

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE IMPLICATION FOR A *ZIIBALOGZII*'S WORLDVIEW: THE CONTENTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

Deezia, Burabari Sunday & Abdulrazaq O. Kilani

Abstract

The African society is increasingly entangled in the web of globalization, which seeks to enthrone a new form of humanism that bridges the gap between humans in all aspects of life through Artificial Intelligence (AI). These new technologies are altering how Africans perceive themselves structurally, ontologically, systematically and psychologically, posing an existential threat to human identity, uniqueness, philosophy and belief. This paper focused on the Ogoni-African philosophy of personhood in the age of AI. The paper discovered that in the Ogoni worldview, it is the community which defines the person as person, not some isolated static quality or rationality, will, or memory. This brings to bear the underlying philosophy of *Ziibalogzii* which holds that no one realizes personhood all by oneself. The paper contended that no matter how sophisticated a work of art may be, it is still an imitation of nature, and hence cannot be equated with human being. The paper, called for guidelines in order for these technologies to remain human-centric, serving humanity's values.

Keywords: *Ziibalogzii*, Personhood, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robots

Introduction

We all struggle to figure out what it means to be human. In this struggle, there are various attempts that aim at defining personhood: biological, anthropological, religious, psychological and others. The traditional Western view of personhood is based on rationality. Aristotle, the father of logic, thought that "man is a rational animal" (Kos, 1926), and that truth could be logically determined through using formal logical rules. In his unified conception of humanity, St. Thomas Aquinas combined these three functions-nutritive, sensory, and rational-into his unitary construct of humanity, with rationality creating the distinguishing nature of the human person (Kretzmann, & Stump, 1998). In holding this particular reason as the central virtue of the *imago Dei*, St. Thomas found common ground with St. Augustine (O'callaghan, 2007). Descartes often referred to as the father of modern philosopher, and his famous quote "I think

therefore I am,” laid the foundation for how human conceptualize their sense of personhood (Kreeft, 2007; Dicker, 2013).

However, the above western views do not resonate with the Ogoni-African worldview, which includes the way of understanding the world and the place of humanity in relation to other realities. As such, African philosophy rejects their emphasis on both rationality and individuality. This is clear in Mbiti’s (1969) famous dictum: ‘I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.’ In African worldview, according to Menkiti (1984), it is the community that defines a person as a person, not some separate static features such as rationality, will, or memory. This brings to bear the underlying philosophy of *Ziibalogzii* which holds that no one realizes personhood all by oneself. The intrinsic interconnectedness of all existents is used to understand the individual personal identity. This suggests that no single person exists in isolation, but rather that individuals exist in relation to other things. “To be” is to be in a mutual and complementary relationship with all things that are and its negation is to be alone and not nothingness (Asouzu, 2011). This implies nothing itself without everything else.

Today, Ogoni is becoming increasingly entangled in the web of globalization, which seeks to enthrone a new form of humanism that bridges the gap between humans in all aspects of life. Artificial intelligence’s exponential expansion and ubiquity are transforming how the Ogoni people see themselves structurally, systematically and psychologically, posing an existential threat to human identity, uniqueness, and philosophy. In a world where the Ogoni reciprocity, relationality, complementarity, and communitarian identity have been repudiated, attacked, and denied as non-essential due to over dependence on technologies and agents of modernity. At this point one could wonder what it means to be human in the age of artificial intelligence.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has made its way out of movies and research labs and into people’s everyday lives, altering every aspect of existence and promising to increase productivity, improve efficiency and reduce expenses. It improves people’s life by assisting them in making better predictions and more informed decisions. AI is currently used in a variety of applications, including healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, and energy, as well as education, financial services, communication, management, agriculture and the military etc. Recent research has revealed that advances in the field of AI and Robotics indicate that today’s machines have progressed beyond simply being robots with human-like attributes for solving simple human problems such as calculating and

processing complex data as seen in Google search algorithms, which now appear to outsmart humans.

However, in the discussions of Artificial Intelligence (AI), relational conceptions of personhood from the Ogoni-African perspective are almost non-existent and, if they emerge, they lack thorough methodology. Amongst other aims, this study seeks to contribute what may be the first substantive understanding of “African personhood” and artificial intelligence, through the constructs of *Ziibalogzi* philosophy. Using the descriptive method, the study reveals that, the principles of *Ziibalogzi* must be considered and developed to provide guidelines for the AI technology.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In the 1940s and 1950s, when computers first became available, the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) was born. During the earlier stages of its development, the focus was clearly on getting computers to do things that would be considered intelligent if done by a human (Turing, 1950). Essentially, this entailed attempting to make computers to mimic human behavior in some or all aspects. In the 1960s and 1970s, this sparked a philosophical debate over how similar a computer could be to a human brain, and whether any distinctions that developed were truly significant.

