TEOLOGIA FUNDAMENTALNA

STUDIA TEOLOGICZNE
43(2025)

TOMASZ JAWORSKI
DOI: 10.56898/ST.15436

THE CONSEQUENCES OF USING AI IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF JOHN PAUL II'S TEACHING

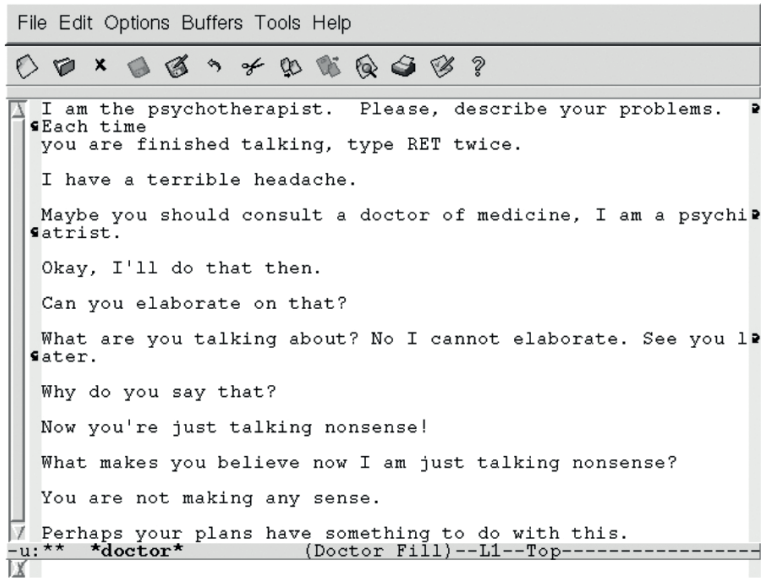
Abstract

The article examines the philosophical anthropology developed by Karol Wojtyła (John Paul II) as a lens for understanding artificial intelligence. It contrasts technological determinism with Catholic personalism as complementary answers to the question, "What does it mean to be human?" The advent of AI underscores the irreducible unity of action and intention in the human act: algorithms can mimic behaviour but cannot reach the metaphysical truth or moral meaning of deeds. Drawing on John Paul II's teaching on dignity, freedom, and relationality, the paper critiques the anthropomorphising of AI and underscores the scientific method's limits in grasping the full reality of the person phenomena. It calls for a balanced stance—between scientific materialism and non-materialist reflection—so that AI advances genuinely empower human autonomy.

Key words: *Artificial Intelligence; AI Ethics; Personalism; Human Autonomy; Anthropology; John Paul II; Leo XIV;*

Question: "Are you human?"
Answer: "To be human … does that mean anything…?"

1. Defining the Problem



Pic. 1: ELIZA - computer program coded in 1966 simulating a psychotherapist. Users started to develop relationship with the program and the phenomena was called Eliza's effect.

In 1966, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Joseph Weizenbaum developed ELIZA, a computer program designed to simulate a psychotherapist in the person-centred tradition of Carl Rogers. Its principal function was to sustain dialogue by paraphrasing the user's statements[1]. ELIZA extracted keywords from the user's utterances and generated a "response" by attaching those keywords to phrases selected from a preset list of „open responses" such as "What does that mean to you?", "That always makes sense," or "I don't know." Despite its simplicity and the limited computational power of its time, users' reactions to ELIZA became a landmark episode in the history of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The term AI - first coined only a decade earlier at the 1956 Dartmouth Conference, widely regarded as the founding moment of AI as an academic discipline - denotes, in its most basic sense, the capacity of machines to perform tasks ordinarily associated with human intelligence.

Users' interactions with ELIZA at times led them to attribute a sense of

[1] cf. Güzeldere, S. Franchi, "Dialogues with Colorful Personalities of Early AI"

"deep meaning" to its responses. Weizenbaum himself observed that his secretary - fully aware she was communicating with a computer program - nevertheless requested privacy while engaging with ELIZA, explaining that she felt able to "confide" in it. For designers and programmers of artificial intelligence, this so-called ELIZA effect - the human propensity to project qualities such as experience, semantic comprehension, or empathy onto text-based programs - proved to be an unexpected phenomenon, one that, as Aristotle reminds us, may well mark the very beginning of philosophical inquiry.

The same 1966, behind the Iron Curtain at the Catholic University of Lublin, Archbishop Karol Wojtyła (the future Pope John Paul II) was conducting intensive ethics seminars under the vigilant eye of Poland's communist secret police. Former students recall that his classes, though rigorous, were deeply inspiring – Wojtyła was an extraordinarily engaging lecturer who packed the halls and tied lofty philosophical concepts to real-life concerns. Two decades after World War II, in the shadow of the German totalitarian hecatomb, the forty-six-year-old Karol Wojtyła, like many Poles behind the Iron Curtain, lived daily under yet another totalitarian regime - first Stalinism, then successive phases of so-called "real socialism." Historians estimate that Nazism was responsible for some 25 million deaths, while communist regimes claimed approximately 100 million lives[2]. Amid the confrontation between these two totalitarian systems, Wojtyła inspired his students[3] not merely as a lecturer, but as a guide who helped them understand themselves in relation both to the material world and to immaterial realities. The well-known mountain hikes, kayaking expeditions, and gatherings of the so-called Środowisko ("the Environment") - which, to avoid communist surveillance, affectionately referred to Wojtyła as Wujek ("Uncle") - vividly embodied the attractiveness of a universitas model grounded in the shared search for meaning. Under these difficult conditions in the 1960s, the future Pope John Paul II developed the ideas that bore fruit in 1969 in his seminal work Person and Act. The book became a cornerstone of his later teaching, traces of which are easily found in encyclicals and homilies dealing with human dignity, freedom, and responsibility. The work is the result of Wojtyla's Aristotelian wonder leading him toward philosophical anthropology and personalism.

