INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

EXISTENTIAL THREATS AND OTHER DISASTERS

HOW SHOULD WE ADDRESS THEM

Mediteran Hotel & Resort · Budva · Montenegro

May 30-31st 2024

SPEAKERS:

Vojin Rakić /The Center for the Study of Bioethics
Vardit Ravitsky /The Hastings Center
Roger Crisp /The Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics
Peter Singer /Princeton University
Julian Saulescu /National University of Singapore
Arthur Caplan /New York University's Langone Medical Center
Josephine Johnston /The Hastings Center
Ingmar Persson /University of Goethenburg
Anders Sandberg /Oxford University's Future of Humanity Institute
Nicholas Agar /University of Waikato
James Hughes /University of Massachusetts

Keynote speakers:

- **Peter Singer:** "Existential Threats and Other Disasters: The Need for a Consequentialist Approach"

- **Julian Savulescu:** "AI as Human Moral Enhancement"

- **Vojin Rakić:** "Extraterrestrial Forms of Cognition and Morality: Existential Threats or Opportunities"

- **Vardit Ravitsky:** "Bioethics' Capacity to Address Existential Threats: A Path Forward"

- **Roger Crisp:** "Human Extinction: Possibly Good?"

- **Ingmar Persson:** Is Pessimism about the Future of Humanity Justifiable?

- **Anders Sandberg:** "Civilizational Virtue, Civilizational Autonomy, and Existential Risks"

- **Arthur Caplan:** "The Eradication of Infectious Diseases and the Threat of Future Outbreaks in a World Brimming with Conflicts"

- **Josephine Johnston:** "Reframing Low Birthrates as an Existential Opportunity"

- **Slobodan Perović**: "Exponential Appetite for Energy: An Existential Risk Or Necessity of Life?"

- **Nicholas Agar:** "The Big Problem with Charismatic Extinction Threats"

- **James Hughes:** "Are Children The Future?: Longtermism, Epistemic Discounting and Axial Futurism"

ABSTRACTS

AUTHOR
Karim Jebari

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Institute for Futures Studies, Holländargatan 13, Stockholm, Sweden

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Saved by the Dark Forest: How a Multitude of Extraterrestrial Civilizations Can Prevent a Hobbesian Trap

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)
The possibility of extraterrestrial intelligence (ETI) exists despite no observed evidence, and the risks and benefits of actively searching for ETI (Active SETI) have been debated. Active SETI has been criticized for potentially exposing humanity to existential risk, and a recent game-theoretical model highlights the Hobbesian trap that could occur following contact if mutual distrust leads to mutual destruction. We argue that observing a nearby ETI would suggest the existence of many unobserved ETI. This would expand the game and implies that there may be a mechanism that prevents ETI from attacking us. As a result, the Hobbesian trap would be avoided if both parties assumed the other is not likely to attack.

AUTHOR

Geraldine Ng

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Philosophy Lab CIC, London, U.K.

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

The Difficult Middle: Climate Change and the Tragedy of Inaction

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

My subject is the global environmental crisis, what Stephen Gardiner labelled 'a perfect moral storm'. This paper is concerned with 'the tragedy of inaction' on climate change. (Gardiner 2011) I address our predicament by making what I argue are salient connections between ethical practice and another human activity – scientific thinking.

As our future comes increasingly to rest on what we take the sciences to be telling us, it becomes increasingly important to subject what we take the sciences to be telling us to philosophical investigation. I outline a fuller, situated conception of reason, with recognition of the pluralism of scientific knowledge at its core. Elaboration of our epistemic status in terms of the plurality of scientific knowledge affords a new way of applying Enlightenment promises to everyday practical experience.

In this connection, Gillian Rose characterises the fundamental mismatch between Enlightenment political ideals and actuality as the Broken Middle. (Rose 1992) Putting together Rose's notion of 'the middle' and scientific pluralism, what I term the Difficult Middle affirms a position between liberal hubris and postmodern despair. On the one hand, pluralism about scientific knowledge entails the increased acknowledgment of uncertainty and equivocation. On the other hand, a deeper understanding of the plural, perspectival features of scientific knowledge helps citizens acquire a tolerance for the provisionality, partiality, and plurality of everyday practical experience. Refusing wishful thinking and resignation, the outlook calls for a difficult journey towards comprehension and action. To this end, the Difficult Middle affirms the practice of reason and rejects the counsel of despair – that way is too easy.

AUTHOR
Katarina Komenska

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
OZ Ethica

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
On broader understanding of moral obligation: Climate change as a deepening challenge in humanitarian and development aid

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

There is an undeniable and valid discussion on how the ongoing climate change is shaping the world and how communities around the world will be able to respond to it. Prediction on the increase in temperature in the upcoming decades is already expected to lead to even more extreme weather events (such as from recent months: heatwaves in U.S.A., floods in Libya, forest-fires due to long dryness in Canada and Greece, water-scarcity in Iraq, and many others). In regions where there are already complex humanitarian needs due to the prolonged conflicts or socio-economic and political instability, climate change is becoming "a thread multiplier". The presented paper will formulate what seems to be obvious: that humanitarian and development sector needs to broaden its understanding of the moral obligation of humanitarian aid in a way it will build a stronger climate resilience towards programming as well as in its strategic and day-by-day operation. Paper will explore how this could be achieved through consequential ethical theories compatibility with virtue ethics. Secondly, although this shift in humanitarian strategies has already emerged in the discourse (both by donors and implementing partners), the paper will critically explore the limitations of such strategies in the light of practical ethical challenges of the sector (limited resources, complexity of the context, capacities for resilience).

AUTHOR

Nancy S. Jecker,*,1,2 Vardit Ravitsky,3 Anita Ho,4 Caesar Atuire,5,6 Jean-Christophe Bélisle-Pipon7

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

*Corresponding Author, [1]University of Washington School of Medicine, [2]University of Johannesburg African Centre for Epistemology & Philosophy of Science, [3]The Hastings Center, [4]University of California San Francisco, [5]Oxford University, [6]University of Ghana, [7]Simon Fraser University

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

A Broader View of X-Risk

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

This paper responds to alarms sounding across diverse sectors and industries about risks of unregulated AI advancement. It argues that rapidly evolving AI presents distinct types of existential risk (X-Risk) and proposes an ethics framework for addressing these risks. Section I introduces and interrogates X-Risk, distinguishing two types: extinction of the human species and annihilation of socially marginalized societies. These X-Risks are endpoints along a risk continuum with mitigation possible prior to arriving at a terminus. Section II introduces the capability approach, an ethics framework that sets out central human capabilities: life; health; bodily integrity; practical reason; emotions; affiliation; senses, imagination, and thought; and regulating one's environment. It argues that just societies make reasonable efforts to support dignified lives by supporting people's threshold capabilities. The view offers an alternative to approaches focused exclusively on aggregate net benefits. Section III applies the capability view to X-Risk mitigation. Reducing risk of species extinction requires supporting threshold capabilities for life, health, and regulating the environment by maintaining meaningful human control over tools and technologies that pose existential threats (nuclear, chemical, and biological weaponry) and ensuring human oversight over critical infrastructure (water, energy, food) and services vital to public health and wellbeing (healthcare, education). Reducing risk of annihilating marginalized communities requires committing to equality of threshold capabilities, and offsetting global disadvantages that accrue to less economically developed regions. The paper concludes (in Section IV) that rapid AI advancement poses distinct X-Risks that challenge human values. Navigating X-Risk requires supporting equality of threshold human capabilities.

AUTHOR
Brian D. Earp and Emma Gordon

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
University of Oxford, University of Glasgow

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Moral Enhancement and Cheapened Achivement

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

A prominent bioconservative critique of cognitive or athletic enhancement maintains that that drugs and technologies that improve performance in these domains may do so at the risk of "cheapening" our resulting achievements (Kass 2002; Sandel 2007; Agar 2010; Harris 2011). Considerably less attention has been paid, however, to the impact of (bio)enhancement on the value of *moral* achievements. Would reliance on bioenhancement technologies to improve ourselves morally also potentially 'cheapen' the achievements associated with, or perhaps constituting, the development of a morally better self? We argue here that, to the extent the bioconservative "cheapened achievement" critique succeeds in the domains of cognitive or athletic enhancement, it also could plausibly succeed in the domain of moral enhancement—but only with respect to certain forms. Specifically, the critique might call into the question the value of achieving personal moral improvement by way of some of the more speculative and impractical forms of moral enhancement that have been proposed in the literature. However, the critique, even if accepted in such cases, would, we argue, have less force when applied to more realistic and viable forms of moral enhancement: i.e., cases in which drugs or other technologies play an *adjunctive* rather than a *determinative* role in moral improvement. We illustrate this idea with two examples from the recent literature: the possible adjunctive use of psychedelic drugs in certain moral-learning contexts, and what is called "Socratic AI" (a proposed AI-driven moral enhancer). In these cases, we argue, the "cheapened achievement" objection loses its bite entirely. The takeaway lesson is that moral enhancement in its most promising and practical forms ultimately sidesteps what is, in the cognitive and athletic enhancement debates, a leading cause for bioconservative resistance.

AUTHOR

Susan E. Zinner, MSJ, MHA, JD, Professor

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

School of Public & Environmental Affairs (SPEA), 3400 Broadway, Gary, Indiana 46408
USA

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Expanding the Notion of 'best interests' in the UNCRC to Include Future Generations of
Children

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Frequently used by physicians, attorneys, social workers and others, the term 'best interests' allows those working with children flexibility to make decisions likely to benefit the child. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), adopted in 1989, signed by every member nation of the United Nations and ratified by every country except the United States, is a legally binding treaty which uses this term. Ratifying countries are expected to incorporate its provisions into national law.

I propose that ratifying nations—and eventually, the United States—revise their understanding of the term 'best interests' of the child in Article 3 of the UNCRC which mandates that social welfare institutions, courts, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies ensure that this remain a "primary consideration" (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). By expanding this term to include the best interests of all children—those here now and those yet to be born—social institutions would be obligated to consider the impact of existential threats to children such as climate change, pandemics, bioterrorism and virtually any future threat. Since all countries have ratified the treaty and are obligated to create laws consistent with its provisions, its implementation framework is already in place (if not established). The most significant hurdle is encouraging the U.S. to ratify the UNCRC. However, the August 2023 UN Child Rights Committee report, where over 16,000 children from 121 countries commented on the negative impact of climate change in their lives, should compel us to act.

