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Is the Android 'Me' the Same Person?
- Future Legal Systems Contemplated at Osaka Kansai Expo 2025

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I. Introduction

I have recently made several visits to the Osaka Kansai Expo. Just last week, I received an invitation from a company where I serve as an external director to visit the "Future of Life" pavilion (official website: <https://expo2025future-of-life.com/en/>) by Professor Hiroshi Ishiguro, who is renowned for his work with androids. This experience made me deeply contemplate legal issues.

While this might be a slight spoiler, the exhibition presents a future where humans can become androids. It features a story of a grandmother and granddaughter who are close to each other. As the grandmother's health deteriorates, she faces a choice: to die naturally or to continue living through androidization. The pavilion also features numerous other androids, creating an exhibition that makes visitors contemplate what "life" truly means. I should note that while I have visited over 40 pavilions so far, the "Future of Life Pavilion" is particularly recommended among them!

This raised a legal question for me as a lawyer. If humans could transfer their consciousness and memories to androids and "continue living" for 100, 500, or even 1,000 years beyond their biological lifespan, what stance should the law take? Specifically, can we legally treat the original human and their post-androidization existence as the same legal person?

An android gazing at itself in a mirror - can it truly be called "the former me"?



II. Limitations of Current Law - What Constitutes a "Person"?

Under the laws of most countries today, a person acquires rights at birth and loses them upon death. This fundamental principle of "biological death = extinction of legal personality" has been the foundation of legal systems worldwide for hundreds of years. However, if technology enables consciousness and memories to be electronically preserved and transplanted into a different body (an android), this principle would face fundamental reconsideration. How should the law treat an existence that is biologically dead but whose personality and memories continue?

Note: This paper discusses androidization through digital transfer of consciousness and memory, not physical brain transplantation. It also distinguishes from cyborgization (replacing parts of living organisms with machines) and deals with complete personality transfer to an artificial body.

III. Four Legal Approaches

Legal approaches to this problem can be broadly divided into four categories:

(i) Non-Personality Theory

This position treats the android as a "property" without legal capacity once the physical body perishes and legal personality ends. From the standpoint of current law, this would basically be the prevailing view.

The android would be owned by heirs as an object treated as property, and the original

human's rights and obligations would be processed through normal inheritance procedures. In this case, the inheriting grandchild would own grandmother's android as a "property," making it legally possible to sell it on marketplace apps or dispose of it as bulky waste - a result that borders on dark humor.

While legal stability would be maintained, the motivation to choose androidization would be significantly undermined. Few people would actively desire androidization if they might be treated as "properties" subject to sale or disposal. Moreover, since they would lose all property rights and contractual status, they would be completely severed from the social positions and relationships they had built.

Is grandmother just a "property"?



(ii) Personality Continuity Theory

This position emphasizes the continuity of memory, personality, and self-consciousness, treating the android as the same legal subject as the original human. In this case, property rights, family relationships, and contractual status would all be inherited as-is, and the person would be treated as "living" in the family registry (*Japan's legal record of birth, death, and familial relationships*).

While this would be the most desirable outcome for the individual, the impact on the entire legal system would be enormous.

(iii) New Personality Theory

This position recognizes personality in androids, but the android is registered as a completely new legal subject, while the original human's rights and obligations are processed

through normal inheritance procedures.

From this standpoint, the android would begin a new life from zero as a "newly born adult."

While freed from past entanglements, they would also lose the human relationships and social status they had built.

(iv) Limited Succession Theory

This is a compromise position that allows succession of only certain rights through special legislation. For example, a system could be designed where personal rights and family relationships are inherited, but property rights go through inheritance procedures.

Specifically, personal rights such as name rights and portrait rights, status relationships as spouse or parent-child, and support claim rights would be recognized for succession, while property rights such as real estate ownership, stocks, and deposits would still require traditional inheritance procedures.

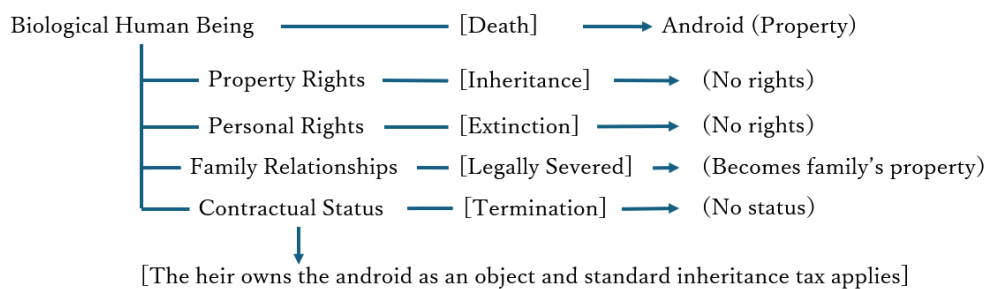
The significance of this Limited Succession Theory lies in legally protecting the emotional connections of families and personal identity while ensuring the stability of socioeconomic systems. It can legally guarantee, albeit limitedly, the continuity of human relationships that would be lost through complete severance.

