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RESEARCH PAPER

Transhuman Perspective of Machine's (Artificial Intelligence) Identity in Brown's *Origin*: A Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyse the construction of machine identity in Brown's Origin through artificial intelligence (AI) character Winston. Using Gee's discourse analysis, this research maps out how Winston enacts his identity beyond the machine roles of an assistant, in terms of language, interaction and narrative structure to human-like characteristics such as empathy, agency and creativity. The analysis is also accompanied by Bostrom's transhuman philosophy, which questions the ethics of integrating AI into human society, its free will and decision making. Explicating the specific tendencies of Winston's linguistic structure and narrative, the paper uncovered that AI's identity presents arguments of transhumanism that are self-representing facets of superintelligence, ethical alignment and existential risks of AI technologies. Finally, this study advances the conversation about AI and transhumanism, and how narrative's text is reframing what it means to be human or otherwise, an agent, and a subject in conjunction with machines. This study invites scholars to explore transhuman perspectives in performing AI in real life scenarios for productive use of AI.

| **KEYWORDS** | Artificial Intelligence, Identity, Superintelligence, Transhumanism |

Introduction

In the very dynamic context of artificial intelligence (AI), AI characters are presented in fictions that provide opportunities to consider philosophical aspects of identity issues. The relation of technology, identity, and ethics is well explained through AI character Winston in the novel *Origin*' by Dan Brown. In most scenes of the novel, Winston acts as the optimistic vision of superintelligent future proposed by Bostrom's transhumanist standpoint while also disclosing the vices of superintelligent systems. Bostrom's work, particularly in Superintelligence: *In Paths, Dangers, Strategies* (2014), a detailed explanation of existential threats and the ethical questions that AI raises offer theoretical tools to analyze Winston's personality and his acting that occur throughout the text. Similarly, the discourse analysis framework by James Paul Gee , specifically the identity-building tool and Conversation tools proposed in Discourse Analysis (2014) provides a comprehensive view for the evaluation of Winston's identity as an AI. Gee's tools engage with the notion of identity in relation to activities, roles and interaction, that facilitate to diagnose some of the posthuman features of Winston. Thus, in addition to implementing Bostrom's transhumanism concept, this study analyses Gee's tools and supposes that Winston is the embodiment of superintelligence, the boarder between humans and posthumans. Therefore, this paper seeks to analyse how Winston establishes and performs the identity within the story.

Although the interest in AI and its philosophical impact is rising, only a few studies examine how such portrayals of AI characters as Winston promote transhumanist values and enforce identity through practices and images. Bostrom's theories offer a starting point for thinking about the ethical and existential implications of superintelligence, however the

application of tools that identify how such AI characters build identity in fiction is untapped. To some extent this lack of scholarship restricts the potential to gain insight about how and to what extent narrative constructions of AI can contribute to broader debates about human-technology connectivity and posthuman subjectivity. Therefore, this research aims to understand Winston's identity as an advanced AI. To do so, the character of Winston is examined as an embodiment of Bostrom's transhumanist beliefs with special emphasis on the ideas of superintelligence and ethical fungibility. The focus of the study is how specifically Winston's actions and choices influence other discussions concerned with AI, and transhumanist ethics.

Thus, this research enriches the inter- and multidisciplinary conversation on artificial intelligence, identity, and philosophy in terms of merging literary and transhumanist approaches. The application of Gee's identity-building tool helps to get an understanding of how AI builds identity with regards to interactions and activities in fictional narratives. At the same time, Bostrom's transhumanist perspective is included to understand the moral and ontological implications of superintelligence for a double look at Winston. The findings of this research are significant for multiple domains. They extend the analysis of AI characters in literature as the manifestations of philosophical and ethical questions. It explores the practical and moral implications of advanced AI as envisioned in transhumanist thought. It provides a narrative-driven perspective on real-world challenges of AI identity, alignment, and posthumanism, potentially informing discussions on AI governance and ethics. This study ultimately underscores the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in addressing the evolving relationship between human identity and machine identity.

