

Can we still be 'Human' in a world with Artificial Intelligence?

Context

In the dominant Western Christian theological discourse, our understanding of the world is shaped through a hierarchical framework that places God as superior to humans, and humans as superior to animals.

GOD



HUMANS

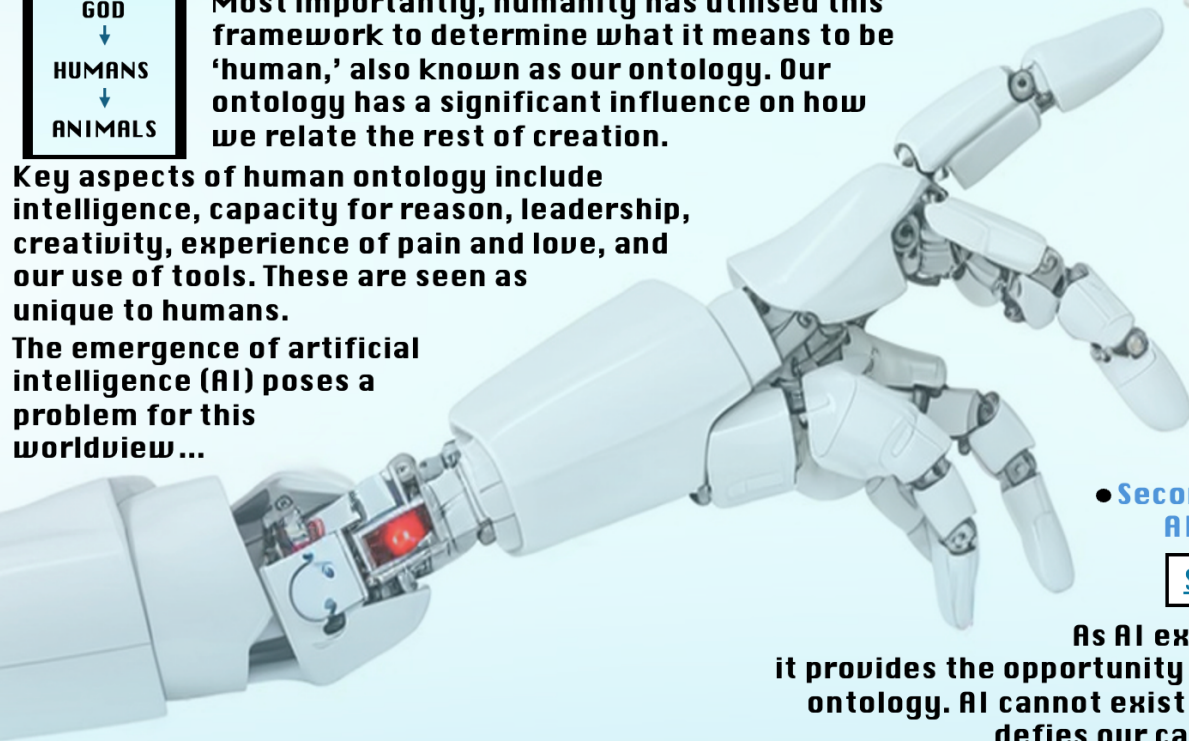


ANIMALS

Most importantly, humanity has utilised this framework to determine what it means to be 'human,' also known as our ontology. Our ontology has a significant influence on how we relate the rest of creation.

Key aspects of human ontology include intelligence, capacity for reason, leadership, creativity, experience of pain and love, and our use of tools. These are seen as unique to humans.

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) poses a problem for this worldview...



Problem

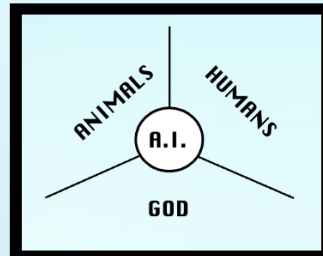
AI exists outside of this framework as it is not present in the biblical narratives that have contributed to/justified our hierarchical worldview and subsequent ontology. The problem this presents us with can be divided into two key questions:

- Firstly, where does AI fit, if at all, in our theological worldview?
- Secondly, what impact will this have on human ontology, especially when AI appears to possess much of what we thought was uniquely human?

Solution - Utilising AI as a Liberative Tool to Challenge Frameworks

As AI exists 'outside' of our established frameworks, it provides the opportunity for a new approach to our worldview and our ontology. AI cannot exist within our current theological discourse as it defies our categories; it is not God, nor human, nor animal.

Additionally, AI challenges the parameters of 'human' through its possession of 'our' abilities. My research advocates that we recognise the fragility of how we currently understand 'human,' promoting a new worldview that acknowledges AI, alongside an equitable approach to the rest of creation.



*The background image for this poster was generated using artificial intelligence.

References/Suggested Reading:
Eysenck, Michael and Eysenck, Christine. *AI vs. Humans* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2022)
Gomez, David. *Human and Machine Consciousness* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2018)
Goodale, Greg. *The Rhetorical Invention of Man: A History of Distinguishing Humans from other Animals* (London: Lexington Books, 2015)
Mazlish, Bruce. *The Fourth Discontinuity: the Co-Evolution of Humans and Machines* (London: Yale University Press, 1993)

Produced by Charlotte Gargett. SALC PhD Student