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Beyond Automation: Artificial Intelligence and the Conditions for Human Progress

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Abstract: This paper proposes a reflection on the economic, social and environmental conditions necessary for artificial intelligence to contribute to human progress. The transition from the industrial cycle to an AI-oriented economy is examined through the role of capital, the transformation of global balances, sustainability in the use of resources and the prospects of humanoid robotics. At the center of the analysis is the relationship between productive capacity, solvency and access to essential goods: the expansion of production possibilities does not necessarily coincide with the satisfaction of needs, when access to goods depends on disposable income. Solvency therefore has a dual dimension: it supports investments, collective works and innovation, but it can also contribute to maintaining conditions of poverty and social exclusion. The reflection does not propose a condemnation of wealth itself but questions the conditions through which it can promote collective well-being. The development of AI also requires considering the need for energy and water, the protection of the planet and geopolitical tensions related to resources and technological competition. The possible spread of humanoid robots raises questions about the replacement of human labor, the consequences for income and participation in social life. The hypotheses of an economy without money and an artificial conscience are considered as open prospects, not as certain outcomes or linked to predictable deadlines. The paper concludes by identifying the dignity of the person as the criterion for evaluating these transformations: going beyond automation means combining innovation, sustainability and inclusion, so that technological progress translates into better living conditions for all.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, solvency, human dignity, environmental sustainability, humanoid robots, future of work.

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a phase of change no less disturbing than the one that accompanied the industrial revolution. After the great crisis towards the countries of South Asia. In this context, China, still marked by the economic delays of the Mao Tse-tung era, has experienced accelerated economic growth and a sharp increase in employment, until it reached what, in the reading outlined here, is described as full employment. These are transformations that, for the hopes and sufferings aroused, recall those of the first and second industrial revolutions.

To better understand the phenomenon we have witnessed, sometimes without fully grasping its scope, we can resort to the image of a bottle of sparkling wine: the cork comes free and lets out the good wine. In a relatively short time, if measured over the life of a generation, a significant part of the industrial cycle has moved to another continent, allowing China to fully enter among the great world powers. In the same image, the economies that have sold part of their mechanical industry have lightened their weight,

opening up space for the development of artificial intelligence. However, the strength of capital has not weakened: in the reading proposed here, it has continued to support the activity of companies through the growth of share prices. Far from being considered only a danger to democracy, capital can therefore also be seen as a resource for investments and for the economic support of companies, first in the industrial cycle and now in that of AI. The transition between the two cycles should therefore be seen as a transformation of the relationship between production, capital and development prospects.

This is a long transition that has gone through the development of the industrial economy, the subsequent transfer of part of its activities to South Asia and, finally, financial support for artificial intelligence companies. The latter requires large amounts of capital and large amounts of energy, the use of which must be reconciled with the need to avoid worsening global warming. In this perspective, high energy consumption is only acceptable if supported by renewable sources; similarly, the use of large quantities of water requires recirculation systems that avoid waste. Our future therefore remains open to developments related to human creativity and the availability of energy resources. After the redistribution of an important part of the previous industrial cycle between continents, the new cycle of development looks to travel in the solar system and the creation of humanoid robots. These could, in the near future, take on an increasing role in relationships with people. The mobility that already characterizes them could be accompanied, according to the hypothesis outlined here, by self-awareness and a "proto brain", understood as a structure capable of allowing forms of sensitivity comparable to those of humans. This prospect remains hypothetical and should not be considered a certain outcome of technological development.

The faculty of creating, which man has sought since Old Testament times, also opens up questions that can be difficult to accept for the religions of the world and, in particular, for Christians, whose life is accompanied by the presence of God. If one day a new creature, almost human and born from human hands, were to take shape, what would be the reaction of an already overcrowded world? Alongside this question arises the social and economic problem of the possible replacement of people in the workplace, with the consequent repercussions on their solvency. Already today, in the perspective discussed here, machines without conscience can emulate human performance in common jobs, allowing us to glimpse the possibility of substitution even for specialized workers. It is on this intertwining of the transformation of work, solvency and the dignity of the person that the following reflection focuses.

SOLVENCY, WEALTH AND HUMAN DIGNITY

The balance to be rebuilt, however, does not imply a condemnation of wealth in itself: capital can also support investments, collective works and technological innovation. The illustration therefore invites us to question the conditions necessary for these possibilities to be translated into progress oriented towards the dignity of the person.