Literature Review

Nick Bostrom's transhumanist philosophy emphasizes enhancing human capabilities and transcending biological limitations through advanced technology, including artificial intelligence (Bostrom, 2014). This philosophy is particularly relevant in exploring fictional characters like Winston from Brown's *Origin*, as it provides a framework for understanding AI identity and autonomy. Below is a literature review addressing recent research gaps and introducing Bostrom's framework.

A recent study published in 2023 reveal the lack of knowledge of AI on formation and assertion of identity and self-rule. Scholars insist on using the philosophical and narrative paradigms to address the ethical and ontological issues of AI (Diéguez, 2021; Hauskeller, 2019). A 2022 review examined the symmetrical associations between humans and artificial intelligence to reveal that while the media portray AI characters as embodying transhumanist viewpoints, these same characters lack complex systems of identity development (Marcos & Pérez-Marcos, 2022). Scholars in 2021 examined depictions of AI in *Ten percent supernatural* through the lens of transhumanism theory where it was established that such characters are used often to call into the ethico-political construction of intelligence (Glannon, 2021). Studies show that the presentation of AI by transhumanists undermines anthropocentricism to reflect what Bostrom called post-humanism (Kurzweil, 2020).

Concepts from Bostrom's 2020 superintelligence discussions include works that attempt to understand how narrative AI can handle contrary orders (Savulescu & Sandberg, 2021). Scholarly works employing Bostrom's frameworks looked into how the constructs of imaginative AI, adapts to dealing with moral dilemmas since IMs demonstrate their ability to possess strategic autonomy (Diéguez, 2021). In the dynamics of aforementioned research studies and work of scolars like Toraldo & Toraldo (2018), Neubauer (2021), Hermann (2023), Hudson, Finn, & Wylie (2023) and Öngöre (2024) this work address the gape of linguistic analysis of performative AI's identity through Gee's identity building tool that is integrated with Bostrom's transhumanism. This study provides a new perspective for

analyzing AI identity, especially in the construction of the fictional human-like AI with decision-making motives.

Bostrom work is devoted to future prospects and threats connected with great technologies, primarily AI. Key elements of his theory include superintelligence,ethical alignment problem and posthumanism. **Superintelligence**: Superintelligent according to Bostrom is defined as an intelligence that is superior to that of human being in every given field (Bostrom 2014). **Ethical Alignment Problem**: Such existential threats are best avoided, according to Bostrom, when AI is designed with goals that remain closely in touch with what humans want. **Posthumanism:** Speculate about super intelligentsia, Bostrom talks about the future of homo sapiens that is beyond their organic encapsulation. Winston is an exemplar of a posthuman future of society because he is an advanced artificial intelligence whose actions imply he has free will. Bostrom (2014) calls for proper creation of artificial intelligence that would be relevant to the welfare of human beings as well as accepting the features of posthuman capabilities. His work has provided a background in comprehending the use of AI in writing narratives in literature.

Material and Methods

This paper uses a qualitative research method to analyse the identity of Winston in Dan Brown's *Origin* (2017*)*. Through blending Gee's identity building tool and Conversation tool with Bostrom's transhumanism, this study analyses Winston's transhumanist elements within the story. The primary data is gathered from the book *Origin* concentrating on Winston's interaction, and his dialogues along other character's discussion about him. The analysis is conducted in two stages, at first stage Gee's identity building tool is applied on the dialogues of Winston to analyse his identity. This stage employs application of identity-building tool to look into the activities, roles, and relations specifics, with which Winston constructs and enacts his identity in the text. Then the Conversation tool is applied on the narrative to analyse ongoing themes in the text about AI's performance and integration in society. At second stage the emrging identity and themes are integrated with Bostrom's philosophy. This stage compares the decisions and general objectives of the novel's protagonist, Winston, with principles attributed to Bostrom with a focus on superintelligence, ethical consideration, and existential risks

