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THE FOUNDATIONS OF ETHICS IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: TRUTH, FREEDOM, AND RESPONSIBILITY

Huỳnh Minh Vương

[1]University of Finance - Marketing
Email: huynhvuong@ufm.edu.vn
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8011-630X

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Corresponding Author: Huỳnh Minh Vương (huynhvuong@ufm.edu.vn)

ABSTRACT

This article examines the transformation of ethical foundations in the age of artificial intelligence. It argues that ethics should not be reduced to abstract rules or technical optimization models but understood as a form of lived human behavior. Using a critical philosophical and interdisciplinary approach, the study integrates insights from moral philosophy, cognitive science, neuroscience, and AI research. The findings suggest that ethical behavior emerges from the interaction of emotion, intuition, reasoning, and lived experience within intersubjective relations. In increasingly data-driven systems, rethinking ethics as a living structure of truth, freedom, and responsibility is essential for preserving human moral agency.

KEYWORDS: Ethics; Responsibility; Freedom; Truth; Artificial Intelligence.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the rapid development of digital technology, big data, and artificial intelligence has profoundly changed the structure of social life and the way people make decisions across many fields. Many activities tied to human judgment are now mediated by technical systems capable of processing data at scale and at speeds far beyond human cognition. These systems increasingly shape evaluation, prediction, and decision-making across multiple domains. That shift opens new opportunities to improve governance efficiency and optimize complex decision-making. However, it also raises fundamental questions about the ethical underpinnings of human behavior in a world increasingly shaped by algorithms and optimized logic. One of the prominent problems in the current context is the risk of reducing ethical behavior to technical processes or computational models. When designed as a data optimization problem, factors that contribute to the depth of human behavior, such as emotions, responsibilities, and sensitivity to specific circumstances, are easily excluded from the evaluation process. This raises questions about the origins of moral norms and about the role of human subjects in increasingly automated systems. In this context, this article approaches ethics from the perspective of life behavior, seeing ethics not only as an abstract system of rules but also as a life structure formed by the relationship among truth, freedom, and responsibility. This approach aims to clarify humans' ability to maintain moral depth in the technological age and to contribute to a humanistic approach to the ethical challenges of the artificial intelligence era.

However, existing approaches often reduce ethics to formal principles or technical governance, overlooking the lived and experiential dimensions of moral behavior.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews relevant literature, Section 3 outlines the methodology, Section 4 presents the main analysis, and Section 5 concludes.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH SITUATION

In recent years, the rapid development of data technologies, artificial intelligence, and digital systems has spurred interdisciplinary studies analyzing the profound transformations in human behavior and normative structures in modern society, especially in the fields of governance, economics, medicine, and digitized social life (Akter et al., 2022). An important research direction focuses on the transformation of innovation and organizational paradigms as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and big data analytics become the central drivers of digital transformation and the restructuring of modern business and governance models (Bresciani et al., 2021). In this context, many works have analyzed how artificial intelligence promotes new forms of business model innovation, and at the same time creates new forms of value creation and value acquisition in economic and technological ecosystems (Åström et al., 2022).

Beyond technological innovation, another line of research focuses on the normative and ethical issues of artificial intelligence, particularly regarding the accountability, transparency, and explainability of algorithmic systems in social decision-making (Coeckelbergh, 2020). Studies on digital ethics also highlight that transforming ethical principles into technology governance practices is a complex challenge, as normative principles that are not properly institutionalized can be easily invalidated in technical and organizational systems (Floridi, 2019). The development of artificial intelligence is highlighting the limitations of traditional ethical models, as algorithmic systems can replicate or amplify social biases embedded in data and decision-making structures (Ferrara, 2023).

The construction of automated predictive models often entails trade-offs among various fairness criteria in data-driven decision-making systems (Kleinberg et al., 2016). In the field of machine learning and data science, the explainability of algorithmic models is an important condition for maintaining social responsibility and human trust in artificial intelligence systems (Doshi-Velez & Kim, 2017). The promulgation of general ethical principles alone is insufficient to ensure responsible technological behavior without institutionalization and practical control mechanisms.

Although artificial intelligence ethics guidelines around the globe have many similarities in principle, there are significant differences in how they apply in different social and institutional contexts (Jobin et al., 2019). In the medical and healthcare sector, the implementation of artificial intelligence raises many new ethical issues related to data privacy, professional responsibility, and fairness in access to healthcare (Elendu et al., 2023). Ethical challenges, including transparency, accountability, and data security, remain central issues that must be addressed to ensure the sustainable development of AI systems in healthcare (Nkrumah et al., 2025). Overall, there is a need for an interdisciplinary approach that combines philosophy, social science,

and data science to better understand the transformations in human behavior, social responsibility, and ethical constructs in the age of artificial intelligence and digital transformation.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research builds on an interdisciplinary critical philosophy and humanities methodology that aims to analyze the nature of ethical behavior in the context of engineering systems and artificial intelligence that are increasingly deeply involved in social decision-making. The study's approach does not view ethics as a set of rules, but as a living structure formed by the relationship among people, technology, and the social environment. From this perspective, the research methodology focuses on analyzing how moral norms are formed, transformed, and redefined under new historical and technical conditions. In terms of methodology, the study employs a qualitative approach grounded in philosophical analysis and interdisciplinary synthesis. First, the conceptual analysis method is used to clarify the central categories of research, such as ethical behavior, responsibility, freedom, and truth, in a social context mediated by data and algorithms. Through analysis of these concepts, the study seeks to demonstrate the limitations of ethical models that rely solely on rule-based logic or technical optimization.

