Thesis Synopsis

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Thesis Project: An Evaluation of Hubert Dreyfus' Notion of Artificial Intelligence

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Department: Philosophy

Year: 2019

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As human beings, we have always regarded ourselves to be superior over other creatures on earth. This is so because of our ability of rationality and self-consciousness. However, the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has challenged this notion. AI has led to the invention of machines capable of displaying behaviours that humans consider to be intelligent. In other words, AI portrays mechanical behaviours that mimic the human mind. Hence, some questions arise: Are machines really thinking? And if machines are thinking, are they rational like human beings? Hence, the basic argument surrounding the project of AI is that Human Intelligence can be reproduced by artificial means.

Hubert Dreyfus' philosophical works may be regarded as those of a committed phenomenologist and existentialist contributions, geared towards understanding the human person's interaction with his environment. In his philosophy of AI, Dreyfus argues that AI is a “scientific attempt to simulate human intelligent behaviour into a computer using programming rules and symbols to make the machine act intelligently”. Dreyfus, therefore, proposes that the quest by scientists to programme rules and symbols into a computer so that it can act intelligently is based on the assumption that human beings produce intelligence by using facts and rules. Hence, Dreyfus holds that this scientific attempt at AI has a 'dead-end'. For him, our

world is full of recognisable and organic objects, which are organised by human beings as organic beings, using their embodied capacities to harness the world's resources to meet their needs. There is no reason to suppose that a world organised in terms of those fundamental human capacities can and should be accessible by a computer. He opined that no matter how machines are programmed to act intelligently, they can never function like humans.

This research articulates two contrasting positions on Dreyfus' concept of AI. On the one hand, Dreyfus' notion of AI is a groundbreaking work in the philosophy of mind and it has demonstrated conclusively that our body is fundamental in all facets of intelligence. Dreyfus has put to rest once and for all the formalistic fantasy that a computer without a body is intelligent. Our body and intelligence co-exist. On the other hand, Dreyfus' concept of AI is somewhat problematic. He offers no hope for machine intelligence simply because a machine lacks the human body. Some scholars, like Harry Collins, suggest that Dreyfus' made a professional mistake in his philosophical evaluation of AI research. Collins argues still that Dreyfus' professional mistake is the application of analysis of science, technology, and mathematics to the human world in his argument. He holds that this enabled Dreyfus' to set up a false dichotomy between domains of knowledge where computers can do things accurately and domains where they cannot. So, if Dreyfus argues that AI is not useful, can he survive in an environment that is highly concentrated with high radiation? Though this place of high radiation is still the human world, we cannot cope there whereas computers can. This shows clearly that machines can be intelligent and useful for mankind. Collins also argues that AI does not need to possess the human body for it to perform intelligent tasks. Today, though computers do not share the same biological body with us, AI robots can detect drugs, solve complex equations, and more.

In our contemporary society, most especially in Nigerian Universities, the research on AI can be very productive. If the government and all stakeholders invest in the instruments of AI, it can help to reduce electoral rigging for example. Also, in taking a leaf from Collins' notion that AI can perform well in its environment, computers can work effectively in oil rigs where the radiation and conditions of the atmosphere are not favourable to the human body

and health in general. Principally, AI can be effective and efficient in those areas because the toxic atmosphere will not affect it since it lacks the biological components that make up the human body. AI has been very effective in hospitals; it can clean and disinfect, deliver medicine to patients, and measure patients' temperature.

The research project's insights and recommendations include the position that AI should complement human beings and whereas human beings are becoming inferior to AI. Nevertheless, AI still lacks fundamental human attributes and so it cannot effectively replace humans. Machines cannot be held responsible for their actions as human beings are. Auto cars can drive themselves without human interference. The question now is who takes the blame when the car is involved in an accident? Also, AI autonomous weapons are capable of searching for targets on their own. In other words, these robots are capable of killing without the interference of human operators. These weapons can end up in the hands of terrorists and they can bring doom to humanity. Elon Musk avers that AI is humanity's “biggest existential threat". AI can be manipulated in the way human beings cannot. A programmer can easily hack into the AI system, like the auto car and the autonomous weapon to cause harm, but our brains cannot be hacked into because we are not machines that are programmed. AI devices are as biased as their programmers.

Finally, AI poses some significant risks. The research points some of these out. First, AI research makes it possible to replace human jobs with machines thereby posing threats to human employment. An increase in AI research will not only produce an employment swing. It will also widen the wealth gap and lead to economic inequality. Second, AI only possesses a programmed intelligence and not progressive intelligence. Human beings learn by experience, whereas AI robots only replicate what had already been programmed into them. Machines lack awareness of dread. So, consciousness can never be attributed to them. Third, in the nearest future, AI will present humanity with new ethical challenges. Unmanned cars, for instance, pose the question of whom to hold when an accident happens? Finally, if AI devices are to be accepted in our environment, then, they must be programmed to follow human rules, norms, values, and ethical principles of the environment they are placed in.

