THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS: PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

Murodova Mehrangiz Umid qizi
English teacher at the State University "Cyber University"
murodovamehrangiz692@gmail.com

Abstract. *One of the main concerns of contemporary philosophy is the subject of artificial intelligence and social consciousness. From a philosophical standpoint, this thesis investigates how artificial intelligence (AI) affects social consciousness. The quick advancement of AI technologies has profoundly changed how people think, communicate, and perceive the world. The study examines how AI affects how societal values, beliefs, and decision-making processes are formed. Philosophical and ethical issues including algorithmic manipulation, lack of critical thinking, accountability, and human autonomy in the digital era are given particular focus. Philosophical analysis is used to look at topics like the limits between AI and mankind, emotional experience, free will, moral responsibility, and technological determinism.*

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence, social consciousness, philosophy, digital society, ethics, technology, human autonomy, mechanistic approach, holistic approach, philosophical and ethical challenges.*

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is considered one of the most important technological and philosophical discoveries in the history of mankind. Today, AI is penetrating all aspects of human activity, and this situation creates the need for a deep analysis of its philosophical, ethical, spiritual and aesthetic aspects. Along with technological achievements, new questions and complex problems are emerging before humanity. Especially important are the philosophical-ethical and spiritual-aesthetic problems of artificial intelligence, also in terms of its impact on the future of humanity.

The philosophical aspects of artificial intelligence are primarily related to the modeling of human thinking, understanding the processes of consciousness and perception. Artificial intelligence has become one of the most influential technological phenomena of the 21st century. Its integration into everyday life, social media, education, governance, and communication systems has reshaped not only material conditions but also human consciousness. Social consciousness, understood as the collective system of ideas, values, beliefs, and perceptions shared by society, is increasingly shaped by algorithmic processes.

From a philosophical point of view, this transformation raises important questions about human autonomy, responsibility, and the future of independent thinking. Therefore, analyzing the impact of artificial intelligence on social consciousness is both timely and necessary.

Main part

Artificial intelligence is a field of science and technology that aims to create machines that can imitate human intelligence. Examples of AI technologies that are widely used today include intelligent web search engines (e.g. YouTube Search), recommendation systems (e.g. YouTube, Amazon, and Netflix), natural language understanding (e.g. Google Assistant, Siri, and Alexa), self-driving cars (e.g. Waymo), and others [1].

Alan Turing was the author of the first research in the field of artificial intelligence [2], and artificial intelligence was founded as an independent scientific field in 1956 [3]. This summer, at a conference at Dartmouth College, John McCarthy first used the term "artificial intelligence" and went down in history as the author of this term. Although research on artificial intelligence has been conducted since the mid-20th century, public interest in it increased dramatically in 2012, when deep learning demonstrated its superiority over other artificial intelligence methods, and in 2017, following advances in transformer architecture[4], the field has developed further in the early 2020s.

This field is based on the assumption that the intelligence of Homo Sapiens can be described so precisely that it can even be modeled by a machine, which is a fundamental characteristic of intelligent beings. In the philosophy department, this raises philosophical questions about the nature of intelligence and the morality of creating artificial beings, questions that have been studied in myth, fiction, and philosophy since ancient times. Artificial intelligence is viewed with optimism.

For centuries, understanding the nature of consciousness has been one of the most pressing issues in philosophy and other sciences. However, today, the rapid development of artificial intelligence technologies is forcing us to reconsider philosophical and scientific problems in the human mind. Artificial intelligence has further complicated this problem and revived the debate about consciousness and intelligence.

The concept of consciousness and artificial intelligence.

Consciousness is the ability of a person to understand himself, think, experience emotions, and perceive the environment. It is considered a central concept in philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, and artificial intelligence research. In traditional philosophy, attempts have been made to explain consciousness through materialistic and dualistic views. That is, from the point of view of materialism, consciousness is viewed only as a product of complex neural processes in the brain, while dualism suggests that consciousness is something independent of the physical world.

One of the important aspects of consciousness is subjective experience or key, which is biologically related to how a person perceives the world. For example, seeing a bright color or hearing music are subjective experiences of the human mind.