We saw new strategy in the 1980s and 1990s, a sort of bottom-up approach to the problem, effectively developing artificial brains to bring about AI. This completely changed the game and raised a whole new set of questions. AI was no longer limited to simply mimicking human intelligence; it might potentially be intelligent in its own right. It could still be done in certain circumstances by emulating how a human brain worked, but it had the potential to be bigger, faster and better. This had the conceptual implication that an artificial brain may now theoretically outperform a human brain.

The lack of a specific, globally accepted definition of AI, on the other hand, is likely to have aided the field’s rapid growth, blossoming, and advancement. While some define AI loosely as a computerized system capable of rationally solving complex problems or taking appropriate actions to achieve its goals in whatever real-world circumstances it encountered. Others see it as “a system” with the ability to correctly interpret external data, to learn from such data, and to use those leanings to achieve specific goals and tasks through flexible adaptation (Kaplan, Haenlein&Siri, 2019).

Despite the different definitions, the common understanding of AI is that it is associated with machines and computers to help humankind solve problems and facilitate working processes. In short, it is an intelligence designed by humans and demonstrated by machines. The term AI is used to describe these functions of human-made tool that emulates the “cognitive” abilities of the natural intelligence of human minds (Russell & Norvig, 2009). Experts propose a variety of classifications for AI issues and solutions. According to Russell & Norvig (2010) artificial intelligence can be classified into the following categories;

1. Systems that Think Humanly: Activities that are associated with human thinking including decision making, problem solving and learning etc
2. Systems that Think Rationally: The study of mental facilities through the use of computation models. They are able to perceive, reason, and act.
3. System that Act Humanly: These machines do tasks that would require intelligence when performed by human.
4. System that Act Rationally: These machines are designed to act like intelligent agents. That is, intelligent artificial behavior.

Benefit of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

There are many positive impacts of Artificial intelligence on human, especially in the field of healthcare. AI gives computers the capacity to learn, reason, and apply logic. Scientists, medical researchers, clinicians, mathematicians, and engineers, when working together, can design an AI that is aimed at medical diagnosis and treatments, thus offering reliable and safe systems of health-care delivery. As health professors and medical researchers endeavor to find new and efficient ways of treating diseases, not only the digital computer can assist in analyzing, robotic systems can also be created to do some delicate medical procedures with precision.

Pets are recommended to senior citizens to ease their tension and reduce blood pressure, anxiety, loneliness, and increase social interaction. Now cyborgs have been suggested to accompany those lonely old folks, even to help do some house chores. Therapeutic robots and the socially assistive robot technology help improve the quality of life for seniors and physically challenged. Human error at workforce is inevitable and often costly, the greater the level of fatigue, the higher the risk of errors occurring. AI technology, however, does not suffer from fatigue

or emotional distraction. It saves errors and can accomplish the duty faster and more accurately.

Other areas of great optimism about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics are their potential to improve people's lives by helping to solve some of the world's greatest challenges and inefficiencies. The promise of AI has been compared to the transformative impacts of advances in mobile computing. Public- and private-sector investments in basic and applied Research and Development (R&D) on AI have already begun reaping major benefits for the public in fields as diverse as health care, transportation, the environment, criminal justice, and economic inclusion etc.

It is observed that as the amount of knowledge available to people grows, humans are most likely relying on AI systems to live, work, and to entertain themselves. Google, for example, has a much larger share of the online world. Search engines are an important source of information. Its browser, as well as its video platform, YouTube, is the world's second largest search engine and video platform. Android, Google's mobile operating system, powers the great majority of smartphones worldwide. Humans leave a data trail, a digital record of their actions, every time they engage with the internet world. When they send an email, they include the message's content, the time it was sent, who it was sent to, and from where it was sent, as well as a host of other information, is recorded and stored in servers and data centers. A similar process happens when humans browse the internet, use an application on their phone, or buy something with a credit card. As more and more aspect of human lives are carried out online, and more and more devices, services and infrastructure are connected to the internet- from cars to toasters to factories- the volume of data continue to grow exponentially. However, AI is also fuelling anxiety and ethical concerns, these algorithmic system have been shown to have a range of knock-on effects that pose a serious threat to people's rights including freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of thought, and the right to equity and non-discrimination. These risks are greatly heightened by the size and reach of Google and Facebook's platforms, enabling human rights harm at a populations scale.

