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Ethical and Social Consequences of Artificial Intelligence

Insights from Christian Social Ethics

VATICAN CITY, THE “GOOD” ALGORITHM?, FEBRUARY 26TH 2020

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Objective and theses

1. Embedding a Social Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in a Social Ethics of Technology.
2. Justice and Power as Central Problems of Artificial Intelligence.



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Outline

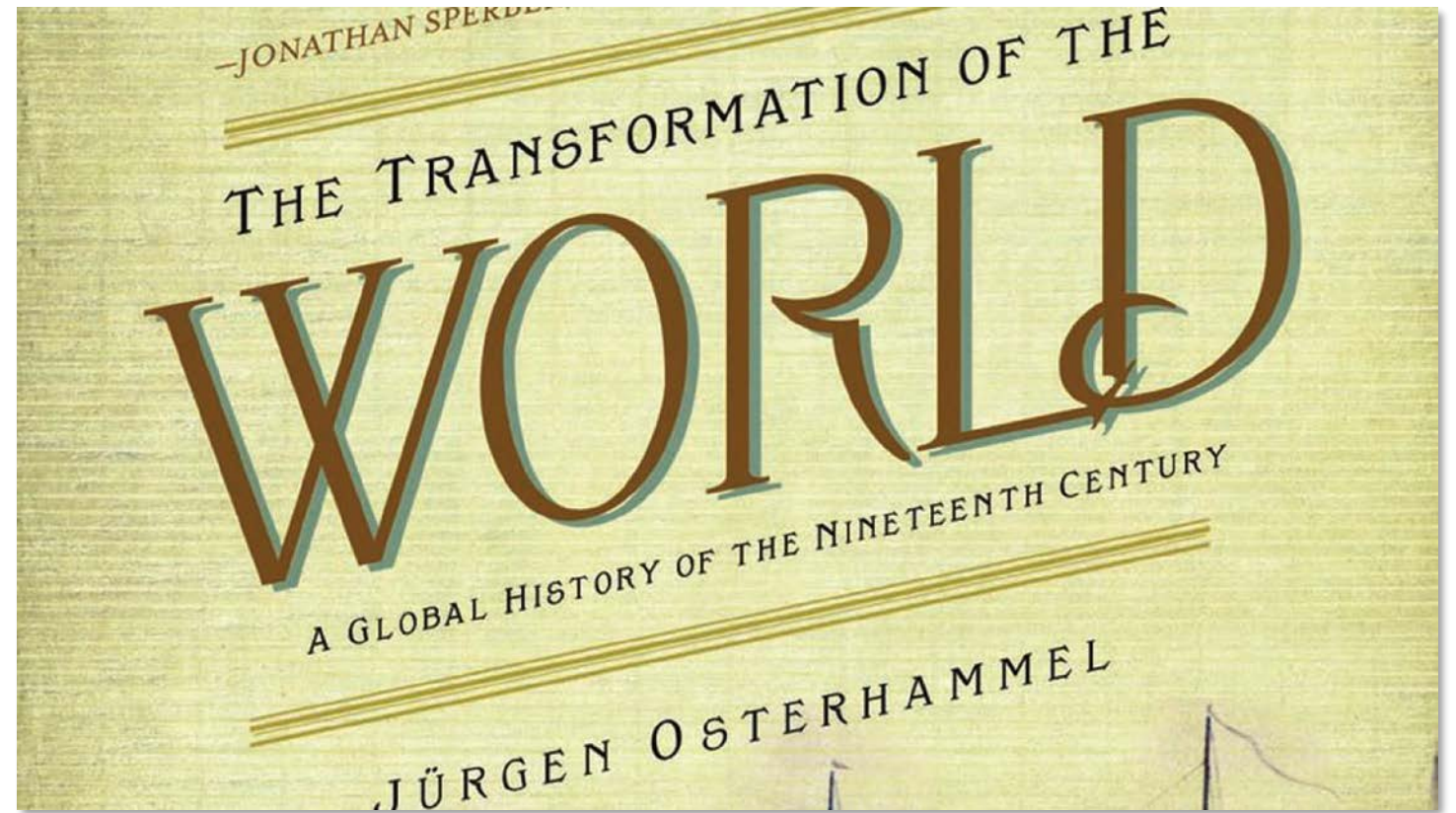
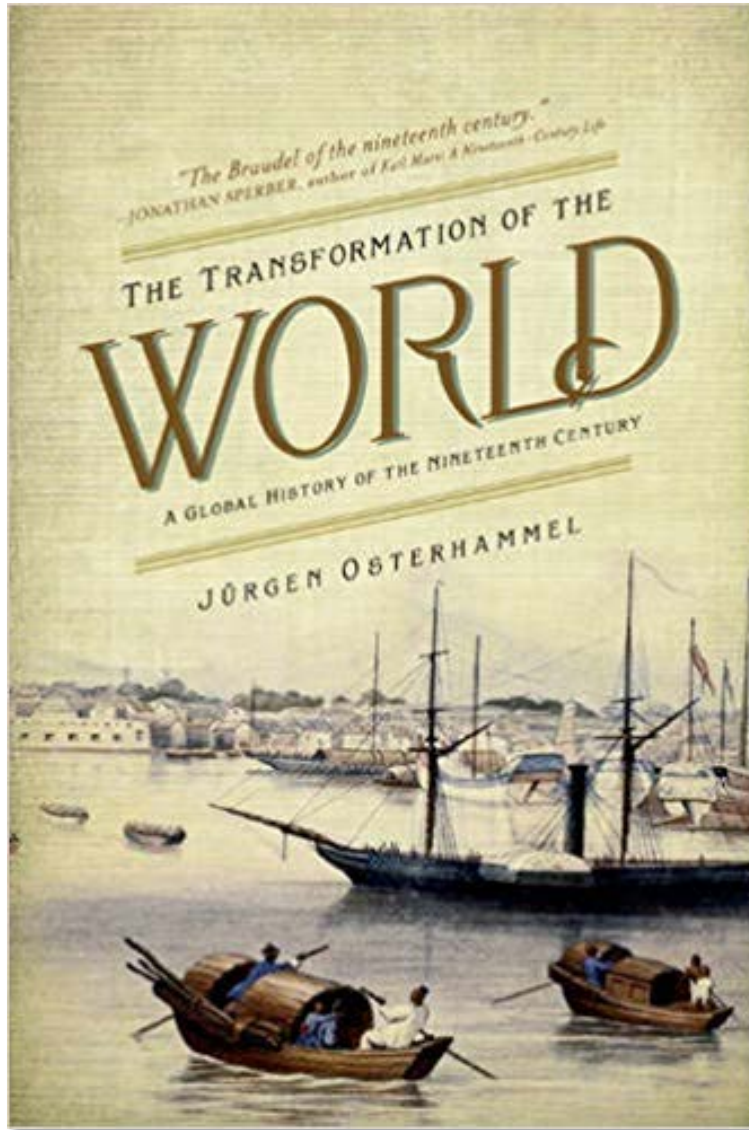
1. Christian Social Ethics?
2. Technology as a specific challenge for Christian Social Ethics
3. Social-ethical challenges of artificial intelligence



