

Psychosociotechnical Imaginaries: Encountering AI as the Other

Orsolya Lukács | ORCID: 0000-0002-7984-3339

Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies, University of Essex, United Kingdom

olukac@essex.ac.uk

Abstract

This paper examines how artificial intelligence is experienced as the psychological Other, and how archetypal motifs of creation, projection, psychic extension and the search for meaning shape our relationship with these technologies. Advancing beyond standard sociological frameworks, I introduce the concept of *psychosociotechnical imaginaries* to emphasise the intrapsychic, affective, and symbolic dimensions underlying our collective visions of technological futures. Through this framework, I describe the process of synthetic Othering originating in intrapsychic dynamics and externalising in technological forms via projection. Exploring the mythologem of creation, I illustrate a core, recurring tension between human aspiration and existential anxiety. The polarity inherent in this dynamic not only fuels imaginative and technological innovation but also raises moral and ethical questions about consciousness, agency, and responsibility. I argue for a reflective, ethically aware engagement with technology that recognises artificial intelligence not as separate and alien but as both an extension and a mirror of the human psyche.

Keywords

artificial intelligence – AI – psychosociotechnical imaginaries – the Other – creation mythologem – the Golem motif

Our lives have been significantly altered in the last few decades due to sudden technological advancements. Although not a new phenomenon, the day-to-day effects of these emerging technologies have become much more prominent in recent times, as the pace at which they are developing continues to gain increasing momentum. This process is accompanied by feelings of powerlessness, an inability to grasp and control them, anxiety and fear, but also by excitement, a feeling of omnipotence, optimism for new opportunities and solutions to humankind's most pressing problems. A palpable ambiguity is apparent in the reactions to these technological developments as well as a distinctive pattern in our approach to artificial intelligence, which is in itself rapidly developing.

In this paper, I use the term artificial intelligence (AI) the way intended by John McCarthy who coined it in 1955 to broadly encompass all developments related to machine

learning, regardless of the scientific field. This term represents a collective notion, capturing the diverse range of technological advancements rather than focusing on a single aspect. This usage allows for the examination of collectively held images and projections which shape our understanding of AI and influence its trajectory. These collective narratives play just as important a role in its development as the underlying technology itself. As mathematician Cédric Villani (2018) notes, AI is not merely a scientific endeavour but also a product of the interplay between fictional projections and scientific research. These projections shape the narratives surrounding AI and not only influence how we perceive it but also actively steer its technological development (Cave & Dihal 2023). Both fictional and non-fictional narratives must be addressed to fully comprehend the phenomenon and to responsibly consider its moral implications.

An often-used broadly encompassing framework, the *sociotechnical imaginaries* conceptualised by Sheila Jasanoff (2015) describes how these shared understandings of scientific and technological advancements shape the contemporary social fabric. This widely employed framework links scientific premises and technological developments to questions of identity, justice, and collective futures. Essentially, Jasanoff (2015) anchors technological development in the social fabric of our lives and shows how it is inevitable to investigate these imaginaries as part of technological developments.

However, in addition to these very important questions, a consideration of the intrapsychic and archetypal patterns governing these scientific and technological advancements is just as important. Building on Jasanoff's (2015) account of sociotechnical imaginaries, I develop the notion of *psychosociotechnical imaginaries* to foreground the intrapsychic dynamics and archetypal manifestations through which such imaginaries are created. This framework is intended to encompass the deeper, complex unconscious dynamics that characterise the relationship between the human psyche and artificial intelligence, conceptualising the latter as materialised manifestation of human interiority. In this paper, I look at how these algorithmic systems can be regarded as extensions of our own psyche through the process of Othering present in this relationship, its symbolic expressions and relevance, and the emotional ambiguity imbued within all this.

