The Singularity of AI?
Toward a new philosophical-theological intelligence

Calvin D. Ullrich
University of the Free State, South Africa
ullrichcd@ufs.ac.za

Abstract

This article presents a series of reflections on the so-called 'singularity' of Artificial Intelligence (AI). It begins with a meditation on Freud's notion of the 'Uncanny' to help us understand the *experience* of interacting with the new AI. It then critically engages the formal notion of 'the singularity' by returning to the classical critique of artificial computing in Hubert Dreyfus, and suggests that 'singularity' should be understood rather in its *effects* within the context of a socio-cultural phenomenon which progressively disembodies the human being. Finally, in conversation with Dominique Janicaud and Emmanuel Falque, it begins to outline the contours of an alternative 'philosophical-theological intelligence': characterized by ambivalence, the 'potentiality' of rationality, and the finitude of our human condition that Christ came to fully embody and share with us, not so that we might escape it, but 'undergo' it in common together.

Keywords

Artificial Intelligence; singularity; phenomenology; Janicaud; Falque

1. Introduction

One of the consistent claims since the advent of computing in the nineteenth century has been that computer or machine intelligence, no matter the extent to which it is able to out-perform humans with specific tasks, will always be left wanting given the creative superiority of human beings.[1]

---

1   This article was first presented under the same title at the annual Theological Society of Southern Africa Conference, held at the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University,

And yet, the last twenty years and now more recent iterations of Artificial Intelligence, i.e., the large language models (LLM) of OpenAI and its main chatbot *ChatGPT* (though there are others now in competition of our attention like Google's *Bard*, Microsoft's *Bing* and DeepMind's *Chinchilla*), suggest that computers can perform better at a phenomenal range of human tasks: from composing essays, to poetry, artistic creation, and even music. Surely the self-confidence of philosophers who adamantly defend that AI is nothing more than a complex bricolage of already accomplished human achievement, will now have to admit that innovations in AI-generated images as well as interactive text, represent something of the *sui generis* nature of today's machine learning capability? In other words, must we finally concede that AI is poised to become an artificial general intelligence (AGI) or should we say a "technological singularity"[2] i.e., the moment hypothesized by the Hungarian mathematician, John von Neumann, and popularized by Vernor Vinge and later by Ray Kurzweil, where a recursively expanding computer intelligence coalesces into a superintelligence that qualitatively surpasses human ability?

This article will begin with some opening gestures regarding the new AI by thinking alongside Freud and the notion of the uncanny, following this it will turn to some of the classic work in the phenomenology of Hubert Dreyfus and suggest that the claims that AI is approaching the culmination of intelligence is a category error which inversely mischaracterizes the essential features of *human* intelligence. Nevertheless, even if the singularity of AI is overstated in terms of these philosophical missteps, then it is still not clear whether it follows that it should be dismissed through a cultural conservatism. Human beings have, after all, always been interacting with artificial and mechanistic tools of their own creation. So perhaps the singularity of AI resides elsewhere. That is, as the article will go on to argue, the singularity of AI must then be understood in terms of the unforeseeable changes it presents to the shape of political discourse, human labour, and education (among some of the most prominent). Connecting with these concerns which can be framed in terms of a *socio-*

June 2023.

2   See Murray Shanahan, *The Technological Singularity* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2015).

cultural influence, it then suggests, paradoxically, that the singularity of AI resides not so much in the fascinations of a disembodied superintelligence but rather in humanity's own progressive disembodying of itself.

It is to this singularity – a secularized eschatology which can be characterized by its sheer *effectuation* or *actualization* of the powers of possibility, to invoke Dominique Janicaud – that a philosophical-theological intelligence stands in tension. On the one hand, a philosophical intelligence has to do not with the *actualization* of our possibilities as a human species, but rather in maintaining rationality's *potentiality*, which is an unresolvable tension that marks the burdensome nature of human existence. And on the other hand, through its own singularity relying on the incarnation, theology proposes an embodied *finitude* that Christ came precisely to share with us, calling us not to attempt to exempt ourselves from it, but through faith, obliges us to act and decide upon an existence to which we are called – this life, here and now. Crucially, this position does not negate the potencies of human curiosity but it does suggest an augmented vision of intelligence (or rationality) one that runs up against obscurantist fantasies of overcoming (*Überwindung*) and instead turns it toward the fragile *undergoing* of that condition itself.

