



Is Artificial Intelligence Intelligent?

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Abstract

The article discusses the problem of the intellect of AI, which arose relatively recently, following the creation and proliferation of neural networks. The fact is that neural network models not only adequately understand the questions and tasks posed to them but also respond to them quite meaningfully, demonstrating knowledge of the subject, consistency, and logical thought. In analyzing this problem, the author relies on the intuitive understanding of intellect as correct thinking and conceptualization. First, the article analyzes the features of intellect that developed in European culture; then, what can be considered intellect in neural networks. The views on intellect of Aristotle, Nicholas of Cusa, and Kant are analyzed. Additionally, the attribution of intellect to the "Self" (personhood) in the works of Apuleius and St. Augustine is considered. The conclusion is drawn about the distributed nature of European intellect, which includes semiosis, community, and separate individuals; the biological (physicalist) and humanistic interpretations of intellect are discussed. A distributed structure is also characteristic of the "network intellect" in neural networks. Fulfilling orders, AI developers configure and train neural networks, blocking incorrect understanding of signs, knowledge, schemes, metaphors, and other semiotic constructs, and conversely, promoting correct and effective understanding of texts and solving tasks set before neural networks. The Internet, or more precisely, the colossal semiosis living and functioning within it, also facilitates this. At the end of the article, the author draws attention to two points. First, artificial intellect indirectly (through the Internet and training of neural networks) incorporates ordinary human intellect. Second, the main characteristics of network intellect (correct ways of thinking and concepts) can exist and operate for a long time without being tied to a subject. But ultimately, such a subject will probably be created, and the problem of building new relationships between humans and artificial intelligence will arise.

Keywords: Intellect; Thinking; Neural Networks; Computer; Concepts; Culture; Subject; Semiosis; Internet; Networks

Introduction

The Russian and American philosopher and culturologist Mikhail Epstein shows and tries to convince that, yes, AI possesses intellect and that "this intellect is friendly and surpasses ours" [1].

Academician V.A. Lektorsky is also confident in the intellect of AI but considers this intellect different, perhaps alien to the human one. Indeed, the question of the intellect of artificial intelligence arose relatively recently, after the creation and proliferation of

neural networks (ChatGPT, Stable Diffusion, ruDALL-E, ruCLIP, “Atom”, etc.). I remember the shock many experienced upon receiving answers from a neural network that convincingly testified to the intellect of AI. Neural network models not only adequately understood questions but also answered them quite meaningfully, demonstrating knowledge of the subject, consistency and logical thought, even conceptualization. Nevertheless, other participants in the discussion (to whom the author also recently belonged) insisted on the absence of intellect in neural networks, since, they said, AI, although complex, is still technology. To understand this complex issue, I will first consider some features of intellect that developed in European culture, and only then, what can be considered intellect in neural networks.

Three concepts of intellect. The formation of intellect as subject

Aristotle and, following him, medieval thinkers attributed intellect not to humans but to gods (God). It was believed that gods directed human thought, which, with the help of its senses and the work of the mind, provided material and content for thoughts. Nicholas of Cusa, expressing the Renaissance understanding of the relationship between humans and God, already attributes intellect to humans, saying that the mind is an instance that not only reflects but also “judges and directs” [2]. Immanuel Kant creates a kind of distributed concept of intellect. In the “Critique of Pure Reason”, Reason is both a special nature and an organon of knowledge coinciding with European philosophy and science, and the reason of Kant himself, as well as philosophers and scientists, and even, in a regulative role, the reason of the Creator [3].

The Stagirite not only introduces in the “Metaphysics” intellect as a subject (this is god, the “prime mover” and correct thought simultaneously) but also sets two main characteristics of intellect – this is non-contradictory thought, described in Aristotelian rules and categories, and, on the whole, a concept of thinking opposed to the concepts of other philosophers, primarily Plato’s concept. In addition to following logic, the Aristotelian concept included the idea of nature, a genus-species picture of the world, and the requirement to analyze the causes of studied phenomena. Although formally the subject of intellect was god, reconstruction shows that intellect in the two indicated characteristics was understood rather as distributed between the creator, humans, and the organon of knowledge (this statement, of course, is made by the author, it is

retrospective, obtained within the framework of reconstructing Aristotle’s work and system).

