Reflections on Artificial Intelligence (AI) through the lens of Unification Thought

Gerry Servito
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In recent years, I've seen various professionals express their distress about advances in technology which demonstrate its capacity to replace them - Hollywood actors, luthiers, musicians, producers, service industry persons, auto fans/designers and others. Having a lifelong appreciation of painstaking design and hand-craftsmanship, I'd empathized with their plight on those occasions when I'd find such articles. But I'd not been disturbed enough to think more deeply about it.

However, I recently listened to an audio rendition of written reflections by folks I knew that was generated by running a text file through an AI program. I was surprised that not one, but two narrators had been added, whose appreciative dialog thoughtfully grouped similar reactions, analyzed them, and drew interesting conclusions from them. The rawness of each person's individual written thoughts was transformed into a very polished and convincing podcast. If I'd not been told that it was AI, I'd assume that it was an actual recorded, post-event conversation between flesh-and-blood male and female analysts.

But knowing the original text, I eventually identified what I missed: the raw immediacy and individuality of each person's unfiltered, immediate thoughts - my sense of emotional connection to each of them through what they'd spontaneously expressed. That caused me to reflect more deeply on this matter than I'd ever done before. Then, one early morning before dawn, I sat up in bed to write down what had suddenly come to me:

In the Unification Thought theories of The Original Image and Original Human Nature, the Divine Character - which we have inherited from our Heavenly Parent - has three characteristics: Heart, Logos and Creativity. These three and their relationships manifest throughout Unification Thought's theories. But that material is too extensive for the purposes of this article. So we'll aim for brevity and simplicity here.

1. Heart

This is "the core of the attributes of God" according to [Essentials of Unification Thought](#) (p. 23). A later text adds this:

Heart (is) the emotional impulse to seek joy through love... the irrepressible desire that wells up from within... it is not possible to repress the impulse to seek joy... the impulse to seek love is stronger than the impulse to seek joy... the impulse of love is primary... Thus, God's Heart can also be expressed as the emotional impulse to love infinitely. • [New Essentials of Unification Thought](#), p. 23 - 24

And another text points out that Heart:

…wells up from the bottom of the mind; it is irrepressible, even for God Himself. • [Explaining Unification Thought](#), p. 21

Such statements profoundly altered my notions about God and the value of human beings.

2. Logos

Though not disputing John's gospel, Unification Thought naturally also speaks of logos in terms of philosophy:

Traditional systems of logic have focused primarily on the laws and forms of thought, but Unification logic begins by considering, first of all, the starting point of thinking itself. Unification logic starts from the question as to why thinking takes place at all… The reason is that, prior to the creation of the universe, God engaged in thinking. That is, prior to the creation of the universe, God established the purpose of actualizing love based on Heart, and then made plans in accordance with that purpose. That constituted His thinking, or Logos (Word). - New Essentials of Unification Thought, p. 458

The stunning conclusion about thought is (put simply): the very purpose of thought is the actualization of love.

3. Creativity

This attribute of our Divine Character is for the actual realization of love:

True creativity originates from God's Creativity, which is based on heart and love. (it) should be based on heart and love, should be pursued for the realization of love - the Purpose of Creation. - Explaining Unification Thought, p. 43

These quotes are mere snippets from the various chapters on Original Image, Logic, Axiology and Art. In the effort to keep things short and simple here, we can summarize the essential relation of these three attributes of Divine Character:
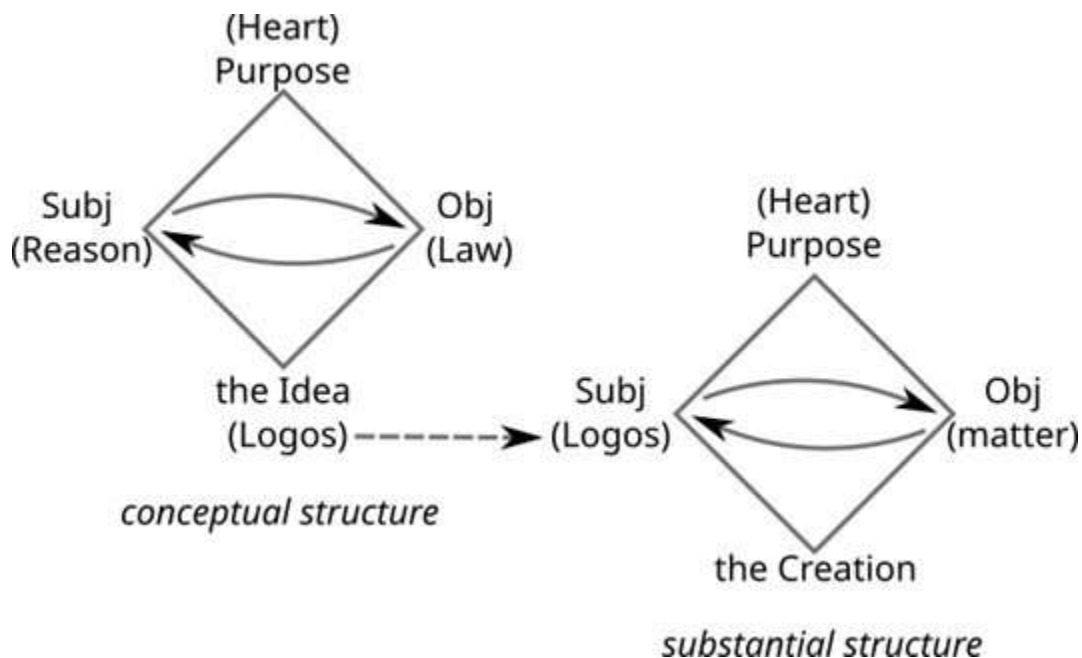