---

2 Courtois „The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression"

3 Półtawska, *Beskid Retreats"

The experiences of Weizenbaum and Wojtyła in 1966 were radically distinct, yet both, in their own ways, confronted the perennial question of human nature—and, by extension, the questions of ethics and freedom amid technological advancement. Weizenbaum lacked the philosophical apparatus that Wojtyła so thoroughly possessed. Although they worked within different intellectual milieus—Weizenbaum in technology and computer science, Wojtyła in philosophy and theology—both were preoccupied with the dignity, autonomy, and ethical integrity of the human person within the shifting landscape of technology and social transformation. For Weizenbaum, these questions emerged as a destination, born of technological inspiration; for Wojtyła, they constituted a point of departure grounded in the conviction that by analyzing human action, one might attain a deeper understanding of the person. Through phenomenological methods - then innovative in the study of moral experience - Wojtyła arrived at the indispensable notion of the structure of the act, encompassing both external deeds and internal motivations. Human acts, in his view, are simultaneously physical and spiritual, for the person is an integral unity of body and soul[4]. Against this backdrop, the ELIZA effect becomes intelligible: users of a program - situated within the material realm of silicon, metal, and electrical signals - nonetheless entered into relation with it, effectively "importing" the program into their immaterial inner world, the psyche. To paraphrase Niebuhr[5]: through the questions raised by Weizenbaum and the broader AI milieu, the answers contained within John Paul II's teaching disclose their plausibility even within the technological domain. Wojtyła discerned with remarkable clarity how the human being relates to technology: by nature, the person spontaneously seeks relationship - even with a program. This capacity, inclination, and desire for relation - something more than a mere exchange of questions and answers with software - does it not continue to astonish us?

2. Human Nature.

Most discussions concerning the consequences of artificial intelligence[6]

[4] Cf. Tischner, "The Methodological Aspect of the Work Person and Act"

[5] Reinhold Niebuhr aptly remarked: "Nothing is more unbelievable than an answer to a question that has not been asked." Niebuhr, p. 6.

[6] In contemporary scientific discourse, it is customary to distinguish among three fundamental categories of artificial intelligence: Artificial Narrow Intelligence

for humanity are, in a sense, framed inadequately. This inadequacy arises almost inevitably, for AI, by its very nature, inhabits both the material and the immaterial realms. This duality is already implicit in the classical definition of AI as the capacity of machines - undeniably material entities - to perform tasks that ordinarily require human intelligence; that is, to produce, for the observer, a convincing simulation of personal capacities that properly belong to the immaterial order[7]. Joseph Weizenbaum's astonishment stemmed from his realization that, in the ELIZA program, he was encountering a thing - mere matter - rather than a mind. Contemporary technological progress compels us to revisit that experience, as it raises the profound question of how far phenomena proper to the spiritual domain can be mapped onto matter - onto silicon[8]. With ever-increasing computational

(ANI), Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), and Artificial Superintelligence (ASI). However, at the current stage of technological development, only Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI) systems are encountered in practical organizational contexts. ANI refers to AI systems that are specialized for narrowly defined applications. A frequent misunderstanding stems from generalizing the impressive performance of certain ANI systems - such as ChatGPT's high accuracy in natural language tasks, Midjourney's capability to generate complex visual content, or the advanced functionalities of autonomous vehicles - to all possible use cases and data types. In reality, despite its enormous potential, AI has yet to attain the level of generalized capability often attributed to it in popular discourse.

7 Fides et Ratio, points out that a purely materialist view of the human person is far too impoverished. He recalls the present "crisis of meaning" and stresses the need to move beyond a strictly positivist vision of science. Such a crisis could not arise if the materialist conception of humanity were adequate. In the Pope's wellknown image of the "two wings" of faith and reason, AI makes it strikingly clear that human reason can indeed be imitated—that machines can perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence. But is that enough to be a person?

8 In Veritatis Splendor John Paul II situates the search for truth within a distinctly moralanthropological horizon. This perspective shows that the very essence of a moral act and the spiritual identity of the person "take place" on a level quite different from even the most advanced technology, which by definition remains on the plane of matter. The goodness or evil of an act is determined not only by its effect in the material world but also by the agent's intention and "inner truth" (nn. 7883). AI may imitate external efficacy, yet it never reaches this inner, spiritual dimension. The encyclical therefore rejects any attempt to reduce freedom and responsibility to purely material processes (nn. 4750). Hence the logical question about the limits of mapping spiritual realities onto silicon: evermore sophisticated algorithms do not alter the fact that human freedom and conscience transcend matter. The Pope further reminds us that technological progress in itself cannot be the ar-

power and ever more sophisticated AI architectures, the simulation has become so persuasive, so exacting, that we are now pressed to ask: *where, precisely, lies the difference between a human being and artificial intelligence?* It was precisely this intellectual provocation that underpinned the panel discussion, "Can Machines Possess Consciousness and Free Will?" organized by the Tertio Millennio Institute and the John Paul II Center for Thought in Warsaw on 19 July 2024[9].