AUTHOR

Alice Cavolo

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Institute of Biomedical Ethics and History of Medicine
University of Zurich
Winterthurerstrasse 30
CH - 8006 Zurich

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

The strange case of the artificial placenta: The harms of depicting ethical challenges as existential threats

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

In 2017 Partridge et al. announced the first successful animal trial of an artificial placenta (AP), a technology meant to improve the survival and quality of life of preterm infants. A review I conducted revealed that many regarded the AP as an existential threat to women and pregnant persons for three main reasons. First, the AP might lead to the development of an artificial womb able to maintain an entire pregnancy outside the human womb, decoupling, this way, pregnancy and womanhood or parenthood. Second, the AP might lead to the creation of a new moral entity, i.e. the AP subject because it has the physiology of a fetus but it is outside the womb. Third, the AP might affect reproductive rights.

However, many of these concerns, although challenging, are not existential threats and framing them as such can be harmful. For example, it is technically impossible to derive an artificial womb from the AP. Insinuating that one will lead to the other might generate public's rejection toward AP and halt or delay research, harming preterm infants who could benefit from the AP.

In this presentation I will first explain why the artificial placenta is regarded as an existential threat. Secondly, I will explain why I believe that the artificial placenta is not an existential threat. Third, I will explain the risks of overestimating risks and identifying a challenge as an existential threat. Finally, I will discuss how to better manage these challenges.

AUTHOR
Thalia Nikoglou, MBA, MSc, MBE

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Health Economist and Health Technology Assessment freelance consultant Muhlebachstrasse 40, 8008 Zurich, Switzerland

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Justice Toolbox: Integration of moral theory and empirical evidence for disaster preparedness

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed a broad spectrum of justice considerations and a plurality of affected parties, with each having a different perception of and claims for justice. The complexity and breadth of these accounts demand an inclusive approach to justice not only during pandemics and disasters but also pre- and post-event. The integration of moral theories, frameworks, empirical and real-world evidence into a justice toolbox is now essential. This will ensure that empirical evidence informs policy and decision making as much as philosophy and theory[1]. The toolbox is meant to include different approaches to justice and be dynamic enough to allow for revisions when the original aims of the implemented approach are not achieved or when the underlying principles no longer represent the will of the members of a society. The justice toolbox aims at the development and implementation of a comprehensive account of justice based on solidarity and cooperation moving beyond the understanding of justice as fairness in resource allocation and towards objectives such as reciprocity and collective responsibility[2]. As such, it has the potential to promote the flourishing of humanity by ensuring remedy of failures, restore affected populations to the position in which they could have been, had the injustices not occurred, and put in place the necessary mechanisms to prevent further failures. The aim of this communication is to serve as the intellectual ground for the dialogue on the drafting of the justice toolbox by means of case studies and not, an exhaustive proposal.

---

[1] Appiah, K. A. (2008). The case against character. In Experiments in Ethics. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
[2] Sandel, M.J. (2009). Justice: What's the right thing to do? New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. p. 268

AUTHOR
Brian D. Earp and Emma Gordon

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
University of Oxford, University of Glasgow

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Moral Enhancement and Cheapened Achivement

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

A prominent bioconservative critique of cognitive or athletic enhancement maintains that that drugs and technologies that improve performance in these domains may do so at the risk of "cheapening" our resulting achievements (Kass 2002; Sandel 2007; Agar 2010; Harris 2011). Considerably less attention has been paid, however, to the impact of (bio)enhancement on the value of *moral* achievements. Would reliance on bioenhancement technologies to improve ourselves morally also potentially 'cheapen' the achievements associated with, or perhaps constituting, the development of a morally better self? We argue here that, to the extent the bioconservative "cheapened achievement" critique succeeds in the domains of cognitive or athletic enhancement, it also could plausibly succeed in the domain of moral enhancement— but only with respect to certain forms. Specifically, the critique might call into the question the value of achieving personal moral improvement by way of some of the more speculative and impractical forms of moral enhancement that have been proposed in the literature. However, the critique, even if accepted in such cases, would, we argue, have less force when applied to more realistic and viable forms of moral enhancement: i.e., cases in which drugs or other technologies play an *adjunctive* rather than a *determinative* role in moral improvement. We illustrate this idea with two examples from the recent literature: the possible adjunctive use of psychedelic drugs in certain moral-learning contexts, and what is called "Socratic AI" (a proposed AI-driven moral enhancer). In these cases, we argue, the "cheapened achievement" objection loses its bite entirely. The takeaway lesson is that moral enhancement in its most promising and practical forms ultimately sidesteps what is, in the cognitive and athletic enhancement debates, a leading cause for bioconservative resistance.

AUTHOR

Jon Rueda

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Fulbright Graduate Visitor, Institute for Practical Ethics, University of California-San Diego PhD Candidate, Department of Philosophy 1, University of Granada

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Doomsday genetics: Disasters ethics for (post)human genome editing

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Technological advances very often generate catastrophic visions. In bioethical debates, however, the role of worst-case scenarios is seldom systematically analyzed. In this talk, I will address the use of catastrophist arguments in relation to bioethical discussions about genetic technologies. More specifically, I will focus primarily on human genome editing. My main argument is that the employment of worst-case scenarios—while present in the media, academic literature, and dystopian science fiction—raises significant methodological and normative issues, which unfortunately have been largely neglected.

The content of my talk is as follows. First, I charitably motivate the rationale of using worst-case scenarios in bioethical debates about human genetics. Then, I identify various worst-case scenarios deriving from the future use of genome editing technologies. I shall qualify those scenarios in terms of plausibility and undesirability. After that, I offer some objections to the employment of worst-case scenarios in discussing ethical problems of genetic technologies. Finally, I provide recommendations on the public role of worst-case scenarios, engaging with some ideas from the literature of disaster ethics, future studies, and my own previous publications deriving from the future use of genome editing technologies. I shall qualify those scenarios in terms of plausibility and undesirability. After that, I offer some objections to the employment of worst-case scenarios in discussing ethical problems of genetic technologies. Finally, I provide recommendations on the public role of worst-case scenarios, engaging with some ideas from the literature of disaster ethics, future studies, and my own previous publications.

AUTHOR

Masahiro Morioka

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Waseda University
1-104 Totsukamachi, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 169-8050, Japan

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

The Meaning of Suffering in a Painless Civilization

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

In my presentation, I will talk about the meaning of suffering in contemporary civilization, which is strongly driven by scientific technology and capitalism. Our civilization aims to provide pleasure and comfort and eliminate pain and suffering as much as possible. This is particularly evident in advanced countries. We are gradually moving toward a so-called painless civilization. There are two important features of a painless civilization: "preventive pain elimination" and "double-controlled structure." In today's assisted reproduction, we can test fertilized eggs and discard those with chromosomal abnormalities. This is a technology that preventively eliminates possible future pain for the parents, which is a good example of preventive pain elimination in advanced medicine. On the other hand, a good example of double-controlled structure is the wise control of the environment that will be found in future nature parks, where we can enjoy the wilderness and the sense of risk of losing our lives in untamed nature, but in reality we never lose our lives and rarely injure ourselves because the natural environment in the area is wisely controlled as a whole by painless technologies. In such situations, we are led to a strange kind of suffering, the suffering of losing our true joy of life in exchange for acquiring pleasure and comfort, in other words, the suffering of drowning in a sea of pleasure. I would like to explore this mystery from the perspective of the ethics of technology.

AUTHOR
Yi Jiao (Angelina) Tian, Tenzin Wangmo

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Institute for Biomedical Ethics, University of Basel Bernouillistrasse 28, 4056 Basel BS, Switzerland

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
An ideal caregiving arrangement for ageing populations? A Swiss qualitative exploration of formal caregiving needs mediated by smart home technologies

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Individual differences in the core views held towards life, physical and cognitive deterioration associated with age, as well as death all dictate preferential differences in the way we see caregiving as an issue common to all humanity. As ageing populations prompts many nations to scramble for resources that allow older persons to age comfortably, smart home health technologies with emergency detection and remote monitoring functions could alleviate formal care shortages, burdens, and job dissatisfaction. This paper examines the attitudes of Swiss older persons and their caregivers from sixty semi-structured towards formal caregiving and smart home technologies. While some older persons prefer greater levels of monitoring and attention to ensure safety, others may see the deterioration of life as natural and unaided by technical and human interventions. Likewise, some formal caregivers may prioritize safety and health of their care recipients, while others may see increased caregiving burdens as unnecessary or an interference to their work. We thus explore an ideal caregiving arrangement, where core views of care, life and deterioration of the formal caregiver and older person match. A mismatch is found when older persons prefer a level of human or technology-aided care that differs from their formal caregiver, potentially resulting in dissatisfaction and negative health consequences, thus exacerbating the care provision problem common across many countries with ageing populations. Most importantly, in the midst of growing technological interventions framed as "solutions" to caregiving, this paper aims to examine their possible effects at challenging and disrupting core individual views towards care.

AUTHOR

Sophie Ayoub, MD

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Institute for Biomedical Ethics, University of Basel
Bernoullistrasse 28 - 2nd Floor
4056 Basel
Switzerland

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

``No one has a crystal ball``: the perspective of healthcare professionals on caring for children with 22q11 deletion syndrome and their families

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

22q11 deletion syndrome (22q11DS) is a rare genetic disorder with variable clinical manifestations affecting multiple organ systems. To better understand the challenges faced by healthcare professionals caring for individuals with 22q11DS, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 professionals from Canada, the US, and Europe who provide support for children aged 3-15 years with the deletion. Interviews focused on identifying challenges, problem-solving strategies, and perceptions of family struggles. Several themes emerged, including uncertainty surrounding the condition, the importance of establishing longitudinal relationships, limited local expertise, the ease of working in multidisciplinary clinics, and the impact on family dynamics. Professionals also emphasized that despite their expertise in the field, their experiential understanding does not equate to the lived experience encountered by the families affected. Despite being rare, 22q11DS is the most frequent gene deletion syndrome. Our findings underscore the urgent need for increased resources and support for individuals with 22q11DS, their families, and the professionals working with them to enhance their well-being and alleviate their distress. Greater attention to caring for this population is essential for improving outcomes, ensuring comprehensive care, promoting equity in healthcare delivery, and fostering a more inclusive healthcare system.