Fig 1: The Two-Stage Structure of Creation

The first (Heart) is the driving force behind the second; the second (Logos) applies reason to logically

fulfill the first; and the third (Creativity) is the deeply considered and careful result of the first two. The accompanying figure is a simplified version of the idea, compiled from several that were created by Dr. Lee and which appear in his handouts.

Conclusion

In this light, I could clearly identify what the cause of my intuitive unease (with the podcast I'd first mentioned) actually was: The problem with AI is that its programmers don't know these defining characteristics about the Divine Character of both the Parent God and we human children. Heart gives rise to purpose; this purpose drives thinking; and the logically created result reflects this.

If the Purpose is true, beautiful and good, the outcome reflects this. If the purpose isn't, neither is the outcome. History is full of examples where logical reason and creativity have been harnessed to accomplish all manner of ends - from the most sublime to the most appalling. Unification Thought stresses that the parental heart of benevolence is the true and original guide of original thought and creativity - its "north star" as it were.

So, in the medium- to long-term, AI guided by true purposes can help end cancer, poverty, drought, famine, disease and many other malaises that plague our world. But driven by false purposes, it might divide humanity between a tiny, competing, enormously wealthy ruling elite, a mercenary class of technologists whom they utilize, and everyone else. For decades now, there have been books and films about dystopian societies which depict this.

But what worries me in the short term is that our children and their children will be lulled into complacency and too much dependency on AI. Such a scenario would be crippling to their innate Divine Character - their Heart/Purpose, their Divine reason and their Divine Creativity - thereby stunting the growth of their own eternal and uniquely individual soul. They could be misdirected from fulfilling their First Blessing… No need to mention what that would mean for the providence and HP's hopes.

When one of the world's most prominent technologists[i] was asked what development excites him most about the future, he answered "AI". And when asked what he fears most in the future, he answered "AI". He's repeatedly explained that the value biases that are programmed into AI by its coders is where the danger lies. Those biases are imbued into their work and thus its influence on the minds of the consumers who use it, knowingly or unknowingly. His conclusion was that AI must be guided by true values[ii] and that's an issue that has driven our Movement from its outset.

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[i] There are many results which crop up in a search for the risks of AI. But two years back there was already a meeting at the US Senate with technologists which was a good indicator. See: www,nbcnews,com/politics/congress/big-tech-ceos-ai-meeting-senators-musk-zuckerberg-rcna104738

[ii] Please see the Abonim's extensive guidance on this matter of original values. vservito.com/a/UTheory/Holy_Books/PHG/PHG-05 Book5,html

CONGRESS

Elon Musk warns of 'civilizational risk' posed by AI in meeting with tech CEOs and senators

Musk of Tesla and X, Meta's Mark Zuckerberg, OpenAI's Sam Altman and others met with senators Wednesday. The behind-closed-doors forum has skeptics in both parties.

Tech CEOs meet with senators to discuss AI regulations
03:18

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Sept. 13, 2023, 4:00 AM MDT / Updated Sept. 13, 2023, 1:10 PM MDT

By Scott Wong, Frank Thorp V, Ryan Nobles and Liz Brown-Kaiser

WASHINGTON – Tech billionaire Elon Musk warned senators in a private gathering on Capitol Hill on Wednesday that artificial intelligence poses a "civilizational risk" to governments and societies, according to a senator in the room.

Musk made his remarks at a first-of-its-kind closed-door summit on AI featuring a who's who of Big Tech titans, who also included Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Sundar Pichai and Sam Altman. All 100 senators were invited, though not all attended.

As he left the Capitol after several hours, Musk – the wealthiest person in the world – called the gathering "historic." He also endorsed the idea of a new federal agency to oversee AI and repeated his warning that artificial intelligence poses a tremendous danger.

"The consequences of AI going wrong are severe so we have to be proactive rather than reactive," Musk told a gaggle of reporters before he ducked into his waiting Tesla.

