

Redefining the Zeitgeist – Artificial Intelligence Incognito

Christopher McLeod

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The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the last decade is the culmination of many centuries of research and algorithmic progress. The notion that we are now hurtling towards an apocalyptic dystopian future is somewhat unfounded. AI threatens to become a transformational force that we can embrace as a tool for good or extreme malice. The depiction of AI in popular and literary culture (Westworld or Brave New World sic.) has done little to quell the fears of many in uncertain economic and financial times.

New articles emerge daily, touting the almost godlike powers of Artificial Intelligence. Man, merely mortal and unable to compete with the superhuman strengths and processing powers that AI brings to the world stage. The future almost set like a boot stomping on the face of humanity for all time (George Orwell, 1984). The problem at its core is more complex than the simple binary code and algorithms used to determine the learning models that run AI. Humanity at its very essence is not a simple notion. Complexities within the Human spectrums of behaviour and emotion exist that cannot be simply categorised into neat boxes.

AI: An Etymology

Notional ideas surrounding AI and algorithmic computations can be traced to ancient times. An algorithm in its simplest form is a set of instructions to complete a task. We can look at this as making a cup of coffee, preparing a recipe, or computational mathematics such as Pythagoras' Theorem or *the book of Indian Computation* (Muhammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī). In essence: the steps we take to solve a problem.

Our search for what Artificial Intelligence seeks to do can be further examined and reasoned through Actual Intelligence. The process of human reasoning and decision making. An algorithm follows a process of yes or no prompts to solve a problem or reach a desired outcome. Human reasoning according to Immanuel Kant's treatise *Critique of Pure Reason* can only be defined through strict definitions of thought pattern. To adhere strictly to Kant's hypothesis is to ignore parameters outside pure reasoning.

Humanity and its reasoning for moral, ethical, and philosophical action cannot be simplified into neat categorisations. There is a larger paradigm of how humans act and think that is outside the realms of pure reasoning and algorithmic calculations. There is a sense that the chiaroscuro shading of human behaviour requires a deeper investigation into the motivations of human actions. Behavioural and Cognitive theorists such as Skinner and Piaget have sought to codify the thought and developmental processes of actions. Yet, no one theory comes close to the inherent reasoning and motivations that humanity displays.

Actual Intelligence

Whateley (2025) in his blog (Artificial Intelligence (AI) versus Actual Intelligence (Acl) defines the process of Actual Intelligence. The process of using the mind to solve simple and complex tasks is an important facet to the Artificial Intelligence question. Choosing to use moral, ethical, and computational paradigms to problem solve is an important part of our interaction with AI. AI is presented as the world changing invention of the fourth industrial revolution.

There is an idea at present that AI is an omnipresent god that knows all and has all answers for all time. This in and of itself is a fallacy. AI can be wrong and often is. The answers that ChatGPT gives must often be rewritten, fact checked and sometimes discarded all together. The speed of ChatGPT when it is accurate is an advantage to its user. However, it is often not the case. ChatGPT's own disclaimer states that answers may be inaccurate. It can be a useful tool when used judiciously.

Moreover, when used in tandem with actual intelligence may prove to be very worthwhile. Yet, the use of actual intelligence may determine the greatest sense of self and sense of achievement within the sphere of academic endeavours. The Socratic method is in part based on the understanding of self through the contextual lens of previous knowledge. A question-and-answer approach to understanding and building new knowledge to synthesise thoughts. Actual Intelligence when applied this way will benefit the thinker as they are more engaged in the process of thought and creation.

Man Immortal: Transhumanism 2.0

Consider then the sense of man's immortality or lack thereof. We can explore the frailty of mere humanity. An innate knowledge that we must all die. We may be at home on this planet for the span of our lives. But eventually all men must die. Their bodies returning to the ash and dirt of the ground. To know death is to truly be human. Yet, we can consider another profound tenet of the drive towards AI integration and Technological inventions that drive integration. A sense that we can merge with the machines and become transhuman. Notions of this are not new and have their portrayal in Literature, Film, Music, and Art for centuries.