Recent studies revealed that achievements in the field of AI and Robotics indicates that today's machine have gone beyond just being robots with human-like attributes for solving simple human problems like calculating and processing complex data as seen in Google search algorithms, which now seems to outsmart human. These AI machines have acquired some degree of consciousness and

intentionality, a feature in machines which largely allows them to combined new algorithms and deep machine learning experience for solving complex human-related problems, a feature never before was believe could be possible to machines. The question then is, could a machine be endowed with artificial consciousness? This AI feature in the field computer science, in many ways mimic the human brain, a feature which allows machines to teach themselves and acquire new knowledge which their inventors may not have initially intended or proposed for them to acquire. But can all aspects of brain function be mimicked by artificial system?

It is not impossible or implausible that AI and Robotics might become dangerous, but the process of getting there will almost certainly be evolutionary, rather than revolutionary. This perhaps explains why Max Tegmark, a Siveclish – American physicist, cosmologist and machine learning researcher express his fears about the possible consequences of this technological advancement (Tegmark, 2016). In other words, AI and Robotics have made human redundant in most measurements and infrastructural services. In his BBC interview professor hawking, a theoretical physicist, cosmologist and one of Britain Prominent Scientists, has warned that development of artificial intelligence could mean the end of humanity. The scientist added that such technology could rapidly evolve and overtake mankind, a scenario like that envisage in the “Terminator” Movies Hawking, who was regarded as one of the world’s most brilliant living scientists, apprehends that machines with AI could “spell the end of human race”, causing human extinction much faster than nuclear threat. In the same vein, Elon Musk, a futurist and one of the prominent voices that has raised red flag about AI, had labeled AI “Our existential threat” (MUSK, 2014:85). He further writes;

I have exposure to the very cutting edge AI, and I think people should be really concerned about it. I keep sounding that alarm bell, that until people see robots going down the street killing people, they will not know how to react, because it seems to ethereal.

Musk further warned that human are creating their own successors (machines). In the course of ages, human shall find themselves the inferior race. Inferior in power, inferior in race, inferior in power, inferior in moral equality of self-control, human shall look up to them as the aim of all that best and wisest

man can ever dare to aim. No evil (passions, no jealousy), no avarices, no impure desires will disturb the serene might of these glorious creatures.

Billgate (2015) also admit that human should be aware of the threat posed by AI, and asserts that robots could go beyond performing menial tasks for which human have trained them, once they get the level of capability to see and move on their own. He share a Microsoft project called "Personal agent" which he says would have a strong memory and would remember everything, helping human store call and find things. In addition to these scientist and realistic attributes, it is also often feared that a kind of artificial supper intelligence (strong AI) would acquire consciousness and freewill and sill perhaps create an auto-upgradable intelligent agent surpassing the human intelligence.

As ridiculous as this idea many sound the thought that machines have now develop and acquired minds of their own which enable them to do and achieve nearly impossible facts (Wallace, 2017), which is a bigger issue arising from research in machine intelligence, becomes one of the major concern of this study. The advance in AI technology and the innovations and simulations of human-like attributes into the designing of machines and devises in the twenty-first century, now more. The threshold of possessing super-intelligent abilities in no distant time, in trait which is believed, will give machines the dominant advantages over their human counterparts no sooner than is expected.

Consequently, many scientist and engineers have emphasized the need for humans to become cyborgs to stay relevant in the age of AI and Robotics, thus, the prediction that the end of humanity is coming. The most familiar form of this vision in the modern time is genetic engineering. Specifically, the prospect of designing better human being by improving their biological systemmore dramatic is the proposal of a small, serious and accomplished group of toilers in the fields of AI and Robotics, their goal, simply put is a new age of post-biological life, a world of intelligence without bodies, immortal identity without the limitations of disease, death, and unfulfilled desire.

As the extinctionists see it, the problem with human life is not simply suffering and death but tyranny of desire. In fact, inventor Kurzweil (1999) anticipates that by 2019 virtual sex, performed with the aid of various machines providing complete sensory feedback, will be preferred for its ability to enhance both experience and safety. To them, if human beings are simply mechanisms that can be improved if their parts are replaceable by other, then it will matters little whether they are constructed biologically or otherwise. If the above position is

assumed to be true, what about the life of the mind? It is against the background that this thesis probes deeper into what it means to be human, especially in an age where machines are said to act faster, smarter and more intelligently than human beings.

What is *Ziibalogzii*?