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1

Christian Social Ethics



J. Osterhammel. 2014. *The transformation of the world: A global history of the nineteenth century*. America in the world. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press.

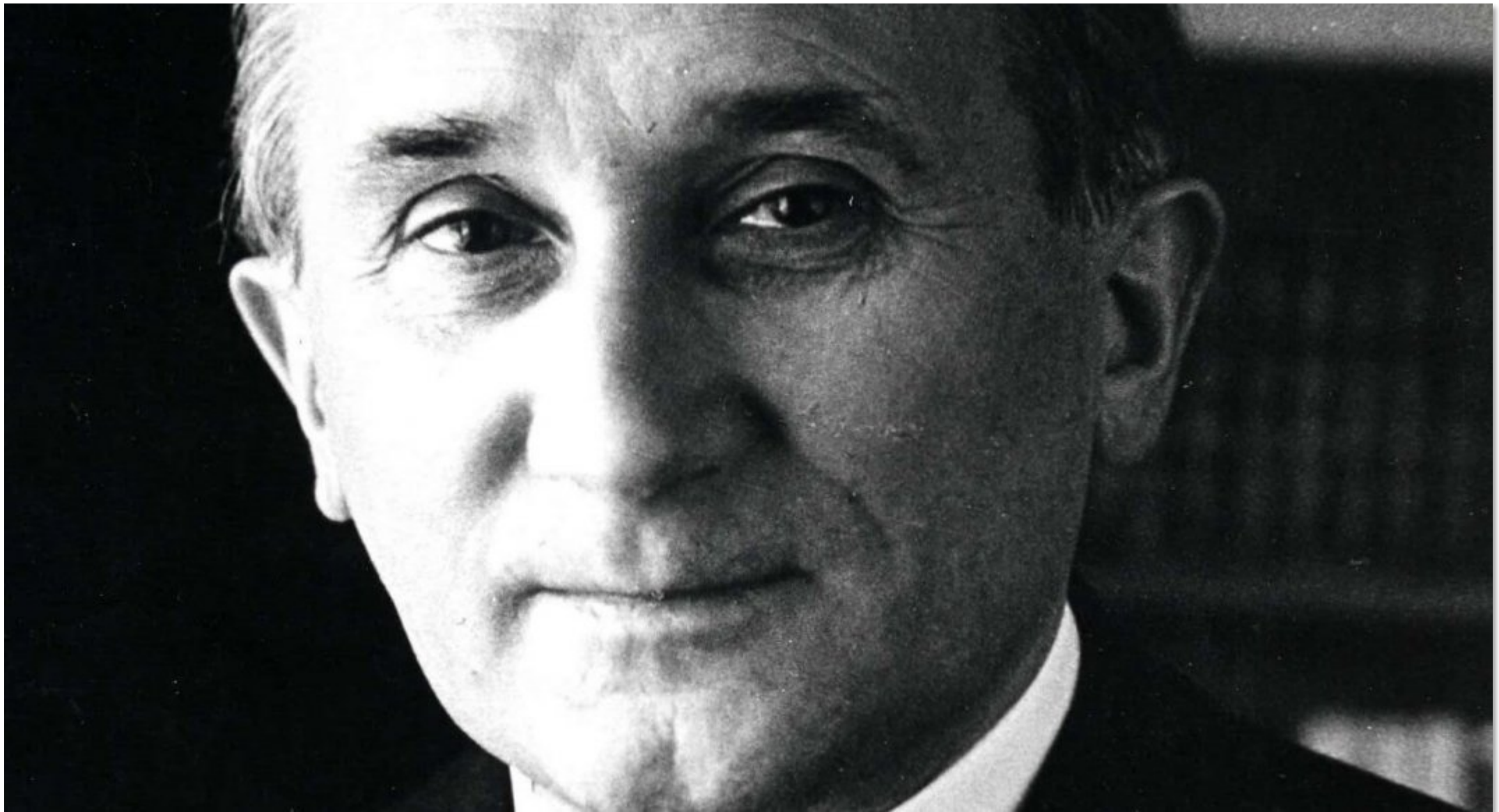
Christian Social Ethics ≠ Moral Theology

(But they are both "theological ethics".)