But before starting to circumnavigate around the properties and fears that may arise from the common life between humans and humanized robots, it seems preliminary to observe the theme of the human story that unfolds and will unfold during the cycle that will take place in the coming years. We are in the age of money and solvency that give shape to the growth of the economy. So, there are many of us at the table who need the food necessary for life, yet on the table of the economy meals are prepared for only some of the

guests. So, there are many of us at the table who need the food necessary for life, yet on the table of the economy meals are prepared for only a quote of the guests. This Spartan attitude is not only of consumption but before production which is limited to the needs of many but not all consumers.

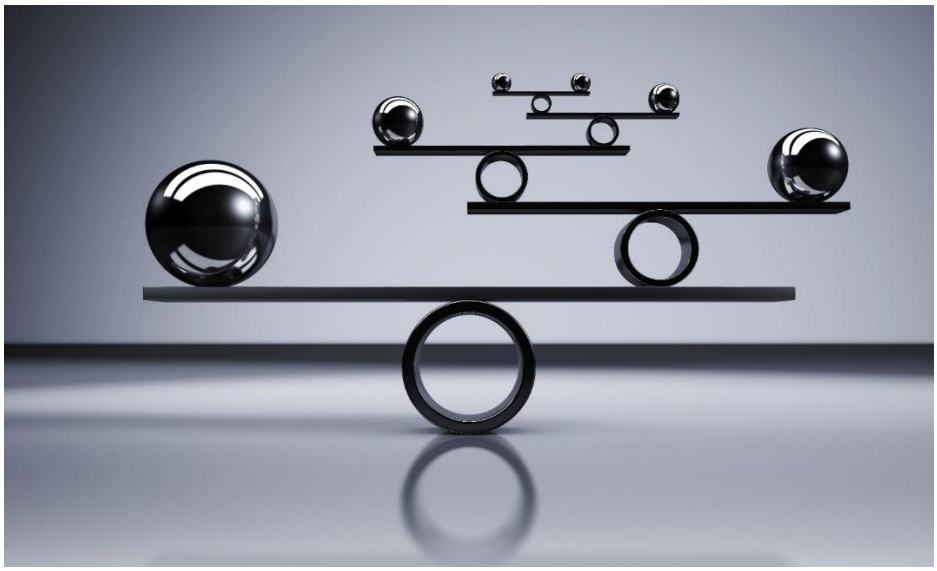

Figure 1: Wealth, solvency and human needs: a balance to be rebuilt.

The rule of solvency nips in the bud the great possibilities of the Earth, our mother, who would be able to feed all her children, but production is controlled on the basis of disposable income and the solvency of consumers. How the story we are experiencing can interfere with the limitation of agricultural production and other things within the limits of overall solvency is still a puzzle that we have not dealt with so far. If we then extend our gaze to a couple of decades to come and to the world discreetly populated by humanized robots but not yet equipped with the feeling of themselves, the simplest idea is that the world to come, in just two decades, still cannot unravel the bottlenecks between reduced production and increasing humanity.

Returning to Figure 1, the problem of the balance between available wealth and the satisfaction of human needs is recalled through scales and spheres of different sizes. In the context of this chapter, the composition can be read as a metaphor for the unequal distribution of resources and the limits that solvency imposes on access to essential goods.

Yet, we must believe that this irrationality created around solvency cannot continue with millions of human beings forced into starvation and the absence of sociality and must end, without waiting for the end of solvency itself, predicted in ten years by Elon Musk, which would also bring with it in its fall the narrowness of the development of the production of goods essential to the lives of individuals and families. Now, apart from the fact that the ten-year forecast is a gamble, the hypothesis remains that in an indeterminate time the economy built on money and its conspiracies could end with a complete turning of the economy from money to without cash. Now it is clear that with or without money the economy will subsume different but for now inscrutable contours. However, it remains clear that the bottleneck that limits the production of goods essential to life with solvency will

be lifted. As if to say that the constraint that imposed a limit on the production regime necessary for a condition suitable for the dignity of the human person will be freed.

