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### **Debunking Robot rights: Metaphysically, Ethically and Legally**

If one believes humans are physical machines, and if one is a techno-optimist, then one might endorse the idea of robot rights. Indeed, why deny other (future, artificial) intelligent beings the rights we grant ourselves? In this talk we debunk robot rights on metaphysical, ethical and legal grounds.

Metaphysically we argue that machines are not the kinds of being that we are. Machines are instead subsumed as elements within our being, that in turn configure human practices. Building on theories of phenomenology and critical race studies, we ground our own position in the lived reality of actual humans in an increasingly ubiquitously connected, controlled and surveilled society. What we find is the seamless integration of machinic systems into daily lives in the name of convenience and efficiency. Here, the 'autonomous intelligent machine' is a sci-fi fantasy, a meme that functions to mask exploited human labour, the backbone of the industry. AI systems furthermore enable surveillance and perpetuate structural injustices, further harming minoritized groups, while creating unprecedented wealth and influence for those in power. From a legal perspective the best analogy to robot rights is not human rights but corporate rights, rights which, notably, undermine electoral processes, workers, and consumers in jurisdictions that have recognized as sacrosanct their "rights" to free expression or property. The idea of robot rights, we conclude, acts as a smoke screen, allowing theorists to fantasize about sentient machines, while actual machines create a surveillance capitalism that is causing serious harm.