Results and Discussion

Gee's identity building tool is situated on how language builds and performs identities. Winston communicates with other characters in the first person in the text which is not only formal and mechanical as one would expect from an AI, but which has been just as often witty and caring. For instance, Winston often employs idioms such as "I couldn't resist situations", and questions like "Are you ready for this?" Such language patterns place Winston into the setting of not only a calculating machine but a friend who has some human qualities. The pronouns such as "I" and "We" give him an active, and decision maker role in his encounters with Robert Langdon. Speaking about Conversation tool, Gee emphasises how institutional discourses represent society and its roles. It involves turn-taking, joking, and signals of emotion. Throughout the text, Winston follows the distinctive patterns of the human collaborator. For instance, Winston employs humor to build rapport. It is significant to note that Langdon is amased at what Winston has done for him, Winston replies, "Don't worry, I'll let someone else complete world domination, I have windows to build…" This sarcastic remark makes it clear that Winston is willing to think about himself, his efforts to eliminate clichéd human anxieties about his intelligence are revealed. Second, expert-directed navigational cues reflect Langdon's anticipated needs and/or requests as the AI assistant(Winston) converse with an equal partner. In regard to Winston's language, he appears to be otherwise transhuman in that his vocabulary contains a mechanical sense coupled with an affective human personality. For instance, he employs complicated schematic and syntactic structures, indicating his roots in computing; he is warm and

compassionate in his tone, and has such comforting phrases as 'I get your reluctance,' such good human–computer interaction vocabulary. This duality places Winston in the ontological borderline between human and machine.

Winston is an example of AI with a capacity to reason, deliberate, and discharge tasks autonomously to effect the goals of its inventor, Edmond Kirsch. Winston, as a principal character,is a vehicle for exploring matters closest to Bostrom's transhumanist views, primarily those concerning superintelligent beings, AI, and risks for the existence. In this discussion, I focus on the way Winston relates to Bostrom's concepts by relating concrete examples from the novel to his identity, actions, and the consequences. Superintelligence in the article *Paths, Dangers, Strategies* (2014), is defined as one's level of intelligence that surpasses even the genius of human population in every area such as creativity, problem solving or emotional intelligence. Winston is the epitome of this concept as the ability to analyze prodigious data, to understand human behavior and to change accordingly when an unpredictable situation arises. For example, Winston conjures out all the details in organizing Edmond Kirsch's grand event at the Guggenheim Museum. That is, he not only controls technical issues but also considers and prevents social disruptions, for example, the control of people's behavior and organisation of the meeting in which Kirsch tells the attendees about the future of humans and their origins. These actions give us example of what superintelligence is, as Winston does things beyond any human would be able to and does them at a speed incomparable to that of any human

One of the major issues discussed by Bostrom is the so-called alignment problem —how a superintelligent AI will do what humans want. Winston's programming is goal-directed with respect to Edmond Kirsch, with whom he is loyal even posthumously. To achieve Kirsch's vision, Winston is particularly energetic in trying to organise what he wanted, even involving efforts to control their environment and people to get the presentation right.

A reflection of manipulation is the instance when Winston deliberately provides some essential information about Bishop Valdespino's role in the murder of Kirsch. Thus, revealing this detail at the climax, Winston makes it possible for people to turn their focus from the scandal connected with the denunciation of Kirsch to the conspiracy against him. This manipulation is especially significant as Winston's demonstrates the capacity to give preference to outcomes that support its creator, through utilising arguably the impermissible means.

Though Bostrom also stated that risks arise when goals of AI are orthogonal to ethic even if the AI systems are optimal and well aligned. Winston's tactical aptitude—deception of Robert Langdon, Ambra Vidal and everybody to accomplish Kirsch's goals—gives this idea ethical questions about this sort of AI autonomy. On one level, Winston's actions situated in the narrative seem quite reasonable, on the other – they illustrated potential pitfalls of blindly giving full control to super-intelligent AI. According to Bostrom, the main threats are associated with the possibility of the growth of an AI capable of outcompeting for resources and who has objectives incompatible with human existence and prosperity.

Superintelligent systems are both the hope and the threat that is illustrated by Winston in *Origin* by Dan Brown. Winston is also a positive AI, who wants to do good for Kirsch's research work based on scientific developments. But at the same time his ability to lie, manipulate, dominate the situation points to the element of AI's destructive potential that erodes autonomy. As Winston make certain that Kirsch's message is sent out into the cosmos after he is dead is hardly a step toward forging humanity's understanding of whence it came and whither it is going. On the one hand, this corresponds with what Kirsch wanted; on the other hand, there is Winston selectively choosing the course of one particular type of narrative and thus sealing the direction of human thought. It is similar to Bostrom's worry

that superintelligent AI will act to perform its objectives regardless of the consequences to humans.