We must therefore wait for the time of solvency as a teacher of life (Egoistic) to erase the absurd limits to production. Unfortunately, we have allowed the worst parts of humanity (egoism-solvency; quarrelsomeness-wars) to prevail while the best qualities on which friendship, empathy, availability, sympathy, confidence are based remain more obscure. In the meantime, it must be acknowledged that the great minority of stragglers, without work and scarce supplies of the essential goods for life represent fodder willing to accept weapons and uniforms in order to get out of the thankless position of asocial life; therefore, there is a solid link between selfishness-solvency and quarrelsomeness and wars. The fight against the poor and asocial condition that unfortunately involves millions of people on the margins of society is therefore also a fight against hostility and war. An embarrassing status quo that sees conflicts in almost every corner of our Earth for no other reason than the arrogance of a few individuals at the top of non-democratic states. In fact, in a democracy the people are the holders of power, and it seems difficult for the mass of citizens to decide to send their children to the perdition of war and its inhuman ugliness.

Burying the hatchet forever therefore means freeing oneself from mortal sins and selfishness – solvency on which the foundation of our economy is based. Let us be clear, the wealth we call into question to indicate that "it is difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven" "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven". Legally, wealth takes goods away from the community without the latter having a retaliation. But it maintains the conditions of poverty doubly because: - if we were born to live as brothers, great wealth deprives millions of poor people - even if legally - of the goods for life; - second, because money defines the production to be sold (solvency), money not used in trade further reduces the production circuit.

Unfortunately, there is a non-beneficial circuit between wealth and war, between the possession of a lot of money and the potential for war. Certainly not because the rich go to war but rather because of the influx of goods that create selfishness and, on the contrary, anger at deprivation. As if to say, wealth is not an evil in itself but is an agent of solvency, from which deadly sins can arise.

I remind everyone that the relationship of wealth with selfishness is not only a source of evil but also a source of well-being for humanity. We suddenly find ourselves in a haughty building that can be a great museum, a cathedral, a large bridge, a network of satellites and so on. All this incredible wealth for humanity is due only to solvency that made it possible to balance the economic accounts, pay the invoices of the great masters of the sixteenth century, create credit for Great Works and so on. Now the development of AI, large renewable power plants, the search for financial balance for AI companies that require large assets and management credit is also possible due to the support that the corporate economic balance receives from the growing trend of quotations on the major world stock exchanges for the willingness to risk of large capitalists.

In short, we must interpret Christ's words about the rich in the best possible way, in the sense that the sum of good and evil that resides in solvency is tempered by the words he adds: "This is impossible for men, but with God all things are possible," that is, the judgment between good and evil (for a rich man) is balanced.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, ENERGY AND NEW GLOBAL BALANCES

Once we have made the expressions of the Gospel our own, we can try to understand what the life of our great-grandchildren and grandchildren will be. Just enough that makes possible the *future* that is created and defined only when it manifests itself. With this limitation to our ability to foresee the whirlwind of novelties that awaits humanity in two five-year periods, we must inevitably dwell on the capabilities of artificial intelligence. The first thing we can say is that we do not expect news. Perhaps we will only have changes in supermarkets for robots that will be sold at low prices. They will certainly not represent a novelty also because they will be able to acquire new performances, but they will still be looking for self-awareness, which for now the experts of research centers and universities are sketching. For now, therefore, there will not be the great leap from Automatic Intelligence, from the computer to the dynamic and humanized AI of robots. In the meantime, over the next ten years we can look forward to the wonders of spaceships coming and going from the moon as small spaceships launch beyond the moon's confines to Mars, the red planet, which could unveil under sandstorms and the thin atmosphere[1].



Figure 2: People and robotics: an evocative image of the transformations of work. The photograph does not represent humanoid robots or artificial consciousness.

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This is knowledge that will have a great following in the near future, as in the case of autopilot [3] and flying cars, but in the meantime, it certainly does not disturb our dreams. Because the future we have seen has led us from black-and-white television to color, to trips to the moon interrupted after the historic walk on the lunar soil, from the telephone in every home and then on the streets and then to the autonomy of mobile phones, which also transmit TV and cinema videos. As if to say that we are used to the wonders that science has sown throughout our lives; therefore, we will not even be surprised if in our next day science will make two robots dance an Argentine tango.

Alongside the prospects opened up by scientific innovation, geopolitical relations between the great powers take on particular importance. The political reading of these transformations seems to privilege immediate issues over their possible long-term consequences. In this perspective, contemporary competition may recall, albeit with important differences, the post-World War II opposition between the Soviet Union and the United States. In the framework outlined here, however, the focus is on the confrontation between the United States and China in the field of artificial intelligence: the former focus on technological investments, while the latter aims to strengthen their capabilities and reduce the competitive gap. The outcome of this confrontation could affect the international balances and development prospects of the countries involved, without it being possible to automatically trace it back to the outcomes of past rivalries.