With the development of artificial intelligence technologies, two main philosophical positions are formed: namely

1. Mechanistic approach. According to this, consciousness is understood only as a complex computational process. According to this point of view, artificial intelligence can acquire real consciousness over time.

2. Holistic approach. According to this principle, consciousness is a complex unique phenomenon that is not represented only by technical systems, but also depends on individual experience, emotions and intuition.

Artificial intelligence works only on the basis of pre-given algorithms, but forms new knowledge by modeling the activity of the human brain.

Artificial intelligence is a set of software systems capable of performing tasks characteristic of the human mind. It has the ability to process information, self-learn, draw logical conclusions and make independent decisions. Artificial intelligence is considered a system that simulates the mental activity inherent in humans. However, whether artificial intelligence can possess real consciousness or not remains an open question. The question of how much knowledge and experience generated by artificial intelligence can be in harmony with human experience is of philosophical importance.

Artificial intelligence and the problem of consciousness.

There are two main approaches to artificial intelligence: strong artificial intelligence and weak artificial intelligence. Weak artificial intelligence is a software system designed to solve specific problems, while strong artificial intelligence is conceived as a model that should have independent thinking, self-awareness, and conscious experience.

With the increasing complexity of artificial intelligence systems, these issues are gaining not only theoretical but also practical importance. Although modern neural networks and large language models seem to exhibit some features of consciousness and understanding, most experts still believe that these systems do not have true consciousness.

Philosophy offers several approaches to resolving the issue of whether artificial intelligence can have true consciousness or not:

1. The materialist approach believes that consciousness is based only on physical processes, and if artificial systems are as complex as the human brain, they can also form consciousness.

2. The dualistic approach states that consciousness is independent of matter and is a property of only humans or other biological beings. Artificial intelligence can never have true consciousness.

3. Functionalism states that the essence of consciousness is not in its physical structure, but in the function it performs. If artificial intelligence can work like the human brain, it can also have consciousness.

Philosophically, the question of whether artificial intelligence can have true consciousness is difficult to answer. Software tools can model human thinking, but can they have real understanding and subjective experience? This issue was also debated through J. Searle's "Chinese Room" experiment. According to him, the program works at the level of syntax (processing symbols), but is not related to semantics (understanding content). That is,

artificial intelligence can logically manipulate language, but it does not understand the meaning of the language.

Another experiment is the TURING test, which was proposed as a means of testing the closeness of artificial intelligence to human thinking. That is, if a person thinks of an artificial intelligence as a real person during correspondence with it, then the artificial intelligence can have consciousness.

In addition, functionalists argue that artificial intelligence can have real consciousness if it can model human thinking and gain independent experience.

However, along with technological progress, the development of AI has also raised a number of philosophical and ethical issues. For example, questions such as: "Can a machine have human-like consciousness?", "Who is responsible if a machine makes independent decisions?" are still relevant today. [5]

Therefore, when analyzing the development of artificial intelligence, it is necessary to deeply consider not only technical achievements, but also philosophical and ethical issues such as its nature, consciousness and personality, responsibility and ethical standards, and human-machine relations. This article aims to conceptually analyze these complexities, namely the history of AI, its nature, and, most importantly, philosophical and ethical issues. [6]

The Concept of Social Consciousness in Philosophy

In philosophy, social consciousness refers to the collective awareness formed through social relations, culture, traditions, and communication. Classical thinkers such as Hegel, Marx, and Durkheim emphasized that social consciousness is shaped by material conditions, social structures, and shared experiences.

Social consciousness includes moral values, political views, religious beliefs, and cultural norms. Traditionally, these elements were transmitted through education, family, and social institutions. However, in the digital era, artificial intelligence has become a new and powerful factor influencing this process.

From a philosophical perspective, the development of AI raises new questions about the nature of human consciousness and the possibility of consciousness in artificial systems. The results of the study show that, although it is possible for machines to make independent decisions, whether they can acquire consciousness or fully simulate all the features of human intelligence remains a theoretical question. In this context, the boundaries between humans and machines and their nature are analyzed as an important philosophical problem.

