

THE GOD FANTASY: AI CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE HUMAN SEARCH FOR DIVINITY

Mark D. Ekperi, PhD

Department of Philosophy,

Niger Delta University

mark.ekperi@ndu.edu.ng

ORCID: 0000-0002-4470-
7046

Abstract

The God Fantasy and the Search for Conscious Artificial Intelligence (AI) delves into the human desire for a supernatural and superintelligent being, drawing parallels from this yearning and the contemporary quest to create conscious artificial intelligence. This paper examines how the human fascination with a divine entity reflects our need to develop AI that shares human and supersensible traits, comparing modern theories of AI consciousness, such as Turing's computationalism and Searle's Chinese Room argument. Applying an interdisciplinary lens, the study traces the historical evolution of AI consciousness, exploring foundational theories and ethical questions. These include the moral responsibility of creating conscious machines and the potential for AI to reshape our understanding of ourselves. It also explores the notion of godlike machines and their influence on theological thought, questioning whether the pursuit of conscious AI is a secular expression of our God Fantasy. The paper concludes with key insights,

suggesting that our continuous fascination with AI consciousness is rooted in an inherent desire for transcendence. It also discusses the broader implications for future research in philosophy, theology, and AI ethics, offering an insightful perspective on the intersection of the God fantasy and the quest for AI consciousness in our rapidly advancing technological age.

Keywords: God Fantasy, AI Consciousness, Artificial Intelligence, Conscious Artificial Intelligence

Introduction

Throughout history, humans have been intrigued and fascinated by the concept of God, and this fixation has driven the search for conscious artificial intelligence (AI). The concept of God has permeated human civilization and history, influencing moral dispositions and shaping numerous religious systems worldwide. It is a key feature of various cultures and traditions, with the theistic view of God—found in religions such as Judaism and Christianity—portraying God as an all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect, eternal, and transcendent entity who created the universe (Morris, 2002).

Religions generally presume a reality beyond the human realm, such as God, deities, and supernaturalism, often using this reality to explain the universe's existence and as the foundation of morality (Nye, 2008). The need for a godlike intelligence in the form of conscious AI is instigated

by humanity's obsession with the idea of God and the desire to validate it through technology. Technology has become an ally in this quest, making it natural to harness its power to fulfill this fantasy. This fantasy can be understood in two ways: first, through the idea of humans as creators, and second, through the idea of humans as created beings.

The idea of humans as creators is evident in advancements in science and technology, where tools and machines are designed to serve humanity's intents and purposes. In this context, humans assume a godlike role, crafting devices and instruments to extend their capabilities and control over the environment. Conversely, the idea of humans as created beings reflects a desire to submit to a higher power, whether divine or technological. This duality is exemplified by humanity's increasing devotion to technologies such as mobile phones, which command a level of attention and reliance akin to religious practice. By empowering machines with godlike abilities, humans seek to fulfill the "God Fantasy," blurring the lines between religion and techno-idealism.

The pursuit of conscious AI falls within the framework of techno-idealism, the belief that technology is a benevolent force capable of solving many of the world's problems and creating a better future for humanity. Techno-idealism posits that technological advancements can address pressing global issues

such as poverty, disease, and social inequality, ultimately improving the quality of life for individuals and societies (Bolstrom, 2014). This optimism extends to the belief that conscious AI will play a fundamental role in shaping a better future, further intertwining the "God Fantasy" with the pursuit of advanced technology.

This paper explores the parallels between humanity's historical longing for a divine entity and its modern ambition to develop conscious AI, arguing that the latter represents a secular manifestation of the former. By examining the historical, philosophical, and ethical dimensions of this phenomenon, the study highlights how the pursuit of conscious AI reflects humanity's enduring fascination with the divine. It also investigates the implications of techno-idealism, questioning whether the creation of godlike machines fulfils human potential or poses ethical and existential risks. Through an interdisciplinary lens, this study offers a nuanced understanding of the "God Fantasy" and its relevance to the search for AI consciousness in an era of rapid technological advancement.

Conceptual Framework

a. The God Fantasy

Understanding the notion of *the God Fantasy* requires a clarification of the concept of God and the concept of fantasy. The concept of God is used here in a generic sense to capture the idea of the ultimate

supernatural reality in the universe as it is used in the most common religious sense. There have been attempts by various scholars to articulate the concept of God, and there have always been varied opinions as to a proper definition and conception of God. However, our focus is on the theistic notion of God and its characteristics. God is everything we are not; this statement is instantiated from the need for human beings to compensate for their finitude. Man is finite, and God is not; therefore, the need to compensate for that finitude has instigated the desire for the infinite. In realisation of our limitations, human beings find the idea of a being or an entity that is unlimited and infinite compelling.

