



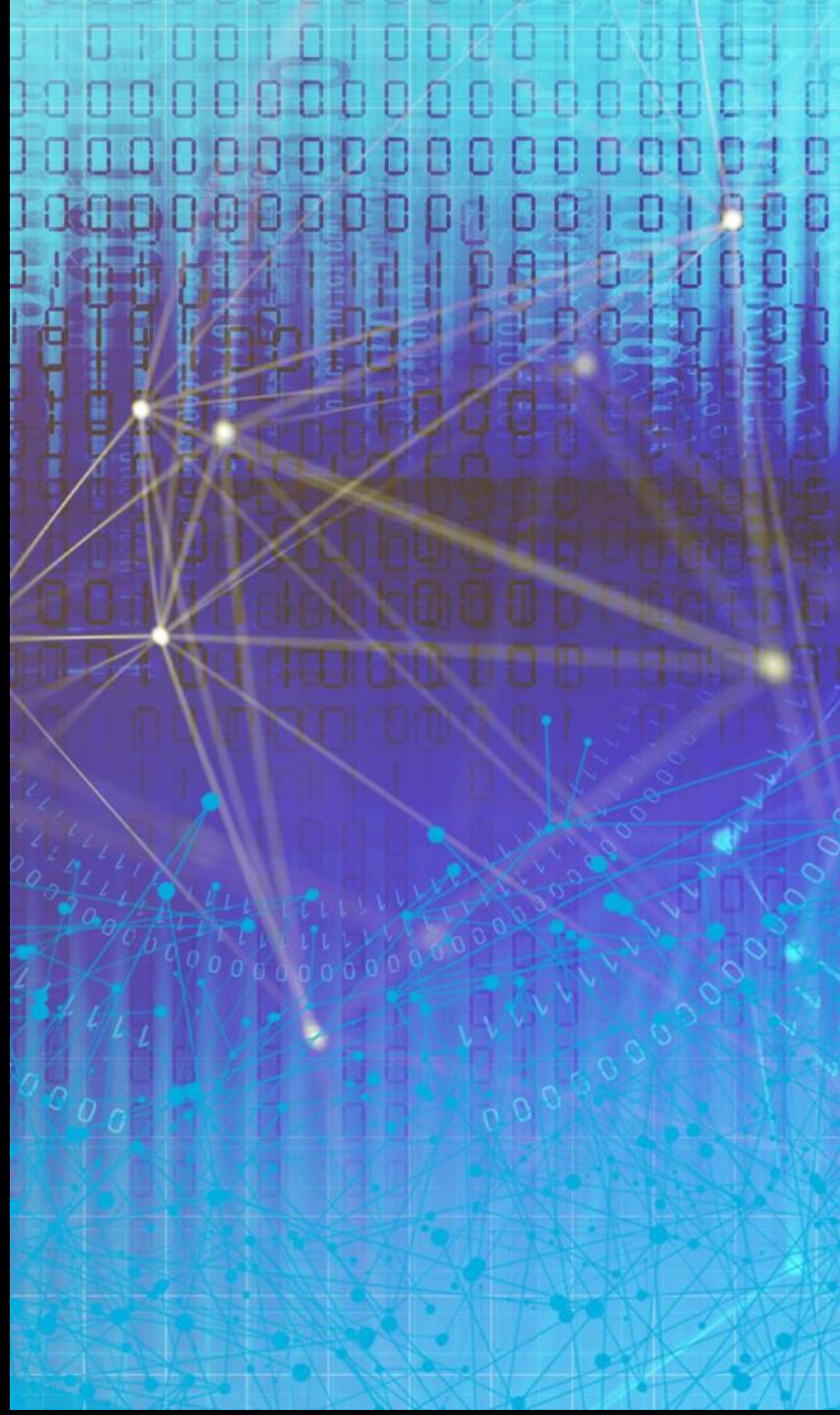
Mark Harris



What does Artificial Intelligence mean for Christians?