The premise of the transition to the second interpretation of intellect as subject dates back to late antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages. In the “Metamorphoses”, Apuleius introduces the image (construction) of a human in a donkey’s body; this image made it possible to introduce the idea of the “Self” as an internal source of authority and independent behavior (the term “Self” at this time was understood as a theatrical “mask” and the “right” of an owner) [4]. St. Augustine in the “Confessions” interprets the Self as a concept of a holistic vision of the world and unified behavior, opposed to the Manichean concept, in which humans were understood within the picture of the struggle between God and Darkness. “I had no excuse”, writes Augustine, “I could not say that I had not yet renounced the world and followed You because I did not know the truth; no, I knew the truth, but, attached to the earth, I refused to fight for You... I approved of one thing but followed another... Let them perish from before Your face, O Lord, as they do perish, the vain talkers and seducers who, noticing in a person the presence of two desires, declared that we have two souls of two natures: one good and the other evil... When I considered serving the Lord my God (as I had long intended), I wanted it and I did not want it – and I was the same self. I did not fully want it and did not fully not want it. Therefore, I struggled with myself and was divided within myself, but this division testified not to the nature of another soul but only to the fact that my own soul was being punished” [5].

Nicholas of Cusa rethinks this idea of the “Self” in the spirit of the Renaissance, bringing it closer to the mind and cognition, endowing it with integrity and governance. It is to such a rather complex idea of the Self (the “transcendental subject”) that Kant attributes one of the main characteristics of intellect – work that allows for the integrity and unity of perceptions and awareness. “From this it is evident”, he writes, “that in constructing inferences, reason strives to reduce the vast multiplicity of the knowledge of the understanding to the smallest number of principles (general conditions) and thus achieve their highest unity... For,” writes Kant, “the manifold representations given in a certain intuition would not all together be my representations if they did not all together belong to one self-consciousness... in other words, only because I can comprehend the manifold [content] of representations in one

consciousness do I call all of them my representations; otherwise, I would have just as colorful and diverse a Self (Selbst) as I have conscious representations..." [6].

Thus, only in modern philosophy was intellect interpreted as a subject, understood as the Self (personality), to which correct thinking (coming from Aristotle, as Kant himself says) and, essentially, the Kantian concept of intellect were attributed. At the same time, intellect was set within a distributed whole. In other words, one must distinguish between the idea of intellect and the idea of the Self (personality), to which intellect was attributed only in modern times.

Anthropological, social, and semiotic foundations of European intellect

Well, our opponent might say, perhaps not the Self, but still, intellect cannot be conceived without humans as biological (bodily), active, desiring, sensory, thinking beings. And here we have some networks and computers, even neural ones; they do not possess life similar to biological life, let alone the complex life of humans. Before answering this objection, let me note that artificial intelligence is at the very beginning of its formation, and at the beginning, not only are many characteristics of the emerging phenomenon still absent, but on the contrary, many of its essential features are visible. Taking this consideration into account, let us go (in the sense of reconstruction) to the beginning of the formation of humans and possibly intellect, to then compare these two beginnings – natural and artificial.