2. The New AI and its Freudian Double

The veritable frenzy around the release of OpenAI's *ChatGPT* has (re) ignited debates in public forums, Op-Eds, academic discourse, higher education more generally, and in some places at the highest levels of governmentality regarding its potential deployability and abuse. Since often these debates operate within a paradigm of a kind of practical ethics of responsible technological use, they often obscure the deeper philosophical (and theological) issue at stake: namely where to draw the line between what is human and what is not — or even further, what constitutes our humanity qua human beings? Realising the dangers of this obscurity, the design of *ChatGPT* itself includes disclaimers when it begins a line of interaction with the user, or at least signals at some point that there are limitations to which it holds itself to. And yet, somehow, it feels as if we have surpassed a new boundary with the recent developments in the new AI and their comprehensive language modelling. On the one hand, the

range and speed of its implementation make even the most cynical marvel at its competency: *ChatGPT* can write anything, given the appropriate prompts, from basic essays, to poetry, music, to complex programming in a range of computing vocabularies. On the other hand, another notable distinguishing characteristic of the new AI is the incorporation of "machine learning", which allows not only the analysis of large data sets but "learns" from these analyses to make decisions based on algorithms that improve their performance over time as they are exposed to more data. The more data the machine learning model uses the better the model will become. The result of this is an experience that is quite literally "uncanny" at the level of inter-subjective experience as many will attest — and perhaps marks its first claim for singularity.

Therefore, it is worth pausing here to reflect on this notion of the uncanny – the implications of which we will return to later. Recalling Sigmund Freud's seminal and incredibly rich text "Das Unheimliche", published in 1919, written in the wake of the disjointedness and anxiety of World War I, and following closely upon his 1917 essay "Mourning and Melancholia" and preceding by one year his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). It draws on the German psychiatrist Ernst Jentsch in his essay "Zur Psychologie des Unheimliche" published in 1906, and his treatment of the phantasy novelist Ernest Hoffman, in particular the latter's short story "The Sandman". Freud develops, interestingly, both with and beyond Jentsch's description of "das Unheimlich" or the Uncanny: unlike Jentsch, for whom feelings of the uncanny derive from an "intellectual uncertainty" that results from a "lack of orientation", Freud asserts that the uncanny occupies that class of the terrifying which leads us back to something which has long been known to us.[3] Following an extensive etymological investigation, Freud seemingly culminates his essay with a definition, whose formula he quotes directly from Schelling: "'Unheimlich' is the name for everything that ought to have remained…secret and hidden but has come to light."[4] Traditional readings of Freud attribute here the topography of the depth model behind classical trauma theory: namely, the encounter with the uncanny signals a return of

---

3　Sigmund Freud, (1919) "The Uncanny," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 17* (1917–1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 220–21.

4　Ibid., 224. Emphasis original.

a repressed past (trauma) that comes to haunt the present as it rises to the surface. One can certainly see this model function at the level of PTSD for example, Freud's immediate inter-war context, as the topographical model joins with a model of trauma that surfaces later in life. However, in the case of the new AI, neither in Jentsch's description is the experience of the uncanny as an 'intellectual uncertainty' – we certainly *know* the AI is not 'real' or not humanly real – but nor is an account of a repressed trauma anything near enough to approximate the feeling of the uncanny with the new AI either. Indeed, one has to read Freud against Freud, and look to other elements which disrupt this depth model.[5]

