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An Ethical Examination of Artificial Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

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Artificial intelligence is one of the most influential inventions throughout the history of mankind. It has changed nature and dynamics of modern societies in significant ways and effects decision making processes and human to human interaction. However, it has also raised many ethical questions in which one of the most important is that who is responsible for the action taken by AI if they harm someone or particular group. This article undertakes an ethical inquiry into artificial intelligence in regard its philosophical, social, and economical aspects. This article focuses on the main questions what is the status of AI in humanistic society? Is it just an instrumental tool or an entity holding moral responsibility, also the question which is most discussed in contemporary discussion if AI can achieve consciousness or not. Artificial Intelligence is a total novel phenomenon to the human kind and the existing theories of the ethics whether they are traditional or modern and lack the full framework which can govern this new aspect of humanistic society. This study is nothing but an approach toward making an ethical framework which can address the concerning question about AI and its role in society. Unlike an objective evaluation based solely on technical assessments, this paper considers AI in view of moral philosophy, pointing to the limitations of value-neutral development. The article asserts that the importance of considering ethics cannot be overlooked in the appropriate growth of Artificial Intelligence. It concludes that, although Artificial Intelligence can improve human qualities, it has to remain ethically restricted by human-centric moral standards to avoid the loss of accountability and erosion of ethical standards. The article's ethics analysis essentially implies that there should be a philosophical consideration of Artificial Intelligence in order for growth to remain in line with moral accountability.

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1.0 Introduction

One such change-inducing factor in the modern world has certainly been the emergence and development of artificial intelligence (AI). Nowhere in the world today is this shift being felt more than in the way the world conducts its economy, governments, medical systems, and the way human beings relate to each other. And this nation, too, is not an exception. All this change has been accomplished through the use of Machine learning[1] and data analytics and the ability to interface with the world in ways that are beyond ordinary human capabilities. And this widespread change has caused many to be appalled and enthusiastic at the same time. On the one hand, artificial intelligence has the potential to significantly increase efficiency and productivity in the world. On the other hand, questions are being raised on the ethics, that challenges the artificial intelligence systems on doing what was once the exclusive function of a human mind. And so, the need to consider the social and philosophical implications of artificial intelligence has now become imperative to consider when thinking in earnest about artificial intelligence. The ethical issues relating to Artificial Intelligence are, at their core, fundamentally philosophical, as they raise foundational questions of moral philosophy, such as agency, responsibility, autonomy, and justice, as well as issues of human dignity.

Artificial Intelligence systems are no longer merely machines which perform mechanical operations; rather, Artificial Intelligence systems are now agents of decision-making processes which directly influence and determine our lives. Artificial Intelligence systems now find themselves in every process, from judicial risk assessments, through to healthcare procedures and hiring, and predictive policing, as decision-makers which directly influence our lives. As such, when Artificial Intelligence systems fail, as measured by bias and injurious conducts, the solution to these issues cannot be merely technocratic but must be informed by normativity and principle-based thinking as to what should be done. The philosophical nature of this problem becomes immediately apparent when considering the debate about moral agency. There are specific agents whose moral agency relies inherently on intentionality, consciousness, and freedom of choice. However, as these systems have pre-programmed algorithms and data learning processes, there is no intentionality inherently within these systems. However, there are actions that mirror decisions made by a conscious mind. This presents a paradox within the system since it does not have a conscious mind.

Therefore, can it be held responsible for actions, or is it always responsible on an institutional basis? Besides this, Artificial Intelligence has also challenged existing moral theories by comprising power dynamics, autonomy, and even potentially exploiting human beings by means of data profiling. In this regard, it requires engagement with deontological, consequentialist, and virtue-based approaches while assessing these changes. Hence, the ethical analysis of Artificial Intelligence and the rapid pace of development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) have spawned one of the most important ethical issues of our time. The increasing ability and willingness to use AI to perform tasks that involve judgment, prediction, and decision has given

[1] a subset of artificial intelligence (AI) that develops algorithms to identify patterns in data, allowing computers to learn and make predictions or decisions without being explicitly programmed for every task.

rise to one of the most philosophical and fundamental questions to be addressed in the world of ethics and Artificial Intelligence: Can Artificial Intelligence itself be the object of moral judgment, or is this truly a unique human experience?