Furthermore, the research employs a literature synthesis approach to integrate findings across various scientific fields, including moral philosophy, cognitive science, neuroscience, and artificial intelligence research. This combination allows for the examination of ethical behavior not only from a normative perspective but also from biological and social perspectives, viewing the human being as a living entity with a body, emotions, and memory. Furthermore, interpretive and inductive methods are used to link theoretical analyses with practical situations in modern life. Drawing on theoretical frameworks in ethics and cognition, the study interprets the consequences for specific contexts, such as education, medicine, and the design of artificial intelligence systems. At the same time, observations about the transformations of human behavior in the digital environment are inducted to clarify the changes in moral norms in contemporary society. Through a combination of these methods, the research aims to formulate an ethical approach that puts people at the center of the analytical process, thereby clarifying the ability to maintain responsibility and the meaning of ethical behavior in an increasingly technology-driven world.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

4.1. Ethics As Lived Behavior: From Abstract Norms to Intersubjective Responsibility

In many traditions of moral thought, ethics has been understood as a system of universal norms existing independently of human life. Within this framework, moral principles function as predefined rules applied to particular situations, while individuals are expected to act as executors of normative commands. Such an approach constructs an image of ethics as a closed and stable system, in which lived experience merely illustrates abstract principles (Bengoetxea, 2022).

However, reducing ethics to a rule-based structure risks stripping moral life of its existential depth. Human behavior is not shaped solely by formal reasoning, but also by emotions, memory, and sensitivity to context. When these dimensions are excluded, ethics becomes a mechanism of regulation rather than a mode of living. Norms then operate as external imperatives rather than as meanings emerging from lived experience (Chang & Wang, 2024).

In contemporary society, this limitation becomes increasingly visible. The expansion of digital systems and artificial intelligence has transformed the conditions under which moral decisions are made. As social life becomes more complex and technologically mediated, fixed normative frameworks prove insufficient to address situations characterized by uncertainty, plurality of values, and incomplete knowledge (Johnson et al., 2022). Ethics can no longer be conceived as a static map capable of guiding action in all circumstances.

Instead, ethics must be understood as a lived process, grounded in intersubjective relations. Moral meaning emerges not from obedience to rules, but from the subject's capacity to recognize others and to respond to their presence. Each action carries consequences that cannot be fully anticipated or reduced to calculation. Responsibility arises precisely from this condition of imperfection, where individuals must act without complete certainty (Carroll & Esposito Amideo, 2024).

This perspective is particularly significant in a world increasingly organized by data and algorithmic systems. While such systems are capable of optimizing decisions and predicting behavior, they tend to standardize value and reduce human action to quantifiable parameters (Kanbach et al., 2024). Yet, core dimensions of moral life-such as empathy, responsibility, and sensitivity to context-cannot be fully translated into computational logic

(Khalid et al., 2023). Ethics, therefore, cannot be reduced to optimization. It remains a form of lived engagement in which the subject assumes responsibility within an uncertain and shared world.

4.2. Lived Experience as the Source of Moral Norms

Rather than deriving from abstract and universal principles, moral norms emerge from lived human experience in concrete social contexts. Human beings act under conditions of uncertainty, limitation, and relational complexity, where fixed rules cannot fully determine appropriate action. In this sense, ethics shifts from a purely theoretical framework to an existential one, rooted in action, choice, and responsibility.

Moral awareness develops through lived interactions, where individuals encounter the needs, vulnerability, and presence of others. These encounters give rise to judgments that cannot be reduced to formal rules but are shaped by experience, perception, and social learning (Atzil-Slonim et al., 2023). Ethical norms are therefore not static prescriptions but dynamic outcomes of human engagement within specific contexts.

From this perspective, morality is not external to life but emerges within lived relations, where action, experience, and responsibility take shape. Individuals do not simply apply norms; they participate in their formation through their responses to concrete situations. Everyday actions-such as helping, listening, or refusing injustice-constitute the practical ground on which moral meaning is established.

The increasing standardization of behavior through digital systems highlights the importance of this distinction. When human actions are reduced to data points and evaluated through algorithmic criteria, the experiential and relational dimensions of morality risk being obscured (Ferrara, 2023). While technical systems can regulate behavior, they cannot generate moral meaning. Ethical life depends on the capacity of individuals to engage with others in ways that exceed formalized structures.