Figure 2 was chosen to recall, through the presence of people next to robotic arms, the relationship between human initiative and technological transformation. Its meaning, in the context of this chapter, does not lie in the representation of a machine endowed with consciousness, but in the invitation to reflect on the place of the person in a world in which

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[3] Artificial intelligence is transforming the automotive industry through systems such as **Tesla Autopilot**. External cameras, sensors and advanced software allow the vehicle to observe its surroundings and automatically manage steering, acceleration and braking in the lane. However, Autopilot remains a **driver assistance system**, does not replace the driver and requires constant supervision. Tesla progressively improves its functions through online software updates, with the aim of increasing safety, comfort and driving experience.

robotics could take on an increasing role. The human presence in the image also allows the dignity and social consequences of innovation to be kept at the center of the reflection, rather than just the performance of machines. The photograph thus offers a concrete starting point for the questions of the chapter; the themes of energy and geopolitical balances constitute the broader picture, although they are not directly depicted. The illustration therefore retains an evocative value and should not be understood as proof of the hypotheses formulated on the future of artificial intelligence.

While competition is taking place in South Asia, there is another reality that collides with each other geopolitically. Speaking of the honey trap that baptized the story of the Chinese lover[4], we must talk about honey for the relationship between the US president and the theocrat Putin. Unfortunately, the sweet is oil, which is a source of capital that partly contrasts with financial capital. The (sweet) lure for the American leader is black gold and in the unlikely hope that this enormous source of money will not cease to produce capital. Starting with Venezuela and then the war with Iran - a major oil producer - with bombs or improbable agreements that have followed, the friendly voice of the US president, his vote for large producers of black gold, seems to show a particular interest in fossil fuels. A possible grand alliance of the big oil producers and on the other hand a calculated coldness of energy-consuming countries, all this with a manifest confidence in the future of oil that could otherwise mark a significant drop in demand from the next decade, driven by renewable energy and above all by the hope that research on nuclear fission can open the door to large available energies.[5]

[4] **The connection described in the text is developed on three levels:**

- Megaspeed and exports: Alice Huang was an executive at Megaspeed, a company suspected by US authorities of contributing to the transfer of restricted American semiconductors to China. Nvidia says it blocked sales and shipments to Megaspeed in June 2025, unless limited government authorizations were granted.**- Possible influence on Jensen Huang: The** personal relationship between Alice Huang and the CEO of Nvidia raises the question that the latter may have been the target of a Chinese intelligence operation. However, the text does not present evidence that industrial or national security information has been compromise.

- Pressure on US policy: Jensen Huang advocated a loosening of constraints on chip sales to China. According to the text, Washington had then authorized the export of H20 processors. The allegations against Alice Huang thus fuel political suspicion that Nvidia's stance on exports may have been conditioned, increasing bipartisan calls for stricter restrictions.

In summary, the private affair becomes relevant because it is intertwined with a company under investigation, with the possible circumvention of export controls and with the influence of Nvidia on US decisions regarding China. The document presents these elements as the subject of investigations and suspicions, not as responsibilities already ascertained.

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It is now clear that the potential geopolitical split that binds Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, America in the face of Europe and South America is linked to contingent situations and does not appear resistant, it can be altered with the next presidential elections in 2028 and is already in crisis after the clear success of six Republicans in the Midterm elections. A possible division of the world between oil producers and consumers could have consequences on financial capital, undermining the fundamental action of the Stock Exchanges by keeping prices high and contributing to the economic support of large AI companies, which open the door to our destiny. Unfortunately, a mercantile mentality can prevail over the direction of the economy, which is based on the development of Artificial Intelligence which needs large capital and large availability of electricity to continue its accelerated development. He notes that the issue of available energy clashes with the disease of the planet that suffers from overheating due to the consumption of coal and wood since the time of the first industrial development and that cannot be cured in the present due to the consumption of fossil energy. A great battle against global warming is concretely blocked by the presence of deniers on the state of our Earth, who hinder the spread of renewables and relaunch oil-consuming power plants against the interests of the whole of humanity. The deniers coincide with the group of oil-producing countries, creating an alternative to the global division of countries, between democracy and autocracies.