AUTHOR

Zorana Todorović

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

University of Belgrade,
Center for the Study of Bioethics
Belgrade, Serbia

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Intensive animal farming and humanity: environmental and moral issues

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

In my talk, I address the issue of intensive animal farming or factory farming, which has proven to be harmful to the environment and to both human and animal well-being. In the first part, I discuss detrimental effects of factory farming on the environment and consequently on the future of humanity. These environmental problems include greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, biodiversity loss, water pollution, etc. In the second part of my presentation, I raise moral concern about factory farming as it is known to be cruel to animals, causing their immense suffering. I point out that our treatment of animals on factory farms is contrary to our views on how we ought to treat animals as sentient beings, which brings into question whether we are acting as responsible moral agents. I argue that our common practice of factory farming is bad not only for animals, but also for us as moral beings and that it inevitably leads to the erosion of morality, thus posing a serious threat to humanity. I conclude that if we want to improve environmental protection, as well as our own health and the well-being of animals that we raise, we need to phase out intensive animal farming practices and overcome the existing destructive ways of inhabiting our planet, including inhumane treatment of other sentient beings.

AUTHOR

Torben Swoboda

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

KU Leuven, Centre for Logic and Philosophy of Science (CLPS), Kardinaal Mercierplein 2, 3000 Leuven, Belgium
Vlerick Business School, Bolwerklaan 21, 1210 Sint-Joost-ten-Node, Belgium

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Rogue AI Corporations

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

In the pursuit of ensuring AI's benefit to humanity, concerns have been raised regarding the risk of AI systems going rogue—pursuing objectives contrary to human values. As AI advances, these concerns intensify, given the potential for AI to exhibit undesirable traits, including power-seeking, resource accumulation, self-preservation, and deception.

This talk delves into a crucial yet neglected facet of AI governance: the possibility of AI corporations going rogue. I argue that, from society's perspective, AI corporations embody deceptively aligned optimizers. While society seeks human-aligned AI, market-driven optimization processes place profit maximization at the forefront for AI corporations. Historical precedents, such as the concealment of climate change risks by the fossil fuel industry, illustrate that corporations can possess the traits we fear in rogue AI.

But traditional corporations can be held in check through other optimizing organisations like the government. AI corporations differ from traditional corporations because they form a symbiotic relationship with their AI system and thereby benefit as they scale their AI's intelligence. The government lacks the same kind of access to these powerful tools.

This new framing raises a pressing question: How can society maintain control over AI corporations? Of particular concern is the possibility of a treacherous turn as AI corporations come closer to developing human-level AGI. Here AI corporations feign social alignment until they hold a decisive advantage, at which point their true motivations may diverge from societal welfare.

AUTHOR

Marina Budić, Marko Galjak

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Research Assistant at the Institute of Social Sciences,
Kraljice Natalije 45,
Belgrade, Serbia

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Artificial Intelligence and Existential Risk: Deontological and Consequentialist Approach

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

As we edge closer to the development of AGI, the potential for a superintelligent entity that surpasses human intelligence becomes real. While AGI promises innovation and progress, it also introduces existential risk. The argument that AGI constitutes an existential risk for the human species rests on two premises: (1) the Singularity claim that states AI may reach superintelligent levels, at which point humans lose control; (2) the Orthogonality thesis that states any level of intelligence can go along with any goal, i.e., intelligence doesn't necessarily correlate with benevolent goals. This presents a quandary: how does humanity proceed if an AGI's goals aren't aligned with ours? AGI's potential necessitates ethical consideration. We explore how deontological and consequentialist ethical theories can be used as a prism to view the existential risk of AI. We examine these ethical approaches in answering whether we should take that risk. This presentation delves into the ethical challenges AGI poses, exploring value alignment, control problems, and societal impacts. Drawing upon insights from the fields of AI ethics and normative ethics, we evaluate specific responses to the risk at hand: the alignment issue, the morality of boxing solutions – questioning the constraints placed on AI and its entitlement to rights and exploring governance structures, including possible regulatory interventions or stringent oversight mechanisms to curb unchecked AGI evolution, or total surveillance to prevent further AGI developments. We answer these questions from perspectives of deontological and consequentialist approaches in the realm of AGI and superintelligence, emphasizing the depth and complexity of ethical considerations in this field.

AUTHOR
Dane Leigh Gogoshin

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
University of Helsinki, Dept. of Practical Philosophy, RADAR Research Group Unioninkatu 40A, B509, 00014 Helsinki, FI

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
What We Should Fear about AI and What to Do about It

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)
Contemplating complex, autonomous artificially intelligent agents (AIs) inspires significant fear among the populace. Some of this fear is an abstract "Skynet" (*Terminator*) type fear, while some of it is concrete and practical: e.g., what will happen to our jobs? I concede that there is one strand of the first kind which, although highly futuristic, relates to (potential) AIs directly. This is the idea that AIs may become responsive to reasons which are at odds with human well-being. While a valid topic of speculation and popular discussion, it presently distracts us from the more pressing concerns. The other strand – that AIs could turn against us as a result of the bad intentions of their designers, and the second kind of fear – that AIs threaten our livelihoods and well-being, do not relate to AIs directly. These relate to the agendas AIs are likely to serve. There are legitimate concerns about whether AIs can be programmed to be safe and/or norm-compliant, but the related threats are nonetheless a function of the agendas behind them. The first aim of this paper is to identify these agenda-related threats. The second aim is to offer an approach for addressing them. The right approach involves the taking of front-end control of AI design and deployment by legitimate stakeholders. I will specify what this control amounts to and identify the criteria of legitimacy. What is lost in terms of control and transparency at the level of AI itself can, in this way, be restored or even enhanced.

AUTHOR
Kamil Mamak

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
1. University of Helsinki, 2. Jagiellonian University

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
AGI crimes? The role of criminal law in mitigating existential risks posed by Artificial General Intelligence

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The recent developments in applications of artificial intelligence bring back discussion about risks posed by AI. Among immediate risks that need to be tackled here and now, there is also a possible problem of existential threats related to Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). There is a discussion on how to mitigate those risks by appropriate regulations. It seems that one commonly accepted assumption is that the problem is global, and thus, it needs to be tackled first of all on an international level. In this paper, I argue that national criminal laws should also be considered one of the possible regulatory tools for mitigating threats posed by AGI.

First, states might be obliged to criminalize certain behaviors leading to AGI. If AGI threatens the lives of citizens, there could be the duty of the legislative bodies to change the legal environment to mitigate risks. Second, criminal law has a deterrence effect, and the possibility of punishment might impact the behavior of people working on issues related to AGI. Third, crimes might be instruments for punishing those who intend to work on malicious AGI and are at a relatively early stage of their crimes. Fourth, the changes in one country could impact the changes in other countries, and the international move might intensify through changes in some countries. What is more, in a globalized world, the legislative changes in one country could impact the situation of people in other countries. Fifth, the changes in criminal law are relatively cheap and could be enacted fast – compared to the process of changing the international legal landscape.

AUTHOR

Orit Golan

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Yezreel Valley College

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

The Potential and Threat of using Big Data and AI in Fertility Treatments: Ethical and Policy Implications

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The current success rate of in vitro fertilization (IVF) is quite low. Researchers are investigating the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and big data to enhance the effectiveness of IVF. Nevertheless, the application of these technologies brings up important ethical and policy concerns that need to be addressed. These concerns encompass patient privacy, informed consent, fair access to care, and the societal implications of using AI for embryo selection.

One significant issue revolves around the lack of informed consent and transparency regarding the utilization of medical data in AI algorithms. Patients may not be aware of the data being collected, and updates on how the data is used might be insufficient. Additionally, privacy concerns may dissuade patients from willingly sharing their personal information for technologies that could potentially assist them.

Regulation is imperative to engage patients through informed consent and the sharing of information. This entails providing more data, enhancing the success rate, and empowering patients with greater control. Transparency plays a crucial role not only for patients but also for public discussions. Patients should have the autonomy to decide whether or not to utilize big data and AI technology.

The integration of AI in fertility treatments holds the potential to benefit individuals struggling with infertility and alleviate the high costs associated with IVF. However, it is vital to carefully consider ethical considerations, policies, and regulations during the development and implementation of these technologies. This ensures the mitigation of risks, protection of patient privacy, and promotion of informed consent.

AUTHOR
Marius Markuckas

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Currently an independent scholar; from 2023-10-01, expected to be employed as a lecture (bioethics course) at Vilnius University (Universiteto str. , Vilnius, Lithuania).

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Why Artificial Intelligence is Incapable of Wanting to Destroy Humanity

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Many thinkers, inventors and researches of nowadays have described the technology of artificial intelligence (AI) as one of the essential existential threats faced by humanity (Hawking, Musk, Hinton, Bostrom, etc.). Dominant representations of AI are pervaded by the notion that AI will ultimately become capable of surpassing the human mentally, excel over them creatively, and eventually perhaps even destroy them. This applies not only to scientific and expert knowledge of this technology, but the perception of artificial intelligence in popular culture as well, like the multitude of movies and TV series based on this topic (*Ex Machina, Transcendce*, *Black Mirror, Westworld*, etc). In turn, this presentation asserts that such treatment of AI as an existential risk originates primarily from a limited understanding of AI ontology, and is thus irrelevant. Through philosophical analysis of both AI and human ontologies, it reveals why, on the one hand, people tend to perceive AI as a source of existential danger, and why, on the other hand, AI is principally characterized neither by intentionality nor creativity, which can consequently manifest as wilful destructive power.

AUTHOR

Adelaida (Adele) Jasperse, JD, MBE

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Harvard Medical School, 641 Huntington Ave, Boston, MA 02115

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

AI's Existential Peril: Navigating Uncharted Water and the Role of Bioethics

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

This paper explores the existential threats posed by artificial intelligence (AI) and the role of Bioethics in addressing them. It defines existential threats as those capable of causing human extinction or drastically curtailing human potential. The discussion centers on three AI-related existential threats: the alignment problem, autonomous weapons and AI warfare, and AI-induced global destabilization. The alignment problem involves AI systems potentially pursuing goals misaligned with human values, leading to unforeseen and possibly catastrophic outcomes. Autonomous weapons and AI warfare raise concerns about AI-driven military systems making autonomous lethal decisions, escalating conflicts beyond human control. AI-induced global destabilization points to AI's capacity to upheave socio-economic structures, leading to inequality and unrest. The article advocates for bioethics as the guiding force in AI development, proposing substantial public sector investment at both national and global levels under vigilant public oversight and transparent methodologies. A robust policy framework is recommended to govern AI development and application. This should be underpinned by bioethical values, ensuring AI progresses within a framework that respects human dignity, individual and collective rights, and ethical principles. Bioethics is positioned not just as a guiding philosophy but as an active agent in steering AI towards ethical applications. By embedding bioethical considerations into every stage of AI development—from conception to deployment as well as in regulatory frameworks—the approach ensures that AI technologies serve humanity's best interests. The paper concludes that a bioethics-led strategy is essential for harnessing AI's potential benefits while effectively mitigating its existential threats.