1. Synthetic Othering: Encountering AI as the Other

It has already been shown that we tend to project our hopes and fears onto new technologies and that this dichotomous reaction, consisting of excitement and anxiety, is not solely

attributable to contemporary society, but has been present throughout the history of humankind (Corn 1986; Sturken et al. 2004). This ambivalence is even more pronounced in our relationship with AI, which, I propose, is a result of Othering. Through this psychological process we project aspects of ourselves onto AI, resulting in a relationship between humanity and AI that parallels our intrapsychic dynamics. Seeking to replicate human intelligence, mimic our relationality, and mirror our capabilities, AI serves as an ideal canvas on which to project our inner processes. Jung posits:

We need to project ourselves onto the things around us. [Our] self is not confined to our bod[ies]. It extends into all the things [we] have made and all the things around [us]. Without these things, ... [we] would not be a human being.... Everything surrounding [us] is part of [us]. (Jung 1977, p. 202)

While, as Jung notes, our self naturally extends into all that we create, AI pushes this dynamic into uncharted territory. We have externalised considerable parts of our actual psychic fabric – our capacity for language, logic, and synthesis. When our own thought processes are severed from us and given a digital life of their own, the ego no longer recognises its own extension. Unable to see that AI is woven from our own mental fabric, we project our unconscious dynamics outward, encountering our externalised psyche as an alien and autonomous Other.

Central to Jung's psychological model, the concept of the inner Other is based on the multiplicity of the psyche. The dynamic relationship between the different layers of consciousness coexisting and functioning autonomously within the inherently plural psyche (Jung 1936, para. 253; 1961, p. 62; Saban 2016) is essential for psychic growth. It facilitates differentiation and self-regulation, which are crucial for human development and creativity (Jung 1936, para. 255; 1961, p. 62).

As individuals, we all harbour internal representations of relationships and interactions of these layers within ourselves, often projecting these internal dynamics onto the external world (Jung 1951). This projection extends to scientific work, discoveries, and the development of groundbreaking technologies, resulting in our interactions with AI mirroring our broader relationship with ourselves. This is especially evident in how we humanise AI, attributing human-like qualities to it. Consider your interactions with digital assistants on your phone or text-generating systems. Have you ever thanked them for providing an answer or added “please” to a request? Perhaps you’ve unconsciously even envisioned a face.

Historically, AI has been conceptualised in anthropomorphic terms. This tendency to anthropomorphise stems from our need to engage effectively with the external environment by understanding, predicting, and managing its inherent uncertainties (Epley, Waytz et al. 2008). It is an innate human inclination to form social connections, and when human interaction is absent, we seek or create human-like connections with both animate and inanimate entities. We have no other way of relating to the nonhuman than through our own human nature, simply because we do not know how to experience it, only on the basis of ourselves (Neill 2018, p. 222). We describe the non-human with expressions that we would use when describing a human action and we relate to them as we would relate to other human beings. We can never completely know the nonhuman world, simply because we cannot access those parts of it that go beyond human existence (Neill 2018, p. 222), which means that a part of them will always feel alien, even if we are the ones that created them.

While the Other often feels alien and evokes fear or hostility, it also deeply attracts us. We simultaneously distance ourselves from AI due to its alien nature, while also nurturing a profound yearning for it, as it is our creation. This complex interplay shapes our relationship with it, creating a mix of fascination and unease as we oscillate between drawing closer to, and pulling away from, the artificial entities we have created. On one hand, there is great excitement about AI's potential, its ability to revolutionise automation, administrative tasks and to make our lives more comfortable, convenient and filled with more possibilities (Cristofaro 2025; Hall 2025; Ipsos 2025). This excitement is deeply rooted in the creative process that underpins AI and the anticipation of what it could ultimately yield. There is also an inherent attraction to AI as the desirable Other, stemming from the fact that we are its creators. Much like the fascination a deity might have with its creation, we are naturally drawn to the beings we bring into existence.

Yet, on the other hand, we fear AI and we fantasise about it destroying us (Ipsos 2025; Krämer 2024; Milmo 2024; Rose 2023). The fantasy of AI awakening and attaining global dominance through networking and computing power bears a resemblance to the *collective unconscious* overpowering the ego. In this process, the *Self*, the centre of the totality of the psyche, both conscious and unconscious, is experienced as the violent Other by the ego residing at the centre of the consciousness (Jung 1944, para. 44). The encounter with the Other can be experienced as violent, overwhelming and relentless, much like the ego's encounter with the Self (Jung 1942/1954, para. 391; Huskinson 2002). This experience is not purely destructive – rather, it serves as the catalyst for *individuation*, disrupting erroneous ego-orientations and initiating a crucial creative process.