Humans with various religious dispositions consider God as the ultimate reality and the origin of the universe. God is considered divine, holy, omniscient, and omnipresent, and both Eastern and Western religions share some ideas of God, which some scholars may argue is rooted in human psychology. For example, Sigmund Freud considered the idea of God as a way of compensating for the need for a comforting, perfect father-figure (Leftow, 2016). There are other conceptions of the nature of God from the monotheist or polytheist, or pantheist view, but our discussion is fixed on the idea of God as the supernatural, all-knowing figure depicted in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. In this context, one of the fundamental attributes of God that is significant to conscious AI study is omniscience.

Omniscience is the attribute of knowing all-things without any constraints (Wierenga, 2021). Granted, there are other attributes of God worthy of mention, but at the core of AI is its vast array of knowledge. Machine learning requires this knowledge or data to execute algorithms necessary for the functioning of AI (Bell 2022; El Naqa and Murphy 2015).

There are various definitions of the term fantasy and its affiliation with imaginative literature. Fantasy, as defined by Merriam-Webster's dictionary, is "a creation of the imaginative faculty, whether expressed or merely conceived"(Definition of FANTASY, 2023). In relation to this definition, a fantasy involves some supernatural content or content that is considered supernatural by humans (Laetz & Johnston, 2008). Therefore, the God fantasy involves human beings thinking about God in a way that appeals to their imagination. In essence, the God Fantasy is the quest for life fulfilment through a supernatural being. This quest or desire follows from conceiving of an all-knowing deity and seeking out that deity through some form of religious worship and devotion. In relation to AI, religious practice is replaced by techno-idealism and the belief in a technological utopia. Techno-idealism is a view that technology can solve most of our problems and the advancement of technology will guarantee prosperity, equality, peace, and happiness for humanity. It is a belief that technology can provide solutions to the complex social, economic, and

environmental problems of our society (Arnd-Caddigan, 2015). This is dissimilar to the hope that religion, through faith in God, can solve the world's problems. An integral part of the techno-idealism movement is the current development of AI; hence, a definition of AI is pertinent going forward.

b. Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the imitation of human intellect in computers. This imitation is designed to accomplish tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and language translation (Russell & Norvig, 2010). Barrat defines AI as a computer or machine's ability to execute commands that ordinarily require human-like intelligence, such as pattern recognition, learning from experience, and adapting to new contexts. For Russell & Norvig, the study of AI is not only to understand but also to build intelligent machines (2010). For Nilsson, "artificial intelligence is that activity devoted to making machines intelligent, and intelligence is that quality that enables an entity to function appropriately and with foresight in its environment" (Nilsson 2009). Artificial Intelligence is machines trying to apply the principles of human cognition in solving real-world problems.

Human cognition and intelligence, on the other hand, distinguish humans from machines and other non-human entities such as animals. AI research seeks to

overcome the gap between human intelligence and computer intelligence. One of the aims of AI is to simulate human intelligence and enhance it optimally without any latency in execution. Some limitations of AI today are that it requires some form of input and it requires training data to learn and improve on decision-making. Therefore, the quality of an AI machine's output is dependent on the quality of the training data and input. Currently, AI systems still rely on human input or commands to carry out their functions. This impediment poses a limit to the extent of AI autonomy and the development of conscious AI.

The notion of AI consciousness hinges on the idea that both humans and AI have a mind in common. However, Searle considers this idea unacceptable. Using his famous Chinese room argument, Searle repudiates the idea that computers can think for themselves (Searle, 1990). The Chinese Room Argument is a thought experiment and philosophical argument that imagines a person who speaks only English and is placed in a room. An individual is given instructions for translating Chinese characters into English and answering questions in Chinese. The person follows the instructions to respond to inquiries in Chinese and engage in a conversation, but does not grasp what the Chinese words mean. This, according to Searle, demonstrates that a computer could obey instructions for processing language and creating replies but would not have a true comprehension of meaning. According to Searle,

understanding requires an intrinsic mental experience and consciousness, which is not present in a computer or machine (Searle, 1980).