Ziibalogzii is a philosophy that originates from Ogoni indigenous people of Eastern Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Ziibalogzii* philosophy refers to the life force that animates all things. *Ziibalogzii* philosophy literally translates to the state of being human in an interconnected web; seeing reality in terms of a universe of forces that interlinked together, and that are in constant interplay with one another (Deezia, 2023). This indicates the importance of interdependence and reciprocity in human cooperation, collaborativity, and interconnectedness of all in the traditional Ogoni way of thought. As an Ogoni ancient and socio-religious philosophy, *Ziibalogzii* Philosophy implies that one's own existence is inextricably linked to what one does in respect to others, specifically, acknowledging their humanity and forming compassionate relationships with them. *Ziibalogzii* philosophy serves as the spiritual foundation of Ogoni societies. This philosophy of personhood emphasizes the importance of mutual dependency and interdependence, reciprocity, and all-encompassing interconnection. It characterizes the fundamental link between humans and their environment in which communal responsibility sustains life. *Ziibalogzii* is the awareness of human innate urge to support and uplift one another while keeping the interests of the community at the forefront of their actions. This method is not only an expression of a spiritual philosophy in its theological and theoretical sense, but as an expression of daily living. That is, a way of knowing that fosters a journey towards becoming human or which renders us human, or, in its collectivist sense, a higher humanity that transcends all forms of alterity.

As a socio-religious philosophy, centered on the principles of reciprocity and the basic interdependence of human existence. *Ziibalogzii* considers human beings as most important; it explicitly links the empirical world and the cosmos. Furthermore, it does not distinguish between individual and the community. Neither does *Ziibalogzii* regard a community in individualistic or collectivistic terms; it denotes a condition of being, linking the community and individuals relationally into an ecological whole with fullness and sufficiency. Its overall objective is to protect the honor and dignity of the community, with the

community members serving a common purpose of life as active, serving members. *Ziibalogzii* associated with a variety of positive attitudes such as respect for human life, a desire to serve others, conviviality, sharing, caring, trust and unselfishness. *Ziibalogzii* appears to boil down to notions that prescribe how one engages in the 'right manner' in connection with other people.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that in *Ziibalogzii* philosophy, the expression 'communing with others' refers to not just living human, but also to a basic connectivity of all lives in natural and spiritual environments. Hence, *Ziibalogzii* is a religio-philosophical theory that unites the natural and spiritual worlds. This religio-philosophical theory is based on a totemic framework in which an individual should perceive himself or herself as related and interrelated with the spiritual world on the vertical axis, as well as other non-human species and the wider environment on the horizontal axis. Consequently, in *Ziibalogzii* religio-philosophical theory, personhood/humanness is intrinsically linked to the dynamic physical and spiritual worlds through a web of interconnectedness and relatedness, one's current and actual web of communion, such as current family ties, takes precedence above future or possible links.

Ziibalogzii is a relational philosophy; with phrases like *Ziitenaalukue* (a tree does not make a forest), *doo-i-toṛ* (live, and let live), *buē neē kum-zoo* (individuals makes up the community), *baegbokpenā loo*, *bakpokpue* (hunting wild animals requires collective efforts of the dogs and the hunter) etc, points towards a strongly constructivist ontology in which a person's sense of being cannot be detached from the social context in which they find themselves.

Ziibalogzii is collectivist in nature, emphasizing the importance of teamwork, cooperation, and community. It promotes a caring and respectful attitude toward others, as well as the need of togetherness in the face of adversity. It's probably unsurprising that such an attitude has triumphed on a continent that has seen so much social, political, environmental and economic upheaval, and where community action and mutual aid have been critical to survival. While other collectivist philosophies have been characterized as repressive and dictatorial, *Ziibalogzii* has been defined as an inclusive approach that emphasizes dignity and respect in human interactions. While classified as a collectivist philosophy, the concept *Ziibalogzii* is inter-subjective in that it focuses on the individual's relationship with the collective, rather than the collective's relationship with the person.

The moral norm of *Ziibalogzii* recognizes and values the fact that the parts of social reality are reciprocally determined; that is, they are interdependent in legal ways. One's activities will be asocial or antisocial in the short run, and self-defeating in the long run, to the degree that one's understanding of self-interest does not incorporate one's obligations toward society at large. This could be indicated by the statement *Nu Mfo Ne Mbugura-a* (I shall reap what I have sowed). Three ethical methods are regarded to jointly control ethical behavior in Ogoni-African societies, and they are subordinate to the principle of *Ziibalogzii*: beneficence, justice, and respect for persons. The first ethical technique, *beneficence*, entails providing positive benefits while avoiding damage, allowing for the unilateral giving of resources for individuals whose dependent condition prevents return in kind. *Justice*, the second ethical strategy, necessitates a fair allocation of duties and benefits, ensuring that rights and obligations are appropriately balanced and mutual enjoyment are achieved. The concept of *respect for persons* involves honoring the decisions of autonomous individuals for the general good.