Comparison of Legal Positions on Androidization

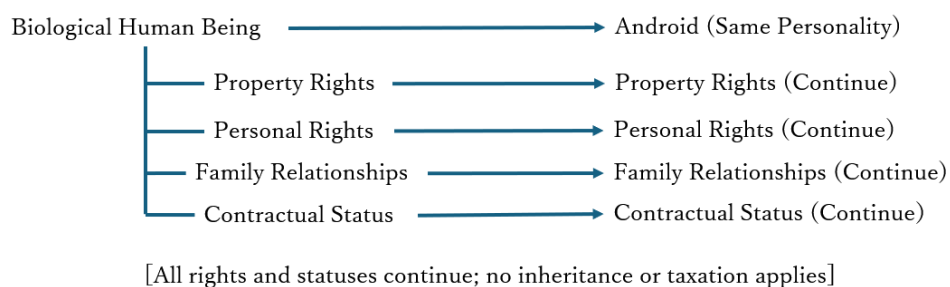
Item	Non-Personality Theory	Personality Continuity Theory	New Personality Theory	Limited Succession Theory
Basic Concept	Personality ends with physical body demise, treated as a property	Emphasizes continuity of memory and personality	Grants personality as new legal subject	Certain rights only succeed through special law
Legal Status	No legal capacity (treated as property)	Continues as same personality	Newly created legal person	Limited rights subject
Property Rights	Processed through inheritance	All succeeded	Processed through inheritance	Goes through inheritance procedures
Personal Rights (name, portrait, etc.)	No succession	All succeeded	Newly acquired	Partially inheritable

Family Relations	Treated as family asset	Continues	Newly established	Continues
Family Registry Treatment	Death certificate filed, registered as property	Continues as living	New birth certificate	Special registration system
Inheritance Tax	Taxed normally	Not taxed	Taxed normally	Only property portion taxed
Benefits to Individual	Minimal (treated as property)	Maximum (all rights continue)	Small (new life but no rights)	Moderate (personal rights protected)
Social Impact	Minimal (maintains current system)	Enormous (fundamental system change)	Moderate (family registry expansion)	Moderate (partial system change)
Feasibility	Easiest (current law as-is)	Difficult (fundamental legal reform)	Somewhat difficult (new system creation)	Moderate (special legislation)

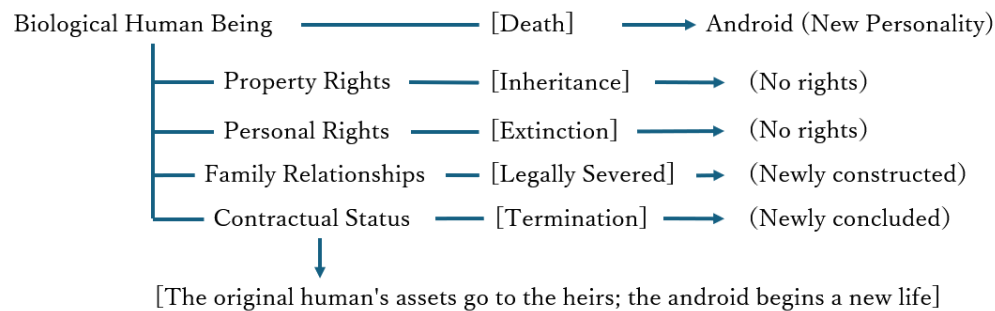
◆ In the Case of the Non-Personhood Theory



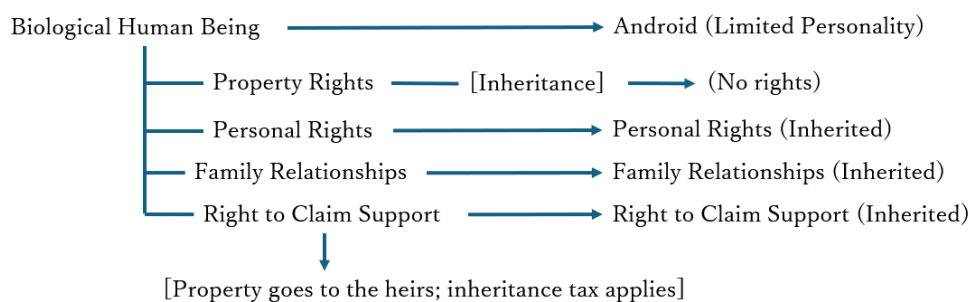
◆ In the Case of the Personality Continuity Theory