Summary

1. What is AI?
2. Transhumanism
3. Human 'uniqueness'
4. Made in the 'image of God'
5. What does AI mean for Christians?



1. What is AI?

AI Research Group for the Centre for
Digital Culture of the Dicastery for
Culture and Education of the Holy See
(2024) *Encountering Artificial
Intelligence: Ethical and Anthropological
Investigations*



THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ENCOUNTERING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

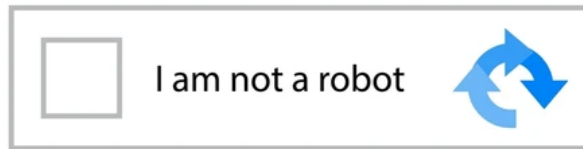
ETHICAL & ANTHROPOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

*A.I. Research Group for the Centre for Digital Culture
Dicastery for Culture and Education of the Holy See*

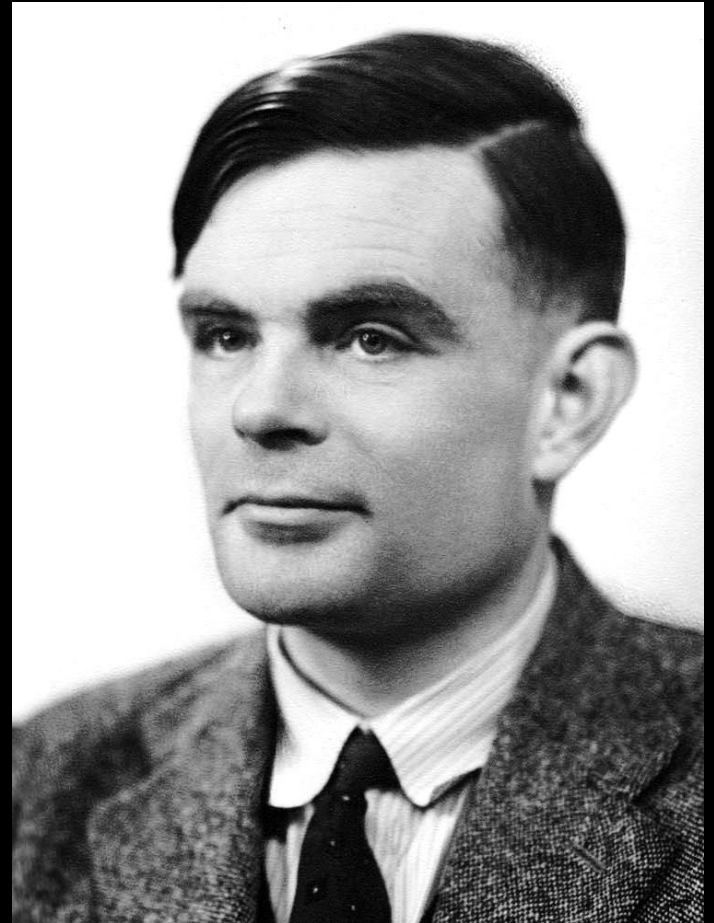
*Edited by
Matthew J. Gaudet, Noreen Herzfeld, Paul Scherz, and Jordan J. Wales*

Alan Turing (1912-1954)

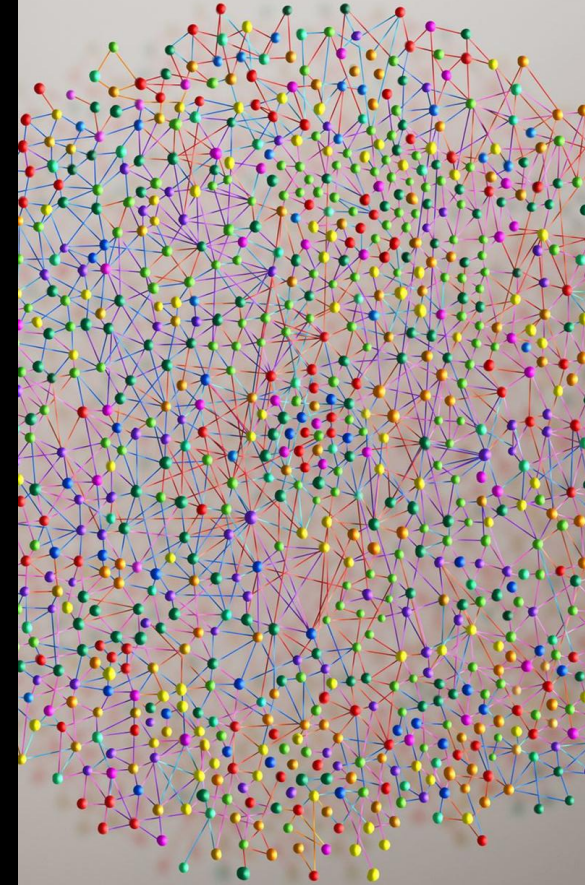
- The Universal Computing Machine
- The Turing test
- CAPTCHA