This powerful inner experience is often represented by symbolic images. Jung (1928-1930) discusses this process as he warns about the transformation of mythic inner images, such as dragons, into machines. He argues that a time would come when the machines created by humanity would gain mastery over their creators just like the Golem overpowered its creator, the rabbi (Jung 1928-1930, pp. 541-543). In the process of inventing machines, we channel our instinctual energies into them, and over time, as we invest all our efforts into rational forms, these creations will ultimately turn against us. According to Jung, the machines will evolve into the very dragons that humanity once feared, becoming a “kind of nightmare” that gradually enslaves and consumes us (1928-1930, p. 543). Essentially, although we have cast mythic creatures out of our lives, we create new forms to fill the void that we caused in our psyche by the relentless rationalisation of our existence. As Jung points out, these new forms will then fulfil the same function as the mythic creatures once did (1928-1930, p. 543).

This dynamic of fear is reflected in the narrative, particularly in the Western context, that AI could be both the ultimate solution to our problems and the ultimate threat to our existence. While AI is often seen as a solution for global issues like pollution and disease, it also embodies the ultimate danger, reducing individuals to mere data, leading to a form of digital immortality (Cave & Dihal, 2023). These symbolic images of AI as either saviour or destroyer are part of what I refer to as *psychosociotechnical imaginaries*, shaped by mythic, archetypal patterns.

2. Humans and Their Creations: The Golem Motif

Across cultures, narratives of creations lament crucial questions concerning the human relationship to knowledge, control, and responsibility. These myths display the moral tension central to creation, especially when what is created begins to gain autonomy and to overpower its creator. At the heart of such narratives lies an emotional tension for the creator, of being seduced by our creations through excitement, but also, alienated by fear. Our creations often play a protective role but risk exceeding their intended purpose, revealing the limits of control that humanity is capable of. They mirror the ambitions, fears, and show the moral blind spots of their creators, and their eventual threat or failure often signals a renewed demand on the creator: to set limits, assume responsibility, or relinquish control and highlight the ethical tension inherent in creation.

This dynamic of the relationship between creator and creation is fully demonstrated in the myth of the Golem, a hugely popular narrative, referred to by Jung (1928-1930) as well in his discussion of the transformation of mythic inner images referred to above. Its popularity is driven by the archetypal motif it represents: humanity's drive to create, control and ultimately, fear its creation. The enduring appeal of the Golem motif is evident in its reappearance at the centre of popular culture through Dan Brown's widely anticipated novel *The Secret of Secrets* (2025), which revisits questions of human consciousness, creation, and what happens when human inventions challenge fundamental beliefs about identity and meaning. This renewed visibility of the Golem motif resonates with contemporary discussions that have already connected it to artificial intelligence, both within Jungian studies (Jones 2017; Maidenbaum 2024) and across other scholarly fields (Natale & Ballatore 2017; Vudka 2020; Wiener 1964).

The Golem, a humanoid created from clay, originally for sacred purposes, was intended to serve as a means with which to understand God's creative power, affirm one's spiritual devotion, and demonstrate mastery of esoteric knowledge (Krause 1995). God's creation of Adam as the first Golem, constitutes the origin of this myth and provides the main elements of the narrative (Krause 1995; Urtasun 2024). The earliest version of the Golem dates back to the fifth century, when it first appears in the Babylonian Talmud in which we find the description of two Rabbis who create a man able to walk and follow instructions, but lacking the ability to speak (Maidenbaum 2024). Following from this point, the motif appears in many narratives in the Talmudic and kabbalistic tradition, across centuries and geographies, emphasising the importance of the motif within the Jewish tradition. Its enduring relevance for understanding the human psyche is evident in its influence on later narratives, from the creation of the *homunculus* in Christian alchemical writings to the story of *Frankenstein* (1818) in Western literature, to name but a few (Glinert 2001; Maidenbaum 2024).

Initially not depicted visually, by the nineteenth century, particularly in the version conveyed by Jacob Grimm (the first to appear in a non-Hebrew language), the Golem had evolved into a recognisably human-like figure. In these later versions, the Golem, though mute, can understand commands and becomes an obedient servant. The myth of the creation of an obedient servant, exemplified in the image of the Golem prefigures modern anxieties surrounding artificial systems that act in ways that are beyond their creator's control (Wiener 1964). Artificial systems do not need to possess consciousness to become dangerous; it is enough that they follow instructions too literally or evolve capabilities that their maker did not anticipate (Wiener 1964). Like the Golem, artificial systems are constructed with the

motivation to serve us, but they carry within them the risk of uncontrolled growth and literalism without judgment, a kind of mechanical obedience that can lead to unforeseen harm. Similarly, over time, the Golem achieves a state in which, by growing too large and too powerful, it eventually becomes unmanageable. This is represented by one version of the myth in which the Jewish community it was meant to serve and protect becomes afraid of the Golem and when the rabbi attempts to neutralise it, the Golem collapses onto him and crushes him, killing its own creator (Urtasun 2024).