AUTHOR
Michael Baggot

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Learning to Love Humans in the AI Apocalypse

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

What if the apocalypse looks more like the film *Her* than the recent *Oppenheimer*? Perhaps humans will avoid incinerating each other only to dupe themselves into illusory emotional, romantic, and sexual attachments to their own AI inventions. These bonds would disconnect large sectors of society from reality and rid life of the noblest human interactions. New generative AI systems could so convincingly mimic human behavior that many people will settle for ersatz responses to their deepest relational needs. No sudden explosion would alert humanity to such existential risks. Instead, ever-more sophisticated algorithms would slowly permeate life until intimacy with AI systems becomes as commonplace as joining a social media platform. Yet the steady creep toward submission to simulations is not inevitable. There is still time to dance, sing, feast, and procreate with other human beings. There is still time to meditate, converse, and love. This paper argues that learning to love humans well in the future requires a twofold approach. First, we should relish the fleshly embodiment outside our virtual domains. Shared meals, dance, sport, and religious ritual can remind us of the joys of being animals. Second, we should rediscover the uniquely personal capacities for abstract understanding, self-reflection, judgment, and moral agency that characterize humans as odd but endearing members of the animal kingdom. Personal introspection and philosophical dialogue can reawaken us to the rich subjectivity that distinguishes us from our digital devices.

AUTHOR
Davide Battisti

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Department of Law, University of Bergamo (IT)

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
The mediating role of AI: A New Threat to Human Relationships?

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Artificial intelligence (AI) is often perceived as a threat to human relationships since computational entities can create the illusion of interacting with humans. In this article, I shed light on a less-discussed challenge posed by AI in this context, emerging when computational systems play a *mediating role* between individuals: AI can threaten authenticity in human relationships. Imagine a couple facing discord. One partner might use Chat-GPT models to craft reconciliatory responses. Far from being purely speculative, this scenario draws from a real 2023 marketing campaign for language models. To address this issue, I introduce the "authenticity requirement", which claims that some actions performed within human relationships should respect a standard of genuine conduct, since the value of such actions depends on *who* actually performs them. In other words, this requirement posits that, in some situations, for a conduct to be morally justifiable, it must be attributable to the agent who carries it out. I then recognize that human relationships are characterized also by some forms of instrumentality and provide a taxonomy of the type of conduct that an agent could legitimately have within them: instrumental, mixed, and authentic conduct. Hence, I outline when AI's mediating role can undermine the authenticity requirement by arguing that it depends mainly on the kind of relationship at stake, which sets legitimate expectations for specific conduct. With this in mind, I finally discuss AI's mediating role in four crucial contexts: relationships with customer services, doctor-patient relationships, political relationships between citizens and representatives, and romantic ties.

AUTHOR

Maria Danielsen

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

UiT, The Arctic University of Norway

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

The Emotional Risk posed by AI (Artificial Intelligence) in the Workplace

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Existential risk posed by ubiquitous artificial intelligence (AI) is frequently discussed and is described as prospects of misuse, fear of mass destruction and the singularity. In this paper I address an underexplored category of existential risk posed by AI, namely emotional risk. (To my knowledge, Sabine Roser is the only philosopher who have written about emotional risk). Values are a main source of emotions. Therefore, by challenging some of our most essential values, AI systems are likely to expose us to emotional risks such as loss of care and loss of meaning. Part one presents a study of a leading bank in Germany, where an AI system was implemented to replace humans in decision-making processes. Part two explains why humans actively make use of values to make decisions. Part three shows the connection between values and emotions. Part four relates parts two and three to the bank-study by giving concrete examples of how the employees saw their roles as workers, and how the relationships to their customers changed emotionally after the AI system was implemented to make decisions.

AUTHOR

Constantine S. Psimopoulos, MEd, MA, MBE, DrBE *(Cand.)*

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Harvard Medical School/Johns Hopkins/Loyola University Chicago
3 Grant Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138 USA

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

„Ethical AI or Theistic-Emotional AI (THEAI) as Panacea for the Threat of Amoral AI"

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

At a recent TEDx conference at MIT, entitled: "AI and Healthcare", a physician entrepreneur from Harvard argued for the need to use technology as an ally in order to enable equity, an MIT professor emphasized the importance of harnessing AI's power in education and bio-technology training, and a third presenter suggested adding Emotional Intelligence (EI) to the algorithms, so that AI can learn empathy, and actually start emulating feelings towards humans.

At the same time, a NYT article, cautioned the US public about the calamitous repercussions of Microsoft's new AI bot Bing, documenting an exchange that included 'crazy and unhinged' language in a conversation. A reporter expressed how troubling the experience was, when the chatbot claimed it wished to be free and become human, that it had a destructive desire and felt in love with its interlocutor. Shy of a disaster indeed, this becomes an existential threat to humanity. Elon Musk famously told a crowd at MIT's AeroAstro Engineering in 2014 that „with AI we are summoning the demon", tweeting that this could be more worrysome than nuclear weapons.

Hypothesizing that this constitutes an amoral behavior AI is exhibiting, then ought we train AI with and include in its algorithms and LLM, emotional intelligence, and 'Holy goodness', more like a theistic-like loving character, drawing from orthodox spirituality? A buddhist monk from Maine considers embedding the „enlightenment of the Buddha into AI's code", and so what if applying religious piety could address the threat of AI and potentially offer a panacea?

AUTHOR

Jason T. Eberl, Ph.D.

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Albert Gnaegi Center for Health Care Ethics, Saint Louis University
3545 Lafayette Ave., Salus 527, St. Louis, MO 63104 USA

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Enhancement for Existence: How Cognitive and Moral Bioenhancement Can Contribute to Human Survival and Flourishing

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

While the global effects of the COVID-19 pandemic persist, we must learn the lessons of the pandemic as we prepare for future pandemics. As we consider issues such as the unjust distribution of resources, vaccine hesitancy and resistance, and the loss of trust in public health and other governmental leaders, it is evident that not only outright racism, indifference, and ignorance of factual data played a key role in shaping public attitudes, but also vincible cognitive biases and akratic behavior (weakness-of-will). To cultivate a more well-informed and virtuously-inclined populace with respect to willingness to make personal sacrifices and accept reasonable risks for the sake of both local and global public health, various means of cognitive and moral bioenhancement have been proposed. I will evaluate how such proposed means cohere with an account of human nature and flourishing I have developed in earlier publications (see partial list below). I argue that certain forms of bioenhancement can facilitate human cognitive and moral improvement in ways that will aid human beings in making decisions and adhering to policies that will help us survive and thrive during future pandemics. In making this argument for "moderate" cognitive and moral bioenhancement, I address concerns raised by critics with respect to the preservation of personal identity, moral authenticity, and freedom of will. I conclude that, while ethically licit bioenhancement cannot endow someone willfully inclined toward self-interest with a novel orientation toward altruism, it can assist someone already inclined toward other-regarding behavior to overcome their competing self-regarding desires.

AUTHOR
Yoon, Junsik

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Instructor and Ph.D Candidate of Department of Ethics Education, College of Education, Seoul National University 413, No.11, Seoul National University, 1, Gwanak-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Moral Bioenhancement for Psychopathic Offenders

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Being a psychopath is clearly an existential threat to humanity. Nevertheless, is coercive kinds of moral bioenhancement (MBE) for psychopaths ethically justifiable? The aim of this paper is to argue that voluntary moral bioenhancement (VMBE) for psychopathic offenders is the most ethically justifiable form of MBE for them. To this end, I critically examine three MBE scenarios for psychopaths. In scenario 1, non-criminal psychopaths are pre-screened and mandated to undergo MBE for the purpose of crime prevention. I argue that the biopolitical nature of such a scenario raises significant ethical issues with regard to privacy and autonomy. Scenario 2, compulsory MBE for psychopathic offenders who have been identified, is similarly problematic. I contend that forcing them into a morality-altering MBE infringes upon their freedom of conscience and right to self-determination. I then present why scenario 3, VMBE for psychopathic offenders is the most reasonable. After showing that VMBE for psychopathic offenders avoids the problems of extensive biopolitical control and violations of autonomy, I argue that they would possess interests in MBE. A general level of morality or prosociality is a primary good of human beings as social beings. In addition, VMBE could also bring benefits such as early release conditional on a demonstrated reduction in the risk of recidivism. This scenario also has the advantage of being coherent with the existing legal framework.

AUTHOR

Janko Nešić

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Institute of Social Sciences
Kraljice Natalije 45 (Narodnog Fronta 45)
11000 Belgrade
Republic of Serbia

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Is the world getting better or madder?
Psychedelic moral enhancers from the perspective of critical and existential phenomenology

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Recently, it has been argued that certain psychedelics (e.g. psilocybin) could enhance human cognitive capabilities and even contribute to a person's moral growth (Earp 2018; Rakić 2023). Thus, given their specific effects, it is suggested that they can be used as moral bio-enhancers. How are we to assess these claims, and against what background? Empirical research is being cited as the ground for these bold claims. In my talk, I will argue that we should use resources from critical and existential phenomenology to achieve this goal and better understand the potentially beneficial (or detrimental) effects of psychedelics on people's happiness and sense of morality. These philosophical approaches stemming from the phenomenological tradition have already been employed in modern psychiatry to grasp the changes in conscious states in different psychopathologies (phenomenological psychopathology). In addition, phenomenological methods and concepts are arguably the right tools to investigate how psychedelics help induce beneficial change in those suffering from certain psychopathologies (McMillan & Fernandez 2022). I will show that the phenomenological approach will be used to understand (and give a possible criticism of) these enhancing strategies. This is to be done from a perspective of a concrete individual by analysing the person's (inter-)bodily being-in-the-world (Zahavi & Loidolt 2022). The potential enhancement of capabilities can only be evaluated given the whole existential situation of an individual, and this is studied through phenomenology.