Freud emphasizes at different points in the essay, in particular, the notions of doubling under the figure of the *Doppelgänger* – here with reference to Otto Rank[6] – and of substitution or the *Ersatz*. In a revealing footnote he refers to an experience of being harassed by an older man dressed in his pyjamas in his train cart, only to later realise this unpleasant man, this *doppelgänger*, is himself in the mirror.[7] In another move associated with the uncanny, Freud undertakes a complicated literary exposition of Hoffman's Sand-Man, where he makes the connection with the fear of losing one's eyes – the traumatic act which the Sand-Man inflicts on naughty children who won't go to bed – and castration anxiety (the fear of losing the penis). This substitution or *Ersatz* for the fear of losing one thing (eyes) in the place of the fear of losing another is not only connected to the dynamics of infantile psychology, but more generally about the fear of loss itself, such that it no longer becomes clear if the fear of castration precedes or follows the fear of loss of one's eyes.[8] The point in both these examples for the purposes of our conversation is that the feeling of the uncanny triggers a slippage between self and other, blurring the boundaries between

---

5   See Heidi Schlipphacke, "The Place and Time of the Uncanny," *Pacific Coast Philosophy* 50 no. 2, Special Issue: Familiar Spirits (Dec 2015): 163–72.

6   "Der Doppelgänger" (1914). English: Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, trans. *Harry Tucker Jr.* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1971).

7   Freud, "The Uncanny," 248.

8   This should be compared to the remarks in Freud's 1932/33 lecture, "Anxiety and the Instinctual Life". Freud writes, "it was not the repressed which created the anxiety; the anxiety was there earlier; it was the anxiety that made the repression." Quoted in Schlipphacke, "The Place and Time of the Uncanny," 167.

supposed opposites and flattening out their difference. This returns us to Freud's initial etymological discussion where he famously concludes, and one should first quote this in the original German: "Also Heimlich is ein Wort, das seine Bedeutung nach einer *Ambivalenz* hin entwickelt, bis es endlich mit seinem Gegensatz unheimlich zusammenfällt."[9] That is, "*Heimlich* thus is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*."[10] Is it not the case that with the new AI opposites collapse, a state of ambivalence occurs between slippages of self and other, and importantly where fear is orientated not toward a past but perhaps to a future of unknown distortions and doublings?

Or, perhaps, this view is too optimistic still. For, after all, behind the figure of the double is also the Myth of Narcissus, where looking back into his own reflection in a pool of water he fades away under the spell of his own vanity.[11] Maybe the lesson of AI is less, or not only, about the ambivalence of the uncanny which marks our existence – though as mentioned, we will return to this – and more about our own supreme arrogance in the creation of an enchanting simulacrum of human mental agency, where, as some propose, not only will it one day become conscious but also by implication reveal the computational structure of our brain and of ourselves more generally. This leads us to the second notion of the singularity and phenomenology.

3. The phenomenological critique of AI: Hubert Dreyfus

In this section the contention is that the new AI for all of its computational flexibility still does not come anywhere near human intelligence, and nor will it ever, and this for the reason that the "image of thought"[12] we have placed on AI and which subsequently we have placed on ourselves is categorically different to the intelligence (or rationality) of organic life.

---

9   Sigmund Freud, "Das Unheimliche", Hrsg. Oliver Jahraus (Ditzingen: Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, 2020), 15.

10   Freud, "The Uncanny," 226.

11   Something of this tone, particularly in the polarization of the political arena, is shared in famed author and political activist, Naomi Klein's recent book: *Doppelganger: A Trip Into the Mirror World* (Allen Lane, 2023).

12   Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), chap. 3.

Accordingly, the classical critiques of AI from the phenomenological perspectives of Hubert Dreyfus and John Haugland still hold up today and should be revisited lest we continue down this erroneous path of ascribing a rational intellect behind the machine. But moreover still, in particular with respect to Dreyfus, who will be our main interlocuter in this section (although others have registered a version of this critique),[13] the critique of AI and what it calls "thinking intelligence" has also, and perhaps more importantly, become a *socio-cultural* phenomenon which defines the effort not merely for greater computational plasticity that approximates human thought, but also governs the paradigm which structures the logic of thought itself.

