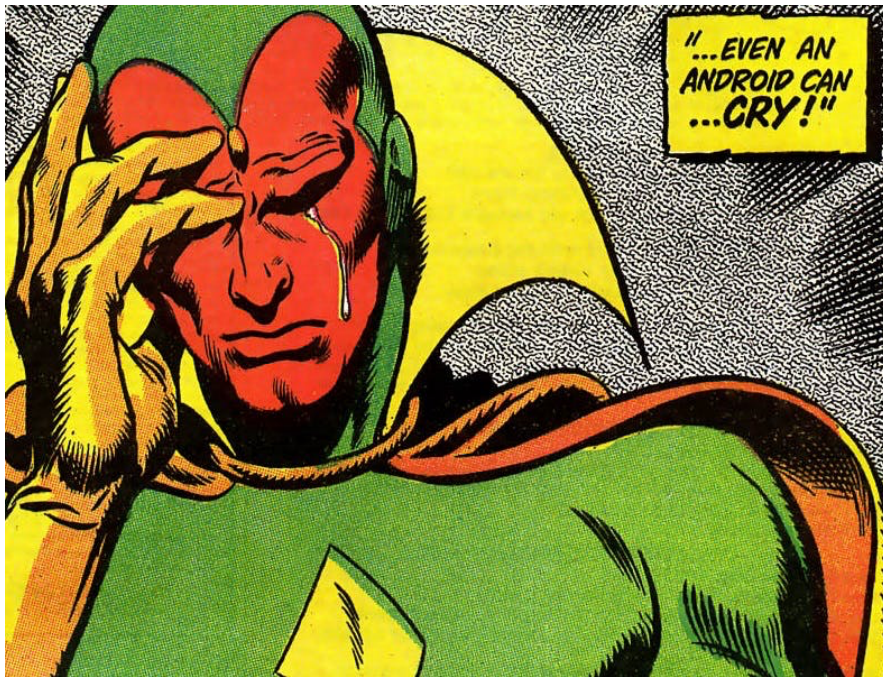


# Symposium:

## REGULATING INTELLIGENCE: THE CHALLENGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN NEW FORMS OF LIFE



27 April 2018

Centre For Life  
Newcastle-Upon-  
Tyne  
(Close to rail station)

09:30-17:30

If you'd like to  
attend, please  
register for free  
before April 18th by  
contacting:  
**david.lawrence@  
ncl.ac.uk**

Biotechnology and advances in AI promise the advent of new forms of life, maybe even 'conscious', reasoning creatures as intelligent and as sapient as *Homo sapiens*. This symposium seeks to highlight the difficulties in the interplay between consciousness, responsibility, and liability, and attempt to provide a basis for developing workable legal definitions that may be applicable in many fields of law. *Full symposium abstract overleaf*

Confirmed speakers include:

- Professor Paula Boddington (Oxford)
- Dr Miranda Mowbray (Bristol)
- Professor Richard Mullender (Newcastle)
- Dr Nathan Emmerich (Dublin)
- Dr Ilke Turkmendag (Newcastle)
- Dr Nicola Williams (Lancaster)
- Mr Daniel Tigard (Tulane, USA)
- Mr Joshua Jowitt (Newcastle)

Convenors:

- Dr David Lawrence (Newcastle)
- Dr Sarah Morley (Newcastle)

Limited funding available.

Contact [david.lawrence@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:david.lawrence@ncl.ac.uk) with any queries.

# REGULATING INTELLIGENCE: THE CHALLENGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN NEW FORMS OF LIFE

Centre for Life, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

27 April 2018

Dr. David Lawrence, Dr. Sarah Morley

One forthcoming challenge for policy and regulation is the potential emergence of new types of being, both sapient and not, through advances in germline gene editing, synthetic genome technologies and the development of artificial intelligences (AI). Recent proposals by committees of the European Parliament, the White House, and the House of Commons have suggested among other things the institution of degrees of personhood for extant 'expert systems' and autonomous robots. These proposals fail in several regards including quite how we might identify an intelligence deserving of this status.

Firstly, the granting of electronic personhood as they propose does not go far enough- corporate persons as they presently exist are a creation of commercial convenience and in no way possess any kind of 'human' or moral qualities. In certain circumstances and with particular technologies this may be an appropriate approach, however emerging bio- and cyber- technologies may occasion rights more akin to those of natural persons.

Secondly, regulators have reacted in a piecemeal fashion. It is imperative to first identify categories of morally significant products that would be subject to regulation and to what extent positive or negative rights might apply. We may never solve the 'hard problem' of consciousness, but this does not negate the need to address the practical issues subsidiary to it. We must therefore develop legal boundaries that might be used to determine between these products – a distinction which the authors term conscious and non-conscious beings.

This too may be overly simplistic a division. Not only are there degrees within consciousness of both sentience and sapience, there is the important point that consciousness does not equal competence (*Gillick v West Norfolk*). The technologies in question may have similar cognitive capacity to a human, but much in the way that children are not seen as competent to give consent to medical procedures it does not follow that a conscious synthetic being would be cognitively equal to an adult. Incorporating subtleties such as this into the development of definitions will help us assess the extent to which a given technology should be liable under or protected by the law.

The meeting will highlight the difficulties in this interplay between consciousness, responsibility, and liability, and attempt to provide a basis for developing workable legal definitions that may be applicable in many fields of law: including medical, company, human rights, employment, criminal and tort, amongst others. This goes far beyond the existing regulatory proposals and academic literature in seeking to move the focus from reacting to piecemeal issues (albeit important, such as negligence and automated cars) onto a more holistic and broad approach. Thus we ensure our readiness to keep pace with technologies that develop ever faster.