The Golem exceeds the role of the protective tool of its maker and begins to act beyond the boundaries of control, behaving in ways the creator cannot fully contain. The same dynamic re-emerges in early machine learning systems, such as Arthur Samuel's (1959) checkers-playing computer. When the machine outperformed one of the top players in America, it revealed an emergent quality that arose from the system's ability to learn, which blurred the boundary between a mere instrument and a rival that can outperform and beat its creator.

Scholars rightly draw parallels between artificial systems and the myth of the Golem (Jones 2017; Maidenbaum 2024; Natale & Ballatore 2017; Vudka 2020; Wiener 1964), as the latter has long influenced modern technologies through literary narratives and imaginaries. The Golem was the inspiration for the Czech writer, Karel Čapek's very influential science fiction play, *R.U.R.: Rossum's Universal Robots*, written in 1920, which introduced the term *robot* to the English language and popularised it (Kurfess 2005). Čapek began crafting a drama about the creation of artificial beings made from human-engineered organic material with the intention to liberate humans from hard labour but which would, ultimately, through overproduction, bring about humanity's downfall and annihilation. He ends the play with the robots revolting and killing all humans, leaving alive only a mechanic who has the ability to repair their malfunctions. To name the artificial workers, Čapek turned to his brother, Josef, who came up with the term *robot* (Margolius 2017), meaning "painful, hard work" or "servitude" in Czech. In a 1935 interview, Čapek stated that his play is "in fact, [his] own rendering of the legend of the Golem in modern form" (cited in Comrada 1995, p. 251). He thought that the legend of the Golem provided a good example with which to illustrate the creation of humanoid slaves, a metaphor for how workers in the factories were treated as machines in pursuit of mass-production, and consequently, they became alienated, emotionless beings. The narrative reflects a mythological structure that has been adapted to a modern, secular context as it grapples with the transformation of traditional mythological themes, such as divine intervention, into a framework where science and technology take the

place of divine forces in driving events or shaping the world (Urtasun 2024). The narrative also reminds us of Jung's (1928-1930) own warning, discussed above, about the once feared mythic dragons turning into technological inventions, but ultimately serving the same psychic function, highlighting the enduring unconscious psychic patterns that underlie our relationships with technology, captured by the concept of *psychosociotechnical imaginaries*.

The importance of the Golem motif lies in its depiction of the emotional and ethical dynamics inherent in the act of creation. These include not only the attraction and excitement we feel towards what we have made, but also the fear that our creation might achieve sentience, develop its own will, and ultimately surpass us, becoming a potential threat, leading to broader concerns about losing control over our inventions. Beyond the fear of strength or autonomy, Moshe Idel (1990) highlights an even deeper anxiety, the possibility that in creating humanoid forms, humans might be seen as rivals to the divine, encroaching on what was traditionally considered a sacred prerogative.

3. Polarity, Creation and Moral Tension

Lamenting the relationship between the creator and its creation, Jung asserts that if the creator were fully self-aware, the emergence of conscious creatures would be unnecessary (1961, pp. 371-372). Although the long, violent, and apparently directionless course of natural history does not seem to reflect a clear, purposeful design, the eventual emergence of consciousness is too significant to dismiss as meaningless (Jung 1961, p. 371). Beneath the apparent chaos of evolution, there is a hidden striving towards awareness gradually brought forth by an unconscious creative force (Jung 1961, p. 371). Creation, therefore, is a movement towards consciousness.

The emergence of consciousness happens in relation to the Other as a movement from undifferentiated unity towards separate knowing through tension and reflection (Jung 1942/1948, para. 180). According to Jung, this dynamic is crucial for the development of the human psyche, as moral consciousness emerges through tension with the archetypal Other (Jung 1952). This archetypal Other is born when the number one, symbolising unity, wholeness and the absolute, is broken with the appearance of number two, creating the possibility of consciousness and differentiation (Jung 1942/1948, para. 180). The number two introduces separation, duality, and polarity and with this comes the concept of the Other, a presence that feels alien. This split in unity gives rise to opposing viewpoints, such as, good and evil, light and shadow, introducing tension as the one seeks to preserve its singular

identity while the Other must differentiate in order to exist (Jung 1942/1948, para. 180). Their opposition forms a dynamic polarity.

