# Chapter 15
# Thou Shall Not Kill:
## The Ethics of AI in Contemporary Warfare

**Evangelos Ioannis Koumparoudis**
*Sofia University, Bulgaria*

## ABSTRACT

*This chapter aims in the presentation of the evolution of AI and robotic technologies with emphasis on those for military use and the main strategic agendas of various superpowers like USA, China, and Russia, as well as peripheral powers. The authors also refer to the uses of such technologies in the battlefield. The chapter also reveals the ethical dimensions of the current military AI technologies. It starts with the Mark Coeckelberg paper, to emphasize his call for a new approach to technoethics. Then, the authors will strive towards the ethical theory Neil C. Rowe, and his propositions for ethical improvement of algorithms. Finally, the authors pose the notions of electronic personhood proposed by Avila Negri, also touching upon the fact the legal debate tends to face an anthropomorphic fallacy. To conclude, Thou Shall Not Kill, the highest ''Levinasian Imperative'' closes the gap of the anthropomorphic fallacy, so our relationship with the killer machines be viewed as asymmetric, non-anthropomorphic, and non-zoomorphic.*

## INTRODUCTION

AI and robotics have progressed over time. After its seminal presentation in the mid-50s, today we can speak about totally different applications both in everyday life, military, and security use. In this chapter, we will first elucidate certain steps in its evolution, to reveal if we can speak about truly autonomous AI. This evolutionary timeline will go in parallel with AI and robotics used for military or security reasons. This is critical because, as it will be shown, there are different views concerning the autonomy of the so-called Autonomous Lethal Weapons, between the superpowers like the USA, China, and Russia as well as peripheral powers such as Israel, North and South Korea. These different views go together with their aspirations to lead the military AI race and provide sociotechnical imaginaries that reflect their meticulous efforts to create such a military status quo, which could be considered as unique and

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-9467-7.ch015

undefeatable. The current progress in military technology is far from these imaginaries, we will expose all the current applications and vulnerabilities of military AI and robotics, as well as the plans for future enhancement in the following 10 years.

In the second part of this chapter, we will proceed to an analysis of how the overall stability between the superpowers is affected, due to this military AI race. This is their position between the different ongoing international tensions particularly the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the plans of China to invade Taiwan, as well as some secondary tensions e.g. Palestine and Israel, North and South Korea. In this section we will further, analyze how either private interests or civilians interact with this kind of tension by rejecting cooperation with the army e.g. Google on Project Maven, or by generally being opposed to the war e.g. the mass protests of Ukrainian people against the war. Through this analysis, we will consider if a form of deliberative democracy could stand against the ongoing aspirations of the superpowers to lead the military AI race, and consequently become the leading regulators of global importance.

In the third section, we will unravel the different ethical theories around AI and military AI. We will thoroughly present the deontological, utilitarian, normative, and applied aspects of AI ethics with an emphasis on military and security use. We will also, refer to the fact that we tend to anthropomorphise and zoomorphise social mainly robotics and to a greater extent military robotics. These fallacies may create problems that revolve around the attribution of the philosophical and legal personhood of AI. Therefore, we will strive towards all the philosophical and legal dimensions of military AI attribution of responsibility and how the framework of ethical use can be established to avoid illegal or mass killing prospects.

In the fourth section we will, come back to the title of this chapter and the Levinasian imperative of ''Thou Shall not Kill''. Although we speak about lethal weapons and even more possibly autonomous lethal Weapons, we will present how AI and robotics could be vulnerable and fragile far from anthropomorphic and zoomorphic fallacies. We will establish a provisional theory based on a radical asymmetry between humans and military AI, ethics as fundamental, and a democracy that aspires to be better and better.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is divided into two main parts. The first describes the evolution of AI technologies with emphasis on the military AI and Robotic technologies. This approach is chronological and also explanatory in relation with the main strategic agendas of various superpowers like USA, China and Russia. Through the analysis which is mostly at the level of politics and political science we can take a deep insight over their tensions and aspirations to lead the AI military race, to become rulers of the world and create an undefeatable status quo. It is also quite important, to highlight how this representation is mediated by mass media, literature and spectacle, creating sociotechnical imaginaries that are far from their real capacities and a real-politik that they can actually impose or support. The second part belongs to applied ethics and moral philosophy and has two sub divisions, the general ethical philosophy of AI and the second a particular type of ethics belonging to the Levinasian philosophy, promoting the ethics of radical asymmetry as applied to techno ethics of military AI.