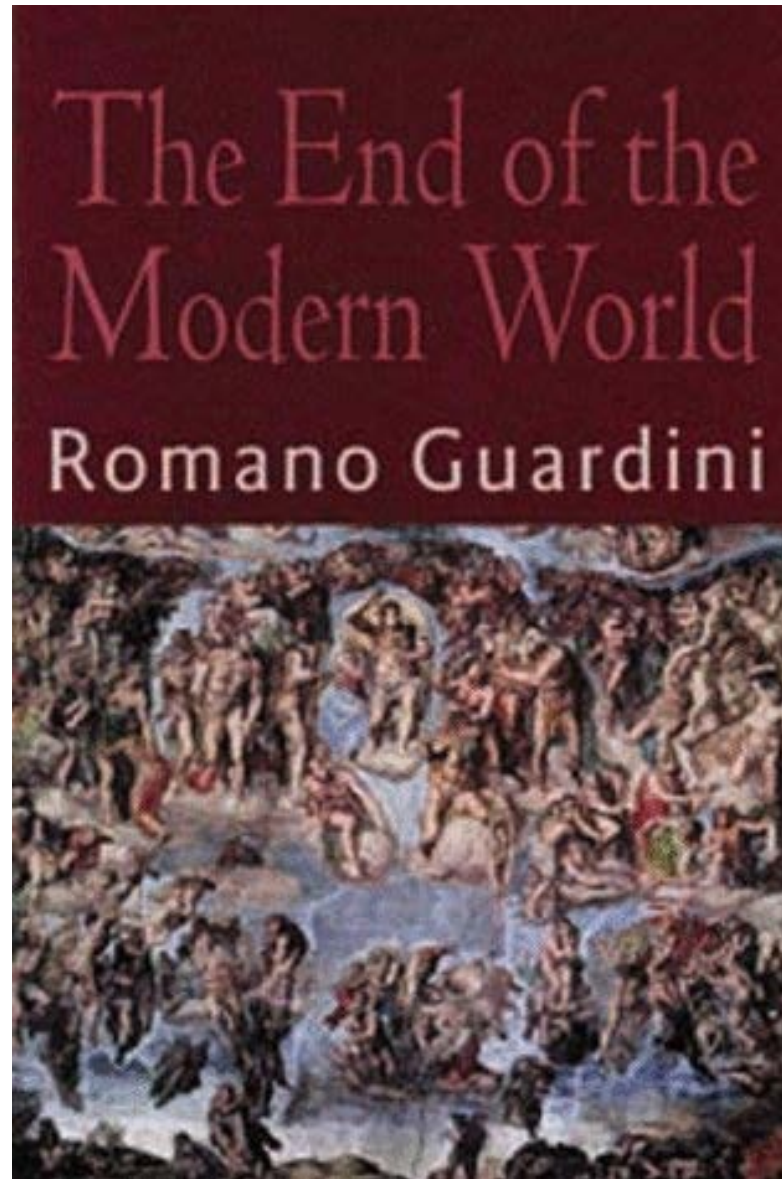
2

Technology and AI as a Specific Challenge of Christian Social Ethics

...understand 'artificial intelligence' as a technique or technology and treat this topic ethically from there.



Romano Guardini, 1885 (Verona) – 1968 (München)



R. Guardini. 1950. *Das Ende der Neuzeit: Ein Versuch zur Orientierung*. Würzburg: Werkbund Verlag.

R. Guardini. 1950/1998. *The end of the modern world*. Wilmington: ISI Books.

“By seeing the world as '**nature**', man places it within himself; by seeing himself as '**personality**', he makes himself the master of his own existence; in the will to '**culture**' he undertakes to build up existence as his work.”

R. Guardini. 1986. Das Ende der Neuzeit: Ein Versuch zur Orientierung.
In Das Ende der Neuzeit / Die Macht. Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag: 9–94, 40f. (own translation)

“The new age loved to justify the measures of technology with their benefit for the welfare of mankind. [...] The time to come will, I think, speak differently. The person who wears it knows that technology is ultimately not about utility or welfare, but about domination; **domination** in the extreme sense of the word, expressed in a **new world form.**”

R. Guardini. 1986. Das Ende der Neuzeit: Ein Versuch zur Orientierung.
In Das Ende der Neuzeit / Die Macht. Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag: 9–94, 51 (own translation)

He criticizes the view that the use of technical possibilities “is to be regarded as a natural process for which there are no freedom standards but only supposed necessities of use and safety.”

R. Guardini. 1986. Das Ende der Neuzeit: Ein Versuch zur Orientierung.
In Das Ende der Neuzeit / Die Macht. Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag: 9–94, 70 (own translation)

The Peter- Parker-Principle



Stills from the Film "Spider-Man" (USA 2002, Sam Raimi)

3

Artificial Intelligence – Impulses of Christian Social Ethics

Theological motives for AI

- Creation
- Theological Anthropology
- Eschatology

Socio-ethical perspectives on AI

- The international political dimension
- Future of democracy
- New knowledge and new insights
- The future of work

Many thanks for your attention!

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