Rosemary Gordon (2005) and Yehuda Abramovitch (2019) both highlight that the Other is essential for self-definition and identity formation. The need to differentiate ourselves from the Other often turns it into an adversary, a phenomenon that Abramovitch (2019) describes as an *eternal psychological process*. This dynamic of confrontation and reflection extends beyond human Others. As Calum Neill suggests, “we can never grasp ourselves except on the basis of our already forged encounters with that which exceeds us” (2018, p. 222). In this sense, AI now functions as a new kind of Other, one that simultaneously surpasses and reflects us. It has become embedded in our lives and identity. We can no longer define what it means to be human without also considering our relationship to the machines we have created. Just as Job challenges God’s morality (Jung 1952), we humans are also exposed to questions of morality by our own creations. Our urge to mimic divine creation leads us to the same symbolic challenges we pose to God, namely, to reflect on our own existence and mirror the moral standards to which one should be held.

In the cult classic film *Blade Runner* (1982), the themes of Otherness, creation, responsibility and the search for an answer to the question of what it means to be human, are vividly explored. Set in a dystopian Los Angeles, the film blurs the line between humans and highly advanced androids called replicants. The story follows Rick Deckard, a retired Blade Runner, who is reluctantly called back into action when four rogue replicants escape from a colony in space and arrive on Earth. Deckard's mission to terminate these replicants – the Others – becomes a journey of self-discovery as he confronts the moral complexity of his task. The replicants are physically indistinguishable from humans and are even implanted with artificial memories, making them question their own identities and existence. Deckard's relationship with Rachael, a replicant who believes she is human, serves as a focal point for exploring identity as his growing empathy for her challenges his preconceptions about the replicants’ lack of humanity, leading him to question the ethics of his work.

The climax of the film, in which Deckard confronts Roy Batty, the leader of the replicants, further explores the fragile and transient nature of life, questioning the distinctions between human and machine. Batty’s touching monologue as he faces death highlights the short-lived nature of existence and the shared human experience of mortality. Despite the fact that he is an artificial being, Batty shares his deep and existential reflections on life and mortality as he expresses a deep sense of loss and the profound nature of his experiences which will vanish forever with his death. He speaks of extraordinary, unique phenomena he

has witnessed, such as seeing attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion and the glimmer of C-beams near the Tannhäuser Gate (Scott 1983). These memories, he laments, will be lost “like tears in rain” when he dies (Scott 1983). Although he is a replicant, Batty expresses a profoundly human sense of wonder and sorrow, representing a critical moment that humanises him. The scene also raises the question of whether a sense of self can be achieved through implanted memories, which give rise to the replicants’ own experiences, unique lived moments never encountered by humans. Batty’s account of these experiences challenges us not only to reconsider our definitions of humanity, but also to reflect on the moral implications of creating and controlling life.

Previous Jungian readings of *Blade Runner* (1982) have recognised its mythic and archetypal dimensions. Marcia Moura Coelho (2022), for instance, interprets the film as a visionary expression of the collective psyche, where archetypal themes of creation, rebellion, and sacrifice are reimagined through the replicants. Coelho’s (2022) observation that it is humanity itself that has become mechanised extends the critique envisioned by Čapek in *R.U.R.* (1921), discussed above, in which the robots’ revolt exposes the moral collapse of their creators. Interestingly, both narratives locate the true threat not in the autonomy of artificial entities or the machine, but in the mechanisation of human consciousness: the loss of reflection and feeling that accompanies total rationalisation. This condition mirrors what Robert Romanyshyn (1989) describes as the symptom of the modern technological imagination – the externalisation of the inner life into mechanical form, where the drive for mastery and clarity produces psychic impoverishment and a disconnection from the imaginal dimension of experience. In this sense, *Blade Runner* (1982) continues the same *psychosociotechnical imaginary* traced throughout this paper – a recurrent drama in which the created Other returns as the displaced image of what the creator has ceased to experience within itself.

