



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Social and Human Sciences Sector
Bioethics and Ethics of Science Section

Panel Discussion on Philosophical Reflection on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights

The first two decades of the 21st century have seen an enormous scientific progress in the area of understanding and replicating human-like intelligence within a machine. Robots and driverless cars are some examples of human-like intelligence or artificial intelligence (AI).

The granting of citizenship to the robot Sophia in 2017 stirred philosophical debates on the foundations of human rights and the possibility of AI. The recent development of AI requires us humans to reconsider the old questions of humanism such as 'What is human?', 'What is so special about human?', 'How are we justified to ascribe 'rights' to agents such as humans, animals, and in some cases to inanimate entities such as rivers and rocks?' By clearly recognizing the 'unfamiliar' aspect of AI, we can try to deal with the ethical and social problems it raises.

The social and ethical impacts of AI on our daily lives can be understood further, when AI is examined as a normative technology, from the perspective of the French thinker Jacques Ellul. What are the constraints inherent to AI and digital technology, and how do they make a « system »? How does AI create new norms, like surveillance through data mining, new perceptions through sensors, bias and control through algorithms, redefinitions of privacy and intimacy through social media platforms, limitations of human autonomy through robotic interaction?

The French revolution, with its Declaration on the Rights of Men and of Citizens laid the foundations for universal human rights, which assert that all human beings, without any discrimination, are born free and equal in dignity and rights. The universal human rights have guided the social development of our societies in their efforts to build a more prosperous world and to fight all kinds of deep social inequalities and discrimination. How could AI, whose nature and impact on society remain uncertain, influence the enjoyment of human rights in different parts of the world? Why are discrimination and authoritarian regimes an issue for the development of AI, and what is 'artificial dumbness' vis-à-vis 'artificial intelligence'? Why is cultural diversity necessary for both understanding human rights and designing AI? What part of humanity cannot give up to AI if the rights of future generation are to be respected?

And, finally: how can we design AI in a morally responsible way, and in line with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights? How can programmers and engineers address the impact of AI on society? And, more importantly, how can they take into account the impact of AI on human morality? Is there a way to build AI on human rights? And does this imply that we should not only attribute duties but also rights to artificial agents?

These and other questions will be discussed by the participants of the round table.

Date and Location

16 November 2018

18h-19h30

Room IX

English and French

125 Avenue de Suffren

75007 Paris, France

Guest Speakers

This panel discussion will be moderated by **Professor Peter-Paul Verbeek**, COMEST Member, Professor of Philosophy of Technology, University of Twente, Scientific co-director, DesignLab, University of Twente (the Netherlands)

The participants of the panel discussion will be:

Professor Marie Hélène Parizeau, COMEST Chairperson, Professor of Philosophy, Université Laval of Québec City (Canada)

Professor Vanessa Nurock, Associate Professor in Political Theory and Ethics, Paris 8 University (France)

Professor Sang Wook Yi, COMEST Member, Professor of Philosophy, Chairperson, Committee for the Education of Philosophical Understanding of Science and Technology, Hanyang University (Republic of Korea)