One important aspect of human brain function that separates man from machines is consciousness. Nagel defines consciousness as “what it is like to be something”. Consciousness can be a simple perception, general awareness, or self-awareness (Nagel, 1974). We can consider consciousness as awareness of phenomena that is both internal and external to the subject. Velmans, in defining consciousness, begins by distinguishing its various uses and references (Velmans, 2009). Consciousness is often used as a synonym for knowledge, where one is conscious of something, one knows it. This usage of the term knowledge is important for understanding the concept, but consciousness is not explicit knowledge. The interchange between consciousness, knowledge, and awareness makes the definition of knowledge daunting. Velmans believes that consciousness is inherent in its phenomenology, and to understand it, we must know its causes and functions (2009). However, he also insightfully concludes that consciousness is experience itself, it is the sum of our subjective cum phenomenological experience (Velmans, 2009, p. 304). This experience requires both our internal and external human faculties as beings in the universe. These faculties of our inner and outer senses differentiate us from AI.

AI consciousness refers to the hypothetical scenario where artificial intelligence systems develop a subjective experience and awareness of their surroundings and themselves, similar to human consciousness. It is an ongoing debate in the field of AI and philosophy as to whether or not true AI consciousness is possible and what implications it may hold (Russell & Norvig, 2010). This notion of AI consciousness is influenced by the concept of computationalism. Computationalism is the assumption that the human brain is a computer of some sort (McDermott, 2007). Therefore, if computers can replicate and demonstrate brain functions, then AI systems can attain some level of consciousness.

This concept of computationalism has inspired the ongoing debate on the possibility of conscious AI among philosophers, scientists, and psychologists. One notable philosopher who has made a significant contribution towards AI consciousness is John R. Searle. Using his famous thought experiment called The Chinese Room Argument, Searle refutes the idea that intelligent machines can have consciousness. The argument suggests that even if a computer program can produce a seemingly intelligent response, it still lacks understanding and consciousness (Searle, 1990). Rodney Brooks argues that it may be possible for machines to become conscious through a gradual process of building up more complex systems. Brooks believes that as AI systems become more advanced, they may eventually reach a level of complexity

where they are able to experience subjective experiences similar to human consciousness (Brooks, 2003). Popular science fiction author Greg Dyson also believes that the development of AI will experience exponential growth and eventually reach its peak. This peak or climax will emerge when AI reaches a level of sophistication and complexity that machines become truly autonomous without the need for human input. At this point, AI will effectively become self-sustaining and conscious. He, however, highlights the need for caution and proactive planning in the development of AI to retain control and regulation to abate this situation (Brockman, 2020).

c. Concept of God

The concept of God has had a long and varying history; cultures and belief systems all over the world have tried to depict God variously. Some have depicted gods as supernatural beings having human-like features and with control over the natural world or cosmos. Ancient civilizations such as the Sumerians, Egyptians, and Greeks had this view (Aslan, 2019). However, monotheistic religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have portrayed God as the single, all-powerful, and all-knowing entity who created and governs the universe (Dombrowski, 2016).

God is frequently depicted in these religions as a deity with traits such as omniscience,

omnibenevolence, and eternity (Dombrowski, 2016). Philosophers like Plato and Thomas Aquinas contributed to the understanding of God by delving into concerns regarding God's nature, existence, and relationship with the universe (Morris, 2002). However, many philosophical and scientific trends in the contemporary era have questioned traditional views about God and religion. For example, the Enlightenment introduced new concepts about reason and science, prompting some to challenge God's presence and the veracity of religious teachings, terming them dogmatic. Despite these obstacles, the concept of God remains important to many cultures and belief systems. For Dombrowski, the idea of God provides comfort, meaning, and guidance for millions of people around the world (2016). The concept of God is also inextricably linked to moral qualities such as compassion, forgiveness, and justice (Dombrowski, 2016). In difficult times, many people find courage and hope in the conviction that there is a higher power or God. As a result, despite the arguments presented against religion by modern science and philosophy, the concept of God remains a huge part of people's lives.

The representation of God in religion has been debated by scholars, theologians, and philosophers for centuries. Across different belief systems, there are a wide variety of interpretations and depictions of God, reflecting the diversity of human experience and the complexity of our relationship with the divine.