Thesis Synopsis

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Thesis Project: The Use of Vernacular Names for Baptism in the light of Canon 855

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Department: Theology

Year: 2019

Pages: 63

During one of my apostolic work experiences as a seminarian, I prepared the Catechumens in a Nigerian parish for the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism and First Holy Communion. On the day of the reception of the sacrament, though she had fulfilled all the requirements, a girl of about 10 years was denied the sacrament of Baptism. She was denied because she had chosen "*Chidinma*" (God is good) as her baptism name. According to the parish priest, the law of the Church states that the girl would not be baptised unless she chose a saint's name. This critical incident provoked some questions, which birthed the research project: What is the problem with indigenous names that the Church would not consider them good enough to administer baptism? Does using a vernacular name invalidate the sacrament of Baptism?

Indeed, some early missionaries in Africa followed canon 761 of the abrogated 1917 *Code of Canon Law*. They rejected many good vernacular names as not good enough for baptism. They asked that Africans choose the names of saints for baptism. According to the African Theologian Benézet Bujo, "the missionaries were not sensitive to the significance of names for the African sense of individuality and personhood. It never occurred to them that they could give to their African converts, names taken from their African

tradition." Yet, the use of vernacular names for baptism is very important. It is a sensitive topic among African Christians. This is because names in Africa are not just tags attached to things or randomly chosen from a list based on how sweet the names sound. Names in Africa reflect the entire being of a child; they have some biological, psychological, social, cultural, moral, cognitive significance. They also have ethical and religious dimensions and importance.

Some African names, when carefully studied, have more theological and theophoric meaning to the people compared to some saint names. Some vernacular names such as Osatofoh (God decides the end), Osagie (God's sent), Chinedu (God is my guide), Chima (God knows), Oluwadamilare (God Marvels me), Oluwatofunmi (God is enough for me), Hakuri (Patience), Alheri (Grace) and many others, will make more meaning to the people who speak these languages than names like Leo (Lion), Philip (horse), Stella (Star), or Peter (rock). These names are easily accepted for baptism because they are names of saints. It is also noteworthy that the name one chooses for baptism is not essential to the celebration of the sacrament. It is inconsequential to the validity of the sacrament. This is because the essential elements of baptism are the matter of the sacrament, which is water; and the form, which is the Trinitarian formula.

During the research, it was discovered that at the core of the liturgical movement before the Second Vatican Council was the call for the use of vernacular languages in Liturgical Celebrations. In the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the Church no longer requires that one must adopt a saint's name to be baptised. It requires that one can use any name from any region that is not offensive to Christian sentiment but reflects Christian virtue (Canon 855). Thus, it is unfortunate that some Catechists and even priests in Africa today still cling to the abrogated 1917 Code. They continue to strip Africans of their identity. They do this by insisting that they must bear the name of a saint if they are to be baptised. Many Catholics have been denied baptism or had saint names imposed on them during baptism.

In the new rite of baptism for children, reference is not made and no room is given for a change of name for those to be baptised. It is unthinkable that Christians, who want to baptise their children,

would give them names offensive to Christian virtue and sentiment. The New Rite for Christian Initiation of Adult, RCIA (1988), states that "those to be baptized may choose a new name. Either a traditional Christian name or a name of regional usage that is not incompatible with Christian beliefs." It gives room for an explanation of the given name of the candidates for baptism in case the priest or the people do not understand the meaning of the vernacular name.

One can say that the choosing of a new name at baptism is first of all optional. Also, baptismal names can be any name of any language, which is not incompatible with Christian beliefs. The choosing of the name of a saint is not mentioned at all or suggested by the RCIA. The RCIA also states that "In some regions where people bear names that do not reflect Christian virtue or are incompatible with Christian belief, they may choose another name which does not necessarily have to be a name of a saint." Still, the Church in approving vernacular names for baptism does not ask that the use of saint names for baptism be abolished. It encourages it. At the same time, it states that the validity of baptism is not tied to the baptismal name. Thus, authentic Christian vernacular names can be used for baptism.

The development of the use of vernacular names for baptism will go a long way to foster the inculturation and indigenisation of the Church. Many Christians, who have been seeing the Church as a Roman and European invention, and as a new form of colonisation, may begin to regard the Church as their own. Hence, proper catechesis of the laity, seminars, and workshops need to be organised for the Christian faithful and ministers of the sacraments. Priests and future missionaries should be formed in a way that they are more open to inculturation and promotion of valuable African cultural heritage. They can make the Catholic faith more relevant and intelligible to today's Christians.