, and even ethical reasoning. As AI grows more complex, the boundaries between human and machine become increasingly blurred, prompting a critical redefinition of humanity.

The Historical Core of Philosophical Anthropology

Traditionally, philosophical anthropology has explored questions such as: What is the essence of being human? What distinguishes humans from other animals? Thinkers like Immanuel Kant emphasized human rationality, while Martin Heidegger focused on existential aspects such as self-awareness and mortality. In the 20th century, U.S. philosopher Ernst Cassirer described humans as “symbolic animals,” emphasizing our capacity for language, myth, and art.

Yet, the 21st century brings new urgency to these questions. With AI systems now capable of generating art, engaging in natural language conversation, and even influencing decision-making processes, the traditional markers of human uniqueness are under scrutiny. Philosophical anthropology has been shaped by attempts to identify the unique qualities of human beings. Thinkers such as Immanuel Kant viewed rationality as the core of human nature, while Martin Heidegger emphasized existential self-awareness and temporality. For many, the capacity for ethical reasoning, language, and symbolic thought distinguished humans from animals and machines. However, the increasing cognitive capabilities of AI systems challenge these traditional boundaries. Large language models like GPT-4 demonstrate linguistic fluency and generate novel insights, while deep learning networks perform complex pattern recognition beyond human capacity. Such developments raise a foundational question: If machines can simulate thought, do they possess it? And if not, what does this imply about our definitions?

The Challenge of AI: Human Uniqueness Revisited

One of the most influential voices in this debate is Ray Kurzweil, an American inventor and futurist. Kurzweil predicts that humans and machines will eventually merge through a process he calls "the singularity." In his book *The Singularity Is Near* (2005), he argues that "the nonbiological intelligence created in that year will be one billion times more powerful than all human intelligence today." Kurzweil's vision challenges the idea that consciousness and intelligence are uniquely human attributes, instead presenting a future where these traits may be shared with—or even dominated by—machines. However, not all thinkers welcome this shift. Philosopher Francis Fukuyama, in his book *Our Posthuman Future*, warns of the ethical and societal consequences of blurring the lines between human and machine. He asserts that "the most significant threat posed by contemporary biotechnology is the possibility that it will alter human nature and thereby move us into a 'posthuman' stage of history." For Fukuyama, the core of philosophical anthropology—defining the nature of humanity—is under threat not just from biotechnology but also from advanced AI.

A central point of contention is consciousness. While machines may act intelligently, do they have subjective experience or self-awareness? American philosopher John Searle addressed this in his seminal "Chinese Room" argument, where he demonstrated that symbol manipulation (syntax) does not imply understanding (semantics). Searle contends that no matter how well a machine performs linguistically, it does not genuinely "understand" language—it lacks intentionality and

consciousness. This reinforces a distinction between simulation and experience, which many philosophers of mind consider essential to being human. Nevertheless, futurist Ray Kurzweil envisions a post-biological future where humans merge with AI to enhance cognition and transcend biology. In *The Singularity Is Near*, he suggests that machines will not only match human intelligence but eventually surpass it. Kurzweil's perspective implies that humanity is not defined by its current biology but by its potential for conscious expansion through technology.

Redefining Consciousness and Personhood

AI systems such as GPT-4, developed by OpenAI, are now capable of producing texts, poetry, and even philosophical arguments that appear to demonstrate a form of understanding. Yet this raises a deeper philosophical question: Does imitation equal consciousness? American philosopher John Searle famously tackled this issue through his "Chinese Room Argument," which suggests that even if a machine can convincingly simulate understanding a language, it does not truly "understand" in the way humans do. According to Searle, "Syntax is not semantics," meaning that computation alone cannot produce true consciousness. This distinction is vital for philosophical anthropology, as it points to an inner, subjective experience as central to being human—something AI, at least currently, lacks. Similarly, Thomas Metzinger, though German by nationality but influential among American academic circles, emphasizes that we must not confuse behavioral mimicry with genuine selfhood. In his critique of "naïve anthropomorphism," he suggests that ethical debates must be grounded in a nuanced understanding of consciousness and personhood, not merely intelligence or function.

Embodiment, Emotion, and the Human Condition

Beyond cognition, the human experience is rooted in embodiment and emotion. The American philosopher Andy Clark, co-author of *The Extended Mind*, argues that human cognition is not confined to the brain but distributed across body, environment, and tools. In this view, AI, no matter how advanced, lacks the embodied experience that shapes human thought and emotion. Moreover, emotions are not mere byproducts of intelligence but central to our moral lives. As Martha Nussbaum notes, emotions are "intelligent responses to the perception of value." While AI can detect emotions and respond accordingly, it does not feel them—raising profound ethical concerns about assigning machines roles in caregiving, justice, or companionship.

Ethical Implications and the Future of Human Identity

The ethical implications and future of human identity

are deeply intertwined with advancements in technology, biotechnology, artificial intelligence (AI), and socio-cultural evolution. As we stand on the brink of unprecedented changes—from genetic engineering to brain-computer interfaces—the very definition of what it means to be human is being challenged. As AI systems take on more human-like roles, from therapists to artists, the question arises: What responsibilities do we have toward them—and they toward us? Shannon Vallor, a philosopher of technology at Santa Clara University, warns that relying on AI for deeply human tasks may erode our moral and intellectual character. In her book *Technology and the Virtues*, Vallor writes, “We risk allowing our tools to shape our humanity in ways we do not fully understand.” These changes require philosophical anthropology to expand its framework. Rather than seeking a rigid definition of humanity, we may need to adopt a relational or functional perspective—viewing humans not by what they are intrinsically, but by how they relate to others (including machines), to values, and to the world.

CONCLUSION

The advent of artificial intelligence challenges many of our deepest philosophical assumptions. It calls into question the essence of human nature, the uniqueness of consciousness, and the moral responsibilities in human-machine relationships. Yet, rather than leading to despair, this moment may offer an opportunity. As we confront the blurred boundaries between human and machine, philosophers like Daniel Dennett urge caution but not panic. “We must not underestimate our tools,” he writes, “but neither should we surrender our humanity to them.” In rethinking what it means to be human in the age of AI, we are invited not just to redefine ourselves technologically, but to reassert the values—compassion, responsibility, and reflection—that have always been at the heart of philosophical anthropology. Artificial intelligence is not simply a technological innovation; it is a philosophical event. It compels a reevaluation of human nature, agency, and identity. While traditional philosophical anthropology sought stable definitions of humanity, the AI era demands flexibility and ethical foresight. As the boundaries between human and machine blur, we must articulate a vision of humanity that is not merely biological or rational, but profoundly ethical, relational, and creative.

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