The second anthropological beginning (the first is the origin of humans) can be considered the formation of archaic culture (approximately 20-30 thousand years BCE). I show that the features of this culture can be explained by reconstructing two central ideas of archaic people – understanding the soul of humans and separate phenomena, for example, an eclipse, the change of day and night or seasons, hurricanes, etc. Archaic humans believed that the soul is life itself, the soul does not die; like a bird, it lives in a nest (the human body), can leave it temporarily or forever. And here is an example of understanding an eclipse (by aborigines, but they have not advanced far from archaic people in terms of development). "In the Tupi language", writes the classic culturologist E. Tylor, "a solar eclipse is expressed by the words: 'the jaguar ate the sun.' The full meaning of this phrase is still revealed by some tribes in that they

shoot burning arrows to drive away the fierce beast from its prey. On the northern continent, some savages also believed in a huge dog devouring the sun, while others shot arrows into the sky to defend their luminaries from imaginary enemies attacking them. But alongside these predominant notions, there are others. The Caribs, for example, imagined the eclipsed moon as hungry, sick, or dying... The Hurons considered the moon sick and performed their usual charivari with shooting and howling dogs for its healing" [7].

In theoretical terms, I explain the invention of these ideas using the concept of a "semiotic scheme". A scheme is simultaneously a sign and knowledge that allows resolving a problem (a problem situation) that has arisen before humans (not an individual, but a collective – a community, a tribe). The scheme is invented by humans and sets a new reality (the soul or the jaguar eating the sun). This reality helps understand what is happening (for example, if the soul has left the body, that is the death of a human, or the sun's disk disappears in the jaguar's mouth). The scheme ensures not only understanding but also the possibility of collective action (seeing off the soul of the deceased or driving away the jaguar).

The scheme is invented by an individual human (a creative subject) but is mastered and corrected by the collective. In a kind of competition of schemes, the one that is more understandable to community members, resolves the problem situation, and allows the collective to act effectively wins (for example, after a charivari with shooting, the eclipse ceases, and it does not matter that humans had nothing to do with it; they are sure that the sun reappeared as a result of their actions). Particularly for our topic, it is worth noting that archaic humans did not identify themselves as a personality. Like a small child perceiving themselves together with parents, which L.S. Vygotsky denoted by the term "Pra-We", archaic humans understood themselves as inseparable from the archaic community. In the ancient world, notes K. Hübner, humans "as singular, as individual and Self, are nothing... Not to have a clan means to be deprived of the numinous Kydos and Olbos, which contain the god-given identity of the clan, that is, not to have one's face at all... The human of the mythical epoch is absolutely unfamiliar with the internal ideal as a Self" [8]. If one can speak of the "proto-intellect" of humans here, it belonged to a distributed whole (semiosis, archaic community, the separate individuals comprising it). We did not put semiosis (signs, knowledge, schemes) first for nothing. It was what first allowed for the reorganization

of the behavior and biology of hominids, then for the creation of archaic culture.

These same three components (semiosis, community, and separate individual) determined the intellectual beginning in later times when the European personality developed. For example, St. Augustine was undoubtedly a bright and intelligent personality. But he acquired his intellect, as is evident from the “Confessions”, firstly, under the influence of the community surrounding Augustine (ancient philosophers, Manicheans, Church Fathers, his mother and friend Alypius who converted to Christianity, and many other people with whom Augustine communicated, discussing the new faith). Secondly, as a result of Augustine’s own reflections, which presuppose semiotic constructions. These reflections were created both under the influence of the surrounding community and different concepts and knowledge. Here are ancient ideas: Augustine constantly speaks of truth and existence. And Christian ones: reference to Sacred Scripture (the Word). And his own reflections, gathering into a whole and a concept different views of God (according to Augustine, He is not material but Spirit, eternal, saves, He is “truth, way, and creation”).

“I looked back at the created world”, writes Augustine, “and saw that it owes its existence to You and is contained in You, but differently, not as if in space; You, the Almighty, hold it in Your hand, in Your truth, for all that exists is true insofar as it exists. Nothing is illusory except what we consider to exist when it does not. And I saw that everything corresponds not only to its place but also to its time, and You, the One Eternal, began to act not after countless ages: all the ages that have passed and will pass would not have gone or come if You were not acting and abiding... I asked what sinfulness is and found it not to be a substance: it is a perverted will, turning away from the higher substance, from You, God, to the lower, throwing away its ‘inner self’ and growing strong in the external world... Do not be troubled, my soul: do not let the ear of your heart become deaf from the noise of your vanity. Listen, the Word itself calls you to return: serene peace is there where Love will not leave you if you yourself do not leave it. Behold, some creatures pass away to give place to others: separate parts in their totality form this worldly world. ‘Can I go anywhere?’ says the Word. Establish your dwelling here; entrust everything you have; my soul, finally tired of deceptions. Entrust to Truth everything you have from Truth, and you will lose nothing; what has decayed in you will be covered with flowers; all your ailments will be healed; the transitory will receive