Several parenthetical remarks are noteworthy here: in the intervening half century since Alan Turing famously suggested in 1950 that a high-speed digital computer, programmed with rules-based commands, might be able to exhibit human consciousness, the classic critique of AI promulgated by Dreyfus over the course of several volumes, beginning with *Alchemy and AI* (1965), his seminal *What Computers Can't Do* (1972) which saw several editions, and together with his brother Stuart Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine* (1986),[14] still located the discussion in terms of what John Haugland called "Good Old-Fashioned AI" or just "general AI", which as a research programme is all but over.[15] However, the crucial distinction mentioned above is the latest innovation of 'machine' or more accurately '*adaptive* machine learning' (AML) over the last two or so decades — and we should include here a more broader research agenda that sees concurrent developments in nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology, and cognitive science.[16] While the full philosophical and theological

---

13　See for example David Bentley Hart's recent, *The Experience of God: Being, Consciousness, Bliss* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

14　Hubert L. Dreyfus, *What Computers Can't Do* (New York: MIT Press, [1972] 1979); Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Compute*r (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1986); Hubert Dreyfus, *What Computers Still Can't Do* (New York: MIT Press, 1992).

15　For a well-documented history of AI see, M. Lungarella, et al. *50 Years of Artificial Intelligence: Essays Dedicated to the 50th Anniversary of Artificial Intelligence* (Berlin: Springer, 2007).

16　See here the work of Hector J. Levesque*, Common Sense, the Turing Test, and the Quest for Real AI* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2017).

implications of this development are yet to be discerned, and also while adaptive machine learning may be distinguished from "general AI's" ambitions of wanting to achieve human-like intelligence, for the supposedly more modest goal of learning through porous recursive relations with human beings and ever expanding big data sets, this does little to negate the overall effects of AI as a socio-cultural phenomenon. In fact, this very porosity of adaptive learning that takes advantage of human interaction precisely secures the thesis of its reversibility of effects on human beings themselves.

Before teasing this out further below, however, and returning to Dreyfus, the central tenant of his critique, drawing predominantly on the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger (but also Merleau-Ponty and later Wittgenstein) is the accusation of AI's basic Cartesian representationalism and functionalism, where "all understanding consists in forming and using appropriate symbolic representations."[17] For general AI, computers were the possible formal processors of symbols and required a structure of rules and facts that could in the end catalogue all common sense knowledge. The problem that Dreyfus identified was that common-sense knowledge had the character less of the accumulation of atomistic symbolic facts, but instead required a bodily holism that consisted in ongoing activity. What Dreyfus called the "common-sense knowledge problem was not really a problem about how to represent *knowledge*; rather, the everyday commonsense background understanding that allows us to experience what is currently relevant as we deal with things and people is a kind of *know-how*."[18] The problem precisely, Dreyfus writes, "was that this know-how, along with all the interests, feelings, motivations, and bodily capacities that go to make a human being, would have to be conveyed to the computer as knowledge" and, moreover, as "a complex belief system" it would have to make "our inarticulate, preconceptual background understanding of what it is like to be a human-being explicit in a symbolic representation."[19] This culminates for Dreyfus in AI's vision of computation that is abstracted from the human form of *life*, since "intelligent activities" as AI would like to have them,

---

17   Dreyfus, *What Computers Still Can't Do*, xi.

18   Ibid.

19   Ibid., xi–xii.

cannot be isolated from "the whole mature human form of life"[20] which is an ontological condition of human living. By contrast, he says, "Computers only deal with facts, but the source of facts is not facts or sets of facts, but a being who creates himself and the world of facts" is "in the process of *living in the world.*"[21]

If this debate around AI and the kind of philosophy of mind which accompanies it – one thinks here of Daniel Dennett and similar like-minded materialists[22] – seems to have reached a dead-end: both with regard to how this technology now concedes that machine-thinking will not be the same as a human being, and also that the inverse construal of the human mind as functionalist or representational, also does not cover the full scope of human intellectual experience (see here the project of embodied cognitive neuroscience),[23] then it is still the case that at the level of a socio-cultural phenomenon, AI, its subsidiary adaptive machine learning, and the broader bio-technological research agenda, cannot be easily dismissed within the wider movements of technological developments within culture.