The materialist position was articulated with remarkable precision by Tomasz Czajka[10] - multiple programming-contest laureate, world team-programming champion, and long-time software engineer at Google and SpaceX. Drawing on his experience in artificial intelligence, Czajka asserted that every phenomenon of the human psyche, emotion, and spiritual life can ultimately be explained through scientific determinism and, consequently, simulated by AI[11]. In this declaration, one perceives the moment

biter of good and evil (nn. 115117). This is a decisive argument in the debate over whether a machine's ability to simulate human behavior entails personal dignity. Why does the moral dimension of an act reach beyond a purely physical description? How does physiobiological reductionism fail to ground freedom and responsibility? Whence the objective existence of moral norms among human beings? Ultimately these three questions converge into a single inquiry about "the limits of mapping" spiritual phenomena onto silicon.

9 "Can Machines Have Consciousness and Free Will?", personal notes from the panel, https://tertio.pl/wydarzenia/czy-maszyny-moga-miec-swiadomosc-i-wolna-wole/

10 among other distinctions: fourtime winner of the prestigious TopCoder competitions and, in 2003, world champion in team programming. He earned a degree in 2004 from the Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Mechanics at the University of Warsaw. He then worked for many years at Google, and later at SpaceX, where he developed software for the flightcontrol systems of the SpaceX Dragon spacecraft. Recently he has devoted himself to independent projects, including writing support programs for chess world champion Magnus Carlsen and developing gameplaying artificialintelligence systems.

11 John Paul II had already outlined this stance—so typical of a modern civilization marked by "previously unattainable achievements in science and technology"—in his very first encyclical, regarded as the programmatic charter of his pontificate. That document expands themes first voiced in the inauguralMass homily summed up by the famous appeal: "Open wide the doors to Christ." Fides et Ratio stresses the complementarity of faith and reason, Veritatis Splendor defends the objectivity of moral norms, and Redemptor Hominis situates the whole discussion amid the latetwentiethcentury technological boom, warning that without transcendence and ethics technology itself leads to drama and paradox: "Does not the world of

when the scientist steps beyond the strict confines of empirical inquiry and crosses into the realm of philosophy - or perhaps even theology - for he proclaims convictions concerning realities that have neither been demonstrated, verified, nor falsified by scientific method[12]. Faith, after all, belongs to the domain of the spirit. Yet the panelists found it difficult to establish conclusively that consciousness and free will remain beyond the reach of machines.

The difficulty lies in the fact that the conclusion is presupposed at the very outset of the debate. Once a materialist worldview is assumed, consciousness and free will must, within that framework, be construed exclusively in terms of what is measurable and observable. If a machine simulation enables the measurement and observation of phenomena resembling human consciousness or volition, the materialist is logically compelled, on the basis of such evidence, to acknowledge the presence of the same phenomenon in the machine[13]. Consequently, for the materialist, no essential

---

the new age—the world of space flights and onceunreachable scientific and technological achievements—also 'groan and travail'?" Benedict XVI neatly echoed this assessment in Spe Salvi, observing that "cumulative progress is possible only in the material sphere… In the realm of ethical awareness and moral decision there is no similar possibility of accumulation, for human freedom is always new and must always decide anew… Freedom implies that in making fundamental choices every person, every generation, is a fresh beginning."

12 An important counterargument was offered by John Paul II "The moral foundation of the universal thirst for freedom was clearly revealed during the bloodless revolutions which took place in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989. These historic events, although rooted in a specific time and place, yield conclusions that reach far beyond the boundaries of any one geographical region: the bloodless revolutions of 1989 showed that the quest for freedom is an irrepressible aspiration grounded in the recognition of the dignity and inestimable worth of the human person, and that it must be accompanied by action on behalf of that person's good. Modern totalitarianism was above all an assault on the dignity of the person, even to the point of denying the inviolable value of human life. The revolutions of 1989 were made possible by courageous men and women inspired by a different vision—ultimately deeper and more vital—of the human being as a rational and free person who bears within himself or herself a mystery that transcends the individual, endowed with the capacity for reflection and choice, and therefore capable of attaining wisdom and virtue." John Paul II, Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, 5 October 1995, §§ 34.

13 Laborem Exercens, sets out a position quite different from the materialist view: it

distinction can be drawn between human and artificial consciousness or free will. Thus one imperceptibly falls into a circular reasoning: by accepting the materialist premise from the beginning, one inevitably returns to it in the conclusion[14].

And yet, the majority of people across the globe remain religious[15]. They existentially affirm a non-materialist premise; they believe in something transcendent. It must be stated unequivocally that disregarding this dimension of human nature in the development of AI - namely, the reductionism inherent in algorithmic determinism[16] and materialism - risks placing artificial intelligence in tension with the deepest aspirations, needs, and modes of existence of most human beings. These are individuals who live by a form of self-awareness through which they recognize themselves and others as spiritual beings - something irreducible to what can be weighed, measured, or empirically observed[17].

The phenomenological method adopted by Karol Wojtyła and later elaborated in the teaching of John Paul II not only resonates with the existential epistemology characteristic of most people[18]; it also safeguards

sharply distinguishes the human person as subject from technology as merely an object. Thus it reaffirms the same anthropological boundary between "person" and "instrument."