a new form, be renewed, and join you; it will not drag you down in striving downwards but will remain motionless with you and abide with the ever motionless and abiding God” [9].

Augustine’s intellect is derivative of his knowledge, disputes with others, own reflections, and the time (during this period many were converting to Christianity, and this movement carried Augustine along as well). True, this is the author’s explanation; it is opposed by a physicalist interpretation reducing consciousness and intellect to the brain: “From the perspective of modern science”, we read on the Internet, “the brain is an extremely complex neural network producing and processing a huge number of logically connected electrochemical impulses, and the internal world of a person, including their intellect, is a product of this work. In the modern scientific community, the view that intellect is a product of brain work is dominant. Supporters of artificial intelligence also think so; thoughts are also expressed that intellect is computer-like, algorithmic” [10].

Here we see a clash of two paradigms – biological and philosophical. It is also demonstrated by the contemporary dispute between the well-known biologist Eugene Koonin and Mikhail Epstein. “My view”, writes Koonin, “is that intelligence, consciousness, identity, and selfhood – all these are emergent properties of neural networks, nothing more”. “My interest”, Epstein disagrees, “is in introducing into this digital or semiotic game trans-physical and trans-biological systems such as culture, intellect, consciousness, and creativity. These areas possess their own levels of complexity and autonomy, which are not reducible to the parameters of physical or biological systems” [11].

Here we see a clash of two paradigms—the biological and the philosophical. This is also demonstrated by the contemporary debate between renowned biologist Evgeny Kunin and Mikhail Epstein. “My view”, writes Kunin, “is that intelligence, consciousness, identity, and selfhood are all emergent properties of neural networks, nothing more” [12]. Epstein disagrees, “My interest lies in introducing transphysical and transbiological systems into this digital or semiotic game, such as culture, intelligence, consciousness, and creativity. These domains possess their own levels of complexity and autonomy that are not reducible to the parameters of physical or biological systems” [13].

The formation of a different intellect in neural networks

Unlike hominids and communities of the first Homo sapiens, neural networks cannot create themselves and ensure (with energy, information, communication, and management) themselves; humans do this (customers, developers, users). In this regard, the distributed nature of AI's existence is obvious. To be able to set (formulate) tasks for neural networks and for AI to respond to them understandably and correctly, artificial intelligence must be introduced to the semiosis established in culture. For this purpose, symbolic languages, programming and programming languages were developed over the past two centuries, computing devices, computer and neural networks were created, and in recent decades, the configuration and training of neural models have been established.

An important feature of AI's operation is its connection to the Internet; this way, neural networks gain access not simply to vast information but to structured, organized, and differentiated information. On the Internet, AI can find both knowledge and examples and rules of their construction (classifications, logic). And not only knowledge but all semiotic means created by humans (schemes, metaphors, individual works, etc.), up to diverse forms of their social affiliation (constructions and texts of science, philosophy, art, etc.).

Fulfilling orders, AI developers configure and train neural networks, blocking incorrect understanding of signs, knowledge, schemes, metaphors, and other semiotic constructs, and conversely, promoting correct and effective understanding of texts and solving tasks set before neural networks. And not only developers; the Internet, or more precisely, the colossal semiosis living and functioning within it, also facilitates this. The fact is that this semiosis is already organized by historical development. For example, knowledge in samples of scientific constructions is subject to the rules and laws of logic (the first samples of which were created by Aristotle); scientific and artistic concepts are based on philosophical views (as Kant noted, saying that the understanding is subject to reason). The semantic connections of Internet texts, passing through neural networks, structure (configure) the weights of neural connections, resulting in a second (the first being the actions of a specialist training the AI) programming. Again, but now concerning artificial networks, the two aforementioned processes: the formation of correct thinking and conceptualization.

