Artificial Intelligence

Proponents of AI may support one of two views: weak AI or strong AI. Proponents of weak AI believe that machines can duplicate human thinking in its entirety, including some sense of consciousness. Proponents of weak AI, by contrast, believe that machines can merely simulate intelligence or act as if they possess intelligence. The prevalent attitude among most AI researchers is that even if AI is not as intelligent as humans, it may be as intelligent as what we consider to be "thinking." By "thinking," they mean the ability to reason, solve problems, perceive, understand complex information, learn, and have emotions. The "thinking" ability of AI may be more developed than that of human beings in some areas, such as pattern recognition, image analysis, and natural language processing.

The debate between weak AI and strong AI is a fundamental issue in the field of artificial intelligence. Weak AI focuses on the ability to perform specific tasks, such as image recognition, speech recognition, and natural language processing, while strong AI aims to achieve human-level intelligence.

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Proposers of AI may support one of two views of personhood: strong AI or weak AI. Proponents of strong AI believe that machines can duplicate human intelligence in its entirety, including sense of consciousness. Proponents of weak AI, by contrast, believe that machines can merely simulate intelligence or act as if they possess intelligence. The prevalent attitude among most AI proponents is that the theory should be developed first and then tested. This hypothesis and simply to ignore the strong AI hypothesis. As long as the computer progresses, it is called a simulation of intelligence or real intelligence is regarded as unimportant.

Many people participate daily in activities involving weak AI, with the most popular enterprise being "gamifying." Since the computer "Deep Blue" successfully defeated chess great Gary Kasparov in 1997, we are on the verge of a revolution in understanding the human race. However, it is important to note that Deep Blue does not mimic the way a human being would play chess, but instead calculates outcomes based on all possible moves and then selects the one with the highest probability of winning. Weak AI also contributes significantly to applications such as speech recognition, machine translation, and search engines.

Traditionally, strong AI has been connected to determinism. Determinism claims that all behavior is the result of preceding events. The idea that machines can duplicate humans implies that humans are deterministic creatures. The assumption of determinism to the Christian worldview may be framed as follows: If a person is just following his or her "program," then no motions of responsibility, sin, and redemption even make sense. For instance, if a computer is programmed to run Deep Blue, then it is the computer doing what it was created to do—even though some people might consider the decisions of Deep Blue as distinct from decisions by a human being. This view is not uncommon among Christians who work in the field of artificial intelligence or act as if they possess intelligence.

Central to a Christian concept of personhood is the image of God. A strong AI perspective poses challenges to this view of how humans and the world was created. The image of God—the functional, the relational, and the substantive. The functional perspective considers what we as humans do. This view comes under attack as we consider our response to whether or not we are deterministic creatures. Did God create us in such a way that we follow a brain "program," or is there an aspect of free will in our function?

The relational view of the image of God focuses more on our ability to have relationships with others and with God. In his book "The Book of Church and Faith," John Jefferson Davis chooses to focus on the security of the relational view in the face of strong AI. Davis's point is that instead of seeing strong AI as an attack on the unique creation that we are in Christ, we should regard our ability to have a relationship with God as the element that will ultimately set humans apart from intelligent machines.

The substantive view focuses on the image of God as manifested by certain qualities or characteristics within the makeup of the human being—i.e., on what a person is. The most common aspect referred to in this view is the image of God as the creator of the world. The image of God is the view that comes under the greatest attack when confronted with the rise of strong AI. The image of God as perceived by those who believe in a functionalist approach to understanding consciousness is often called the "artificial intelligence" view. However, in addition to the substantial view, there are more than one possibility for how strong AI could be viewed.

The idea that machines can duplicate humans implies that humans are deterministic creatures who make decisions based on some predetermined brain "program." If the brain is a computer that duplicates human behavior, then it does not have the ability to make free choices. If a person is just following his or her "program," then no motions of responsibility, sin, and redemption even make sense. For instance, if a computer is programmed to run Deep Blue, then it is the computer doing what it was created to do—even though some people might consider the decisions of Deep Blue as distinct from decisions by a human being. This view is not uncommon among Christians who work in the field of artificial intelligence or act as if they possess intelligence.

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