2.0 Literature review

Conventional moral theory has long linked responsibility to intentional agency, consciousness, or the capacity for free choice. With regard to moral agency, it is thought that agents act intentionally in an effort to realize the consequences of their actions, giving them a certain degree of responsibility. Computers, on the other hand, operate through algorithmic processing, statistical analysis, and data optimization. They lack all the qualities of consciousness and inherent intentions. Yet, computers are capable of making many decisions that have highly significant consequences for human life, for example, in medical diagnosis, legal risk assessment, financial lending, or security monitoring. The seeming paradox in the role of computers raises an underlying conceptual tension. There are thus two main paths in the discussion. One line of argument suggests that AI is simply an instrument, an intelligent tool whose ethics are simply preconditioned and in no way original or inherent. The ethics are thus entirely the responsibility of human beings who create and program these machines, as well as the corporate and governmental establishments in general. AI cannot be attributed or imputed ethical responsibility because it has no such freedom or agency whatsoever. The other line of argument refers to several instances of how AI is autonomous to a great extent and is therefore competent in learning; hence, one might question the concept of agency. One might question agency, in fact, because of its function, even if AI lacks the quality of consciousness. Another condition that adds to the complexity of the situation is found in the case of distributed decision-making. In such a case, the decision is the outcome of a complex interaction between developers, data sources, institutional frameworks, and machine learning models. However, such a decision-making scenario makes the accountability of the decision seem distributed.

Therefore, the question is not just the capability of AI to assume moral responsibility, but the nature of responsibility within the context of technology-mediated environments. To morally discuss AI, there is a need for a reevaluation of agency, accountability, and moral status in the context of technological society. Instead of viewing AI as morally responsible or blameless, there is a need for a more complex philosophy of technology to clarify the extent of machine agency while reasserting the role of moral accountability. Intelligence goes beyond norm-making to an in-depth philosophical analysis. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most impactful technological advancements of our modern era, significantly changing and modifying social, economic, political, as well as cultural configurations around the world. The areas in which AI technologies are entering prominently include areas like finance, healthcare, and governance systems—areas in which human elements prevail. The key question, therefore, is: what is the relation between Artificial Intelligence and ethics, and how important is ethics in this regard?

3.0 Methodology

This research uses a qualitative and philosophical mode of analysis, through conceptual analysis and critical reasoning. The research is basically library-based, involving a systematic

examination of the philosophical literature on the subject of artificial intelligence. The research applies normative ethical theories such as deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics as a theoretical framework to examine the major ethical issues surrounding artificial intelligence, including autonomy, responsibility, decision-making, justice, and human dignity. In addition, the ethical difference between human consciousness and machine intelligence was explained using a comparative and critical mode of research, in order to offer a coherent and philosophically valid interpretation of the ethical implications of the use of artificial intelligence.

4.0 Discussion and results

The association between AI and ethics hinges on the rather simple yet important reality that AI systems have a considerable influence on human lives that is infused with ethical implications. Unlike other pre-existing technologies, such as mechanical systems, AI systems have an inherent capacity to learn from data, adapt to new surroundings, and make outputs based on simulating reasoning. The scope of AI reaches to include job opportunities, results in criminal trials, medicine, credit accessibility, and political viewpoint formulation, among others. The implication is such that as long as technology is implicated in shaping choices, opportunities, and rights, evaluation is necessarily warranted. Among the main areas where the issue of AI and ethics comes into play is that of fairness in relation to the existence of issues of bias in the works of artificial intelligence. The main issue comes in the implementation of learning in such systems, whereby they are trained to perform on the basis of historical performance, where there is a possibility of inequalities and prejudices in the existing societies. It is, therefore, the role of ethics to analyze the issue of fairness in the various works of artificial intelligence lest technological efficiency lead to inequality. Another key ethical issue that is of grave importance is the issue of autonomous human agency. In other words, the ethical issues revolve around the concept of the effects of artificial intelligence on human autonomy. There is the possibility that the AI in recommendation systems, surveillance techniques, and prediction techniques could shape human decisions. Generally, recommendations, news feeds, and political outlets fall in the same category. The significance of ethical issues is key in the pursuit of understanding the value of the degree to which the actions of artificial intelligence hinder autonomous human agency. Accountability represents a further key aspect of ethics in the realm of AI. In an instance of malfunction or error on the part of an AI system the cause could be anything from misdiagnosing a patient to making an arrest or causing financial misinformation the issue of accountability becomes complex. Since AI systems don’t operate in the same manner as ordinary machines, which could be clearly understood by those who created them, it becomes necessary to think through accountability from the perspective of those who created them as well as institutions. Without this, the risk of the “responsibility gap” arises. Privacy and Data Protection: Another fundamental aspect at the very center of ethical issues related to Artificial Intelligence is related to privacy and data protection. Indeed, today any Artificial Intelligence system is based on massive amounts of data, normally extracted from personal data. In this respect, the processing and exploitation of such massive amounts of data represent a serious risk to our traditional understanding of consent and control. In this respect, these ethical issues are fundamental with regard to dignity and informational self-