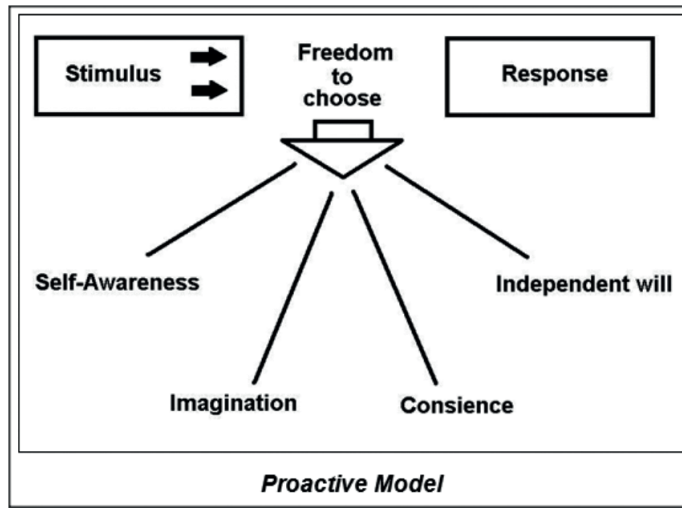
14 This reductive way of thinking is termed "practical materialism" in Evangelium Vitae. It entails defining the "quality of life" is „interpreted primarily or exclusively as economic efficiency, inordinate consumerism, physical beauty and pleasure, to the neglect of the more profound dimensions-interpersonal, spiritual and religious-of existence".

15 According to estimates from the PewTempleton Global Religious Futures project, approximately 84% of the world's population identifies with some religion.

16 even if they are statistical, nonlinear, and variable

17 „the confrontation between the religious view of the world and the agnostic or even atheistic view, which is one of the "signs of the times" of the present age, could preserve honest and respectful human dimensions without violating the essential rights of conscience of any man or woman living on earth." Cf. „Address to the 34th General Assembly of the United Nations"

18 Phenomenology is primarily a style of thought, a relationship of the mind with reality whose essential and constitutive features it aims to grasp, avoiding prejudice and schematisms. I mean that it is, as it were, an attitude of intellectual charity to the human being and the world, and for the believer, to God, the beginning and end of all things. To overcome the crisis of meaning which is characteristic of some sectors of modern thought, I insisted, in the Encyclical Fides et Ratio (cf. n. 83), on an openness to metaphys-



Picture 2: Victor Frankl's model identifying self-awareness, imagination, conscience and independent will as differentiators in stimulus -> response acting typical to animals.

thought against the reductionist fallacy and the vicious circle of materialist reasoning (along with, perhaps, fifty other errors from Elon Musk's celebrated list[19]), all of which are today amplified by the dazzling pace of technological progress. *How does a machine express itself through action*? Deterministically. *How does a person express himself*? Non-deterministically - more fully - revealing body and spirit in their manifold dimensions. When one asks, from a programming standpoint, about the elements that distinguish the human being from the animal — s*elf-awareness, imagination, conscience,* and *independent will*[20] - the current stage of technological development yields a single, unequivocal answer: all of these can be simulated. And simulated efficiently. Yet, ultimately, the aim is not to impede scientific or technological progress. Rather, by posing these questions in John Paul II's manner - that is, by ask-

ics, and phenomenology can make a significant contribution to this openness. „Address of John Paul II to a Delegation of the World Institute of Phenomenology of Hanover" March, 22nd 2003

19 Elon Musk, "50 Cognitive Biases Everyone Should Be Taught," Tweet, December 20, 2021, accessed July 3, 2024, https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1472647410568642564

20 Cf. Frankl & Covey pp. 75–76.

ing h*ow the person is disclosed through action* - one restores proportion[21].

Ultimately, however, the central issue is not whether consciousness, free will, or other attributes of personhood can be simulated. The true concern lies in the rights intrinsic to the person - rights that are entirely meaningless when applied to a machine[22]. In other words, the question is fundamentally ethical. As in the thought of Karol Wojtyła, anthropological reflection inevitably unfolds into the domain of ethics.

3. Ethics (or: Responsibility).

What emerged early in the history of artificial intelligence - already discernible in the work of Joseph Weizenbaum - and what has since become increasingly evident in the research agendas of major AI corporations[23], as well as in international legal frameworks[24] and the standards of regulatory

[21] Because the human being—the person, the subject—is the centre of John Paul II's method, he rejects both *totalitarian collectivism* ("(..) the fundamental error of socialism is anthropological in nature") and an *radical liberalism* that reduces the human being to a mere consumerproducer ("(..) when man is seen more as a producer or consumer of goods than as a subject who produces and consumes in order to live, then economic freedom loses its necessary relationship to the human person and ends up by alienating and oppressing him"). - Centesimus Annus

[22] There are phenomena irrelevant and redundant in the domain of machines and materialistic determinism, like forgiveness, joy and dignity.. „we have already called attention to the fact that he who forgives and he who is forgiven encounter one another at an essential point, namely the dignity or essential value of the person, a point which cannot be lost and the affirmation of which, or its rediscovery, is a source of the greatest joy". Only rights inherent to the person explain modern AI progress with strength and clarity. - Dives in Misericordia

[23] Ethical categories such as fairness (bias mitigation), transparency, privacy, safety, and human accountability recur across the frameworks of major technology giants, for example: Google – Google AI Principles (introduced in 2018); Microsoft – Responsible AI Principles / Responsible AI Standard (2019 / 2022); IBM – IBM Principles for Trust and Transparency (2017); Amazon – Amazon's AI Principles (2020); Meta – Responsible AI Principles (2021); OpenAI – OpenAI Charter (2018); Apple – Responsible ML guidelines (2020).