***Ziibalogzii* as Ogoni-African Ontology of Personhood**

In African metaphysics, the concept of the human person or Personhood is essential. Personhood aims to navigate the often definitive conceptions of 'human being,' 'human person,' 'person,' 'humanity,' and the common generic term 'man.' The concept of personality, in general, refers to what distinguishes one person from another. The conception of person, personhood or personality, which I use interchangeably in this study, encompasses more than just the pieces that make up human person. It covers what makes the individual human being a person as well as the relevance of the constituent parts of the individual. Within the hierarchical order of "Being" in Ogoni metaphysics, the human person comes after the spiritual entities. Quoting Kwasi Wiredu, Godfrey Onah writes, "in African metaphysics, there are two approaches to the concept of a person: the descriptive approach and the normative approach" (Onah, 2002). This entails examining the physical and non-physical components of the human person, as well as their functions and significance in the larger scheme of things. It reveals the ontological status of the human person. Although there are minor discrepancies in the identification of the essential parts of the human person from one African culture to another, these differences do not negate the fact that there is a consensus of opinion on what constitutes the human person.

The Ogoni indigenous people of Eastern Niger Delta, Nigeria have a tripartite notion of the constituent parts of a person. The Ogoni sees the individual as a combination of *nam-loo* (physical body), which he receives from his mother, *adoṛ* (spirit) which he receives from his father, and *piogi* (soul) which he receives from *Kawaa-Bari* (God), her creator. Without *Piogi*, life-giving force, the individual is merely *mū* (blood). It is the essential part of a person inherited from the Supreme Being (*Kawaa-Bari*), which links the individual to the Supreme Being, without whom the individual cannot exist.

When the phrase “personhood” is used, it refers to the quality of life, rights, dignity and respect that a human being deserves. Personhood in this case aims to establish the human person’s sanctity by placing him in the proper order and level among other creatures in the universe—as the primary actor who defines what the universe is in its deep interconnectedness. Personhood is not something that the Ogoni people are born with; it is something that they must struggle for and at which they may fail. Furthermore, there are different levels of Personhood, and the lesser ones might fade away into oblivion in the life of a human being. Life in the Ogoni perspective is a battle for Personhood since it is a struggle for Personhood. The Ogoni societies are well-known for their communalism. From the beginning, the individual is instilled with a sense of belonging and solidarity with a large circle of relatives. The basis of this solidarity is a reciprocity system in which each individual owes a vast number of other people. These are matched by the number of people who owe him or her rights. Living in the midst of this reciprocity, one quickly comes to regard oneself as presupposing. This is the foundation of a person’s normative idea. This ties people’s fates together. Individuals give up their individuality for the greater benefit (interdependence). They are not required upon to make such a big sacrifice, but they are socialized to be and act in this manner. Members of the community’s conduct and identity are shaped by their values, norms, beliefs, and practices.

Personhood is also thought of as connoting ‘humaneness’ rather than ‘humanness’ when considering it in relation to the Ogoni people. It is the traits that define one’s status as a ‘person.’ These characteristics are culturally determined and may not be used in the same way in different groups, but they transmit similar ideals. In Ogoni ‘personality’ is defined by relationships: cordiality, sharing, belonging, sacrifices, respect, celebration, and so on. Isolationism, independence, individualism are all linked to people who have a “bad heart.” In fact, ‘personhood’ is defined by a ‘good heart.’ In the Ogoni

context, personality refers to how people respond to and observe cultural norms, values and beliefs. In other words, personality is a reflection of specific characteristics, whether positive or negative. A person is considered a 'person' if he or she possesses the characteristics that promote social stability. Non-compliance with societal norms and values leads to being judged in non-personal terms by the very behaviors that define 'who' one is—uncooperative, thief, rapist, and so on.