determination.

In addition to the above, we observe that there is another set of implications that arise on a more philosophical level. For example, what are the implications of human moral agency if AI systems are increasingly capable of performing tasks that require human reasoning and judgment? Is AI simply a sophisticated tool, or even more so because it does not perform tasks that are organized by a consciousness and intentionality all its own, while it becomes increasingly autonomous? The need for ethics in AI systems is not only due to its extrinsic nature as a rule of conduct in decision-making, but also due to its intrinsic nature as an essential component of technological design. The ethical approach of "Ethics by Design" contends that ethics should be incorporated into the technical design of AI systems from the outset. This ethical viewpoint presumes that ethics are already implicit in algorithmic design, data selection, and in the process of getting maximum results. The implications of ethical AI are profound. The role that ethical AI can play can be viewed from various levels: society, as it involves the task of instilling trust in technological systems; an institution, as it may enhance transparency; and finally, at a philosophical level, as an ethical examination of AI involves re-examining traditional notions of responsibility, autonomy, and justice. The relationship between Artificial Intelligence and Ethics is not optional; but it is essential. This is because the purpose of AI systems is to have a voice in determining human possibilities and reality. Ethics play a crucial role in informing the development of AI, preventing harm to human dignity, and ensuring that the advancement of AI is in accordance with basic ethical values. The future of AI will not be informed by technical possibilities; rather, it will be informed by moral frameworks.

The philosophical interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) is therefore not coincidental and certainly not new, but rather a product of the tradition of debate on the nature of the mind, agency, morality, and the character of rationality. The reason for this is the fact that, with increasing simulation and deployment in the realms of decision-making, learning, and reasoning, artificial intelligence is naturally bound to intersect with the fundamental philosophical issues on the nature and definition of intelligence, the possibility of agency and morality in the absence of consciousness, and the assignment of responsibility in technologically mediated reality. The ethics of artificial intelligence must therefore be informed by the tradition of ethics and political philosophy. The relationship between Philosophy and AI: The relationship between Philosophy and AI begins in Philosophy of Mind. One of the most important issues when discussing AI relates to whether machines are "thinking" at all, which takes us back to Alan Turing[2]'s early philosophical suggestion of functionalism[3] as a way of determining intelligence on the basis of observable

[2] ***Alan*** Mathison ***Turing*** was an English mathematician, computer scientist, logician, cryptanalyst, philosopher and theoretical biologist.