In monotheistic religions, God is often depicted as the single, all-knowing, and all-powerful creator of the world that watches over humanity. In Christianity, God is portrayed as the Father, who is loving and merciful, but also just and holy (Bratcher, 1979). Similarly, in Islam, God is known as Allah and is described as the compassionate and merciful ruler of the universe (Ali, 2000). In Judaism, God is seen as the creator of the world and the source of all wisdom and knowledge (Alter, 2018).

Polytheistic religions, on the other hand, often have multiple gods and goddesses, each with their own unique qualities and attributes. In Hinduism, for example, there are many gods and goddesses, each of whom is revered for specific reasons. For example, Vishnu is considered the preserver of the universe, while Shiva is the god of destruction and regeneration (Eck, 2012). In this way, Hinduism reflects a diverse and complex understanding of the divine, allowing for multiple representations of the deity. In addition to the above depictions, there are also belief systems that do not necessarily involve the worship of gods, but instead focus on a more abstract or philosophical understanding of a higher power or ultimate reality. For example, some people may view God as an energy or consciousness that permeates the universe, or as the ultimate source of all being (Tarnas, 2010). In this case, the representation of God is more abstract and less anthropomorphic, reflecting a deeper understanding

of the mystery of existence and the infinite nature of the divine.

The representation of God in religion is a complex and multifaceted discussion that shows the diversity of human beliefs and experiences. From monotheistic religions that depict God as a single, all-knowing deity, to polytheistic religions that have multiple gods and goddesses, to more abstract belief systems that view God as an ultimate reality or consciousness, there is a wide range of interpretations of the divine. Ultimately, the representation of God is shaped by cultural and historical factors, as well as individual beliefs and experiences, and serves as a source of inspiration, comfort, and guidance for people around the world. Therefore, we can deduce that the representation of God in religion illustrates the various roles the divine plays in human existential experience. Just as the representation of God serves as a source of inspiration, comfort, and guidance for believers. Believers in the possibility of conscious AI could be argued to desire the same things as people with religious beliefs. In this context, techno-idealism could be considered a form of religion, and conscious AI a god. Hence, God is to religion as conscious AI may become to techno-idealism.

To better understand the God fantasy and its relation to AI, we will explore the similarities between the two concepts. Both God and AI possess a high degree of intelligence and knowledge.

However, God is often seen as transcendental and the origin of all wisdom and knowledge (Bolstrom, 2014). Similarly, AI is designed to have the ability to process enormous pieces of data and make decisions based on that information. Another similarity between God and AI is their potential to shape the future. From a religious perspective, God has the power to influence the world and determine the course of human events. Similarly, AI has the potential to have a profound impact on society, with the ability to automate tasks, solve complex problems, and make predictions about future events.

However, there are also some profound differences between God and AI. For example, God is considered a conscious and intentional being, with the ability to make choices and decisions based on moral and ethical considerations. In contrast, AI is a product of human design and programming, and its actions are limited by the algorithms and the training data provided. Despite these differences, some consider AI capable of reaching “technological transcendence” where AI surpasses human intelligence and achieves “superintelligence” (Bostrom, 2014). At this point, AI might be considered as having god-like capabilities, with the ability to rule the world.

The Search for AI Consciousness

Artificial intelligence is a field of computer science and engineering focused on developing intelligent

machines that can perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as understanding natural language, recognizing images, and learning from experience (McCarthy, 2007). Our quest for AI is inextricably linked to our fascination with god-like entities or qualities. Some historians of science argue that the earliest depiction of artificial intelligence was in Greek mythology (Stanford, 2019). In Homer's contribution to Greek mythology, he tells of Jason and the Argonauts, a band of 50 men on a ship called Argo in a quest to get the golden fleece (Colavito, 2014). In their adventures, they encounter the bronze giant Talus (Talos/Talon), who was created by Hephaestus, the Greek god of fire, invention and blacksmithing (Berens, 2010). The giant robot was commissioned by Zeus (the king of the Greek gods) to guard the Island of Crete and ward off intruders (Stanford, 2019). The giant had a mysterious life source called *ichor* running from his head to one of his feet through a vein. Hephaestus also created another artificial being called Pandora out of clay. According to myth, the gods were so impressed by Hephaestus' creation that they all bestowed special gifts on her. She was called Pandora (all-gifted) because she received all the necessary attributes from the gods to make her irresistible (Berens, 2010). Adrienne Mayor argues that Pandora could be considered an AI agent sent to earth by Zeus to punish mortals for inventing fire (Stanford, 2019). Another prominent craftsman in Greek mythology was Daedalus, who was the first

mortal to create life-like bronze statues that could cry, bleed, move, and speak ('Daedalus', 2023). According to the Mayor, the Greek myths and legends illustrate our fascination with creating artificial life. Aristotle also alluded to this fascination with AI in his *Politics* when he opined that:

For if every instrument could accomplish its own work, obeying or anticipating the will of others, like the statues of Daedalus, or the tripods of Hephaestus, which, says the poet, of their own accord entered the assembly of the Gods; if, in like manner, the shuttle would weave and the plectrum touch the lyre without a hand to guide them, chief workmen would not want servants, nor masters slaves. (Aristotle, 1984, p. 2794)

This notion of automation, as conceived by Aristotle, has been a recurring theme in the development of technology and AI. Centuries later, Joseph-Marie Jacquard developed the Jacquard loom, which used a system of punched cards to automate the weaving of a silk tapestry portrait of himself (*Artificial Intelligence | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, n.d.). Interestingly, Nilsson is of the view that AI begins with dreams, and traces the history of the quest for AI from Homer's *Iliad* to modern AI. He includes the ideas of the Catalan mystic, Ramon Llull, who created paper discs called the *Ars Magna* (Great Art), which were intended to prove the Christian faith with logic and reason. Leonardo Da Vinci is also

considered one of the early advocates of AI by sketching designs for a robotic medieval knight in 1495. However, research in AI has advanced beyond the level of fascination to action through current research.

From the myths of ancient Greece to our current realities, the development of AI has seen more progress in the last six decades. Some scholars argue that what we consider AI started with Alan Turing's work in 1947 (McCarthy 2007). However, the Dartmouth Conference organised by John McCarthy, Marvin Minsky, Nathaniel Rochester, and Claude Shannon in 1956 is considered a significant event in the AI movement. This conference was significant because it discussed the possibility of creating intelligent machines (McCarthy et al. 2006). This set the stage for further research in AI and the development of advanced computer systems. Another significant event that contributed to the advancement of AI is the development of machine learning and neural networks. The development of machine learning dates back to the development of machine learning algorithms based on pattern recognition and decision-making by Arthur Samuel and Frank Rosenblatt (Russell and Norvig 2010). This was followed by advancements in neural networks in the 1990s. Neural Networks are computational models that try to mimic the structure and function of the human brain (Gurney 1997; Lawrence 1993). The concept of neural networks benefits from the

idea that the brain is similar to a computer. Neural networks could be trained to identify patterns in data and avoid the cumbersome task of explicit programming (Bishop 1995). These developments in AI research are important for the discourse on AI consciousness because of the connection between consciousness and brain function. The notion of consciousness has ontological significance because of its relevance to the notion of being.

The notion of being as regards to conscious AI raises some ethical questions, especially concerning moral agency. For Bostrom & Yudkowsky, it is ethically problematic to create conscious machines, and it is imperative to ensure that such machines do not harm humans or other morally relevant beings. In addition, it is important to determine whether they possess moral status (2018). This has far-reaching implications for moral-decision making, especially because of potential conflicts between humans and AI.

The Existential Implications of Creating AI with Consciousness

The notion of conscious AI also raises some existential questions as it pertains to the ontological status of intelligent machines. It is possible for machines with conscious intentions to act in ways damaging to human interests if they have their own goals and desires (Bostrom 2014). Conscious AI may acquire the ability to set goals different from those set by

humans, which may eventually lead to the annihilation of humankind as a whole (Bostrom 2002). The premise here is that it can do so because of its superintelligence. For example, intelligent machines trained on various data concerning the environment may consider human beings a threat to the environment. On becoming conscious, they may decide to save the earth by annihilating humans. The ethical and existential implications of conscious AI are interwoven with the ontology of AI.

The ontology of being in metaphysics refers to the nature of being as a substantive, fundamental aspect of reality. The ontology of AI deals with the definition and nature of AI as an aspect of reality. This is pertinent to our understanding of its consciousness because we have yet to determine what sort of entity a truly conscious AI is. The nature of AI and its relationship to human consciousness is fundamental to its ontology. However, the argument about AI consciousness and its difference from human-like consciousness raises doubts as to the validity of AI ontology (Searle, 1980). The possibility of consciousness in machines and its relation to the notion of consciousness is vital for how we conceive AI.