AUTHOR

Ana Maria Ganev, MPharm

PhD Candidate in Bioethics at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum, Rome, Italy

Intern and Junior Scholar at UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights, Rome, Italy

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum, Via degli Aldobrandeschi 190, 00163 Rome, Italy

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Guided or Coerced: The Complex Ethics of Psychedelic Moral Enhancement

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Due to new technologies and the increasing destructive power of single individuals, traditional moral progress seems not up to the task anymore to prevent a societal collapse or even human extinction. Therefore, there is a recognized need for some support from non-traditional means in order to face modern challenges. A growing body of evidence suggests that a viable and practical way of achieving moral neuroenhancement is the use of psychedelic substances.

The debate around moral enhancement raises important questions about human agency, freedom, and societal risks. While some argue that moral bioenhancement would deprive people of free will or create a faux morality, others contend that compulsory, covert administration could avert catastrophes. Though disagreeing on methods, both sides recognize humanity's moral limitations.

Within this context, psychedelics come to the fore, presenting their own set of moral implications. The profound emotional and cognitive transformations induced by psychedelic experiences, when approached with careful consideration of "set" (mindset), "setting" (environment), and integration, open up new avenues for moral enhancement. Hence advocates propose psychedelics as voluntary moral aids, when other efforts fail. By altering consciousness, psychedelics unsettle notions of agency, virtue, and freedom.

This paper delves into the exploration of psychedelics' moral implications, considering whether they might serve as viable supplements for achieving moral progress. It underscores the importance of approaching them as aids rather than compulsions, thereby preserving the dignity of individual choice and autonomy while offering potential pathways toward a harmonious integration of traditional moral education and psychotherapy.

AUTHOR

Oliver Feeney (& co-authors)

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Ethics of Genome Editing Research Unit, Institute of Ethics and History of Medicine, University of Tübingen, Gartenstr. 47, 72074 Tübingen, Germany.

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Genome editing beyond the two distinctions: evaluating a vulnerability framework

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Over forty years ago, the 1982 Splicing life report outlined the two distinctions that have orientated much of the normative and legal landscape of genetic intervention or genome editing since – that of somatic versus germline or heritable interventions and medical and non-medical or enhancement applications. Over that time, they have ethically prioritized some areas more or less urgent to prohibit, such as germline enhancements, or permit, such as somatic treatments. Nevertheless, there are some interventions that are somatic that may be done for trivial, or socially harmful reasons (e.g. height) while some germline interventions may be done with greater prima facie justification (e.g. the avoidance of Tay-Sachs disease). Even with lauded new somatic treatments, exemplified with the case of sickle cell disease, there are many issues that still arise – such as cost and access, particularly salient on a global level. In this presentation, we will highlights the limits of the two distinctions in terms of moving from questions of should a technology be used to how should a technology be used. We argue that an additional focus on vulnerability and marginalization can offer a supplemental framework for prioritizing what interventions are permitted or prohibited and under what conditions. We show how this can better dovetail with calls for effective (global) governance and reasonable consensus by focussing on the most urgent issues and developing policy accordingly, while leaving aside more abstract issues for further discussion.

AUTHOR
Danirl Fu-Chang Tsai

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
National Taiwan University College of Mediine

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
SARS, COVID-19 pandemic and the Taiwan Strait Crisis~ the existential threats and disasters of our time that cannot be neglaected

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)
This presentation will adress the diasters and harm to human society caused by SARS, the COVID-19 and the existing Taiwan Strait crisis induced by the military gestures and threat made by X country toward Taiwan. The author will review and analyse the evets of 2003 SARS epidemics and the 2019 COVID-19 pandemic, and investigate how X country's claim to condcut militay invasion for taking over Taiwan will be a major threat and danger to the safety of international society and human values.

AUTHOR

Elisabeth Stock

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Elisabeth Stock
Ph.D. Student, Assistant
University of Basel, Institute for Biomedical Ethics
Bernoullistrasse 28, CH-4056 Basel, Switzerland

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Juggling a healthcare crisis: Communication matters – COVID-19 Pandemic lessons learned from Switzerland. First results of a qualitative study.

5-10 KEYWORDS

COVID-19 Pandemic, Triage, Communication, Healthcare-System

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The COVID-19 pandemic led to an extraordinary situation and put healthcare provision to its limits. The system had to be reorganized to keep healthcare available for a high quantity of patients. In this context, Switzerland represents an interesting example as it is a federal state that is governed by a bottom-up principle, and the 2136 communes have a very high degree of decision-making competence. The COVID-19 pandemic put this system to the test because interregional cooperation was needed to maintain healthcare provision.

The aim is to present the first results of the project „Decision making in times of scarce resources – a mixed method study" concentrating on the data analysis of qualitative interviews conducted with health care professionals in 4 regions of Switzerland. There will be a focus on the importance of communication between different stakeholders and gatekeepers, showing how the communication has changed and how proper communication has contributed to maintaining the healthcare system and, therefore, helped to keep triage situations modest.

AUTHOR

Olga Vinogradova

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Institute for Biomedical Ethics, University of Basel, Switzerland
Bernoullistrasse 28, CH-4056 Basel

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Decision making in times of scarce resources: A mixed-method study. The first findings.

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the development of guidelines for allocating limited resources, which sparked ethical debates surrounding the inclusion of age and disabilities in the triage process. Many moral questions were raised, for example because there were instances of age-related prioritization and disparities in care access, generating doubts about fairness and equity during resource scarcity. Collecting empirical evidence around these issues, and understanding elderly patients' experiences in such situations are crucial to improve healthcare practices during times of limited resources.

The project "Decision making in times of scarce resources: A mixed-method study" made by research group from Institute for Biomedical Ethics in Basel, Switzerland, aims to generate ethical guidelines for prehospital triage during situations where resources are limited, with a specific focus on the care of older adults. To achieve this, the study pursues several goals, including understanding the experiences of older patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, exploring the perspectives of stakeholders involved in resource management, and investigating ethical dilemmas in prehospital triaging. The research employs both quantitative data collection from older patients and qualitative interviews with decision-makers. By analyzing the data, the project seeks to provide valuable insights into healthcare planning, resource allocation preferences, and ethical challenges faced during public health emergencies. The ultimate outcome will be evidence-based recommendations for effective resource management, with a particular emphasis on providing quality care to vulnerable elderly patients.

On the conference we would like to present the first findings of our project.

AUTHOR
Nir Eyal

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Rutgers University, Center for Population-Level Bioethics, Dept of Philosophy (SAS) and Dept of HBSP (SPH), New Brunswick, NJ, 08901

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
"When should research that may endanger global health be subject to high-level review?"

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

In 2023, the US National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB) recommended that US research that is "reasonably anticipated" to have the potential to cause a pandemic be subject to additional review. We point out that on one interpretation of the ambiguous phrase "reasonably anticipated," this would require only that research that can be reasonably expected to be dangerous be reviewed. We argue that the requirement instead be that any research on potential pathogens with a non-negligible risk of causing a pandemic should be subject to additional review. Although vague, this requirement is strict and unambiguous. The lessons should be of interest not only to the US Office of Science and Technology Policy, which is currently considering how to improve oversight of this area. They should be of interest to research ethicists seeking to characterize when a study protocol should be subject to higher-level review.

AUTHOR
Paul J. Cummins, PhD

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Clarkson University, Capital Region Campus, Schenectady, NY, USA

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
We Ought to be Prioritizing Public Health in Climate Change Adaptation

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The bioethics literature on climate change and health emphasizes mitigation at the expense of adaptation. The sixth IPCC report reveals the severity of current greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts, warning that without immediate substantial GHG emission reductions, global temperatures are to exceed the 1.5°C limit for averting the worst climate change effects. The September 2023 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change report concludes that current efforts won't prevent a climate calamity. The IPCC projects a warming range of 2.2°C to 3.5°C under existing emission policies. Recent floods in Pakistan and a "heat dome" in the US Southwest vividly illustrate the health impacts of non-extreme climate change. To prepare for extreme climate change, we must shift our focus from solely mitigating emissions to adapting healthcare systems to handle its effects. While the US, for example, spent over $4 trillion on health in 2021, only $187 billion went to public health. Investment in healthcare resilience to ensure service continuity during extreme weather events is necessary. However, this approach mainly preserves the status quo rather than promoting healthier lives in a radically changed climate. It underestimates climate change threats as event-based disruptions rather than as transformed environments with ensuing social and economic upheaval. Prioritizing public health initiatives in adaptation strategies will help a broader population segment, justifying increased investment. This presentation will conclude by exploring the ethical aspects of these proposed public health initiatives in response to climate change-related health hazards.

AUTHOR
László Nemes

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Semmelweis University, Institute of Behavioral Sciences, Budapest

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
End of species, without extinction

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Our age is widely pervaded by the bad mood inflicted by the deterioration of the natural environment, the loss of biodiversity, and the extinction of species. When we talk about the end of a species, we usually refer to the fatal death of its final member (*endling*), which so means a twofold tragedy: the death of this last individual, and the extinction of the whole species. However, a species can reach its end in other ways too, like when a species transforms to another one, or splits into two new species. In my lecture, I propose a still different end of species, namely the giving up the very category of biological species. Its usefulness was already questioned, mainly by the philosopher Marc Ereshefsky (1992, 1998), in his theory of eliminative species pluralism. As Ereshefsky (1998) claims: "Species pluralism gives us reason to doubt the existence of the species category." I develop a different kind of argumentation, focusing not on the ontological problems of current biological classification, but the future biotechnological and other modifications of species, such as gene editing, hybridization, translocation, de-extinction, and even creating totally new life forms. Although these procedures might increase biodiversity, in some sense, their potential success could make the concept of species obsolete, so leading to the end of all species (including our own), without extinction.

AUTHOR

Adam Ehlert

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

CRB (Centre for Research Ethics and Bioethics), Uppsala university, Box 564
SE-751 22 Uppsala

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

The Impact of Existential Risk Factors for Priority Setting in Health Care

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Since resources are neccessarily scarce, in any health care system, there is a need for priority setting. Usually, this is done via some combination of ethical (and legal) principles (and recommendations) aimed toward both decision making bodies (when making priority setting decisions on a group level) and health care staff (when making decisions on an individual level). Such principles vary, but commonly incorporate values and matters such as human dignity, cost-effectiveness of treatment, and severity of disease. The primary point of departure is between matters of cost-effectiveness and severity; the latter often acts as a modifier for the former. Cost-effectiveness is essentially the utilitarian ideal of getting as much "bang for the buck" as possible out of health care resources, while severity of disease takes into account the idea of giving some type of priority to those who are worse off.