[3] a theoretical framework across disciplines—primarily sociology, psychology, and philosophy—that interprets phenomena based on their purpose, function, or role in maintaining a larger system.

behaviors. However, John Searle[4]'s "Chinese Room[5]" objection to early strong AI theory argued that purely syntactic processes of symbol processing were insufficient for semantic processes of understanding. The discussion of AI is obviously pertinent to ethical considerations because traditional criteria for moral agency have been based on intentionality and consciousness. However, if machines are merely mimicking these qualities without really possessing them, then they retain a fundamentally different moral status from humans. Normative ethics offers us theoretically defined structures in the assessment of actions, consequences, or characters. The three major traditions employed by the field of AI ethics are: deontology, utilitarianism (consequentialism), or virtue ethics. Deontology is a school of ethical thought most prominently represented by Immanuel Kant[6], who focuses on duty, reason, and the respect for persons. Kantian deontology teaches us, for example, that human beings are intrinsically valuable and cannot be treated as a means to an end; hence, the preferential option for AI is to avoid instrumentalizing people through data mining and manipulation. An exemplary situation is the utilization of personal data by predictive models for the maximization of profit, which disregards the Kantian dictate for respect for autonomy and dignity.

Furthermore, the imperative of rational accountability emerges as a major theme in Kantian philosophy. As AI systems are devoid of real autonomy from the moral angle, no moral accountability is assigned to them. From the moral viewpoint of deontology, ethical AI systems center on the principles of transparency, consent, and respect for human dignity. Utilitarianism, as postulated by Jeremy Bentham [7]and John Stuart Mill[8], considers the consequences of actions and the results in terms of utility. In artificial intelligence, the consequential argument may be in line with the use of artificial intelligence that benefits efficiency and productivity. For instance, the use of artificial intelligence in the healthcare industry may lead to the accurate diagnosis of diseases. The consequential use of technology is justifiable. However, it is also essential to perform a cost-benefit analysis. If AI systems inevitably cause damage to society, for example, by introducing bias among their algorithms, causing unemployment, or compromising privacy, their utility is called into question as a moral issue. In this respect, some scholars argue that a strictly consequentialist approach may not be entirely ethical because it may brush aside individual rights and minority concerns to achieve total utility. Virtue ethics, which focuses on character, moral development, and the acquisition of virtues like justice, prudence, and compassion, has its origins

[4] John R. Searle was an American philosopher widely noted for contributions to the philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, and social philosophy.
[5] a 1980 thought experiment by philosopher John Searle, which posits that computers,, regardless of how advanced, only simulate understanding through syntax (symbol manipulation) rather than true comprehension (semantics).
[6] Immanuel Kant was a German philosopher. Born in Königsberg in the Kingdom of Prussia, he is considered one of the central thinkers of the Enlightenment.
[7] Jeremy Bentham was an English philosopher, jurist, and social reformer regarded as the founder of modern utilitarianism. Bentham defined as the "fundamental axiom" of his philosophy the principle that "it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong".
[8] John Stuart Mill was an English philosopher, political economist, politician and civil servant. One of the most influential thinkers in the history of liberalism and social liberalism, he contributed widely to social theory, political theory, and political economy.

in Aristotle's ethics and has relevance to AI studies, mainly because it redirects the focus of attention from AI systems per se to the character of their designers and policymakers. Ethical AI design demands virtues like responsibility, prudence, and humility. Additionally, virtue ethics prompts the reflection that humans should consider the influence of AI technologies on the character of human beings. For instance, if human beings depend more on the judgment of AI technologies, what influence will this have on practical wisdom? Will there be a loss of moral responsibility? Similarly, the era of meta-ethical arguments on moral realism, moral constructivism, relativism, etc., cannot leave the issue of artificial intelligence untouched. The issue of the objectivity or subjectivity of moral values arises as an important factor, as it would not make any sense to build artificial intelligence that is not morally absolute, if morality, in fact, exists. Thus, the issue of the embeddedness of "moral values" in the algorithm of artificial intelligence cannot be discussed outside the context of the understanding of the concept of morality. The moral position of AI is possibly the most contentious area. Some philosophers take the position that Advanced AI systems, certainly those nearing artificial general intelligence itself, may ultimately develop aspects deserving of moral consideration, while others take an unequivocal position and disagree with the notion that moral personhood must be characterized by the presence of consciousness. Moreover, it should be mentioned here that Artificial Intelligence is related to political philosophy as well, especially with respect to theories of justice because, according to the theory of justice as proposed by John Rawls, if any system of algorithms is biased towards marginalized sections, then it would be considered unethical, and similarly, as Michel Foucault has debated power and surveillance discourses, it would be pertinent to note here that Artificial Intelligence would, to some extent, be enhancing unequal power relationships as well, especially with respect to surveillances and data management practices. One of the most pressing philosophical problems today relates to responsibility and complex systems of technology and computers. Conventional moral theory is based directly on agents who are accountable for given acts and behaviors. The development of AI has expanded the initial model by incorporating different decision-making actors, such as programmers, data scientists, corporations, and artificial intelligence systems, through the construct of "distributed responsibility." Philosophical implications: challenges to classical theory and the need for new models.

