Proceeding Paper
Could We Speak about a Moral Identity of AI? †

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Abstract: This paper aims to identify the systemic factors contributing to the transformation of the moral identity/moral identities of nowadays person(s), during these times of technological changes and challenges, based on the rhizomality and transgressiveness, in order to formulate some logic and clear questions related to the possibility of moral identity/moral identities of AIs/AGIs.

Keywords: identity; moral identity; AI; AGI; human rights; self-aware machines; complexity; rhizomal self; moral transgressiveness; virtual reality

1. Introduction

Various nowadays reports, papers and reactions, when analyzing the effects of the increasing interdependency between human beings and AIs/AGIs for the future of humanity, seem to share a common presupposition.

A recent example could be the *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* [1], calling for a moratorium on AI/AGI systems colliding with human rights. Following its publication, news agencies and major journals from around the world have published news with this main idea: "U.N. urges moratorium on use of AI that imperils human rights"—as it is in this case: Los Angeles Times, published on 15 September 2021 [2].

In that report were expressed "Concerns about artificial intelligence systems in key sectors" ([1], p. 6), under the basic idea that "the need for a human rights-based approach to new technologies in general, and artificial intelligence in particular, has been recognized by a growing number of experts, stakeholders and the international community" ([1], p. 10).

Even one will not find in that report the term "moral" and only three times—as a footnote—the term "ethics"; the term "identity" is used 5 times there.

What is the importance of those findings for this paper?

First of all, the presupposition of that report seems to be this one: "identity" is strictly related to a human being agent and not to an artificial agent.

This is challenging, as there are, already, some robots/artificial intelligences that refers to themselves using "I"—as if they have an identity [3].

So, the problem of defending human rights against the errors or malfunctioning of Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) should not ignore the problem of an identity of an artificial entity that can affect a natural-born being.

Secondly, one cannot radically cut the problem of identity from the problem of moral action.

So, the problem of AI/AGI identity brings about the problem of AI's/AGI's moral action(s) as we are already speaking about self-awareness robots [4].

2. Very Short Discussion

2.1. Moral Identity/Identitiesis/Are under Change(s)

Until the late 20th century, the *moral identity/identities* was/were a stable marker, almost like a sort of mathematical invariant(s), as it/they usually was/were associated with ethnic identification.

In our Digital Era, at the beginning of the 21st century, the moral identity is increasingly separating from that stability/invariance and it is acquiring a trajectory under independent transformation(s), through the influences of the complexities of digitalization and of virtual space.

Due to the rapid changes observed all around in our societies, both in the late 20th century and nowadays, the concepts focusing on this particular feature of (continuous) transformation have already became accustomed, as, for example: "transforming society" [5], "society of acceleration" [6], "fluid modernity"/"liquid modernity" [7], "Age of Surprise" [8] and others.

Under these circumstances, this once super stable social phenomenon—*moral identity*— is nowadays a full subject for change(s).

Let us agree that *moral identity* is just a part, just a face, and just a dimension of the identity itself.

Also, let us observe that the scientific discourse is already actively using several terms associated with the unstable and even the changeable nature of the (moral) identity in our era, characterized by "social acceleration" [9], as being fluid, flickering, drifting, deformed, protean, as well as hybrid, networked, and transboundary [10].

2.2. Our Identity/Identities Is/Are Itself/Themselves under Change(s)

Nowadays, there is an obvious tendency for change of the *identity/identities* itself/themselves and, by effect and correspondingly, of the *moral identity/identities*, as we are discovering, understanding, realizing and confronting the increasing complexity/complexities of the concept of "identity" [11]: our various, changing and often unexpected identity/identities, in the Digital Era, could and should be characterized as forms of "controlled chaos".

These changes are facilitated both by our own rhizomal self [12] and by the "rhizomality" of the contemporary (digital) social space [13], where the virtual environment is contributing to and influencing our identity/identities and, consequently, our moral identity/identities.

In fact, in our days (digitized) society, we are playing, simultaneously, several (digital or not) different identities and, correspondingly, several different moral identities and roles, as we would have a set of interchanging different identities and moral identities.

2.3. The Plurality/Rhizomality of Our Identity Is Including Our Moral Identity

Our postmodern times—or, better, transmodern times—require an approach of the problem of the rhizomality of identity/moral identity, because plurality rather than binarity is the term better characterizing contemporary society [14].

In the Digital Era, the nature and the vectors of the transformation of the interchanging of our moral identity moral identities are important indicators of the stability of society [15].

It is possible to view moral identity as a social phenomenon that is now less dependent on the ethnic or even cultural identity, because it ceases to be a just and only a prescribed identity as it can be affected by multiple transformations, as in the case of adolescents [16].

2.4. Moral Transgressiveness

The concept of "*transgression*" is based on the postmodern idea of going beyond the boundary/boundaries, confines and norms generally accepted in society/a particular society, including the boundaries of oneself [17].

In our digitalized society, the transition from one (moral) identity to another (moral) identity or even to several other (moral) identities shifts to the personal level and takes the form of transgression.

The use of the term "transgression" allows us to examine a wide range of identity changes; not only the transition from one moral identity to another, but also going beyond the morality field [18].

A transgressive act is the refusal to obey any given conditions, since the very existence of the boundary/boundaries of what is moral presupposes their violation and since the

reality itself became more a possibility than an effectivity, under the enmeshing forces of the digital society.

Overall, the transgressive identity changes seem to currently be manifested as most obvious in the morality sphere.

Moral transgressiveness is manifesting more actively in our digitalized domain because it corresponds to the modern rhizome reality, the "fluid modernity".

2.5. Moral Rhizomality

The "*rhizomal variability*" of the digitalized society provides the subject with a wide range of opportunities for transgression for going beyond the moral limits; even the vectors of this transgression are not always determined by an urgent need but by several social and psychological opportunities and circumstances.

The "rhizome" term refers to a departure from unambiguous prescription, linearity and predictability to variability and unexpected, as, at any point in time, a rhizome "can be torn off, broken, it builds its initial or different lines up again" [19]. It allows and provokes transgression.

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2.6. Virtual Reality and the Plurality of (Moral) Identity/Identities

Virtual reality is a rhizome space providing a possibility of multidimensional, multilevel and multipolar transgression for any individual morally immersed in it, as the non-formal or formal education for science/critical thinking [20] and for creativity are nowadays favoring, encouraging and multiplying the perspectives on what is a good, right, moral act/behavior or what is not, for any intelligence(s) immersed in it.

3. The Shortest Conclusions

For the scope of the mental experiment proposed in this paper, it is not important if an AI/AGI could or will attend/realize a personal/humanlike identity [21].

Instead, it is an invitation to consider the idea that our artifacts are and will always be reflecting/mimicking our identity/identities, including the moral identity/identities.

This is why, exactly in this context, we have to afford the questions: Could we speak about a moral identity of AI? Could we speak about moral identities of AGIs? [14].

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