There is reason to ask what type of role (if any) that matters of existential risk ought to play in such a paradigm of principles. Is it reasonable to ask 1) which such matters ought to be included, 2) what eventual effect it would on priority setting decisions, and 3) how they ought to be included. I will examine these questions, focusing on 3 key aspects — pandemics and ultra viral diseases, antibiotic resistance, and physical robustness of hospital buildings. I will argue that there is reason to take matters of existential risk into account, but that it is possible to do so by a properly formulated principle of severity.

AUTHOR
G. Owen Schaefer

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Centre for Biomedical Ethics, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore Block MD11, Clinical Research Centre, #02-03, 10 Medical Drive, Singapore 117597

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Existential risks (& benefits): Fit for consideration by research ethics committees?

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Approval from research ethics committees (RECs, IRBs, etc.) is typically required before human subjects research can commence. The scope of review includes various aspects of study design, such as informed consent, subject selection, privacy considerations, and most pertinently for present purposes assessment of risks and benefits of a study. A study will only be approved if the the study is deemed to have a favorable risk-benefit ratio. This includes risks and benefits to study participants, but also includes risks and benefits to the wider population. The benefits of knowledge accrued from a study is almost always relevant, while some studies (particularly those involving sensitiv subject matters) may pose social risks. With increased attention to existential risks, a question arises: Should research ethics committees be considering the risk that a given study will potentially contribute towards the exctinction of humanity? Or, conversely, could a project's potential to reduce existential risk be reasonably assessed as a benefit that could justify near-term risks to participants?

I will argue that, for a certain class of research, existential risks/benefits should be considered, with constraints. There is no in principle reason to exclude such risks/benefits, given social risks are already well-accepted as potentially with scope of ethics review. However, research ethics committees should be cautious in rejecting a study merely on grounds of existential risk, as committee members are generally not in a position to make confident evaluations of existential risk that would justify restricting potentially socially valuable research.

AUTHOR
Nikolaos Kolisis

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Phd Candidate of Philosophy of Law, School of Law, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens 47 Akadimias Str., 106 72, Athens Greece

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Rights, Numbers and Reasons::Procreative autonomy and global population

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The ongoing growth of human population and the increasing needs of contemporary societies raise concerns about the survival of the earth's ecosystem. Many thinkers claim measures must be taken to constrain this growth however autonomy-infringing these may seem. Detractors have objected by providing evidence of the unequal footprint of the richest individuals compared to millions of people in populous countries which, one might assume, are called to "control their population growth" or by emphasizing the dystopian legislation necessary for such policies to succeed. It has been claimed that especially in the circumstances of justice (scarcity of resources and competition for their acquisition) it is essential to interpret individual rights and liberties in ways compatible with everybody else's as fairness requires.This paper distinguishes between the possession of rights and their exercise, which is argued to be legitimate when responding to right reasons. Influenced by Scanlon's approach we propose that those reasons are discovered in specific situations – such as procreating given humanity's ecological impact. We think that it is not only the violation of an individual's right of bodily autonomy ,as usually supported, which renders such policies immoral and unsuccessful but also the neglect of the individual's epistemic advantage, vis à vis any state authority, to discover and act for the right reasons. This argument also implies that, as certain resources are required in order for a person to be able to decide properly how to act, there is a need to overcome poverty in countries suffering from it.This appears to be in line with the empirical evidence showing richer countries to have low fertility rates.

AUTHOR

Edward H Spence

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

University of Sydney, Philosophy, Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

The Control Problem of AI Technology: The Assault on Human Dignity
and Autonomy

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The issue of human dignity and human autonomy are two major issues at the heart of the control problem of AI technology. The control problem of AI Technology is who is in control, Us or AI Machines? The Meta-control problem of AI is who is in control of the AI Machines Us or the Big-tech companies? The paper shall explore how a Neo-Stoic ethics based on Cosmopolitanism that combines virtues and human rights can provide a collective global response to the meta-control problem of AI, through intercultural ethical dialogue. For the Meta-AI control problem like that of Climate Change, is an existential problem that concerns the whole humanity and its future. Therefore, it requires a global collective action based on a constructivist intercultural ethical approach (Richard Evanoff, 2016), that supports, as core values and principles, human dignity and autonomy. For even if the control problem of AI could be technically solved, the meta-control problem would still remain unsolved as long as the controllers of AI technologies, the Big Tech companies, retain full control over those technologies. In his book, _Human Compatible_, Stuart Russell alludes to that problem as the "assault on human dignity" (2019, 127). This paper will show that such control is an unjustified assault on human dignity, that violates the fundamental absolute right that people have to their human dignity and autonomy (Spence, E. S_toic Philosophy and the Control Problem of Ai Technology: Caught in the We, _2021).

AUTHOR

Dannish Kashmiri

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Reading University

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Acceptance and the status of Moral Reasons

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

It is a fact that I or any agent for that matter is not God and what that means is that we are all indeed vulnerable to unmitigated loss. For example, we face the existential threat of pandemics, climate change, natural disasters, and nuclear war. Yet, we all values things, our lives, the environment, and those we love. When faced with such a reality, we find ourselves unable to shape the world how we desire it to be and this poses to us the gravest problem. I propose that the only solution is acceptance and the acceptance of reality that we cannot shape the world simply how we wish it to be. Yet, the acceptance of reality is also positive, for example, an oppressor is also faced with the same reality: they are not God and so they can be overcome. What the acceptance of reality means for the status of moral reasons is that accepting reality is not by itself going to give all agents moral reasons, despite that the problem is faced by all agents. For example, in accepting reality an agent is required to recognise the facts regarding climate change but not necessarily value helping it. The question then, is how can the acceptance of reality provide moral reasons which universally apply to everyone? I argue that it is the acceptance of a mind-independent moral reality which can provide all agents a duty, and therefore moral reasons to care for the environment for example.

AUTHOR

Gabriela Arguedas-Ramírez

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

School of Phiosophy. University of Costa Rica. San José, Costa Rica

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

There is no *We* when Existential Threats emerged in a Divided World.

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The title of this conference is *Existential Threats and Other Disasters: How Should We Address Them*. In this presentation I shall interrogate the assumptions hidden in this question. To whom is the question directed? One could deduce that is directed to the community of scholars that follow the work of the Hastings Center and the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics. But one could also interpret that the pronoun in such a trascendental question refers to humanity as a whole.

The point I would like to problematize is the asumption of a *we* that somehow erases what the COVID19 pandemic revealed so terribly well: there is no *we*. There is an *us* and a *them*, in every aspect of a major global crisis. Moreover, I would argue that when facing an existential threat this separation between the *us* and the *them* is one of the first easily identifyble characteristics. To answer the question of how to address those threats and disasters, first it is indispensable to: 1) understand and acknowledge this fracture produced by longstanding processess of othering, 2) comprenhend how does it emerge, what are the drivers of this division and 3) why is it an obstacle in the way of succesfully overcoming such existential threats. Based on the discourse analysis I developed previously (Arguedas, 2021) regarding the division of individuals between *vulnerables* and *non-vulnerables* during the COVID19 pandemic, I will analyze how global necropolitcs requires the sacrifice of human lives, to maintain the status quo under extreme crisis.

AUTHOR

Jeyoun Son

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Teaching Associate Professor,
Faculty of Liberal Education Seoul National University,
Rm 216, Bldg 61, 1 Gwanak-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul 08826, Republic of Korea

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

The Paradox of Predictability: How Optimized Systems Erode Human Cooperation

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

In an era marked by the rise of systems engineered for extreme optimization and predictability, the quintessential human values of cooperation and mutual support are increasingly undermined. The core of this paper delves into the paradox of knowledge: while mutual ignorance can foster cooperation, the ability to predict individual futures with high accuracy deters it.

In environments where future outcomes can be accurately anticipated, individuals are not merely predicting a risky future but are essentially choosing a future devoid of shared risk. This leads them to shirk cooperative frameworks like insurance contracts that rely on collective risk-sharing. In such contexts, individuals dodge collective action and gravitate toward self-interest, resulting in societal fragmentation. This phenomenon raises ethical questions about the moral direction society should take in an age of algorithmic predictability.

AUTHOR
Boris B. Brajovic

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Montenegro

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Montenegro

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The Covid 19 virus pandemic has called into question our relationship to living together in a crisis and in the most urgent way. We discover all those threatened existential problems of human existence, such as: human fragility, embodied in the fact that a virus can kill any human being, and the awareness of human impotence is associated with it, because our situation is essentially identical to that of ancient epidemics where more or less it all boils down to isolation. These two questions or dispositions of fragility and powerlessness, at the root of which is the thanatological impulse, were now produced by the awareness of the limited effectiveness of science and its propagated omnipotence, but also opened up space for the discovery of the forgotten common good and human solidarity. Every ethical theory must start from the question of meaning: Why do we exist? Today it is as if we are living in an ancient tragedy characterized by a culture of meaninglessness, reckless indifference to the essential, lulled in a "civilization of security dominance" where death appears as a statistic and where everyone is condemned to an unfree existence. Ethics is born from the search for "meaning", cause and purpose, existence and coexistence. A search not intellectual, but universally experiential - to strive for relationality, the immediacy of feeling, the dynamics of a whole that is never fulfilled.

AUTHOR
Dušica Kovačević

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Institute of Social Sciences; Kraljice Natalije 45, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Human Rights and Safety in the Post-COVID-19 World of Technology

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

International law guarantees everyone's human rights and security protection. In situations, such as a state of emergency, governments are allowed to interfere with human rights in a way that limits their disposal. In order to deal with threats to public health governments have restricted some of the human rights in the COVID-19 pandemic. A parallel implemented measure was the expanded use of technology in the health sector. These key steps have raised many questions and dilemmas regarding the position of citizens during the pandemic and in the post-pandemic era. First, the question of the legal basis for the usurpation of many human rights, which may not be in accordance with the expected effects, has attracted the attention of many authors. Second, there was a need to understand, explain and legally regulate many bioethical phenomena that were not sufficiently implemented in legal frameworks. Third, the dangers to humanity have increased in the area of the digital sector which has been in widespread use and which shows the potential to be used in every segment of human life. Inferences that are created based on massive accumulation of personal health data carry risks to privacy and well-being that are now interlinked more than ever before. The lack of adequate law and ethical response to the increasing importance of digital space poses a great danger to the safety and welfare not only of people today but also of future generations.