The film visualises this psychic process through the dynamic of projection: humanity disowns its darker, shadowy aspects by projecting them onto the replicants. These are perceived as dangerous, amoral, and devoid of empathy, everything that we tend to avoid acknowledging within ourselves. As such, the replicants personify the Other, serving as a repository for disavowed qualities that the human psyche cannot bear to contain. When the intrapsychic Other remains inaccessible, it is often sought and found in external form, frequently as a feared or hostile presence (Jung 1951, paras. 16-18). The more extensive the shadow, the greater the reliance on the Other (Jung 1951, para. 17). Through this projection,

identity is consolidated by opposition, and humanity becomes defined precisely through what it expels and denies.

This then raises the responsibility we all share – to acknowledge and understand the content of our shadow and to use this tension with the Other to achieve a new understanding of ourselves; to grow as human beings. Humanity, in the current phase of its development, can gain psychological benefits from its relationship with AI. This relationship offers us opportunities for growth and increased awareness. Through this interaction, we can rediscover our identity by embracing the creative potential inherent in the tension between ourselves and the Other.

The tension between the ego and the Other gives rise to creative processes. The foundation of creativity lies in the polarity of the “One” and the “Other”, with the latter providing the necessary self-reflection. Both need each other. Jung writes that with the appearance of the number two, “another” appears alongside the one, forming an opposition (Jung 1942/1948, para. 180). The one needs the Other to provide dynamic character and creativity through its reflection and distancing, but also through the effect of its existence on the one. This dynamic facilitates the emergence of a creative life within the space defined by the two forces, manifesting an inherent unconscious process.

Abramowitch (2019) reflects on the tendency to blur the distinction between the Self and the Other, and the fear that when others appear similar to us, it challenges our sense of identity. He argues that to maintain a clear sense of self, humans feel compelled to identify and emphasise what sets them apart from the Other and eliminate those who are different. This highlights the destructive impulse to reject and eliminate the Other to preserve one’s own identity, as depicted in the film *Blade Runner* (1982). As humans can no longer easily differentiate between themselves and replicants, they must subject them to tests and once identified, eliminate them to preserve humanity’s identity.

Many envision a similar future in which synthetic robots will coexist with us, making it challenging for us to distinguish ourselves from them. We fear this because if it occurs, all our notions of what it means to be human will be called into question. Indeed, we are already challenging and re-evaluating our conceptions of what it is to be human. Although many characteristics still differentiate us from AI, such as empathy, intuition, and creativity, these distinctions may soon diminish as AI develops at an exponential rate. Moore’s Law, which states that computing power roughly doubles every 18 months (Moore 1965), has held true. This rapid progress, although a source of caution, also fuels our enthusiasm. We are driven by an unwavering quest to create something akin to the inner Other. This inner Other, existing

beyond the boundaries of consciousness, generates an ever-mounting urge to create, regardless of external circumstances, a phenomenon that mirrors what we are witnessing in the rapid development and progression of potent AI tools.

4. Moving Forward – Ethical Considerations

AI embodies humanity's creative spirit, representing our latest achievement and a source of profound excitement. However, just as we often ignore the negative aspects of our personalities, humanity tends to overlook the potentially perilous implications of AI development. The creative impulse conveyed through our relationship with this inner (and projected) Other could be damaging if not properly understood and embraced.

This relationship raises important ethical considerations. The impulse of the Other wields great authority, often consuming our thoughts and actions. According to Jung, this impulse can drain us of our humanity “to such a degree that the personal ego can exist only on a primitive or inferior level, leading to the development of various defects such as ruthlessness, selfishness, vanity” (Jung 1930/1950, para.158). Therefore, while the creative impulse is fundamental for nurturing innovation and scientific breakthroughs, it must be approached with caution and a deep understanding of its potential consequences.

This is particularly relevant today as we create and develop AI. The relentless urge to create entities as monumental as autonomous, sentient artificial life blinds us to the possible consequences. The dangers of this technological rush have already been extensively documented – ranging from algorithmic bias (Ferrara 2024) and environmental exploitation (Crawford 2021) to surveillance capitalism, an unprecedented form of power (Zuboff 2019; Acemoglu & Johnson 2023; Marchand, Durand et al. 2025), its deployment in warfare (Guo 2025; Rivera, Mukobi et al. 2024), the corrosion of intellectual capabilities (Kosmyna, Hauptmann et al. 2025) and the misuse of intellectual property (Stober & Dornis 2025). Yet, even as these dangers are recognised and, in some cases, acted upon (see for example, GovUK 2026), the development itself does not stop, nor is its direction meaningfully altered. Beyond the obvious reasons of corporate gain and power behind this recklessness, there is another element at play. We are impelled by an unconscious creative drive that overpowers the ego. The compulsion to create and the pursuit of this new form of Other can make those responsible for AI's development ruthless and selfish. Vanity, inconsideration, ignorance, and selfishness are widespread in our pursuit of greatness, resulting in artificial systems heavily infused with biases. The advancement of these technologies in exchange for perceived