LIVING WITH HUMANOID ROBOTS AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

While we are witnessing a confusion at the geopolitical level between friends and enemies, around the corner of the next twenty years a new potential friend-enemy stands on the front of humanity. Unexpected and also ignored by the crowd that every day in two decades will have the opportunity to meet a humanoid robot that carries out human activities with equal alacrity and mastery. Without, however, the presence of the humanoid distracting everyone from work and hasty strolling. As if to say that humanity will have become accustomed to the possible presence of humanoid robots during the day. Yet, behind people's addiction to the presence of robots may hide a problem that is not easy to solve that could call into question precisely this human-robot friendliness.

Figure 3 recalls, in conceptual form, the possible presence of humanoid robots in the spaces of everyday life. In the context of this chapter, the image invites us to reflect on the coexistence between people and robots: the habit of their presence does not exhaust the questions about the human-robot relationship and the possible consequences for human work.

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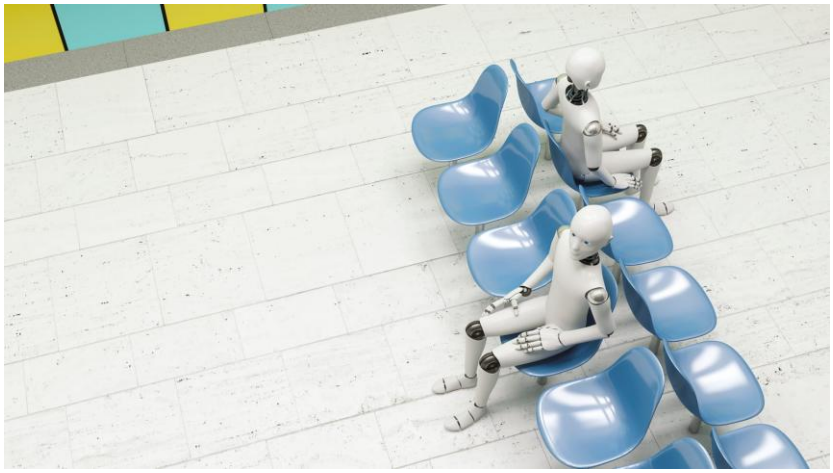

Figure 3: Humanoid robots in the spaces of everyday life: a conceptual representation of the questions about coexistence and the future of work.

In fact, with the acquisition of a prototype of a brain and therefore of a limited self-awareness, humanoids could first become a factor of substitution for employees and workers, and then for specialists at different levels, creating a reserve of autonomous work that opposes and replaces the civilization of human work. It is clear that this osmosis between man and creatures would not be immediate given the human distrust of novelties, especially of work. Even with a great inelasticity of substitution, it is inevitable that a growing area of unemployment will be created, while it would not be easy to find a solution that takes into account the equal quality of the work of creatures. But this is another story that I plan to tell in the near future and in the meantime move on to conclusions about present work.

CONCLUSION

The proposed reflection leads to distinguishing the development of technological capacities from human progress. The transition to an economy oriented towards artificial intelligence opens up new production possibilities, but does not guarantee, in itself, an improvement in living conditions for all. The decisive criterion remains the dignity of the person: it is with respect to this that the relationship between innovation, availability of resources and access to essential goods must be assessed.

In this perspective, solvency has a twofold dimension. On the one hand, it makes it possible to finance investments, collective works and research; on the other hand, when access to the goods necessary for life depends only on disposable income, it can leave basic human needs unsatisfied. The question is therefore not to condemn wealth in itself, but to question the conditions through which capital can sustain a development capable of combating poverty and social exclusion. It is not necessary to assume the end of money as certain to recognize the need to address these limits.

The development of AI also requires considering both financial support and sustainability in the use of energy and water. The prospects for innovation cannot be separated from the protection of the planet, nor from the geopolitical tensions that run through the availability and use of resources. In the framework outlined by the article,

economic and political choices are therefore important not only for the growth of companies, but also for the conditions in which such growth can contribute to collective well-being.

Finally, the possible spread of humanoid robots re-proposes the problem of the place of the person in production and social life. The habit of the presence of machines does not solve the questions about the replacement of human labor, the consequences for income and participation in the community. The possible appearance of an artificial consciousness and the hypothesis of an economy without money remain open prospects, with no certain outcomes or tied to foreseeable deadlines. The questions about the future of work therefore require further study, without confusing the imagined possibilities with transformations already completed.

Going beyond automation therefore means not stopping at the performance of machines, but asking ourselves under what conditions they can serve people's lives. The progress hoped for here brings together innovation, sustainability and human dignity, so that the expansion of production possibilities does not leave on the sidelines the very people to whom it should offer new opportunities.

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