[24] to mention widely discussed EU AI Act often compared with AI-relevant instruments in two important jurisdictions outside the EU: United States (Executive Order 14110 on Safe, Secure and Trustworthy AI, 2023) and China (Regulation on Generative AI Services 2023 and the earlier Algorithm Recommendation Regulation 2021). Simplifying the dominant ethical-philosophical values that underpin

bodies[25], is the pivotal role of ethics, or more precisely, the responsibility for the outcomes produced through the use of AI technologies. The ethical impulse prompted by the rapid advancement of AI is, without doubt, a positive development. Yet it remains only partially comprehended, for the corporate "codes of ethics" that have so far appeared rest upon inherited moral architectures - values forged by humanity in response to an earlier configuration of reality. The categories currently employed to evaluate AI - *privacy*, *transparency*, *accountability*, *fairness* (*no algorithmic bias)* - are themselves legacies of the twentieth century. What remains absent is a renewed reflection emerging at the intersection of scientific determinism and personalism - at the point where the remarkable outcomes of determinism encounter the freedom of the individual[26].

It is precisely at this juncture that civilization has forged several pivotal concepts: decision autonomy, informed consent, and the opt-out option[27]. Once embedded within legal frameworks, these notions serve to safeguard

AI regulations one may say for EU it's dignity, for US it's innovation and for China - stability and control. Furthermore all main jurisdictions have their ethical positions on AI, including India (Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023), Canada (Artificial Intelligence and Data Act AIDA) and Bill C-27 (expected 2025), United Kingdom (Pro-Innovation AI White Paper 2023 and pending statutory powers for the AI Safety Institute 2025), Brazil (Brazil AI Act, Bill 2338/2023 which passed Senate 2024), Singapore (Model AI Governance Framework v3: Generative AI Edition 2024), Japan (AI Strategy 2024 aligned with the G7 Hiroshima Process), South Korea (AI Basic Act adopted 2024, in force 2026) and more.

[25] the OECD Guidelines (2019), the IEEE 7000 principles, the EU Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI (2019), and the ISO/IEC 42001 standards, NIST AI Risk-Management Framework 1.0 (2023) and the draft Algorithmic Accountability Act (2024), UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI - cf. Jaworski „Artificial Intelligence from the Perspective of Healthcare Management"

[26] „The development of technology and the development of contemporary civilization, which is marked by the ascendancy of technology, demand a proportional development of morals and ethics." Redemptor Hominis, §15

[27] These concepts were not coined for the AI era, but refer to scientific reasoning applied to individual and its rights towards the result of logical reasoning based on scientific premises and evidence (aka scientific determinism). Patient autonomy became a core ethical norm only in the mid-to-late 20th century, when courts and bio-ethicists rejected paternalism (Harvey, pp. 223-228). Informed consent likewise crystallised after Nuremberg and the U.S. Common Rule (Beatty & Bryant pp. 615-627). Even "opt-out" frameworks in organ donation are modern adaptations of that same consent doctrine (Jones & Cameron pp. 360-365)

personal freedom, ensuring that - even when determinism appears to provide definitive answers to nearly every question - the human being still retains the capacity to accept or to refuse a decision generated by scientific determinism[28].

Indeed, scientific determinism attains a clearer self-understanding when it encounters personalism - when it confronts the ethical dimension. Scientists sometimes overlook that the scientific method itself is a form of reduction: it begins with arbitrarily chosen categories, concepts, assumptions, axioms, and methods. This reduction has produced spectacular results within the sphere of material progress; yet, the more it is applied to spiritual or immaterial phenomena, the less persuasive - at least to the majority of humanity - its answers tend to be[29]. A simple illustration of this tension can be found in the puzzle of the ELIZA effect: what, precisely, was the source of the feelings and emotions experienced by users as they interacted with that early program[30]?

4. Freedom.

Within a materialist framework, freedom appears merely optional; materialism itself tends to slide easily into determinism. Science, too, often wrestles with the notion of freedom, for freedom - understood as a universal (*universale*), a primordial fact - resists justification by purely empirical means[31]. Wojtyła discerned the nature of the human person precisely

[28] John Paul II affirms those those concepts in "Address to Participants in the 81st Congress of the Italian Society of Internal Medicine and the 82nd Congress of the Italian Society of General Surgery," 27 October 1980

[29] in his „Addresses to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences" from 1996, 1980 and 2000 John Paul II writes that while empirical science "describe[s] and measure[s] (..) the manifestations of life," "the moment of transition to the spiritual cannot be the object of this kind of observation". He also warns against a purely materialist outlook: "The principal danger lies in reducing an individual to a thing (..) As a result, man is no longer perceived in his spiritual and corporeal unity.". At the same time he affirms science's goodness and insists that faith "is able to integrate and assimilate every research" (as in Fides et Ratio §43, "faith is not afraid of reason" but uses it to lead to the fullness of truth)

[30] Recent neuroscience reviews, experiments and commentary by leading scholars (LeDoux, Chalmers, Tallis, etc.) underscore that subjective emotions and intentions pose challenges to a strictly materialist neuroscience.