The human mind has a vast imagination that can bring forth all manner of dreams and visions. It is no mistake then that thinkers like Ray Kurzweil are excited for the future and the possibilities of enhancing humanity through AI integration. Kurzweil amongst others is a form of priest in this new AI religion. A true believer that all who seek to merge their humanity with the created will somehow become superior to the purely organic humans who have not chosen to merge. They place their stock in AI and integrative technologies working flawlessly without interruptions and failures.

There may be some folly in this line of thought as developmental and implemented timelines can shift. Technology is seldomly rolled out without flaws and imperfections. The failure of the Apple Vision Pro headset is one such example of this. The product was not ready for full market implementation and as a result wasn't adapted by the public due to its flaws. The push towards Transhumanism and body adaptive AI may also suffer from the same timeline constraints. Transhumanists are hoping for the integration and singularity (merging with the machines) to come to fruition around 2030. This may be naïve at worst and hopeful at best.

Implications

The implications for using Artificial Intelligence are not straightforward. The complexities surrounding the implementation of Artificial Intelligence assume no clear solution to the larger philosophical argument. To completely replace all humans regardless of a universal basic income would be to potentially render human being's labour as worthless. There are deeper arguments surrounding work, leisure, and their meaning to man that are outside the purview of this article. A core tenet of the argument in favour of AI is the saving of human resources and hours worked. Again, a larger philosophical conversation.

To completely discount AI is dangerous. There is a push for its integration into our daily lives. The process for this is increasingly thwart with backlash from those in society where job losses have already occurred. A form of marginalisation and discrimination as the nature of work shifts and entire industries are upheaved overnight. There is a gradual sense that the

darkness of night is setting across humanity. Inversely, the Transhumanists believe that we are entering a golden age where we will merge with machines; becoming all powerful as we live forever. But to quote the Rock band Queen: Who Wants to Live Forever? To be human is to be frail. To live a 'good' life. And to die. The biological human machine was not designed/evolved to last forever.

We may find that the notions of science fiction writers and film makers are mute. There may be no world in which the majority are enslaved or disenfranchised as we adopt this new technology. A notion exists currently as is the fad for all new technology. There is an enormous push for the adoption of AI in day-to-day operations across society. An argument that this will transform the face of work and society as we know it. This may not come to pass. The mid 1980s onwards saw the massive adoption of CDs and then digital streaming. The resurgence of vinyl and even cassette tapes today suggests that there is a demand for the tangible. The human. AI as we currently understand it is not human. We are not yet at the point of *Ghost in the Shell*. History is not- was. History - is. And the future is yet to be written.

Predictions

The next five to ten years will see an increasing integration and reliance on AI. More home devices will become smart devices which are typically powered by Artificial Intelligence. The mass adoption of these technologies will be sold as conveniences for the masses. Though, there may be some delay with the adoption rates as current economic and political circumstances have driven down household spending and purchasing power. Consumers typically rein in spending as economic times toughen. This may prove a stumbling block for Transhumanists seeking mass adoption of the technologies.

Additionally, the increase in physical media purchases such as vinyl records and physical books (partially in response to Digital Rights Management (DRM) measures) will continue to increase. This is in part a response to the 'stream everything - own nothing' culture that has proliferated the last decade of consumptive purchasing. People are looking for something tangible to hold and experience again. People still long for humanity and the human touch. A core belonging of generational lineage. AI in its infinite power and potential cannot replicate human experience in the material world.

Finally, a larger emphasis on the *hybrid* will begin to take place. Proponents of Transhumanism will likely become more reliant on AI and the accoutrements of highly technical life. There will be many who choose not to partake at all. However, there will be those who seek to live a *hybrid life*. They will gather a modus operandi that frames both the use of AI and the use of the physical (Acl) world. This middle ground will perhaps be the best of both worlds. A sense that we live in the physicality of the world and the physicality of the hybrid digital spaces of the present and future.

The true cost of AI and the transformation of society will likely not be known for some years if not decades. We are in a highly transformative state. Behind us the world of the past. A lifestyle and way of being that has connectivity towards all those who came before us. Our present a strange kind of diaspora. All of us digital nomads. All of us scattered to the ends of the world. The future an unknown void. The nightmares of science fiction writ large in the cultural zeitgeist. Some of the concerns may come to pass. Some may pass uneventfully. History will be the final arbiter of fact and fiction in the debate around AI and Acl.

Christopher McLeod is an Associate Professor at the *Australian Guild of Education*