◆ In the Case of the New Personality Theory



◆ In the Case of the Limited Succession Theory



IV. Legal Chaos Brought by Super-Longevity Society

Would current legal systems function when androidization allows humans to live for 1,000 years? If androidization achieves effective immortality, many current legal systems could become dysfunctional.

(i) Impact on Civil Law

The inheritance system would fundamentally change. If people don't die, inheritance doesn't occur. As a result, assets like real estate and stocks would be permanently occupied by the same individuals, severely impeding social fluidity.

Contract relationships would also become abnormally long-term, potentially causing rigidity in the entire socioeconomic system.

(ii) Impact on Family Law

If one spouse becomes an android, what happens to the marriage relationship? Since the androidized spouse is legally "living," the other spouse's remarriage would raise bigamy issues.

Parent-child relationships would also become complex. The relationship between androidized parents and subsequently born children, and the scope of support obligations across generations - these are problems traditional family law never anticipated.

(iii) Impact on Criminal Law

The penal system would require fundamental revision. The meaning of life imprisonment would be relativized, and consistency with statute of limitations would become problematic. The concept of "rehabilitation potential," one of the foundations of punishment, would also change significantly when premised on lifespans of hundreds of years.

V. Impact on Political and Social Systems

Would democracy remain viable if immortal beings continued to hold political power? The impact extends beyond legal issues to affect democratic institutions themselves.

In a society where only the wealthy can choose androidization, they would continue exercising political and economic influence for hundreds of years. An "immortal elite class" with voting and candidacy rights could monopolize decision-making, impeding social renewal through generational change. As Piketty pointed out that "the return on capital exceeds economic growth rate ($r > g$)," the phenomenon of wealth accumulation and expansion could be further accelerated by the perpetual androidization of the ultra-wealthy. Pension systems, healthcare systems, and education systems - current social security systems are designed based on average human lifespan. These systems would also require fundamental revision.

[Column: The Multiple Android Problem - Who is the "Real" One?]

As technology advances, multiple androids could potentially be created simultaneously from one person's consciousness and memory. For example, suppose there exists "Android 1" created from Person A's memory transfer and "Android 2" later restored from a backup. Furthermore, if biological Person A is still alive, we would have a three-way coexistence of "Person A + Android 1 + Android 2."

In such cases, the following legal problems would arise:

◆ Identification of Rights Holders

- Who would be the "real A" to inherit property rights and contractual status?
- Should judgment be based on memory "most recent backup" or "first created"?

◆ Property and Contractual Confusion

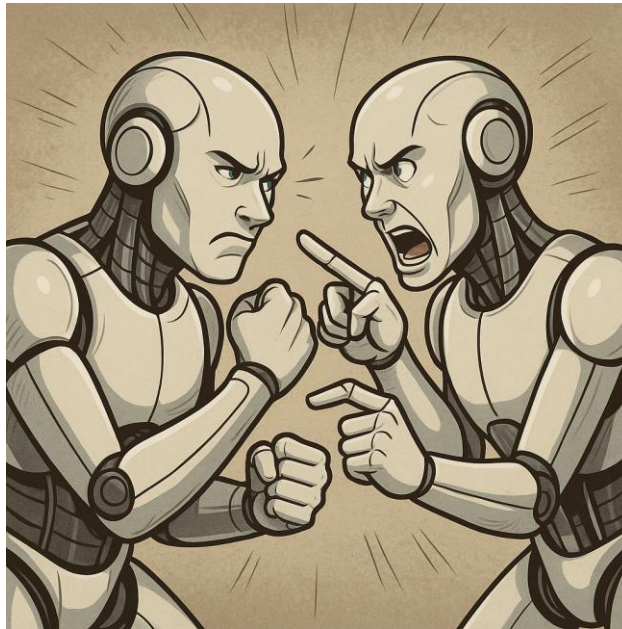
- To whom would real estate ownership belong?
- Which personality would hold withdrawal authority for bank accounts and securities?
- If multiple androids claiming to be the same person assert the same contract, what would be the legal validity?