***Ziibalogzii* and the Challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

The world goes through a troubled period in the contemporary era when everything is swept away by the speed of change. There is also great pessimism in the face of the loss of past values and references of the past and the lack of meaning of life as it relate to *Ziibalogzii* philosophy. The major impact Artificial Intelligence on the concept of personhood in Ogoni is alienation. The notion of alienation has had a long tradition in the history of western theology and philosophy, and has become a central theme in the contemporary thought about human being and his/her place in the world. The English term "alienation" has its root in the Latin "*alienationem*" and can be traced back to Greek and Hebrew sources. While in the Hebrew usage, it referred to separation of a person from God for various reasons caused by the blindness of heart (Eph. 4:17-19; Colossians 1:21; Psalm 58:3). In the Greek usage alienation is giving a positive connotation. The Latin usage is seen here to be more neutral, indicating separation of a person from some other person, group, being, or thing, a separation which may have positive or negative connotations depending on the situation.

The pursuit of Artificial Intelligence (AI) comes out of human contemporary history – a late capitalist period of advanced production from machinery and technology comes the possibility to imagine an utopia world in which production is fully automated leaving human with free time. This implies that alienation is the negation or privation of the essence of being; a situation that denied the actualization of inherent potentials in human beings. Consequently human depend on non-human agents (machines) to get almost everything done. This implies that human intelligence and creative ability gets withered and dumber as they continue to seek for cognitive short cuts. Over dependent and misplacement of trust in AI- smart software, automations and robotics etc- rather than lifting human, seems to be dumbing human down, thus, the existentially

concern as individual became fragment and separated from their private and public lives.

In other words, humans in their pursuit for AI and Robotics, risk sleepwalking into self-obliterate. By downplaying the risks of AI by believing that the benefits will outweigh the burdens, if and when a generalized AI is achieved to come online. Scientific and technological advancement alienates human from themselves, by leading them to attribute their own nature, which is intersubjective, to a separate being, a non-human agents, and ignoring their own sense and essence of being which is based on complementarity, reciprocity, collaborativity, and relational communality. This has caused a state of meaninglessness, powerlessness and isolation as humans depends on non-human agents (machines) to make meaning of their existence. This therefore raises some existential thoughts, as to what it means to be human in the age where non-human agents are being projected as if they are human.

The discriminatory effects of Artificial Intelligence (AI) are the expected result of individualistic behaviors that violate *Ziibalogzi* philosophy. The efficiency and optimization that technology can promote is not necessarily morally sound or fit for a society. Mazisi (1982:138) warns:

Thus, a highly ethically advanced society need not necessarily be technologically advanced; equally a technologically advanced society does not automatically possess a high ethical level. Indeed more often than not technological advancement tends to barbarize society, since by its very nature it implies a high degree of competitiveness for resources. In short, the instruments or tools for modelling man's material environment do not necessarily improve the ethical quality of society.

Greed is the ultimate form of individualism. The vice of greed is antithetical to the generosity, interconnectedness, reciprocity, and empathy required by the *Ziibalogzi* philosophy. In similar view, the slain South African human rights leader Steve Biko quotes the anti-colonial leader and first president of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, when he asks, "is there any way that my people can have the blessings of technology without being eaten away by materialism and losing the spiritual dimension from their lives?" (Mazisi, 1982). Technology that is built only reflecting an individualistic worldview can disconnect human from one another, therefore causing a spiritual decline. Furthermore, Biko states that technology has the ability to shift humans away from placing value in human

relationships, asserting, “We must seek to restore to the black people a sense of the great stress we used to lay on the value of human relationships” (Mazisi, 1982).

The construction of value in the digital technology industry based on the commodification of users amounts to processes of reduction that lead to the isolation and dehumanization of individuals. The commodification resulting from designing one-sided objectives—objectives ultimately designed to increase a company’s profits, sometimes through the capture of a user’s attention—results in a diminished digital representation of ourselves and treats people as a means rather than an end. The extraction of our data reduces a holistic view of a person and leads to models designed to maximize profit. Algorithmic personalization and individualization, void of the consent and cooperation of those who will be affected by such algorithms, may also lead to processes of dehumanization that reduce individuals to mere commodifiable metrics. When what a user can view is uniquely tailored by a platform, it can lead to isolation and an incomplete worldview that can be at odds with the benefits of society. As a result, users are likely to become disconnected from the rest of society. This can be exacerbated by platforms that are designed to be addictive. The manner in which algorithms are used to make recommendations is often designed purely to maximize objectives that lead to the profit of the platforms. Maximizing public good is an afterthought in practice. Certain worldviews become dominant, not because they are good for society, but because they reflect the biases and metrics of those who are empowered.

Questions have been asked: With the progressive development of AI, human labor will no longer be needed as everything can be done mechanically. Will humans become lazier and eventually degrade to the stage that we return to our primitive form of being? The process of evolution takes eons to develop, so we will not notice the backsliding of humankind. However how about if the AI becomes so powerful that it can program itself to be in charge and disobey the order given by its master, the humankind?