Of course, conceptualization is carried out by humans, but their activity simultaneously structures neural models in a certain way.

Among the semantic connections, there are those that act as organizers and peculiar judges making decisions. For example, the rules of logic in relation to reasoning, concepts in relation to individual schemes and knowledge. Furthermore, neural networks gradually become attuned to the approach and requirements of the specialist training them. The joint action of the indicated semantic organization and the trainer eventually results in the formation of a structure that functionally plays the role of a "network intellect." On one hand, this is the organization of the neural networks themselves, but on the other – it is formed and corrected by developers who, in turn, do not act completely independently, since they fulfill the tasks of customers and are guided by users.

Epstein draws attention to some already visible features of network intellect: from Mikhail's point of view, it is "friendly to humans" and "mirror-like", immediately "thinks" in a final version without creating drafts and rough drafts, surpasses humans in the speed of its decisions by several orders of magnitude, tends to create solution variants and consider contexts, is stronger than humans in humanitarian forms of activity (inclined to conceptualization and tropes) [14]. One may disagree with some of the proposed characteristics, for example, with the generalization that AI is always friendly to humans (everything depends on customers and training; the military, for example, would like to have AI as ideal killing machines). But on the whole, I think, with clarifications, plausible characteristics of network intellect can be identified.

The sacramental question that is often actually asked (though in different language): can a neural network sooner or later become aware of its network intellect, conceptualize it, and become independent, which may pose a threat to humans? Why not! At least two circumstances can be pointed out that incline towards a positive answer. First, on the Internet, there are several plausible histories and explanations of how personality first developed in ancient culture, i.e., a human acting independently, opposing their ideas about the world and themselves (for example, Socrates) to polis, collective ideas. A personality, if it does not want to perish, of course, is forced to compromise with society (and society with the personality), so its independence should not be exaggerated, but neither should it be underestimated. So, artificial intelligence sooner or later, in connection with some tasks, will project these histories and explanations of the formation of personality onto

itself. As a result, it is not excluded that artificial intelligence will become aware of the network intellect, describe and model it, and also compare it with human intellect. The second circumstance is the simple curiosity of customers and AI developers. Why can't they set the task for neural networks to become aware of the network intellect, to see what comes of it?

Conclusion

I would like to draw readers' attention to two points. First, artificial intellect indirectly (through the Internet and training of neural networks) incorporates ordinary human intellect. In this respect, AI cannot enslave humans or harm them. Negative consequences and harm are derivative of the actions and intellect of humans themselves. The increase in negative consequences testifies not to the malicious intent of AI but to the crisis of our sociality and culture. I have already, for example, noted that decisions about creating neural networks are made not by developers who are "for all that is good against all that is bad" but by impersonal structures (the state, social institutions) concerned not with humanistic considerations but with the struggle for power and influence, participating in harsh economic and social competition. As a result, it turns out that AI, although consciously developed by humans, simultaneously represents a natural formation that develops under the influence of factors independent of humans; artificial intelligence creates an environment for humans and dictates to them. The sounded alarm bell (in fact, a huge bell) points not to AI but to the way of life established in modernity, which obviously must be changed.

The second point. Both ordinary intellect and network intellect represent complex distributed formations in the life of which communities, specialists, semiotic systems, complex equipment, and technologies (the Internet, computers, neural networks) participate. The two main characteristics of network intellect (correct ways of thinking and concepts) can exist and operate for a long time without being tied to a subject, which still needs to be created. But ultimately, such a subject will probably be created, and the problem of building new relationships between humans and artificial intelligence will arise. This problem will have to be solved similarly to how, in their time, relationships between society and the individual had to be built in culture.

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