

MITOCW | Ethics_of_AI_Bias_clip5

Well, since we are short on time, I'll have to move on to chapter five on property.

But explore when you can what he says about the state of war and slavery in the Skip chapters.

We will also come back to other subtleties, like why he calls the doctrine by everyone in the state of nature has executive power this strange doctrine in paragraph 13 and, for that matter, why there is no authority in the state of nature besides each individual.

So what are his key arguments on property?

Alyssa.

One is that each of us has a property in our own person.

That's in paragraph 27.

Good.

And later in paragraph 27, that we make things our property by mixing our labor with things from nature.

Very good.

Yeah.

I like the acorn example.

By picking up an acorn, we make it ours.

I guess that applies to fruit, too.

[LAUGHTER]

And he says in paragraph 26 that the Earth is ours for the support and comfort of our being and that we're given reason to use it well.

That brings me back to my point from before.

Someone isn't using it well if they're rich and they hoard things.

Well, you can only hoard so much.

Like, who needs 10 Ferraris?

I do.

Ha, ha.

Ha, ha, yourself.

The point is that you cannot hoard because your things will spoil.

Yes.

That is why he talks about money somewhere.

Money doesn't go bad.

Yes, in paragraph 36.

But you'll see that he says in paragraph 31 that everyone can take as much as he wants from nature, but there is a limitation.

What is that limitation that prevents us from accumulating so much that things spoil?

Well, what is also present in nature besides things you can take?

Oh, yes.

The law of reason.

It's stupid to hoard because then you're just wasting stuff, and that's against the law of reason.

But once there is money, you can hoard it without spoiling.

So why isn't that wrong to do?

Because you put your labor into it?

But what if you're just lucky?

Or what if you inherited it?

OK if I answer this one?

It's because someone else put their labor into it, therefore they can give however they choose.

Excellent.

Thanks.

Do you recall how much Locke says labor increases the value of what is in nature?

100 times in paragraph 40.

1,000 times in paragraph 43.

Both 10 and 100 times in paragraph 37.

And since we mentioned paragraph 40, we should point out his famous statement in the subsequent one.

A king of a large and fruitful territory in America feeds, lodges, and is clad worse than a day laborer in England.

So whatever the factor of increase is, the point is not just that labor is almost all the value in property but that by protecting property we will all benefit with many good things.

Yes, like this university.

[CHUCKLES]

Exactly.

I still don't think it's fair that some people have so much more than others.

But we all benefit.

Besides, if it weren't for this system, you wouldn't even be able to get that broken-down Kia that you dream of.

Oh.

Ha, ha.

[LAUGHTER]

But even if the pie gets bigger and bigger, some people will still control others because they have a bigger piece, making those people unhappy.

Or do you mean less free?

If so, it seems that AI doesn't solve the problem at all.

Of course, some people do think that it can, that mathematization of all things can lead to a sort of techno utopia.

Locke is giving us a choice.

We can be controlled by algorithms designed by smart but unworldly people working long hours in some basement-- or let's call it a cave-- or we can be allowed our own choice.

Of course, that choice should be the product of thoughtful reflection, particularly on our own biases.

But AI could give more freedom, couldn't it?

I see what you're saying.

Certainly, it can bring benefits in health care and transportation and make many things more efficient.

But intrinsically it can't solve the problem of bias even in itself.

Actually, it's even worse.

Those who develop and therefore control AI will build AI systems biased for their own benefit.

Hmm.

Hmm.

Having said that, I realized that we somehow seem to have gotten distracted from understanding how natural right can help us to address bias in AI.

And we only have a few minutes of class left.

I was wondering when you were going to realize that.

Well, you convinced us that all AI systems will be biased in some dimensions no matter what you do.

But then you also convinced us that property should be respected.

So, what do we do about bias?

Yeah.

And how should we punish people who write unacceptably biased AI systems?

Or reward them for making acceptably biased AI systems.

I mean unbiased AI systems.

[LAUGHTER]

Yeah.

We can't reward or punish people, according to Locke's system.

On the contrary, we can reward them by buying their products if we like them or punish them by not buying their products if we don't like them.

So transparency is the key?

Yes, if people are willing to pay for transparency.

You see, the law of nature addresses that too.

And in most contemporary approaches, there is an assumption, one which we have been addressing today too, that bias is bad and should be eradicated by technical mathematical means.

We now understand that a deeper reflection on the law of nature and the law of reason is needed, but we engineers needed to see the limitations of the mathematical or computer science approach first before we turn to a broader or deeper one.

Yeah.

I think I understand this now, but it still hasn't changed one thing.

I want a Ferrari.

[SCOFFING, CHUCKLING]

The point is under the Lockean system we are all better off-- happier, we could say-- because algorithms with unacceptable bias will go away because no one will buy them.

You're starting to understand.