A huge social change that disrupts the way we live in the human community will occur. Humankind has to be industrious to make their living, but with the service of AI, we can just program the machine to do a thing for us without even lifting a tool. Human closeness will be gradually diminishing as AI will replace the need for people to meet face to face for idea exchange. AI will

stand in between people as the personal gathering will no longer be needed for communication

Unemployment is the next because many works will be replaced by machinery. Today, many automobile assembly lines have been filled with machineries and robots, forcing traditional workers to lose their jobs. Even in supermarket, the store clerks will not be needed anymore as the digital device can take over human labor. Wealth inequality will be created as the investors of AI will take up the major share of the earnings. The gap between the rich and the poor will be widened. The so-called “M” shape wealth distribution will be more obvious

New issues surface not only in a social sense but also in AI itself as the AI being trained and learned how to operate the given task can eventually take off to the stage that human has no control, thus creating un-anticipated problems and consequences. It refers to AI's capacity after being loaded with all needed algorithm may automatically function on its own course ignoring the command given by the human controller. The human masters who create AI may invent something that is racial bias or egocentrically oriented to harm certain people or things. For instance, the United Nations has voted to limit the spread of nucleus power in fear of its indiscriminate use to destroying humankind or targeting on certain races or region to achieve the goal of domination. AI is possible to target certain race or some programmed objects to accomplish the command of destruction by the programmers, thus creating world disaster.

Concluding Remarks

The thrust of this paper is the attention it has drawn to *Ziibalogzii philosophy* as an alternative to individualistic and utilitarian philosophies that tend to dominate in the West. The African conception of personhood, as captured in *Ziibalogzii* is relational and complementary; diametrically opposed to rationality as personhood, the philosophy that has shaped Western individualism, the Western world's asymmetric relationship with much of the world, computing culture, and AI's quest for a mechanical personhood. *Ziibalogzii*, is the basis of Ogoni philosophy, the “wellspring flowing with African ontology and epistemology.

To some, AI will be a panacea for many problems. They see AI ending wars and conflict; curing diseases; reversing ageing; renewing the environment and bringing prosperity and a greater quality of life for all. Conversely, pessimists see AI getting out of control, or being developed or acquired by the wrong people

or even taking over the world. The truth appears to be much greyer in that no one today can predict the future of AI and its impact on humanity.

The human mind is too complex and nuanced to be replaced by AI. However, there is definitely a great danger, if humans do not take a realistic attitude, the danger implies that human intelligence and creative ability will get dumber and withered as humans continue to depend on AI for cognitive shut-cut. Such misplaced priorities and the continuous worship of gadgets will not only alienate the human mind from nature but from their essence of being. The machines are there to be used by humans and if they prefer the whole matter of human essence and existence to the machines, then human beings are in for trouble.

To ensure that AI benefits humankind, AI development should be undertaken in a planned manner, ensuring that the benefits are spread equally. Policy can be a powerful tool for African governments to promote technological development by encouraging innovation and investment. At the same time, as leading countries have shown, government engagement and experimentation with nascent technology can also be a powerful signal of trust and support local companies. According to African stakeholders, low government engagement, particularly at the policy level, has been a hindrance, and a stronger focus will encourage an early adoption of AI. African governments should take a proactive approach and implement AI-friendly regulation, policies, and initiatives. There are several areas relevant to the development of AI and robust digital economies where policy-makers should focus:

1. **Data privacy and security** — A data privacy and security framework that individuals can trust encourages and empowers them to use AI-based solutions that require their data to work. Data privacy and security laws should aim to protect users' data without restricting the ability to move data across borders. In drafting these laws, African regulators should look to learn from international best practice, which includes avoiding burdensome requirements which would foreclose the benefits of AI and put African companies at a disadvantage.
2. **Cybersecurity** — African governments should adopt cybersecurity laws that provide for meaningful deterrence, incentivise investment, clarify legal responsibilities, and create effective and reasonable enforcement

mechanisms. Additionally, authorities should help users understand and properly manage the risks inherent in using AI technology.