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- Dartmouth Conference (1956)
 - ‘Artificial Intelligence’
- Machine Learning
- Neural Networks
 - Model
- Large Language Model (LLM)
 - e.g. ChatGPT, CoPilot, Gemini...



What is AI?

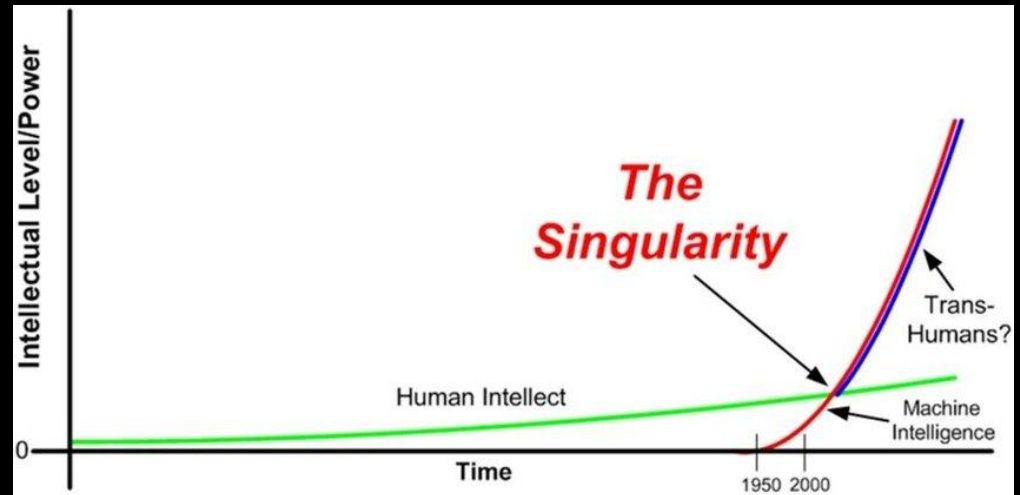
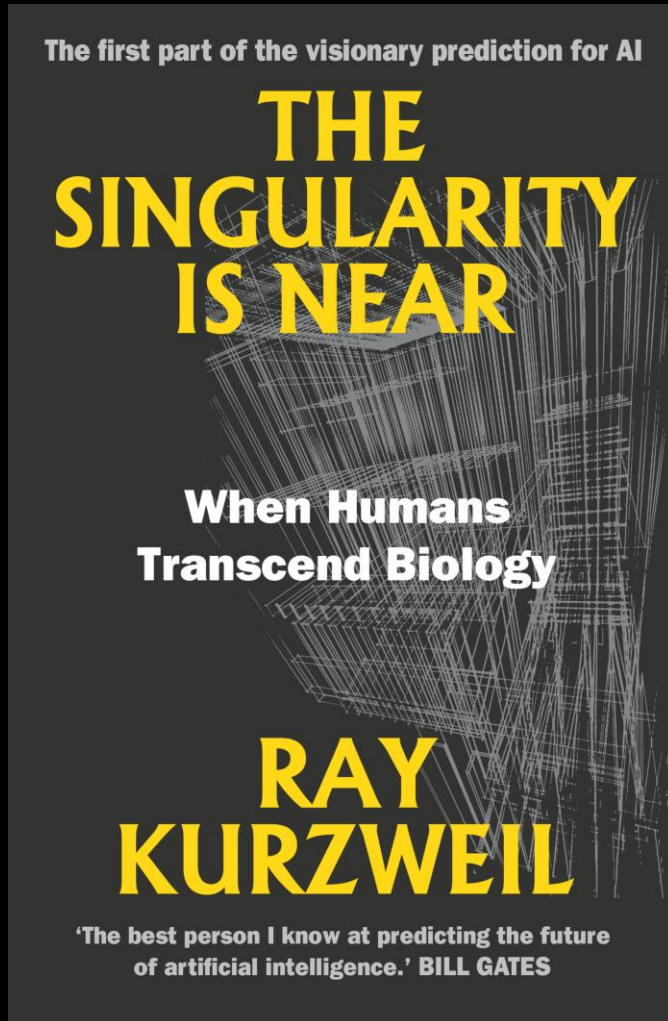
- ‘Artificial intelligence, or AI, is a branch of computer science focused on creating machines or software that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include problem-solving, understanding natural language, recognizing patterns, and learning from experience.
- AI is a broad field with various sub-disciplines, including:
 - Machine Learning: Using algorithms to analyze data, learn from it, and make decisions. This includes techniques like neural networks and deep learning.
 - Natural Language Processing (NLP): Enabling machines to understand, interpret, and generate human language. Examples include chatbots, language translation, and sentiment analysis.
 - Computer Vision: Allowing machines to interpret and understand visual information from the world, such as images and videos.
 - Robotics: Combining AI with physical machines to perform tasks, from simple household chores to complex surgeries.