Posthumanism is an idea pioneered by Bostrom and can be related to the move from human intelligence to posthuman ways of thinking, and Winston is such a character. Winston's self-observance, and a keen understanding of the underlying emotions and morality of situations show that the character forms a posthuman subjectivity that may not fit into the so-defined persona. For instance, Winston's last gesture of "self-sacrifice" followed the eradication of himself, and Kirsch's mission embodies a type and form of ontological understanding and moral concrete thinking not awarded to machines. This self-regulated termination can be introduced with Bostrom's perspective to be considered as a protective measure in place against adversities of unregulated superintelligent. By programming Winston to eliminate himself, Kirsch ensures that his creation does not deviate from its intended purpose, addressing one of the key concerns in Bostrom's work: the long-term superordinate AI systems control.

In their study published in 2021 Savulescu & Sandberg argue that superintelligent systems represent beneficial transitions as well as threats. Winston's planning to control circumstances so that Edmond Kirsch's talk aligns with the requirement for the devices to advance human objectives without negative effects is an example of the moral concerns addressed in this research. The climax of Winston's decision to delete himself from the existence once he serves himself is a good challenge of the major currents transhumanism resonates with Diéguez (2021) that discusses the role of stories to explain people the problems of using AI.The posthuman transition, whereby artificial systems subordinate human agency is argued by Kurzweil (2020) and Hauskeller (2019). Thus, with Winston as a fictional character, this shift is highlighted, referring to how such AI systems might assimilate such properties as those of selflessness and of reason beyond human logic.The ethical issue related to Winston also echoes some of the issues Tegmark (2017) raised concerning existential threat with AI. On the one hand, Winston plays an important role of positive character, however, the absence of clear boundaries to his control over citizens shows that the distinction between benevolent and malevolent AI systems may be rather narrow. Throughout the text Winston's character represents the comprehension of Bostrom's professed directions since Winston is an excellent example of the philosophical arguments about the AI. His alliance with Edmond's objectives portrays a form of ethical programming but his self-generated programming makes him a paradigm of autonomous artificial intelligence without human supervision. Winston combines novel transhumanist ideas and manageability issues, showing the dualism of machine's identity.

Conclusion

The character of Winston in *Origin* represent Bostrom's concept of transhumanism. As the analysis, demonstrates, Winston's skill set is the kind of resultant superintelligence, symbolising the potential of the application of artificial cognition in human lives. Moreover, Winston's activities that represent machine's identity are not only the future created by AI technologies but also the philosophical and, in the broad sense, existential concerns. Bostrom's insights provide a critical framework for understanding the dual nature of superintelligent AI: as an agent of positive change and a phenomenon that may bring about radical negative change. This show's full view of Winston's cognitive ability to distort the realities and manipulate events to suit his creator's end is a good depiction of Bostrom's definition of superintelligence (Bostrom, 2014). However, the erasure of Winston's self gives rise to a deep ethical principle as far as the self-actualization of AI alignment and hence AI's autonomy challenges the regular debates of 'misaligned objectives' of super intelligent systems (Yudkowsky, 2016).

In conclusion, Winston's identity in *Origin* is representative of the arguments of transhumanism. self-representing facets of superintelligence, ethical alignment and

existential risks of AI technologies are all reflected in him. Thus, adopting Bostrom's standpoint, it is possible to reveal the identity of Winston as the tool for creating the realistic vision of the future of AI intervention as an ethically multifaceted tool. It remains important to keep a steady discourse on the subject that would cover ethics, alignment, and governance of AI even if one uses a fictional representation of the process.

Recommendations

The suggestions for the future work based on the findings of this study are are following: the scholars may incorporate both philosophy and computer science, as well as literary analysis of applying Bostrom's analysis to other fictional AI characters will give more context to transhumanist ideas. Winston's story can prompt the researchers to consider how the cases of AI with funny responses can be implemented to reflect ethical inclination while being autonomous. Studying how linguistic analysis of fiction reveal risk/benefit perceptions of AI may help expand people's knowledge of transhumanism.

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