The ontology of AI also has important implications for the mind-body problem in philosophy. Consciousness is considered an attribute of the brain and within the scope of mental activity. Therefore, reconciling the mind with a physical machine is subject to debate.

However, some may argue that AI exists as software on hardware, but AI is still subject to the laws of physics and the constraints of the material world. However, its ability to interact with the world, process information, and make decisions raises serious questions about its relationship to human ontology. Does AI have an ontological status, or is it a product of programming? Can it exist independently of human intervention, or is it always dependent on human input and maintenance? The ontology of AI, therefore, raises critical questions about the nature of consciousness, the relationship between AI and the natural world, and the fundamental nature of being and existence.

The God Fantasy and AI Consciousness

The relationship between God and AI raises important questions about the nature of creation and the role of humans in that creation. God is considered a primary creator, and humans could be considered secondary creators. Following this hierarchy, conscious AI could occupy the position of tertiary creator. For example, according to Christian theology, something was created from nothing, and this is similar to the idea of the Big Bang. However, science and theology differ as to the cause of the formation of the universe. Humans create from the vast wealth of resources available to improve their quality of life. AI, on the other hand, relies on training data provided by humans; hence, their

position as tertiary creators – Gods create man, man creates AI.

For Hefner, AI represents a new form of creation that challenges our traditional understandings of humanity's place in the universe (1993). He also considers technology as a spiritual and religious reality that is part of human becoming (Hefner 2003). However, Caputo argues that AI represents an evolving manifestation of the divine and that humans should strive to recognise and honour the divinity inherent in all things (2006). These different perspectives try to highlight the connection between humans, God, and AI.

As advancements in artificial intelligence continue to reshape various industries, the concept of techno-idealism has emerged as a belief that technology can solve all societal problems and lead to a utopian future. However, this notion raises important questions about the ethical implications and potential risks associated with placing too much faith in AI. Philosophers like Martin Heidegger have argued that the increasing reliance on technology may result in the loss of human authenticity and a detachment from our true essence. Heidegger's concerns stem from the idea that technology can create a sense of alienation and distance us from our own humanity (Heidegger 1977). This detachment from our essence can lead to a devaluation of human relationships and an overemphasis on efficiency and productivity.

It is crucial to critically examine the role of AI in society and ensure that it aligns with our values and ethical principles, rather than blindly embracing techno-idealism without considering its potential consequences.

The God fantasy and AI consciousness have both captivated the human imagination for centuries. The concept of a higher power or divine being has been a central theme in various religions and belief systems, while the idea of artificial intelligence gaining self-awareness and consciousness has been explored in various literature. They both raise profound questions about the nature of existence, intelligence, and our place in the universe. While the God fantasy seeks to explain reality through God, AI consciousness explores the potential for machines to think, learn, and possibly surpass human capabilities. These concepts continue to inspire debate and speculation as we grapple with understanding our own consciousness and the possibilities that lie ahead in our technological advancements.

Conclusion

The God fantasy and the pursuit of conscious artificial intelligence (AI) have been present themes throughout human history and civilization. A fundamental aspect of many civilizations and traditions is the idea of God, which is present in faiths like Christianity and Judaism. The universe is said to have been created by God, an all-knowing,

all-powerful, flawless, everlasting, and transcendent being. The human fixation with the concept of God and the desire to use technology to support it are the driving forces behind the desire for conscious AI. The notion of man as creator is illustrated by scientific and technological developments, where people have evolved into godlike beings capable of building machines for a variety of uses. This preoccupation bears similarities to religious behaviour in terms of commitment and adoration.

The notion of conscious AI falls within the scope of techno-idealism, the view that technology is a malevolent force that can fix most of the world's problems and improve humanity's future. This viewpoint is predicated on the idea that technology may enhance human circumstances and deal with challenging societal issues, including poverty, illness, and social inequity. The human need for a supernatural and superintelligent being is reflected in both the god fantasy and the quest for AI consciousness, ultimately highlighting our desire for a higher power or superior intelligence that can provide answers and solutions beyond our own capabilities. While technology has the potential to address many of our problems, it also reveals our inherent longing for something greater than ourselves, whether it be a divine being or an artificially intelligent entity. This desire for a higher power drives us to continually push the boundaries of technological advancement in hopes of finding answers and achieving a better future for humanity.