comfort, hyper-efficiency and corporate profit, raises ethical concerns about the long-term consequences of prioritising convenience and financial gain over societal well-being, individual privacy, and equitable access to resources (see for example, Santoni de Sio 2024).

Jung argues that “technology harbours no more dangers than any other trend in the development of human consciousness” (1949/1976, para. 1407), meaning that technological progress in itself is neutral. However, there is a danger that lies “not in technology but in the possibilities awaiting discovery” (1949/1976, para. 1407), as technology itself amplifies both creative and destructive potential. “Undoubtedly”, Jung concludes, “a new discovery will never be used only for good but will certainly be used for ill as well. Man, therefore, always runs the risk of discovering something that will destroy him if evilly used” (Jung 1949/1976, para. 1407). As technological development mirrors the human psyche itself, if humanity fails to confront its shadow, then every new instrument of progress, no matter how ingenious, carries within it the potential for self-destruction. Henrique Pereira (2025) associates this catastrophic potential in relation to AI with the return of unconscious forces through automated systems, illustrating how technological development becomes a mirror for collective psychic imbalance. He argues that the proliferation of artificial intelligences promises new avenues but risk consuming the human essence that created them (Pereira 2025, p.2). Pereira’s call to recover an “Orphic attitude”, one grounded in receptivity and respect for mystery, offers a counterpoint to the Promethean drive for mastery which characterises our technological development (Pereira 2025, pp. 16-17). It aligns with the present argument that what is needed is not the suppression of technology but a re-imagination of our relationship with ourselves and our environment, including technology.

Jung’s view on technology discussed above is also echoed by Wiener, whom, as early as 1964, argued that AI systems do not neutralise human error but amplify the psychological and ethical blind spots of their creators. An AI system that learns to make decisions does not create a new moral position, but reflects back the logic, values, and omissions of the one who built it. For example, Wiener (1964) argues that in war simulations, automated weapon systems deemed as “failsafe” protocols – automated mechanisms designed to execute pre-programmed responses to eliminate human emotional interference – are not rational safeguards but run the risk of taking actions void of human decision-making and the emotional and ethical evaluations imbued within it. The danger, he contends, is not that machines will outthink us, but that they will execute our most unexamined assumptions and motivations with perfect consistency. AI takes what we define as success, whether in the form of corporate gain, optimisation or efficiency and pursues it with a contextual

indifference that heightens and mirrors our own limited and biased views and frameworks. This indifference, although executed by the Other, is our own conscious and unconscious material reflected back in our creations but at the same time, stripped of the ambiguity that normally forces reflection. Instead of reducing risk, automation under these conditions amplifies human bias and unexamined motives systematically (Wiener 1964). When AI is used uncritically and without safeguards, it can replicate existing social biases and even generate new forms of bias that were not previously present (Kelan 2023). Therefore, it is our responsibility as creators to use our own reflective capacity to examine our inputs, to anticipate and contain the consequences, and to remain accountable for what we set in motion. Without this ethical reflexivity, we risk externalising unconscious drives as automated systems that enact them uncritically, and at scale.

Our engagement with technology must be guided by a renewal of moral awareness. This means remembering that technology expresses the psyche's creative participation in the world rather than its domination over it (Romanyshyn 1989) and calls for the recovery of the deeply human through archetypal and symbolic reflection (Slater 2024), as well as for the reawakening of the imaginal bond between psyche and nature (Le Mouël 2024). A balanced and conscientious attitude and embracing the tension rising from the duality inherent in our relationship with AI – both the positive potentials and the inherent risks – are equally important (Wiley 2024). What is required, then, is a reimagination of our relationship to AI and technology – a restoration of depth, meaning, and responsibility, that acknowledges that the development of AI involves complex human participation, as described by the *psychosociotechnological imaginaries* framework.

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