Finally, AI poses the question of what it means to be human. Existential and phenomenological thinkers focus on experience, embodiment, and subjectivity as fundamental to being human. On the other hand, AI systems are using simulated versions of abilities such as reasoning and imagination. As such, there is a pressing ethical issue of whether progress in technology necessitates a reappraisal of what it means to be human. The literature on philosophy supports the argument that one cannot discuss Artificial Intelligence from a technical and legal approach only. It has broad implications for various foundational debates, such as philosophy of mind, ethical theories, meta-ethics, political philosophy, and theories relating to agency. Deontology refers to respect for autonomy and rights, while utilitarianism refers to consequence, social benefits, virtue ethics, and political philosophy, which refer to justice and power. Thus, in sum, the ethical investigation of Artificial Intelligence is merely the latest chapter in the very long

series of investigations into the nature of human reason, action, and the good life. It is the newest product of the long-standing search by humanity to grasp the ethics of its own creations. The immediacy and pervasiveness of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in every aspect of humanity's existence have raised an array of ethical issues that are intricate in nature. These ethical issues are not only paramount but also primary considering that AI technologies are increasingly making impacts in every aspect of humanity's existence. A critical ethics discussion of AI technologies requires an examination and analysis of the inherent ethical issues. Among the ethical dilemmas that are of most concern within AI are algorithmic bias. Usually, AI systems are trained using historical data that often mirrors existing social inequalities. As a result, AI systems that have been learned on such biased data are found to promote such forms of bias in different realms. Concerns about justice always arise in such situations. The need to consider the ethical question of fairness arises because if AI systems are creating unfair situations among different classes of people, it implies that the moral precept of 'equality' is not being respected. AI further complicates the traditional concept of moral responsibility. When an AI-created process leads to a negative outcome, such as an accident caused by an automated vehicle, wrongful arrest due to predictive policing, or a medical misdiagnosis, it becomes challenging to assign responsibility. Is it the responsibility of the programmer, the company, the end user, or the AI algorithm? The presence of multiple characters in the creation of the negative outcome leads to what is referred to as a "responsibility gap" by scholars. For example, many AI systems use deep learning algorithms, which are considered "black boxes," implying that they lack transparency in explaining their decision-making processes. This is pertinent to ethical systems because it must be possible to build trust through transparent and explainable decision processes. Without such systems, it is possible that the AI system will be compromising democratic processes. AI systems utilize vast personal data collection and analysis techniques. There are privacy, consent, and informational autonomy concerns with these practices. The utilization of surveillance techniques, which can predict and influence decision-making with AI, threatens personal freedom and dignity. For ethical AI development, it is necessary to prioritize the privacy of individuals and avoid the exploitation of personal data. AI influences human decisions through recommendations, advertisements, and predictions of human behavior. Undoubtedly, AI makes decision-making easier, but at the same time, ethical issues of manipulation of human decisions also arise. The influence of AI on human decisions is not obvious, which reflects considerations of the ethical evaluation of the impact of AI on human decisions, which needs to be either enabled by AI or eventually replaces them.

From a more philosophical point of view, the question of whether AI systems should be considered moral agents in the first place is more pertinent. The moral agent argument is defined in terms of the concepts of consciousness, intentionality, and free will, which AI systems empirically keep lacking. Nevertheless, with the increased demonstrations of autonomous and learning functions of AI systems, the discussion of the moral status of AI is becoming more pressing: even if not moral agents, should we continue using the concepts that we apply to AI systems? One of the distinguishing impacts of AI technology is its far-reaching effects, which may be felt in the job markets and economic systems. AI may bring increased unemployment,

inequality between people, and dominance of technologically powerful organizations. Questions of distributive justice and equality of access to the benefits of technology will need to be considered among the moral impacts of AI. With these AI technologies available for various malicious purposes like cyber warfare, autonomous weapons development, and campaigns promoting misinformation, there are ethical concerns regarding malicious AI applications. Such dual uses of these technologies require great ethical vigilance and regulations to guard against any potential harm.