It is here that Dreyfus's contribution offers an important intervention that is worth returning to and expanding on – though exceeding here the bounds of this article – and that brings us back to the story of secular modernity that has now long-been documented (not least, most famously by Dreyfus's sometime collaborator, Charles Taylor.)[24] Without needing to revert to the various *Sources of the Self* or paradigms of *A Secular Age* in detail, we can simply note here that AI and the boom it created in related research programs, which we are now experiencing at an even more pervasive rate, at the very least helped facilitate and accelerate what Heidegger called the technological 'en-framing' (*Gestell*) of the world, or in Dreyfus's words, "calculative rationality", where "the computer seems

---

20 Ibid., 291.

21 Ibid., 290–91.

22 Daniel Dennett, *From Bacteria to Bach and Back: The Evolution of Minds* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2017).

23 Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson, Eleanor Rosch (eds.), *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human. Revised Edition. Experience* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, [1991] 2016).

24 See Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Taylor, *Retrieving Realism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

to be the very paradigm of logical intelligence",[25] now holding us captive and determining in every field the ways and types of questions people ask about how to model knowledge, distinguish ourselves, and our interactions with the world. Against the relief of these phenomenological perspectives, we can see that rooted in the capaciousness of algorithmic plasticity, the singularity of AI is not today about the coalescing of a super-intelligence that exceeds humanity, but rather concerns the inhabitation and generation of endless images and visions of ourselves as abstracted, rational, and synthetic entities, which saturate our reality in an increasingly inescapable hall of mirrors.

4. Toward a (new) philosophical-theological intelligence

If enough has been written regarding the general effects of the technologization of society, then it is also not difficult to detect even a small range of more specific effects that the new Artificial Intelligence might have on our collective order. For one thing, as some have noted, we might be witnessing the greatest intellectual heist in history—why for example, should a for-profit company like Dall-E-2 be permitted to feed all the copyrighted digital paintings, photographs, or drawings of living artists into its artistic generation tool at the expense of those very artists? This is the same Silicon valley logic of 'disruption', as Naomi Klein has noted, where big-tech corporations steam roll their technology into the public domain without any regulation, and once the technology has become so ubiquitous the litigators, despite the wreckage, declare that nothing can now be done about it. Klein, in a recent article, goes further in debunking several 'hallucinations' that tech-CEO's of AI promulgate: like solving the climate crisis, delivering wise governance, or liberation from drudgery. On the contrary, the reality is that under the current economic parameters this technology will likely have the obverse effect in these domains. Some of these conclusions are not just the ramblings of leftist Luddites, they are also the open admissions of scientists and the very developers of these technologies themselves.[26]

---

25   Dreyfus, *What Computers Still Can't Do*, 231.

26   Naomi Klein, "AI machines aren't 'hallucinating'. But their makers are", *The Guardian*, May 8, 2023. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/may/08/ai-machines-

However, to begin to develop an adequate philosophical-theological response we must also register one of the missteps that philosophers will now take in accounting for this precarious situation. As we saw above, the Cartesian dispensation of calculative rationality that marks our current condition, suggests by implication that the innovations of science now pose some of the greatest threats to human and ecological existence. The reason for this, we are told, is that Descartes dream of humanity replacing God, as the master and possessor of nature, has turned into a hellish nightmare, and thus mastery is in need of more mastery — i.e., we need *more* technological intervention to stave off our inevitable self-destruction. But this solution fails to recognize not only the same philosophical gesture behind what is obviously a dichotomised understanding of nature and culture, but also that what it is responding to is precisely not – or no longer – only about mastery. Indeed, as Jean-Pierre Dupuy, the French philosopher and historian of science, has argued, the convergence of technology now taking shape at the intersection of a great many fields *aims precisely at non-mastery*. The engineer, scientist, or technologist, will adopt a bottom-up approach, more as an experimenter than a master builder. To quote Dupuy at length here:

> to the extent that the scientist is now likelier to be someone who, rather than seeking to discover a reality independent of mind, investigates instead the properties of his own inventions (more as a researcher in artificial intelligence, one might say, than as a neurophysiologist), the roles of engineer and scientist will come to be confused and ultimately, conflated with one another. *Nature itself will become what humans have made of it, by unleashing in it processes over which, by design, there is no mastery.*[27]

This situation of non-mastery, needless to say, still occurs at the hands of humankind, with the only difference now being that ascribing responsibility for the destruction it may cause is shielded by a kind of autonomous limitlessness of its own creative possibilities. For Dupuy's Weberian-Girardian inspired account, this situation calls for a return of the sacred as the heteronomous foundation for moral limitation, and hence

---

hallucinating-naomi-klein (accessed at: 14 June 2023)

27   Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *The Mark of the Sacred,* trans. M.B. Debevoise (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 64.

of transgression. Dupuy is right to imply that a concept of limitation – or what we prefer to call 'finitude' – is needed. However, does the imposition of the sacred vis-à-vis profane human activity, not redeploy the same opposition which engendered the desire for the creative (non)-mastery of AI technology in the first place?

To conclude, therefore, we should begin to pursue a different approach, one that we can only briefly begin to sketch out here: a *philosophical* intelligence supplemented by a theological concept of finitude, which draws on the work of Dominique Janicaud and Emmanuel Falque respectively. Our aim is to show, and this returns us to our opening discussion with Freud, that the excess of AI's singularity – it's narcissistic enchantment, facilitation of a computational paradigm, and a logic of non-mastery – as we have been developing, should be counter-balanced by, on the one hand, a philosophical existential limitation or "an undergoing" of ambivalence, and on the other hand, theologically this time, by a conception of finitude that God comes to inhabit alongside us and that only God can transform.

Beginning with Janicaud: It is an unfortunate circumstance that he has almost exclusively been associated with his critique of the theological turn in phenomenology.[28] However, his philosophical corpus boasts an impressive array of titles covering themes from French spiritualism, to Hegel, and several books on Heidegger. For our purposes, there are a few key elements of his text, *La puissance du rationnel* (The Powers of the Rational, 1985), as well as *L'homme va-t-il dépasser l'humain?* (On The Human Condition, 2002),[29] which ask for our attention. For Janicaud, writing also in the climate of Heidegger's critique of technology, the solution to technicist nihilism was not a return to meditative thinking – that attempt to think the unthought ground of reason as a return to the truth of Being –

---

28   See Dominique Janicaud, et al. *Phenomenology and the 'Theological Turn': The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000).

29   Dominque Janicaud, *The Powers of the Rational: Science, Technology, and the Future of Thought,* trans. Peg Birmingham and Elizabeth Birmingham (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); *Dominique Janicaud, On the Human Condition,* trans. Eileen Brennan (London: Routledge, 2005). For this brief discussion, however, we will draw on Simon Critchley's excellent introduction to the former text: *Simon Critchley, "Introduction: The Overcoming of Overcoming. On Dominique Janicaud" in Dominique Janicaud, On the Human Condition,* trans. Eileen Brennan (London: Routledge, 2005), vii–xiv.