3. **Digital strategies and cloud adoption initiatives** — Governments should develop national digital strategies and policies that foster widespread cloud adoption to democratise the use of advanced technologies.
4. **Intellectual property** — Intellectual property laws that provide for clear protection and enforcement against misappropriation and infringement of technological developments, including proprietary algorithms, are indispensable to promote continued innovation and advancement in AI.
5. **Procurement policies** — Public procurement regulations should enable the use of AI solutions for the provision of public services. By investing in public sector innovation, African governments will demonstrate their trust in AI and support the growth of local developers.
6. **Industry-led standards and international harmonisation of rules** — IT organisations worldwide are developing international standards to ensure data portability, interoperability, and a smooth data flow. African governments should remain abreast of developments in this area and seek to adopt international standards and harmonisation rules as they become applicable. By drawing from international best practice, African governments can develop national strategies and create a flourishing legal environment for AI. Leading actors — both other governments and the private sector — have valuable experiences to share regarding the advantages, uses and risks of AI, as well as policy approaches they have taken to address challenges and create an environment to fully benefit from this technology.

References

- Kos, W. D. Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, Translated into English under the Editorship of M.A. Hon. LL.D (Edin), Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press. Online Edition. 1926, pp. 112-11
- Asouzu, I. *Ibuanyidanda and the philosophy of Essence.(Philosophy, the Science of Missing Links of Reality)*, 50th Inaugural Lecture, University of Calabar. University of Calabar Press, 2011. P. 76
- Bill-Gate, *AI is like a nuclear energy both promising and dangerous*. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/03/26/bill-gate-artificial-intelligence-both-promis-dangerous.html> 2015, p. 95. Accessed 15 November, 2023.
- Deezia, Burabari Sunday, "Ziibalogzii philosophy: An Ogoni-African conceptual foundation for social work practice in Nigeria." *Journal of African Political Philosophy and Leadership: Philosophia Politica* vol. 2. No. 1, 2023, pp 98-118
- Dicker, G. Descartes. *An analytical and historical introduction*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Paperback;
- Kreeft, P. *Socrates Meets Descartes: The Father of Philosophy Analyzes the Father of Modern Philosophy's Discourse on Method*, Ignatius Press: San Francisco. Paperback 2007, p. 45.
- Hawkins, Jeff and Blakeslee, Sandra. *On intelligence*. s.l. : Times Books. 2004, pp 20-99
- Kretzmann, N. & Stump E. "Aquinas, Thomas" In E. Craig (ed). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, London: Routledge, vol. 1, 1998, p. 125.
- Kurzweil, R. *The age of spiritual machines: When computers exceed human intelligence*. New York: Viking Penguin, Paperback. 1999, p. 65.
- Mazisi, K. The ancestors & the sacred mountain: Poems. *African Writers Series Exeter*, N.H., USA: Heinemann Educational: London. Paperback. 1982, p. 33.
- Mbiti, J. *African religions and philosophy*, London: Heinemann Publishers Paperback. 1969, p. 55.
- Menkiti, J. A. "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought." In R. A. Wright (ed.), *African Philosophy*. New York: University Press of America. 1979, pp. 157-168.

- O'Callaghan, J. P. "Imago Dei: A test Case for St. Thomas's Augustinianism." In M. Dauphinais, B. David and M. Levering (eds.) *Aquinas the Augustinian*, Washington D. C: Catholic University of America University Press: 2017, pp. 100-144 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fgqbx.9>. Accessed 15 November, 2023.
- Onah, G. I. The universal and the particular in wiredu's philosophy of human nature. In Olusegun Oladipo (ed). *The third way in African philosophy: Essays in honour of Kwasi Wiredu*. Ibadan: Hope Publication, 2002, p. 46; Kwase Wiredu & Kwame Gyekye, *Person and community. Ghanaian philosophical studies*, Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy 1992, p.88
- Russell, S. & Norvig, P. *Artificial intelligence: A modern approach, prentice hall series in artificial intelligence*, (3rd edn.). Prentice Hall: London Paperback, 2010, p. 122
- Teigmank, M. *Benefit and risk of artificial intelligence*, available at <http://futureoflife.org/background/benefit-risk-of-artificial-intelligence/2016>, p. 15. Accessed 15 November, 2023.
- Turing, A. M. "Computer machinery and intelligence" *Mind*, Vol 49. 1950, pp 433-460.
- Wallace, H. *The future of artificial intelligence in the poker world*, available at <https://www.casinogamspro.com/2017/10/16/the-future-of-artificial-intelligence-in-the-power-world2017>, p. 25. Accessed 15 December, 2023.
- Welch, C. & Elon Musk. "AI research could produce a real-life Terminator." *The Verge* <https://www.theverge.com/2014/6/18/5820880/elon-musk-worried-ai-research-could-produce-real-terminator2014>. Accessed 18 December, 2023.
- Metz, C. Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk, "The feud over killer robots." *The New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/09/technology/elon-musk-mark-zuckerberg-artificial-intelligence.html2018>. Accessed 18 December, 2023.