Affirming lived behavior as the foundation of morality also entails resisting the reduction of ethics to instruments of control. When norms are imposed as external mechanisms, ethics loses its critical and transformative function. In contrast, moral meaning is sustained in the openness, uncertainty, and creativity of lived experience. Norms do not precede life; they acquire meaning through action. Ethics thus remains an ongoing process, continuously reconstituted within human relations and concrete situations (Soni, 2024).

4*.3. Truth, Freedom, And Responsibility as the Core Structure of Moral Life*

Ethics is better understood as a lived process grounded in human experience rather than as a fixed system of abstract rules. Within this process, truth, freedom, and responsibility constitute the core structure of moral life.

Truth, in its ethical sense, is not merely the correspondence between statements and objective facts, but the capacity to confront reality without concealment or self-deception. In data-driven environments, truth is often reduced to measurable and verifiable outputs. However, moral truth emerges in lived situations where individuals acknowledge limitations, resist injustice, and remain accountable for their judgments. It is not an abstract property of information, but a commitment expressed through action in relation to others (Coppock, 2019).

Freedom is not defined by the abundance of available choices, but by the subject's capacity to take a stance within constraints. It involves the ability to resist what is unjust and to affirm what is meaningful, even when such actions entail risk. In technologically mediated contexts, where options are structured by algorithmic systems, freedom lies in the capacity to question, reinterpret, and refuse predefined pathways. Moral freedom thus depends on the preservation of reflective autonomy within conditions that tend toward automation (Eidenmüller et al., 2025; Klos et al., 2021).

Responsibility constitutes the depth of both truth and freedom. It binds individual action to its consequences for others and for the shared world. In increasingly complex and distributed systems, responsibility risks being diffused across networks of actors and processes. Nevertheless, ethical life requires that responsibility be re-grounded in the subject, who must recognize and assume the effects of action in concrete situations. It is through this recognition that moral agency is sustained, and the meaning of action preserved (Hameed et al., 2025).

These three dimensions are inseparable. Truth without freedom becomes conformity, freedom without responsibility becomes arbitrariness, and responsibility without truth loses its grounding. Their dynamic relationship forms the living structure through which moral life is continuously enacted in a technologically mediated world.

4.4. Emotional Intelligence and Moral Intuition in Ethical Behavior

Traditional rationalist models have often treated moral judgment as the product of abstract reasoning. However, advances in cognitive science and neuroscience suggest that ethical behavior is deeply rooted in emotional and intuitive processes. Moral life is not guided solely by logical evaluation but emerges from the interaction of cognition, emotion, and lived experience (Chen et al., 2020).

Emotional intelligence plays a central role in this process. The ability to perceive, interpret, and respond to the emotions of oneself and others enables individuals to recognize vulnerability and adjust their actions accordingly. Moral intuition, similarly, is not an irrational impulse but a form of understanding shaped through accumulated experience and social interaction. It allows individuals to navigate complex situations where explicit rules are insufficient (Elhaddad & Hamam, 2024).

In contexts increasingly mediated by artificial intelligence, these dimensions become even more significant. Algorithmic systems are designed to optimize decisions based on predefined criteria, often excluding the experiential and affective aspects of human life. While such systems can enhance efficiency, they cannot fully capture the depth of moral judgment, which depends on empathy, context-sensitivity, and relational awareness (Bataineh et al., 2024).

Ethical behavior, therefore, cannot be reduced to computational processes. It emerges from the integration of reasoning, emotion, and intuition within lived experience. The capacity to perceive others as concrete human beings rather than as abstract data points remains essential for maintaining moral depth. In this sense, emotional intelligence and moral intuition are not secondary to rationality, but foundational to ethical life.

5. CONCLUSION

This article analyzes the shift in the understanding of ethics in contemporary society, where data systems and artificial intelligence are increasingly involved in decision-making. The results of the study suggest that approaching ethics only as an abstract rule system or as a model of technical optimization is not enough to explain the depth of human behavior. Ethics is not merely the observance of existing norms but a way of life shaped by relationships with the world and with others. The analysis shows that ethical behavior emerges from the interaction among emotions, intuition, reasoning, and life experience, and is closely tied to the physical structure and intersubjective relationships of social life. In the context of technical systems that tend to standardize and quantify behavior, restoring the understanding of ethics as a life force becomes especially important. This allows the human role to be maintained as a subject capable of recognizing the consequences of actions and taking responsibility for others. From this perspective, ethics can be understood as the structure of life that governs the relationship among truth, freedom, and responsibility. These three elements form the basis for human beings to maintain the meaning of action in a world increasingly organized by technical systems. The reshaping of ethics in this direction contributes to opening up a humanistic approach to the challenges of the artificial intelligence era.

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