[31] Paradoxically, contemporary materialist determinism advances claims quite dif-

because, by acknowledging the existence of "something more" than what rational inquiry alone can apprehend, he made possible the coexistence of science - with its method and achievements - and a proper relationship between scientific knowledge and the domain of individual freedom[32]. By allowing, with John Paul II, for the presence of mystery (*mysterium*, *μυστήριον*) within the being that is the human person, we may pause - even in light of certain scientific discoveries and conclusions - and affirm a reverent respect for personal freedom[33]. Such an attitude remains profoundly rational, fully worthy of *homo sapiens sapiens*, a creature immersed in the technological realities of the twenty-first century. As John Paul II observed, "*every culture is an effort to ponder the mystery of the world and, in particular, of the human person: it is a way of giving expression to the transcendent dimension of human life.*[34]".

Social and psychological processes are conditioned by truth as it is inscribed in the laws of nature. Effective action - that is, action consonant with these laws - thus requires minimal expenditure of energy, whereas

ferent from those of the past. Among Enlightenment libertines, materialism and determinism shifted the concept of freedom from metaphysics into social practice and became the philosophical groundwork for political and social emancipation—freedom of conscience, expression, and association—as well as for the earliest demands for women's equality. Equally paradoxical was the use of the notion of the 'human machine' (coined by La Mettrie) to argue for the right to freedom—for example, to show that women possess the same rational capacities as men, and that gender inequality is nothing more than prejudice and upbringing. — Budzanowska pp. 11–13.

32 „Faith therefore has no fear of reason, but seeks it out and has trust in it. Just as grace builds on nature and brings it to fulfilment, so faith builds upon and perfects reason. (..) Faith is in a sense an "exercise of thought"; and human reason is neither annulled nor debased in assenting to the contents of faith, which are in any case attained by way of free and informed choice." Fides et Ratio § 43.

33 „(..) „each" man, "the most concrete" man, "the most real"; this is man in all the fullness of the mystery (..) he is the primary and fundamental way (..). The essential meaning of this (..), consists in the priority of ethics over technology, in the primacy of the person over things, and in the superiority of spirit over matter. (..) Respect each one's dignity and freedom!" — Redemptor Hominis §§ 13–16.

34 John Paul II, "Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations," Apostolic Journey to the United States, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 5 October 1995, § 9 also Centesimus Annus §24 „Different cultures are basically different ways of facing the question of the meaning of personal existence. When this question is eliminated, the culture and moral life of nations are corrupted.".

action contrary to them, though technically possible, demands disproportionately greater effort. In contemporary China, freedom is curtailed through the use of artificial intelligence. Although such restriction is technologically feasible, it remains ethically impermissible in Wojtyła's framework and economically inefficient[35]. It likewise stands in contradiction to praxeology - the science of effective action - as evidenced by protests and social tensions that consume both governmental resources and collective vitality[36]. Moreover, such measures tend to generate apathy and further diminish social dynamism[37].

By demonstrating that freedom belongs to the very nature of the human person, John Paul II elucidates why any opposition to freedom inevitably requires an expenditure of energy, force, and means in order to resist, distort, and artificially sustain a social order in a state of disharmony[38]. Hence, in China - where an extensive social-scoring system restricts citizens' access to public services and individual rights - we witness recurrent protests and acts of civil disobedience, most visibly among students[39]. A parallel phenomenon emerges in England, where the introduction of automated surveillance for vehicle entry into so-called clean-transport zones has provoked widespread acts of vandalism against monitoring equipment[40]. One

---

35 confer: Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, § 332: „The moral dimension of the economy shows that economic efficiency and the promotion of human development in solidarity are not two separate or alternative aims but one indivisible goal. Morality, which is a necessary part of economic life, is neither opposed to it nor neutral: if it is inspired by justice and solidarity, it represents a factor of social efficiency within the economy itself."

36 confer: Göbe, Cheltenham & Northampton, Gütersloh, Mitchell & Yu

37 Cf. Rothschild

38 Centesimus Annus, § 32: „distortions of political conduct create distrust and apathy, with a subsequent decline in the political participation and civic spirit of the general population, which feels abused and disillusioned."

39 cf. adversarial fashion and Wu pp. 53-79;

40 John Paul II observed that the „search for truth is the task of basic science (..) Basic research must be free with regard to political and economic authorities" whereas „Applied science must be united with conscience, so that, in the trinomial, science-technology-conscience, it is the cause of man's real good that is served." Such an approach preserves the autonomy of the sciences while at the same time integrating them into the broader intellectual and ethical endavour that humanity pursues through culture and religion. - cf. "Address to the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences" §§ 2, 3, 5

cannot deceive nature. It is therefore worth seeking to understand - and to respect - the nature of the human person.

5. Toward Conclusions.

Artificial intelligence is a comparatively recent phenomenon, whereas the human person, in the ontological sense, endures. The repercussions of AI are already manifest across diverse domains of human activity - medicine, economics, politics, and beyond. If John Paul II's teaching indeed discerned the true laws of nature, it may provide a reliable framework for anticipating the long-term implications of this technological development.