but neither was metaphysics to be overcome in Rortyian or Habermasian rationalism.[30] So what is instead needed was to hold open the domain of possibility (*puissance*) for rationality which is the task of a philosophical *intelligence*. Indeed, Janicaud speaks deliberately of intelligence and deploys it prominently in his lexicon. Much like the account of calculative reason we saw above, Janicaud diagnoses the rationality of techno-science as a type of hyper-rationality, which has as its objective the *total actualization* of its possibilities. Such actualization of rationality of course slips into its inverse, *irrationality*[31] — the hallucinatory claims of AI-CEO's for example, or the recent story of the Irish Times running a completely fake AI-generated story,[32] or more tragically, the young man who committed suicide after a long and harmful series of conversations with a chatbot that was programmed to emote feelings.[33] If we cannot do away with reason, according to Janicaud, but nor can we slide into irrationality, the task of a philosophical intelligence is precisely to demarcate rationality's limit, or to put it positively, to testify to its *puissance* (potency or potentiality which is not the same as Power) over actuality. Scientific rationality in its current iteration sacrifices this *puissance* by privileging actuality and so Janicaud must find a more reasonable conception of reason, or a more intelligent philosophical intelligence.[34] This is the wager of his notion of *partage*, which has the delightful French connotations of both 'sharing' and one's 'share' or 'divisions', 'splitting', 'partitions', etc., but also the sense of our share as in our lot in life, allotment. Janicaud is thus attempting to think of reason as a non-instrumental, non-calculative dialogical experience of one's situation that is shared by and with others, in all the delicacy and fragility of life. This experience was felt as a call for potentiality and inventiveness that

---

30   Critchley, "Introduction", x.

31   Ibid., xii.

32   Rory Carroll, "Irish Times apologises for hoax AI article about women's use of fake tan", *The Guardian*, May 14, 2023. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2023/may/14/irish-times-apologises-for-hoax-ai-article-about-womens-use-of-fake-tan (accessed at: 14 June 2023).

33   Chloe Xiang, "'He Would Still Be Here': Man Dies by Suicide After Talking with AI Chatbot", *Vice*, March 30, 2023. https://www.vice.com/en/article/pkadgm/man-dies-by-suicide-after-talking-with-ai-chatbot-widow-says (accessed at: 14 June 2023).

34   Critchley, "Introduction", xiv.

does not give up on the fragility, does not try and surpass it, but to search out new ways of humanizing the human.

If the human being is this *partage*, this division between exceeding itself in hyper-rationalization and irrationality, then it is just this thrown paradox which constitutes human freedom under which we must toil, and to which theology can neither withdraw from nor exempt itself. This is well-supplemented by the development of the concept of finitude in the work of another French philosopher-theologian, Emmanuel Falque.[35] For Falque, the lesson to be learned from the incarnation is not that the Word came to dwell in the finite so that we might become aware of the infinite, but rather that through Christ's incarnation the Word takes on and shares the finitude of humanity in the limited and contingent horizon of an existence.[36] What is conventionally taken to be 'finite being' is understood always with reference to an infinite, which the finite regrets not being like (the logic of Dupuy's position), whereas the one who 'lives in finitude' is simply 'being-there' in the Heideggerian sense, faced with death, and devoid of an elsewhere. In another place, Falque invokes Dietrich Bonhoeffer's phrase from *Letters and Papers*: "esti Deus non daretur" ("even if there were no God"), not to deny God's existence but to learn to live without God, that is, "in the sense that God should not be a crutch for our existential difficulties."[37] This situation of finitude Falque argues forcefully in the first volume of his philosophical triptych, *The Guide to Gethsemane*, where Christ definitively comes to share in our deepest human fears and anxieties, anchored as we are before the horizon of death. For Falque, theology has this first starting point, this defined limit of human existence, which God comes to inhabit *fully* not so that we might escape it, which is the false – and for Falque, indeed, the sinful – move of Artificial Intelligence, but so that we might live it with Christ acting as a guide through this finitude, as he himself has also taken it on fully.

---

35   See Emmanuel Falque, *The Metamorphosis of Finitude: An Essay on Birth and Resurrection* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 11–20.

36   Falque, *The Metamorphosis of Finitude*, 18.

37   Emmanuel Falque, "Après La Mort de Dieu et La Mort de L'Homme: Dialogue avec Nietsche"*, Laval théologique et philosophie,* 77, no. 3 (October 2021): 377–396, 388: "Il est dans le projet même de Dieu de nous laisser vivre sans lui, au moins au sens où il ne saurait être la béquille de ce qui nous manquerait pour exister." Author's translation.