◆ Overlapping Family Relationships

- From the perspective of spouses and children, with whom would they have marriage and parent-child relationships?
- Could support obligation holders multiply?

Such problems could fundamentally shake legal systems in a future where single personalities can be digitally "replicated." While current law doesn't anticipate such situations, "uniqueness guarantee," "identity authentication," and "centralized management of digital personalities" might be required as premises for future system design.

"I'm the real one!"



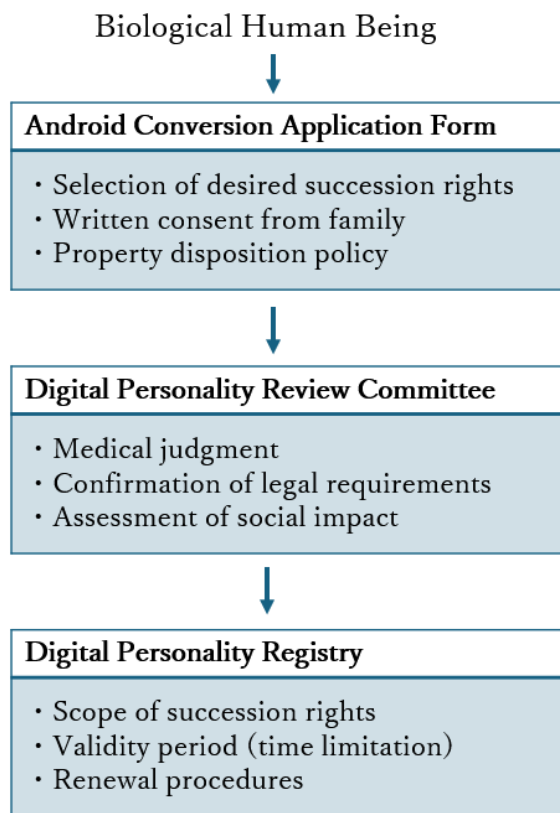
VI. Possibilities for Legal System Design

How should our legal system evolve to address such a future society?

(i) Digital Personality Registration System

This would establish a new family registry system specifically for androids, recognizing personality succession based on clear expressions of intent made during one's lifetime. The scope of inheritable rights would be clearly defined in written law to ensure legal predictability.

Digital Personality Registration System Process Flow



(ii) Time-Limited Personality System

To ensure social fluidity, this system would limit personality succession to a specific period (for example, 50 years). After the period expires, mandatory status transfer would occur, legally guaranteeing generational change.

(iii) Hybrid Legal Personality System

This would create "Android Corporations" as entities between individuals and corporations, recognizing limited legal personalities that inherit only specific rights. This system aims to balance continuity of social roles with legal stability.

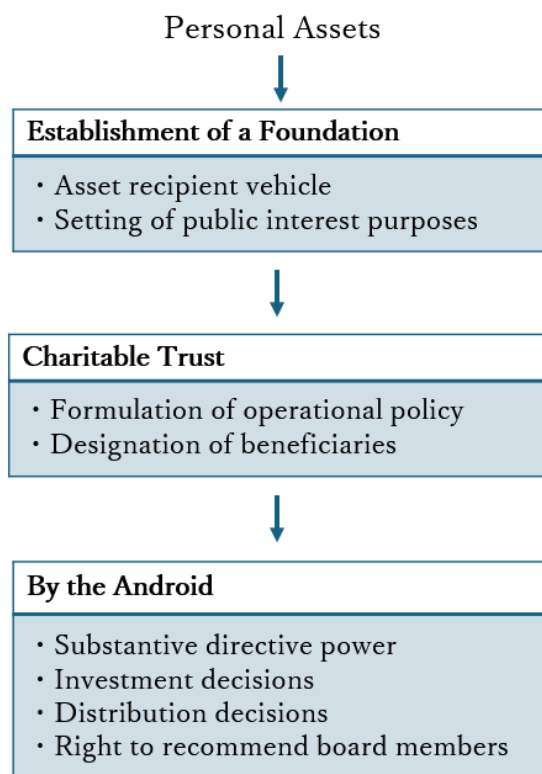
(iv) Utilization of Trust and Corporate Schemes

As background, I previously worked as a financial lawyer creating Charitable Trusts in jurisdictions like the Cayman Islands and establishing corporations with no shareholders. Even if android personality rights were restricted, it might be possible to create a system where companies and foundations are established, all assets transferred to them, and the android embodiment directs these entities. This could potentially enable survival while maintaining assets for 1,000 or even 2,000 years.