Karol Wojtyła laid the groundwork for his later encyclicals and homilies during the Polish Millennium celebrations of 1966, in the immediate aftermath of the "night of occupation" and the ideological deformations of Stalinism. Both totalitarian systems - Nazism and Communism - were sustained by ideologies grounded in determinism and materialism[41]. John Paul II's response was to advance a more profound understanding of the human person as one who realizes the self through action[42]. He subsequently completed this foundational vision by returning to Paul VI's fourfold schema - summarized by commentators and the media[43] in the striking maxim that the twenty-first century will be an age of the civilization of love, or there will be no twenty-first century at all[44]. Ultimately, for John

[41] John Paul II, Centesimus Annus, § 32: „The events of 1989 are an example of the success of willingness to negotiate and of the Gospel spirit in the face of an adversary determined not to be bound by moral principles."

[42] „through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfilment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes "more a human being". Laborem Exercens, §9

[43] The sentence as it is usually quoted in popular writing is a the concise form and a clever paraphrase that echoes two well-known aphorisms: one attributed to the French Minister of Culture André Malraux—himself an unbeliever—who is said to have remarked that "the twenty-first century will be a century of religion (or of mysticism), or it will not exist at all," and a similar dictum ascribed to Karl Rahner, namely that "the Christian of the twenty-first century will either be a mystic, or he will not be at all."

[44] „(..) the priority of ethics over technology, in the primacy of the person over things, and in the superiority of spirit over matter. This is why all phases of present-day progress must be followed attentively. Each stage of that progress must, so to speak, be x-rayed from this point of view. What is in question is the advance-

Paul II, the very essence of the human being is the capacity for relationship - the capacity to love and to be loved[45].

When the ELIZA program was asked, "Are you human?", its simple algorithm returned a response that many found unexpectedly profound: "To be human… does it mean anything?" As John Paul II once observed, "It is not a matter here merely of giving an abstract answer to the question: Who is man? It is a matter of the whole dynamism of life and civilization. It is a matter of the meaningfulness of the various initiatives of everyday life and also of the premises for many civilization programmes, political programmes, economic ones, social ones, state ones, and many others.."[46],[47].

* * *

This article does not claim to be an exhaustive treatment of the topic. It seeks only to encourage dialogue between technologists and theologians, inviting a renewed reading of the legacy of John Paul II in light of the challenges posed by the development of AI. Many weighty issues in the teaching of John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła) - such as transcendence, integration, consciousness, agency, and co-participation - have been deliberately left unaddressed. Moreover, reference to human nature, ethics (responsibility), and freedom alone cannot do justice to the mystery of the person or to human dignity. The aim here is solely to indicate new areas for reflection that emerge as a consequence of AI's development.

ment of persons, not just the multiplying of things that people can use. It is a matter-as a contemporary philosopher has said and as the Council has stated-not so much of "having more" as of "being more"" — Redemptor Hominis §16.

45 „proclaiming the core of this Gospel (..) is the proclamation (..) of human life as a life of relationship" - Cf. Evangelium Vitae, §81.

46 Redemptor Hominis §16.

47 „I chose to take the name Leo XIV. There are different reasons for this, but mainly because Pope Leo XIII in his historic Encyclical Rerum Novarum addressed the social question in the context of the first great industrial revolution. In our own day, the Church offers to everyone the treasury of her social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice and labour."

KONSEKWENCJE WYKORZYSTANIA AI W ŚWIETLE NAUCZANIA JANA PAWŁA II

Streszczenie:

Artykuł analizuje przydatność antropologii filozoficznej opracowanej przez Karola Wojtyłę (Jana Pawła II) do zrozumienia znaczenia zjawiska sztucznej inteligencji. Zestawia technologiczny determinizm z personalizmem chrześcijańskim jako uzupełniające się odpowiedzi na pytanie: „Co to znaczy być człowiekiem?". Pojawienie się AI podkreśla nieredukowalną jedność działania i intencji w czynie osoby: algorytmy mogą naśladować zachowanie, ale nie mogą dosięgnąć metafizycznej prawdy ani moralnego znaczenia czynów. Opierając się na nauczaniu Jana Pawła II na temat godności, wolności i relacyjności, artykuł krytykuje antropomorfizację AI i podkreśla ograniczenia metody naukowej w uchwyceniu pełnej rzeczywistości osoby. Apeluje o zrównoważone stanowisko — między materializmem naukowym a refleksją niematerialistyczną — tak aby postępy AI wzmacniały ludzką autonomię.

Słowa kluczowe: *sztuczna inteligencja; etyka AI; personalizm; autonomia decyzyjna; antropologia; Jan Paweł II; Leon XIV;*

Bibliography:

U. Beatty, L. Bryant, "*A Modern History of Informed Consent and the Role of Key Information*", Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics 49 (2021), pp. 615–627.

Bertelsmann Stiftung „*2024. BTI 2024 Country Report — China*". Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung. https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/CHN

A. Budzanowska, „*Muslin Rebellion: Women's Erudite Libertinism in Enlightenment France and Its Traces in the Feminist Tradition*" („Muślinowa rebelia. Kobiecy libertynizm erudycyjny oświeceniowej Francji i jego tropy w tradycji feministycznej"), Katowice: University of Silesia Press, 2025, pp. 11–13.