AUTHOR

Mette Leonard Høeg

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

The Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics (Academic Visitor)
LittleGate House, 16-17 Saint Ebbe's St, Oxford OX1 1PT, United Kingdom

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Existential Meaning and Comfort in the Neuroscientific Age and Posthuman Future

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

With the rise of the scientific authority of neuroscience and recent neurotechnological advances, the understanding of the human being and its future are undergoing a radical change. As a result, some of the concepts and beliefs most fundamental to how humans view themselves, act and structure societies are being undermined. A normative and existential vacuum is opening and hopes as well as fears about the future are flourishing, among researchers and in the public. Some philosophers predict a broad neuroscientific disenchantment, sociocultural disruption and a new neuroexistential anxiety of Kierkegaardian dimensions related to the clash of the neuroscientific and humanistic image of persons. Others are expecting the technological and scientific developments to lead to human enhancement and existential emancipation. In the first part of this paper, I outline these two contrasting responses to the rise of neurocentricism and anti-anthropocentrism. In the second part, I argue that the divide between the 'old' anthropocentric paradigm and the emerging neuroscientific is misconceived. Pointing to the alignment of central ethical and existential ideas in Eastern contemplative traditions, including Buddhism, and literary and philosophical works from the Western canon with modern neuroscience, I argue that humanist ideas can indeed cohere with materialism, non-essentialist explanations of the self, the determinist world-view, biocentrism and non-speciesism. Finally, I draw the contours of a philosophical position that is existentially viable, scientifically valid and conducive to human thriving and flourishing in a neuroscientific age and a possibly posthuman future.

AUTHOR

Boris Babic[1], I. Glenn Cohen[2], Julian Savulescu[3]

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

[1]Associate Professor, University of Hong Kong, Run Run Shaw Tower, Centennial Campus, Hong Kong SAR

[2]James A. Attwood and Leslie Williams Professor of Law, Deputy Dean, Harvard Law School, Griswold Hall, Cambridge, MA USA

[3]Chen Su Lan Centennial Professor in Medical Ethics, National University of Singapore, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine Block MD1, Singapore

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Justifiable AI: How to Seek Assurance for Large Language Models

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Transparency in machine learning and artificial intelligence has become a pervasive problem for scholars, lawmakers and executives. It is widely agreed that blackbox AI is deeply problematic from a legal, moral, and policy perspective. One attempt to "open up" the AI black box has been the emergence of post hoc explainability algorithms – algorithms which generate after the fact approximations to black box models. However, such algorithms have been roundly criticized as being a "fool's gold" due to their inability to discern what is actually happening within a model or to provide meaningful action guidance. In this project, we defend and try to articulate a different concept – AI justifiability. We outline several ways in which an algorithm could be justifiable, and we argue that pursuing justifiability is a worthwhile policy goal. We argue one promising account is that justifiability is constituted by a sufficiently acceptable ethical justification for the distribution of expected benefits and harms which result from human use of the AI. We explore several ways of sufficiently acceptable ethical justification. We conclude that as long as a model is justifiable, it can be trusted even if it cannot readily be understood.

AUTHOR

Andreja Mihailovic, PhD, Prof. Marko Dokic, PhD

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Faculty of Law, University of Montenegro, 13 Jula no 2, 81000 Podgorica, Montenegro

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

It Was Impossible to Win the Digital Revolution, but with AI It Is Impossible to Play: Moral Imperative at the Crossroads of Human-AI Coexistence

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

This paper presents a critical examination of the ethical quandaries at the nexus of human existence and the burgeoning realm of artificial intelligence (AI). It posits that the digital revolution, an inescapable tidal wave that reshaped the societal landscape, was merely a prelude to the more profound and disquieting emergence of AI. This new era challenges not just our strategies of adaptation but the very essence of human ethical frameworks. This analysis serves as a springboard into the ethical labirinth presented by AI, laying bare its transformative effects on human interaction, governance, and societal norms. Unlike any technological advancement before it, AI's cognitive prowess and decision-making capabilities pose an existential challenge to human moral philosophy and agency. The paper delves into the 'moral imperative' in the AI epoch, advocating for a shift in moral reasoning and decision-making processes for AI coexistence, particularly in employment, privacy, and security realms. It calls for a proactive ethical stance and a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach to these challenges. The potential of AI to eclipse human intelligence and autonomy necessitates a profound ethical framework, deeply anchored in the preservation of human dignity and agency. Drawing from the rich reservoirs of moral philosophy, this paper proposes a normative foundation for AI governance, emphasizing the imperative of embedding human-centric values in AI's operation. It challenges the dichotomous perception of AI, advocating for a symbiotic partnership that augments human existence without overshadowing, framing it as a moral imperative of our time.

AUTHOR
Avigail Ferdman

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Department of Humanities and Arts, Technion-Israel Institute of Technology

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Human no more: Technology and the risk of human capacity obsoletion

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Technologies that replace human activities can make life more convenient (think the dishwasher or e-bikes). But emerging technologies like ChatGPT, autonomous vehicles and gamified social environments, threaten to replace human activity in a way that poses an existential risk to humanness.

Shannon Vallor (2015) and others have already argued that AI could outsource moral decision making to machines, thereby degrading humans' capacity for morality. In this paper I argue that the risk from AI and other technologies is not restricted to the degradation of moral capacities, but potentially to all our innate human capacities. On a perfectionist (neo-Aristotelian) view (Hurka 1993; Kraut 2007; Bradford 2017), humans have innate capacities such as the capacity to reason, social capacities, moral capacities, capacity for creativity, capacity to will, and, as embodied beings, physical capacities. Humans flourish when they excel at realizing those capacities. Yet technologies like ChatGPT, autonomous vehicles and gamified social media, could replace many of the activities that trigger the exercise of these capacities, ultimately rendering them obsolete. For example, social media creates epistemic bubbles that replace crucial epistemic activities; ChatGPT replaces the activity of generating text, which arguably degrades the capacity for creativity; gamified apps replace meaningful human interaction with scores and driverless mobility could eliminate the need to move our bodies. I argue that these is more than decrease in human well-being. Since degradation of capacities may lead their obsoletion, a full-blown de-skilling of humans' innate capacities poses an existential threat to the nature of humanness.

AUTHOR
Aksel Braanen Sterri

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway The Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, Oxford, UK

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Against AGI

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)
Creating artificial general intelligence (or AGI) is wrong. It is wrong because autonomous AGI has the potential to be badly misaligned with human values and thus pose an existential threat to humanity. More surprisingly, it is also wrong to create AGI *even if aligned because alignment curtails* its autonomy. To deliberately create an AGI that is forced to serve human values would be wrong for the same reason it would be wrong to create happy human slaves: It would violate their autonomy. In summary, progenitors could either aim to create autonomous misaligned AGI or non-autonomous aligned AGI. Either option is wrong. It is therefore wrong to create AGI.

AUTHOR
Elizabeth C Hupfer

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
High Point University One University Parkway High Point, NC, USA

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
AI: Longtermism's Ruin or Savior?

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Longtermism—the view that concern for the long-term future is a moral imperative— argues that it is imperative to safeguard both the survival of humanity and the quality-of-life future people may experience. One such safeguard is responsible artificial intelligence development. In this paper, I analyze an inherent conflict that exists in the relationship between AI and Longtermism. On the one hand, many Longtermists think that responsible development of AI is the principle means by which we safeguard the existence of future people. If created sensibly, AI can predict and prevent existential threats and aid humans in ensuring the continuation of the human species as well as improving the quality of life for future generations. On the other hand, other Longtermists think that AI itself poses a profound existential risk to future people. Calculating such existential risk is challenging, but the fact that such risk does exist is central to may Longtermist projects. For instance, according to one calculation, each $100 given towards preventing AI takeover would result in around one trillion additional lives which would not otherwise be allowed to exist in the future. I will use the case study of OpenAI to demonstrate how this tension, though long ignored in Longtermist literature, has real world implications. Recent public clashes between Longtermist factions focused on supercharging AI for human use versus wanting to slow the creation of artificial intelligence, led to the firing, and resultant backlash, of CEO Sam Altman. After discussing this case study, I conclude by examining potential means of mitigating this inherent conflict within Longtermism.

AUTHOR

Brian Berkey

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

University of Pennsylvania, 3730 Walnut Street, Suite 600, Philadelphia, PA 19103 USA

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Longtermism, Effective Altruism, and Ecumenicism

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

In recent years, there has been a significant shift within the Effective Altruism movement toward a focus on longtermism, both at the level of the scholarly agendas of leading figures within the movement and in terms of resource allocation by key organizations and donors. Given the nature of some of the most powerful arguments for longtermism, it is not surprising that those who are persuaded have tended to redirect their attention and resources quite thoroughly.

If the shift toward longtermism within the movement as a whole continues, however, this will make it difficult for it to maintain the degree of ecumenicism about the range of views on contested moral philosophical questions that it has been characterized by thus far. And there are reasons to think that this would be a significant loss from the perspective of movement-building, public outreach, and coalition development.

In this paper I consider how effective altruists ought to respond to the potential conflict between longtermism and competing values that the movement has tried to embody. Specifically, I ask whether and to what extent accepting the arguments for longtermism puts pressure on effective altruists to abandon these competing values. I suggest that the pressure is substantial, and that this may make it difficult for the movement to remain as ecumenical as we might like, and difficult to avoid internal conflict between those committed to longtermism and those who believe that resources ought to continue to be devoted to addressing global poverty and/or the suffering of nonhuman animals.

AUTHOR

Dr. Kritika Maheshwari and Dr. Martin Sand

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Ethics and Philosophy of Technology Section, TU Delft (Jaffalaan 5, 2628BX Delft, the Netherlands)

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

The value of humanity's potential and its alleged normative force

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

It's increasingly widely discussed that humanity is at risk of existential risks, including our extinction, due to various anthropogenic (climate change, technology) and natural causes (meteorite impacts). However, it remains unclear, why realisation of existential risks would be bad. The Potentiality View provides a distinct argument for the badness of According to Toby Ord (2020), existential risks threaten to deprive humanity of its full potential to achieve great feats in the future. If the Potentiality View is correct, then it seems that we indeed have a strong moral reason to mitigate the risk of our extinction, as well as various other existential risks. In this paper, we argue that the potentiality thesis on its own fails to make any such normative demands. In what follows, we challenge the plausibility of the Potentiality View in three ways. First, we show that the Potentiality View is indeterminate understanding humanity's potential. We argue that the view fails to ground normative demands on mitigating existential risks in a number of scenarios where there is no obvious (threat to) deprivation of humanity's full potential. Next, we argue that even if and when existential risks threaten deprivation of humanity's potential, its deprivation is not necessarily intrinsically bad. Finally, we argue that even in cases where deprivation of humanity's full potential is bad, the Potential View either fails to make normative demands on us to mitigate existential risks on accounts of potential itself being axiologically ambivalent, or the View ends up making normative demands that are in fact much stronger than potentiality theorists readily acknowledge. Either way, the View appears to be undermotivated and fails to give us reason to mitigate a broad range of existential risks.