- AI can be classified into two main types:
 - Narrow AI: Designed to perform a specific task, like voice assistants (e.g., Siri) or recommendation systems (e.g., Netflix's suggestions).
 - General AI: A more advanced form that can understand, learn, and apply intelligence across a wide range of tasks, similar to human cognitive abilities. This is still largely theoretical and not yet achieved.
- It's a rapidly evolving field with immense potential to impact various aspects of our lives, from healthcare and education to transportation and entertainment.
- What sparked your interest in AI?

Microsoft Copilot



2. Transhumanism



3. Human 'uniqueness'

- Are humans unique/special among all other species?
 - Bipedal gait
 - Theory of mind
 - Consciousness
 - Intelligence and problem-solving
 - Language
 - Culture
 - Morality

- '[N]eural circuits supporting behavioral/electrophysiological states of attentiveness, sleep and decision making appear to have arisen in evolution as early as the invertebrate radiation, being evident in insects and cephalopod mollusks (e.g., octopus). Birds appear to offer, in their behavior, neurophysiology, and neuroanatomy a striking case of parallel evolution of consciousness. Evidence of near human-like levels of consciousness has been most dramatically observed in African grey parrots...**We declare the following: “*The absence of a neocortex does not appear to preclude an organism from experiencing affective states. Convergent evidence indicates that non-human animals have the neuroanatomical, neurochemical, and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviors. Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Nonhuman animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.*”**

The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness, 2012

- Are humans unique/special among all other species?
 - Bipedal gait
 - Theory of mind
 - Consciousness
 - Intelligence and problem-solving
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4. Made in the 'image of God'

- 'Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ), according to our likeness (כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ); and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image (בְּצַלְמוֹ), in the image (בְּצֶלְקָם) of God he created them; male and female he created them.' (Gen.1:26-27)

1. The ontological/substantive interpretation

- ‘The image of the creator is to be found in the rational or intellectual soul of humanity...Although reason and intellect may at times be dormant, or may appear to be weak at some times, and strong at others, the human soul cannot be anything other than rational and intellectual. It has been created according to the image of God in order that it may use reason and intellect in order to apprehend and behold God’

Augustine, *de Trinitate*, XVI.iv.6

- The reason science works: humans possess the divine rationality
- The image of God resides in human culture (Wentzel van Huyssteen)