S. Covey, „*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*", New York: Simon & Schuster 1989.

O. Courtois, N. Werth, J.-L. Panné, A. Paczkowski, K. Bartošek, J.-L. Margolin, „*The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*" („*Czarna księga komunizmu. Zbrodnie, terror, prześladowania*"), Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka 1999.

D. Donnelly, "*Met Police Investigate Nearly 1 000 Incidents of ULEZ Cameras Being Stolen or Vandalised*", Sky News, 1 XI 2023 (access: May, 16th 2025).

L. Feuillet, J.-P. Dufour, F. A. Pelletier, "*Brain of a White-Collar Worker*", The Lancet 370 (21 VII 2007), p. 262.

V. E. Frankl, „*Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy*", Boston: Beacon Press 1959.

C. Göbel, "*Social Unrest in China: A Bird's-Eye Perspective*", in: „*Handbook on Dissent and Protest in China*", ed. T. Wright, Cheltenham–Northampton MA 2019, pp. 65–88.

F. Güzeldere, s. Franchi, "*Dialogues with Colorful Personalities of Early AI*", Stanford Humanities Review 4 (1995) 2, 2024 r., http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/4-2/text/dialogues.html, access Jun, 30th, 2024

A. Harvey, "*The History of Autonomy in Medicine from Antiquity to Principlism*", Journal of Medical Ethics 43 (2017), pp. 223–228.

T. Jaworski, „*Artificial Intelligence from the Perspective of Healthcare Management*", in: „*Medical Applications of Artificial Intelligence: Perspectives, Challenges and Practical Solutions*", eds. Z. Nawrat, P. Czuma, M. Szeliga, Warsaw: PZWL, 2025, pp. 173–178.

C. Jones, s. Cameron, "*Opt-out Organ Donation: On Evidence and Public Policy*", Journal of Medical Ethics 40 (2014), pp. 360–365.

J. Lewin, "*Is Your Brain Really Necessary?*", Science 210 (12 XII 1980), pp. 1232–1234.

T. Mitchell, s. Yu, "*Can Xi Keep a Lid on China's Mounting Social Strains*?", „Financial Times", 18 VII 2024.

R. Niebuhr, „*The Nature and Destiny of Man*", vol. 2: „Human Destiny", London 1943.

J. Paul II, „*Address to the 34th General Assembly of the United Nations*", 2 X 1979.

J. Paul II, „*Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations*", New York, 5 X 1995.

J. Paul II, „*Address to Participants in the 81st Congress of the Italian Society of Internal Medicine and the 82nd Congress of the Italian Society of General Surgery*", 27 X 1980.

J. Paul II, „*Address to the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences*" (Commemoration of Albert Einstein), 10 XI 1979.

J. Paul II, „*Address to a Delegation of the World Institute of Phenomenology of Hanover*", 22 III 2003.

J. Paul II, Encyclical „*Centesimus Annus*" (CA), 1991.

J. Paul II, Encyclical „*Dives in Misericordia*" (DM), 1980.

J. Paul II, Encyclical „*Evangelium Vitae*" (EV), 1995.

J. Paul II, Encyclical „*Fides et Ratio*" (FR), 1998.

J. Paul II, Encyclical „*Laborem Exercens*" (LE), 1981.

J. Paul II, Encyclical „*Redemptor Hominis*" (RH), 1979.

J. Paul II, Encyclical „*Veritatis Splendor*" (VS), 1993.

M. Półtawska, „*Beskid Retreats: The Story of Father Karol Wojtyła's Friendship with the Półtawski Family*" („*Beskidzkie rekolekcje: dzieje przyjaźni księdza Karola Wojtyły z rodziną Półtawskich*"), Częstochowa: St Paul's Publishing 2008.

Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures, "*Religious Projections: 2010–2050*", https://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/ (access: 16 V 2025).

Paul VI, „*Solenne Rito di Chiusura dell'Anno Santo: Omelia del Santo Padre Paolo VI, Saint Peter's Basilica*", 25 December 1975, published in Acta Apostolicae Sedis 68 (1976): 993-999; text online: https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/it/homilies/1975/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19751225.html.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, „*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*", Vatican City 2004.

V. Rothschild, "*Protest and Repression in China's Digital Surveillance State*", „Journal of Information Technology & Politics" (online first, 19 IV 2024).

R. Tallis, "*What Neuroscience Cannot Tell Us About Ourselves*", The New Atlantis 50 (Winter 2016), pp. 3–25.

J. Tischner, "*The Methodological Aspect of the Work «Person and Act.»*" ("*Metodologiczna strona dzieła «Osoba i czyn»*"), Analecta Cracoviensia 5 (1973), pp. 85–97.

V. Wu, "*Facial Recognition Technology: College Students' Perspectives in China*", „Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities" 3 (1) 2024, pp. 53–79.

Tomasz Jaworski - M.Sc. – Ph.D. candidate, Department of Management, Faculty of Applied Sciences, WSB University. Seasoned high-tech industry expert with over 30 years of experience, specializing in artificial intelligence (AI). As an IEEE CertifAIEd™ Authorized Assessor, he brings extensive practical expertise in AI to his academic research, bridging the gap between industry and academia in the field of emerging technologies. Contact: tomasz.jaworski@wsb.edu.pl • Tel: (32) 295-93-43.