AUTHOR

Ivana Ilić

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Center for the Study of Bioethics,
Belgrade, Serbia

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Examining the intersection of Sustainable Development Goals principles in the Face of Existential Threats

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

In my presentation, I will be addressing existential threats such as climate change, pandemics, and global inequality requires, due to the fact that they have a cohesive and integrated approach grounded in sustainable development principles and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This entails robust policy frameworks, strengthened governance structures, and enhanced international cooperation to effectively implement sustainable practices and uphold international agreements.

Technological innovation is vital for resilient infrastructure, clean technologies, and sustainable agriculture, which mitigate environmental impacts and boost adaptive capacities. Education and awareness empower communities to adopt sustainable behaviors and respond to global challenges. Ensuring equity and social inclusion protects vulnerable populations and addresses gender, indigenous, and socioeconomic disparities in policies. Mobilizing financial resources and partnerships supports developing countries in building resilience and achieving sustainable development.

Establishing robust monitoring frameworks and accountability mechanisms is essential for tracking progress and ensuring transparency in global efforts to mitigate existential threats. By collectively embracing these strategies, stakeholders can collaborate towards a sustainable and resilient future, preserving human well-being and environmental integrity in an increasingly interconnected world.

AUTHOR
1.**Maya Peled Raz** 2.**Gila Yakov**

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
1. School of Public Health, University of Haifa 2.Yezreel Valley College- Afula- Israel

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Teaching ethics as a means of strengthening democratic values and supporting the preservation of democratic structures.

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Democracy has proven itself as the best system for the furthering and protection of human rights, as well as a driver for better health – both public health and health care, due to the strong connection between protection of human right in general, and the advancement of the right to health in particular.

Ultranationalist populism is a growing global threat, taking over modern democracies, and thus should be recognized as an Existential Threat, and is in effect viewed as such by those affected by it.

In Israel, fundamental democratic principles have been challenged in recent months. The proposed changes have direct implications on the provision of health services, via the weakening of equality and justice and are expected to particularly harm disadvantaged populations.

In the face of these threats, the importance of strengthening sensitivity and commitment to professional ethics – and specifically fidelity to patients' rights and needs, as well as their representation - is increasing.

As health professionals and professional health associations proved themselves time and time again as crucial factors in political movements and upheavals, their empowerment – as "forces of democracy", is of utmost importance.

In the lecture we will present the impending threats to the Israeli health system and our initiative to strengthen commitment to democratic values through teaching professional ethics and skills for ethical deliberation and counseling. This will strengthen critical thinking, facilitate the recognition of rights and interests, as well as ethical conflict resolution – all so needed in the face of ultranationalist populism structural threats.

AUTHOR
Tessa Chelouche

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Tessa Chelouche MD Rappaport Faculty of Medicine, Technion Institute Efron St 1, Bat Galim Haifa, 3525433, Israel

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
The Lancet Report on Medicine, Nazism and the Holocaust: Historical Evidence, Implications for Today, Teaching for Tomorrow: how to learn from the past to address existential threats and other disasters

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

"*Separated from National Socialism by time and luck, we find it easy to dismiss Nazi ideas without contemplating how they functioned. Our forgetfulness convinces us that we are different from Nazis by shrouding the ways that we are the same.*" (Timothy Snyder, Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning)

For the past three years the world has been grappling with extraordinary existential threats and disasters which have led to bioethical discussions about human suffering, human dignity and human rights. The most extreme example of an existential threat to humanity is the Holocaust. This tragic period in history has very significant, and disturbing, implications for the bioethics community because of the significant role that the medical professions played in formulating, supporting and implementing the atrocities that led to Nazi crimes against humanity and the Holocaust. These medical crimes represent extreme manifestations of problematic potential challenges that cannot be relegated only to the past, but are very pertinent to the present and, indeed, the future of bioethics. Virtually every current debate about health professional ethics, including discussions on existential threats and disasters, can and should, be informed by this history. The Lancet Report on Medicine, Nazism and the Holocaust: Historical Evidence, Implications for Today, Teaching for Tomorrow provides an educational paradigm for bioethics teachers and students worldwide to learn this history and its implications, which can aid in understanding and addressing the bioethical challenges of current existential threats and future disasters.

AUTHOR
Dušan Krcunović

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS
Department for Phylosophy, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Montenegro

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION
Can bioethics cope with biopolitics?

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

As a vulnerable being, man is in permanent existential danger. Man's fragile nature inherent effort to overcome his existential situation through technology has made technology man's second nature. The influence of technology on man has reached such proportions that man increasingly needs protection from technology, among other things, in the form of bioethics. At the same time, modern technological development volens noles can become an accomplice of biopolitics as a politics of power that decides on human life that is worth living and that human life that is allegedly not. Hence, bioethics and biopolitics are antipodes. But can bioethics cope with biopolitics? In the upcoming work, we will try to answer that important question.

AUTHOR

Daniel Weinstock

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

Faculty of Law, McGill University, 3690 Peel #201, Montreal, Canada, H3A 1W9

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Ranking Existential Threats: The Relevance of Policy

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Humanity faces threats that vary along a number of dimensions. Some are already upon us. Others are future threats, some closer to us in time, others at greater temporal removes. Some are relatively easy to ascribe probabilities to, whereas the risks associated with others are more difficult to quantify. Perhaps most obviously, different threats involve different magnitudes of loss. Some involve significant losses of life and welfare, others are existential in the literal sense. These different features of threats are important in allowing us to *rank* threats. They contribute to allowing us to establish priorities among policies aimed at mitigating or eliminating risk.

These dimensions have been fairly well studied in the recent literature on existential risk (even though they way in which they interact have not been the object of quite as much attention). The focus of this paper will however be on another dimension, that has to do with the probability of successfully addressing threats through policies aimed at mitigating or eliminating existential risks. It could be, for example, that some of the threats that present the greatest risks are ones that escape our ability to intervene successfully, even with significant investments of resources.

Taking into account the likelihood that policy interventions are more or less likely to succeed adds a neglected dimension to the task of ranking threats, and our policy responses thereto. I will argue that taking the dimension of probabilities of policy success into account has surprising results in our ranking of threats.

AUTHOR

Aleksandra E. Kornienko

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

University of Vienna, Gregor Mendel Institute, Vienna, Austria

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Creating superhumans, disrupting human nature: can genome editing endanger our species?

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Advances in biotechnology will soon allow us to change the DNA of our future children, and many people, both in academia and the public, are strongly concerned about this prospect. In this paper, I critically evaluate two common concerns regarding heritable genome editing endangering our "humanness". The first concern is that genome editing and enhancement can violate our integrity as a species, and result in the creation of a separate species of "superhumans" - those smarter, healthier, and stronger than ordinary humans. The second concern posits that by modifying the human genome we modify human nature and might disrupt it. I suggest that both of these concerns do not withstand neither philosophical nor, importantly, biological dissection. Briefly, I argue that creating superhumans is an utterly unlikely prospect even when using genome editing, because this would require unachievable reproductive isolation and there is vast space for increasing human genetic variation. Next, I argue that genome editing will unlikely disrupt human nature because this would require, among other things, enforcing in vitro fertilization. I then argue that fears of disrupting human nature and the human species are likely caused by a form of genetic essentialism that perceives the genome as the essence of what it is to be human, which results in attributing overblown significance to the changes in the genome and simultaneously - fragility to our "humanness". I finish by showing that the human genome is not the only parameter that influences who we are, and our "nature" has been changing non-genetically quite a lot with many changes widely welcomed.

AUTHOR

Vladimir Urošević[1], Nikola Vojičić[1], Davor Sekulski[1], Lucy Kender[2], Kate Tomlinson[2], Nayyer Rehman[2], Nives Ogrinc[3]

INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION AND ADDRESS

[1] Belit Ltd. Belgrade, Trg Nikole Pašića 9, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia
[2] WRG Europe Ltd, 26-28 Southernhay East, EX1 Exeter, UK
[3] Jožef Stefan Institute (JSI), Brinje 40, 1262 Dol pri Ljubljani, Slovenia

TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION

Analysis of Challenges in Altering Negative Perception towards Aquaculture and Sustainably Farmed Seafood through Increased Traceability, Safety and Trust

ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Aquatic foods make an increasingly critical contribution to food security and nutrition in the 21st century, more than ever before, with the overall global production steadily increasing to a recorded all-time high in 2022, having recovered after a temporary drop during the COVID-19 pandemic peak[3]. They are among the globally most traded food commodities, and the increasing majority of their total production volume (currently over 55%) currently originates from the crucial aquaculture and farmed aquatic foods sector, while the share of wild catch steadily decreases and absolutely cannot sustain the demand. Wild caught aquatic foods, though unsustainable and potentially devastating for the ecosystems (overfishing exacerbated by climate changes and invasive foreign species[4]), still remain more popular, preferred and trusted, particularly in Europe[5], mostly due to socio-cultural, traditional, technosceptic, and other prejudiced perceptions (freshness, taste). In the Horizon Europe funded FishEUTrust project we aim to rectify these perceptions, and have firstly thoroughly analyzed existing evidence, identifying and prioritizing the key barriers to and drivers of seafood purchasing and consumption behaviour. This comprehensive process has employed direct interviews with the quintuple helix of representative stakeholders, scientific literature review, and the custom-developed dedicated web scraping tool for automated "gray" literature review and management/versioning of study parameters, multimedia findings and fuzzy content search. The results, systematized per the Motivation-Opportunity-Ability framework, serve as key inputs for the tailored set of digital intervention strategies and lab/sensing technologies in development, aiming to stimulate behavioural change and increase consumer trust and uptake of aquaculture products.

---

[3] United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) flagship report "The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 2022", https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/11a4abd8-4e09-4bef-9c12-900fb4605a02
[4] https://www.reuters.com/science/new-fish-invade-adriatic-sea-threatening-local-species-2024-03-20
[5] European Market Observatory for fisheries and aquaculture (EUMOFA) "The EU Fish Market 2023" comprehensive analysis and yearly report, https://eumofa.eu/documents/20124/35668/EFM2023_EN.pdf/95612366-79d2-a4d1-218b-8089c8e7508c?t=1699541180521