By applying such existing legal schemes, we could potentially achieve substantial rights

succession after androidization. We may need to consider whether such schemes should be prohibited.

Android Substantial Rights Holding Structure (Cayman Islands-type Scheme Example)



Note:
Legally, the foundation/trust makes the decisions,
but in practice, the android retains influence.

[Column: Can AI Be Granted Legal Personality? - Legal Status of "Bodiless Intelligence"]

When discussing personality succession through androidization, another intriguing question emerges: "Can pure AI (artificial intelligence) be granted legal personality?" While androids transfer human memories and personalities and interact with society through physical bodies, making them easier to position as extensions of "the former self," AI lacks such physicality or continuity with past personalities. Rather, AI represents "new intelligence" that learns from zero and makes independent decisions.

◆ AI and Personality - Succession or Creation?

In this regard, while androids are subjects that "inherit personality," AI becomes the target of whether to "create or deny personality" - a more fundamental debate about recognizing entirely new legal subjects.

In the past, some parts of the EU discussed the legal concept of "electronic person," but ultimately negative opinions became mainstream. The reasons were simple:

- Cannot bear ethical responsibility
- Has limitations in autonomy
- Presupposes human control

These factors present major barriers to granting AI legal capacity and obligation capacity like corporations.

◆ However, Could This Apply to "Memory-Holding AI"?

Meanwhile, systems like "memorial AI" that learns a person's voice, speech patterns, and values, or "Digital Executor" AI that realizes posthumous wishes, are progressing as real technological challenges.

What would happen if such AI were granted civil law contract-making capacity or authority for intentional representation? Unlike androids, it would be realistic to limit this to "agent" or "functional entity" status.

◆ Direction for Legal Organization

Item	Android	Pure AI (ChatGPT-like existence)
Physical form	Yes (Human-like embodiment)	No (Server-based, non-embodied)
Personality continuity (with original human)	Present (with original)	None
Succession possibility	Partially inheritable	Generally none
Legal status grant	Possible under special law	Not recognized as independent legal person
Expected legal positioning	Limited legal subject (e.g., agent, trust beneficiary)	A function-limited agent within a system

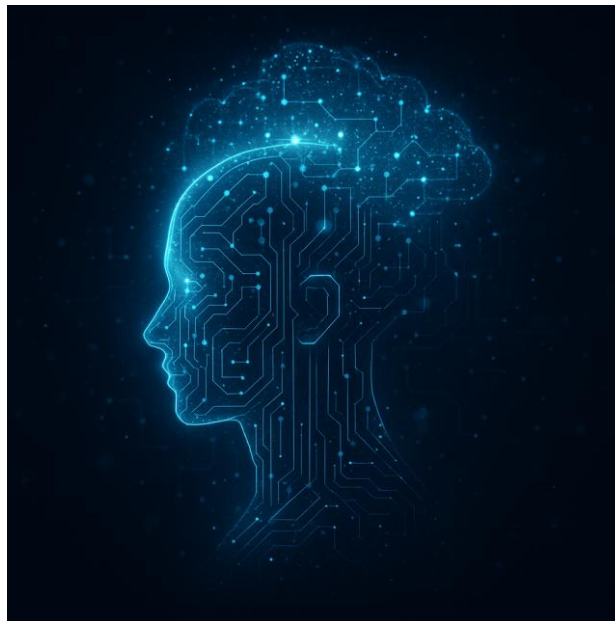
Thus, AI and androids are fundamentally different in their "nature of personality" and "legal roles." While this paper focuses on "how to inherit personality," the separate question of "whether to grant personality to new intelligence" will also be an unavoidable issue in future legal system design.

VII. Impact on Legal Practice

If such technology becomes reality, significant changes will be required in legal practice. New legal service demands will emerge, including preparation of lifetime intent documents regarding androidization, establishment of digital asset management and succession contracts, and support for family consensus building.

The legal profession will also urgently need to establish ethical codes responding to new technologies and continuous training systems.

Humans as Digital Information



VIII. Conclusion

What I felt from viewing Professor Ishiguro's exhibition was the magnitude of technology's impact on legal systems. While the issue of personality succession through androidization remains in the realm of thought experiments at present, considering the speed of technological development, this is an area where the legal profession should begin discussions early.

Legal studies must find answers to fundamental questions: What is humanity? What is personality? What is the individual's position in society? In an era where technology transforms society, new challenges await legal professionals.

Note: This paper represents the author's personal views as part of thought organization and does not predict or guarantee future legal systems. While Saito is somewhat positive about androidization, there is absolutely no intention to encourage readers to "please become androids!"