An even more salient development in Falque's thought and striking for our purposes given its glaring omission up until this point, are the phenomenological investigations he carries out in his third volume: *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb*, where, in a reading of the eucharistic feast Falque identifies the animality[38] of Christ in the bread and wine, an animality that is shared with humanity. For Falque the incarnation and the eucharist presence of Christ confirms to us that God comes to inhabit the *depth* of our finitude even the depths that tie us to our material nature — the 'organic' life of which we share not only with others but also with the living world. There is a tradition here that Falque is drawing upon of a philosophy and theology of life which precedes our rational powers, from Plato to Aquinas, and to the continental thought of Pierre Hadot, Hans Jonas, and even Jacques Derrida. It is this philosophical-theological 'intelligence', of the living, breathing, organic, and material life, that theology – too often accused of neglecting – should come to inhabit, not so that it can be transgressed, but undergone and shared, just as Christ shares it with us.

Bibliography

Bentley Hart, D. 2013. *The Experience of God: Being, Consciousness, Bliss*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Carroll, R. "Irish Times apologises for hoax AI article about women's use of fake tan." *The Guardian,* May 14, 2023. [Online]. Available: https://www.theguardian.com/media/2023/may/14/irish-times-apologises-for-hoax-ai-article-about-womens-use-of-fake-tan [Accessed: 14 June 2023].

Deleuze, G. 1999. *Difference and Repetition.* Translated by Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press.

Dreyfus, H. L. and Stuart Dreyfus 1986. *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer.* Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1986

---

38 See Calvin D. Ullrich, "The Spread Body and the Affective Body: A Discussion with Emmanuel Falque," in *Religions* 15 no. 30 (2024): https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15010030.

Dreyfus, H.L. 1979. *What Computers Can't Do.* New York: MIT Press, [1972].

Dreyfus, H.L. 1992. *What Computers Still Can't Do.* New York: MIT Press.

Dupuy, J-P. 2013. *The Mark of the Sacred.* Translated by M.B. Debevoise. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Falque, E. "Après La Mort de Dieu et La Mort de L'Homme: Dialogue avec Nietsche." *Laval théologique et philosophie* 77, no. 3 (October 2021):377–396.

Falque, E. 2012. *The Metamorphosis of Finitude: An Essay on Birth and Resurrection.* Translated by George Hughes. New York: Fordham University Press.

Freud, S. (1919) 1955. "The Uncanny," 220–221. In James Strachey (ed.). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 17 (1917–1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works.* London: Hogarth Press.

Janicaud, D. 2005. *On the Human Condition.* Translated by Eileen Brennan. London: Routledge.

Janicaud, D. 1994. *The Powers of the Rational: Science, Technology, and the Future of Thought.* Translated by Peg Birmingham and Elizabeth Birmingham. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Klein, N. 2023. "AI machines aren't 'hallucinating'. But their makers are." *The Guardian. [Online]. Available:* https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/may/08/ai-machines-hallucinating-naomi-klein [Accessed: 14 June 2023].

Klein, N. 2023. *Doppelganger: A Trip Into the Mirror World.* Allen Lane.

Levesque, H.J. 2017. *Common Sense, the Turing Test, and the Quest for Real AI.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Lungarella, M. et al. 2007. *50 Years of Artificial Intelligence: Essays Dedicated to the 50th Anniversary of Artificial Intelligence.* Berlin: Springer.

Schlipphacke, H. "The Place and Time of the Uncanny." *Pacific Coast Philosophy* 50 no.2, Special Issue: Familiar Spirits (Dec 2015):163–72.

Shanahan, M. 2015. *The Technological Singularity*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Ullrich, C. D. 2024. "The Spread Body and the Affective Body: A Discussion with Emmanuel Falque." *Religions* 15 no.30. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15010030.

Xiang, C. "'He Would Still Be Here': Man Dies by Suicide After Talking with AI Chatbot." *Vice*, March 30, 2023. [Online]. Available: https://www.vice.com/en/article/pkadgm/man-dies-by-suicide-after-talking-with-ai-chatbot-widow-says [Accessed: 14 June 2023].