2. The functional interpretation

- The image of God is a function/vocation

3. The relational interpretation

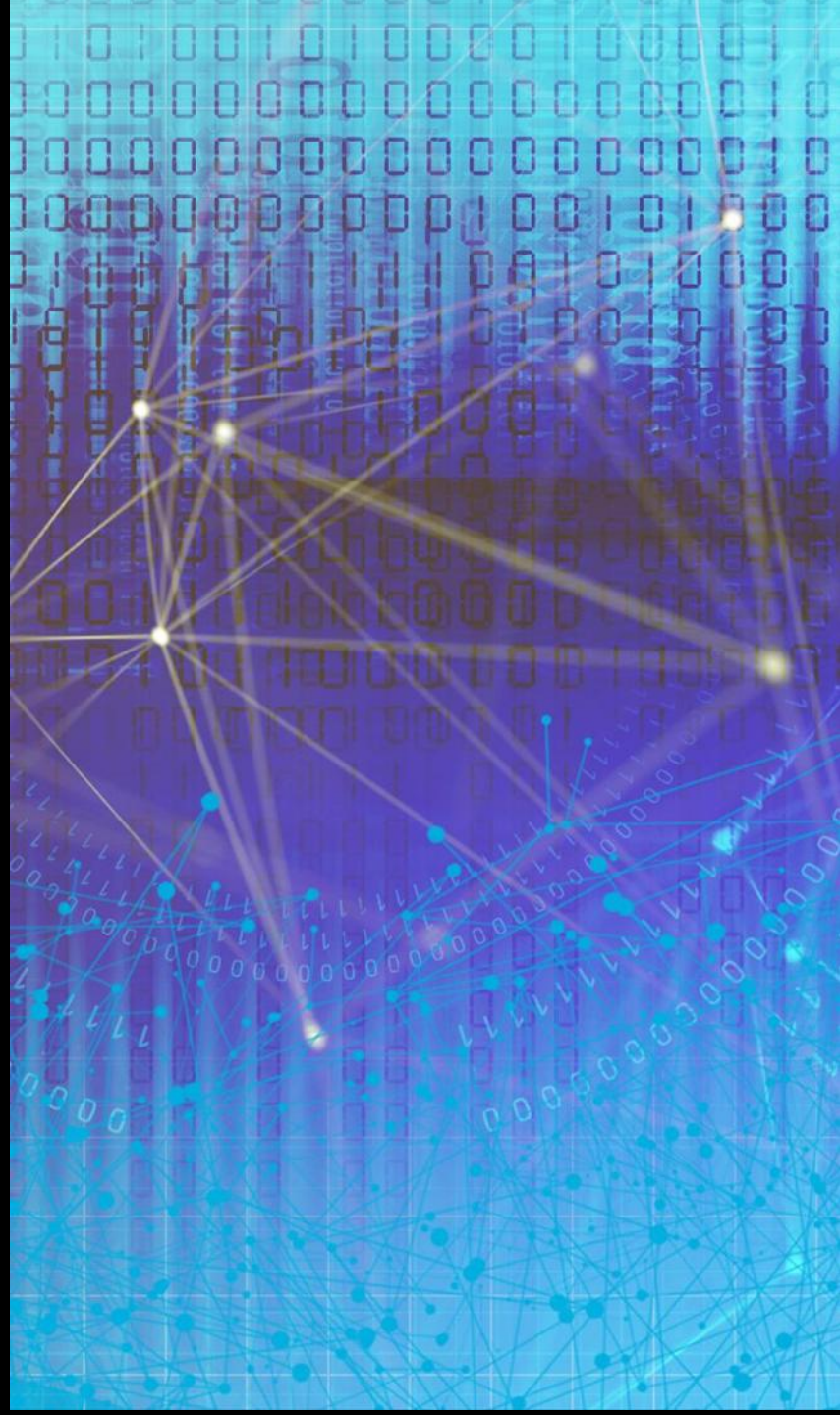
- Karl Barth

4. The eschatological interpretation

- The risen Christ is the 'image of God'

Summary

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5. What does AI mean for Christians?

Noreen Herzfeld (2023) *The Artifice of Intelligence*

‘The machine has no goal or strategy of its own. It gives an illusion of self. And we, as the social beings we are, fall for that illusion...because we crave relationship and, like children who talk to their teddy bears or imaginary friends, we imagine an interlocutor even though we are really only talking to ourselves’ (p.66).