Spiritually, the impact of artificial intelligence on human values and beliefs also requires great attention. Today, the use of AI without taking into account spiritual criteria can lead to crisis situations in the socio-spiritual life of humanity. In this regard, the problems of virtual reality and digital identity are of particular importance. Resolving conflicts between the human personality formed in a virtual environment and its moral and spiritual values existing in the real world is an urgent issue.

From the point of view of aesthetic aspects, there are also debates about the aesthetic value of works of art, musical compositions and artistic creations created by AI. Do works of art created by AI actually have the same aesthetic value as products of human creativity, or are they just mechanical products created based on algorithms? At the same time, it is recognized that human creative abilities can be further expanded and enriched with the help of AI. This can change a person's aesthetic outlook and creative thinking styles.

To solve these problems, humanity needs to create new forms of philosophical and ethical paradigms. The future development of artificial intelligence requires a reconsideration of the philosophical, ethical and spiritual criteria of humanity. In this sense, a deep analysis of the philosophical-ethical and spiritual-aesthetic problems of AI remains an important condition for its development in a way that serves the interests of humanity.

The issue of artificial intelligence and the boundaries of humanity is one of the complex and multifaceted topics at the intersection of modern philosophy, cognitive sciences and ethical approaches. The development of artificial intelligence (AI) brings to the agenda not only technological, but also ontological, epistemological and ethical questions.

First of all, if we look for an answer to the question of whether AI can understand human emotions, then two main approaches can be distinguished here: functionalist and phenomenological. According to functionalism, emotions can be modeled as a system response to certain input-output conditions, that is, an AI can determine a person's emotional state by analyzing tears, facial expressions, speech timbre, or physiological signals. In this approach, the AI "understands" the emotion, that is, processes it as a statistical and computational model. But this is not perception, this is not feeling. The problem lies in the internal subjectivity of emotional experience, as phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl and Merleau-Ponty have noted. The experience itself is lived, the feeling is understood, which is characteristic only of consciousness existing in an organismic and physical context. Therefore, an AI can analyze emotions, but it is philosophically ambiguous, if not impossible, for it to perceive them or experience them as an "inner world."

Mechanisms of AI Influence on Social Consciousness

One of the most significant mechanisms is algorithmic filtering, often referred to as the "filter bubble" effect. Individuals are exposed mainly to information that aligns with their existing beliefs, which can reinforce biases and limit critical reflection.

Moreover, artificial intelligence enables large-scale manipulation through targeted content, automated messaging, and digital surveillance. These practices can weaken independent reasoning and transform social consciousness into a more passive and controlled state.

Philosophical and Ethical Challenges

The growing influence of artificial intelligence on social consciousness presents several philosophical challenges. First, the issue of human autonomy arises: to what extent are individuals free in their thinking when algorithms shape their informational environment?

Second, the problem of responsibility becomes unclear. If social decisions are influenced or guided by AI systems, who is morally responsible for the outcomes — humans or machines?

Finally, there is the ethical concern of preserving human dignity and critical thinking. Without proper philosophical and ethical frameworks, technological progress may lead to a decline in reflective thought and moral awareness.

Conclusion

The results of the study showed that the development of artificial intelligence includes not only technological, but also philosophical and ethical aspects. Although AI systems increase efficiency in various areas of human life, the issues of responsibility, ethics and consciousness associated with them remain relevant. From a philosophical point of view, the issues of AI related to consciousness, personality and human intelligence are considered as an important object for research. The study shows that although autonomous decisions can be made by machines, their complete simulation of human consciousness remains a theoretical issue at present.

Artificial intelligence has a profound impact on social consciousness, transforming how individuals perceive reality, form opinions, and interact with society. From a philosophical perspective, this influence is not purely negative or positive but deeply ambivalent.

To ensure that AI contributes to the development rather than the degradation of social consciousness, it is essential to maintain ethical oversight, promote critical thinking, and emphasize human responsibility. Philosophy plays a crucial role in understanding and guiding this transformation, helping society navigate the complex relationship between technology and human consciousness.

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