5.0 Conclusion

In the course of analyzing the ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence, it has been observed how this technology is not only a technological issue, but it is, in fact, a major philosophical challenge that demands the re-evaluation of long-held moral notions. As this research has been conducted, it has been observed how these underlying moral issues associated with Artificial Intelligence, such as bias and discrimination, accountability and responsibility, transparency, privacy, autonomy, socioeconomic inequality, and moral agency, are all highly interwoven with a number of underlying moral philosophical notions. Artificial Intelligence systems have a profound impact on opportunities, goods, and decisions, as well as power relations, and therefore, as such, ethics is not a marginal aspect to be taken into consideration in the context of the development of technology, but it is, in fact, necessary. If observed from a utilitarian perspective, it can be stated that AI systems can help to the greatest extent possible for the benefit of well-being and can be beneficial for the common good. In the health sector, predictive analytics can enhance overall diagnostic abilities; in the management of the environment, it can maximize resource use; in education systems, it may enhance learning accessibility. These points can thus be justified if observed from a consequentialist perspective, where the result of actions imparts utility by their total sum. However, utilitarianism suggests that technology is a point that needs to be analyzed in terms of macro-outcomes, and if the impact of AI systems leads to an increase in inequality, bias, or a reduction in privacy at a social level, the calculations of utility may become morally questionable. The kind of safeguards that deontological ethics, especially in the Kantian version of it used here, provides. It should be noted that through the use of deontological ethics, especially Kantian ethical theory, the above-mentioned safeguards are provided. These safeguards include the fact that human beings should never be treated as a means to an end but as ends in AI systems. "The requirement that the development of AI must respect human dignity and the requirement of informed consent also point towards an understanding of AI as having no moral responsibility; the responsibility gap created by complex technological systems does not excuse moral responsibility; it intensifies it." Moreover, it should be noted that the central concern of Kantian ethics is accountability. In other words, it’s worth mentioning that the only stakeholders who have the capability of showing moral responsibility are human beings."

Virtue ethics brings an additional important dimension by not concentrating solely on rules and consequences, but also emphasizing moral character and practical reasoning. The moral quality of AI development is greatly dependent on the virtues of individuals who control its development, regulation, and implementation. Prudence, justice, humility, and foresight are

important virtues in a world defined by intelligent systems. Virtue ethics can prompt a discussion about how AI impacts moral development in humans. There is a great danger that if we increasingly rely on AI to make moral judgments, then our practical reasoning ability will be affected. Ethical AI development should be designed to encourage, not replace, virtues in individuals. Throughout the range of different philosophical schools, there is an apparent consensus: AI needs to be considered part of an anthropocentric ethical framework. In other words, AI should neither be viewed as morally independent nor should it be seen as having no moral role. AI systems carry out values via their design, data structure, and application within social contexts. The disseminated responsibility among social circles points to the necessity of fresh forms of collective responsibility without negating the classic idea of agency. Political philosophy suggests an evaluation of AI in relation to justice, fairness, and power, so that technological progress does not deepen social inequalities.

Consequently, with respect to Artificial Intelligence, the above-mentioned ethical considerations prove that the potential of the underlying technology does not solely influence one's moral legitimacy. In the case of Utilitarianism, the focus is on the current potential for the greater good; deontology focuses on the preservation of human dignity; virtue ethics focuses on the ability of the ethical theories to sustain one's wisdom of practice. Therefore, one could conclude that the future of Artificial Intelligence will not only flourish with the help of progress in computer technology but with the underlying moral values that it needs to uphold as well.

Contribution

Muhammad Nadeem Akhtar Janjua: Problem Identification, Theoretical Framework, Data Analysis, and Drafting

Muhammad Jawwad: Supervision

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