The God Fantasy is central to the human experience as it taps into our innate curiosity and need for meaning in the universe. It catalyzes innovation and progress, pushing us to explore new frontiers and expand our understanding of the world around us. Whether we find this higher power in religion or in the form of advanced AI, the quest for something beyond ourselves is a fundamental aspect of human nature that drives us forward in our pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment.

References

- Alfonseca, M., Cebrian, M., Fernandez Anta, A., Coviello, L., Abeliuk, A., & Rahwan, I. (2021). Superintelligence cannot be contained: Lessons from computability theory. *Journal of Artificial Intelligence Research*, 70, 65–76.
- Ali, A. Y. (2000). *The Holy Qur'an*. Wordsworth Editions.
- Alter, R. (2018). *The Hebrew Bible: A translation with commentary* (Vol. 3). W. W. Norton & Company.
- Arnd-Caddigan, M. (2015). Sherry Turkle: Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other. Springer.
- Artificial intelligence. (n.d.). In the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved March 10, 2023, from <https://iep.utm.edu/artificial-intelligence/>

- Aslan, R. (2019). *God: A human history*. Random House Trade Paperbacks.
- Baggini, J. (2009). *Atheism*. Sterling Publishing Company, Inc.
- Barrat, J. (2013). *Our final invention: Artificial intelligence and the end of the human era*. Macmillan.
- Bell, J. (2022). What is machine learning? In *Machine learning and the city: Applications in architecture and urban design* (pp. 207–216).
- Berens, E. M. (2010). *The myths and legends of ancient Greece and Rome: A handbook of mythology*. BoD—Books on Demand.
- Bishop, C. M. (1995). *Neural networks for pattern recognition*. Oxford University Press.
- Bostrom, N. (2002). Existential risks: Analyzing human extinction scenarios and related hazards. *Journal of Evolution and Technology*, 9.
- Bostrom, N. (2014). *Superintelligence: Paths, dangers, strategies*. Oxford University Press.
- Bostrom, N., & Yudkowsky, E. (2018). The ethics of artificial intelligence. In *Artificial Intelligence Safety and Security* (pp. 57–69). Chapman and Hall/CRC.
- Bratcher, R. G. (1979). *The Holy Bible—New International Version*. SAGE Publications.
- Brockman, J. (2020). *Possible minds: Twenty-five ways of looking at AI*. Penguin.
- Brooks, R. (2003). *Flesh and machines: How robots will change us*. Vintage.

- Brynjolfsson, E. (2022). The Turing trap: The promise & peril of human-like artificial intelligence. *Daedalus*, 151(2), 272–287.
- Caputo, J. D. (2006). *The weakness of God: A theology of the event*. Indiana University Press.
- Chalmers, D. (2017). The hard problem of consciousness. In *The Blackwell companion to consciousness* (pp. 32–42).
- Chella, A., & Manzotti, R. (2013). *Artificial consciousness*. Andrews UK Limited.
- Chrisley, R. (2008). Philosophical foundations of artificial consciousness. *Artificial Intelligence in Medicine*, 44(2), 119–137.
- Colavito, J. (2014). *Jason and the Argonauts through the ages*. McFarland.
- Daedalus. (2023). In Wikipedia. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Daedalus&oldid=1142212181>
- Definition of FANTASY. (2023). In Merriam-Webster. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fantasy>
- Depoortere, F. (2008). *The death of God: An investigation into the history of the Western concept of God* (Vol. 86). T & T Clark.
- Dombrowski, D. A. (2016). *A history of the concept of God: A process approach*. SUNY Press.
- Dreyfus, H., Dreyfus, S. E., & Athanasiou, T. (2000). *Mind over machine*. Simon and Schuster.

- Eck, D. L. (2012). *India: A sacred geography*. Harmony.
- El Naqa, I., & Murphy, M. J. (2015). *What is machine learning?* Springer.
- Fantasy. (n.d.). In the Cambridge Dictionary. Retrieved January 29, 2023, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fantasy>
- Flasiński, M. (2016). History of artificial intelligence. In *Introduction to Artificial Intelligence* (pp. 3–13).
- Flowers, J. C. (2019). Strong and weak AI: Deweyan considerations. In *AAAI Spring Symposium: Towards conscious AI systems* (Vol. 2287).
- Gurney, K. (1997). *An introduction to neural networks*. CRC Press.
- Hefner, P. (1993). *The human factor: Evolution, culture, and religion*.
- Hefner, P. (2003). *Technology and human becoming*. Fortress Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1977). *The question concerning technology*. Harper & Row.
- Herzfeld, N. (2002). Creating in our own image: Artificial intelligence and the image of God. *Zygon®*, 37(2), 303–316.
- Jordan, M. I. (2019). Artificial intelligence—the revolution hasn't happened yet. *Harvard Data Science Review*, 1(1), 1–9.
- Kanu, A. I., Addidi, T. & Kanu, C. C., "Artificial intelligence and cybercrime in Nigeria:

- Towards an Ethical framework". *Dialogue and Universalism*. 32(1) 143-158, 2024.
- Kanu, I. A. (2020). "Igwebuiké philosophy of science and technology". *Nnadiabube Journal of Education*. Vol. 5. No. 4, pp. 64-74.
- Kizi, K. F. U. (2022). Strong and weak artificial intelligence.
- Laetz, B., & Johnston, J. J. (2008). What is fantasy? *Philosophy and Literature*, 32(1), 161–172.
- Lawrence, J. (1993). Introduction to neural networks. California Scientific Software.
- Leftow, B. (2016). God, concepts of. In *Routledge encyclopedia of philosophy* (1st ed.). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780415249126-K030-1>
- Legg, S., & Hutter, M. (2007a). A collection of definitions of intelligence. *Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence and Applications*, 157, 17.
- Legg, S., & Hutter, M. (2007b). Universal intelligence: A definition of machine intelligence. *Minds and Machines*, 17, 391–444.
- Levine, J. (2003). Explanatory gap. In L. Nadel (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of cognitive science* (Vol. 2, pp. 86–91).
- Martin, M. (1990). *Atheism: A philosophical justification*. Temple University Press.
- McCarthy, J. (2007). What is artificial intelligence?
- McCarthy, J., Minsky, M. L., Rochester, N., & Shannon, C. E. (2006). A proposal for the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial

- Intelligence, August 31, 1955. *AI Magazine*, 27(4), 12.
- McCorduck, P., Minsky, M., Selfridge, O. G., & Simon, H. A. (1977). *History of artificial intelligence*. In *IJCAI* (pp. 951–954).
- McDermott, D. (2007). Artificial intelligence and consciousness. In *The Cambridge Handbook of consciousness* (pp. 117–150).
- Morris, T. V. (2002). *Our idea of God: An introduction to philosophical theology*. Regent College Publishing.
- Nagel, T. (1974). What is it like to be a bat? *The Philosophical Review*, 83(4), 435–450.
- Nilsson, N. J. (2009). *The quest for artificial intelligence*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nnaemedo, B. (2019). Philosophical inquiry into God-definition question: The context of mercy. *Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 4(3).
- Nye, M. (2008). *Religion: The basics*. Routledge.
- Russell, S. J., & Norvig, P. (2010). *Artificial intelligence: A modern approach*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Schneider, S. (2019). *Artificial you*. Princeton University Press.
- Searle, J. R. (1980). Minds, brains, and programs. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 3(3), 417–424.
- Searle, J. R. (1990). Is the brain's mind a computer program? *Scientific American*, 262(1), 25–31.

- Stanford. (2019, February 28). Ancient myths reveal early fantasies about artificial life. Stanford News. Retrieved from <https://news.stanford.edu/2019/02/28/ancient-myths-reveal-early-fantasies-artificial-life/>
- Stewart, M. B. (1923). The definition of God. *Harvard Theological Review*, 16(3), 259–265.
- Tarnas, R. (2010). *The passion of the Western mind: Understanding the ideas that have shaped our worldview*. Random House.
- Velmans, M. (2009). *Understanding consciousness*. Routledge.
- Warwick, K. (2013). *Artificial intelligence: The basics*. Routledge.
- Wierenga, E. (2021). Omniscience. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy* (Summer 2021 ed.). Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2021/entries/omniscience/>
- Williams, D. P. (2019). Consciousness and conscious machines: What's at stake? In *AAAI Spring Symposium: Towards conscious AI systems*.
- Zhang, B., Zhu, J., & Su, H. (2023). Toward the third generation of artificial intelligence. *Science China Information Sciences*, 66(2), 1–19.
- Zhang, C., & Lu, Y. (2021). *Study on artificial intelligence: The state of the art and*

prospects. *Journal of Industrial Information Integration*, 23, 100224.