"The question is really one of civilizational risk. It's not like ... one group of humans versus another. It's like, hey, this is something that's potentially risky for all humans everywhere," he said.

Asked whether AI will destroy mankind, Musk paused and replied: "There is some chance that

is above zero that AI will kill us all. I think it's low. But if there's some chance, I think we should also consider the fragility of human civilization."

Sen. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., who attended the private gathering, said she was struck by Musk's phrase "civilizational risk." She wrote it down in her notebook and showed it to two reporters.

Other panelists, she said, talked about the need for immigration reform to allow more high-tech workers in the U.S. and the need for standards reforms at the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

"You had everything from there to sort of the high-level comment about the civilizational risks associated with AI, which is a very 60,000-foot-level remark, and it was everything in between, so I thought it was surprisingly interesting and helpful. And I'm glad I went," Lummis said.

The bipartisan gathering, dubbed the AI Insight Forum, was hosted by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Sens. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., Todd Young, R-Ind., and Martin Heinrich, D-N.M. More AI forums will be held through the end of the year, serving as brainstorming sessions about how lawmakers can regulate artificial intelligence.

"We got some consensus on some things. ... I asked everyone in the room does government need to play a role in regulating AI, and every single person raised their hand, even though they had diverse views," Schumer told reporters Wednesday. "So that gives us a message here that we have to try to act, as difficult as the process might be."

Zuckerberg, the CEO of Meta, did not answer questions as he left the summit. His team provided his prepared remarks from inside the room, where he said the onus is on government to regulate AI.

"I agree that Congress should engage with AI to support innovation and safeguards," he said. "This is an emerging technology, there are important equities to balance here, and the government is ultimately responsible for that."

Altman, the CEO of ChatGPT parent company OpenAI, said he was surprised, given the format, by the broad agreement in the room on "the need to take this seriously and treat it with urgency."

"I think people all agreed that this is something that we need the government's leadership on," Altman told reporters during a break. "Some disagreement about how it should happen, but unanimity this is important and urgent."

Inside the cavernous Kennedy Caucus Room, the 22 panelists and hosting senators were seated in a U shape. On one side of the room was Musk, the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX and the owner of the social media site X; on the other side of the room was Zuckerberg, who has clashed with Musk in the past and recently launched a rival to X called Threads.

The daylong, high-profile gathering has its share of skeptics in both parties. Some senators lamented that the so-called AI Insight Forum was closed to the public and the media (reporters were briefly allowed in the room before the forum began to view the set-up). Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., said it would allow tech billionaires to lobby senators behind closed doors

Warren, D-Mass., said it would allow tech billionaires to lobby senators behind closed doors about one of the most critical issues facing the country and economy.

"They're sitting at a big round table all by themselves. All of the senators are to sit there and ask no questions," said a frustrated Warren, who this week called on the Senate to investigate Musk's alleged role in thwarting a Ukrainian drone from attacking Russia's naval fleet last year in the Black Sea.

Schumer dismissed the criticism, noting that three public hearings on AI have been held and that the forums include not just tech billionaires, but also labor and civil rights leaders, national security experts and academics.

"It was a very productive meeting. At first blush, you would think that given all the tech people that were there, their voices would be overwhelming," Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, said in an interview. "But what happened instead was there was a lot of consensus about how the safety needs are hugely important to really engage the innovation and that those two things go hand in hand."

Schumer argued in an interview Tuesday that doing nothing on AI is unacceptable.

"AI is going to be the most transformative thing affecting us in the next decades. It's going to affect every aspect of life. It has tremendous potential to do some really good things: cure cancer, make our food supply better, deal with our national security, help our education. It has tremendous potential to do bad things: allow continuation of bias, throw many people out of work and even let some of our adversaries get ahead of us," Schumer said.

"When it's something this difficult and this pervasive and this changing – it's changing rapidly – the average instinct of Congress is 'Let's ignore it; let someone else do it,'" he continued. "There is no one else to do it. We can't be like ostriches and put our heads in the sand, because if government doesn't involve itself in putting in some real guardrails, this thing could run amok."

Two tech executives warned senators at a public hearing Tuesday that an emergency brake is needed for critical systems run by AI, like power grids or water supplies, to protect humans from potential harms caused by the emergent technology.

In addition to Musk, Zuckerberg, Gates and Altman, the CEOs of Google, IBM, Microsoft, Nvidia and Palantir were on hand at Wednesday's forum, along with the heads of labor, human rights and entertainment groups. They include Elizabeth Shuler, the president of the AFL-CIO; Charles Rivkin, the chairman and CEO of the Motion Picture Association; Janet Murguía, the president of UnidosUS; and Maya Wiley, the president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights.

Wednesday's inaugural forum was scheduled to run seven hours, with a break for lunch. Schumer and Rounds moderated the discussion, with help from Heinrich and Young, aides said. Senators were not expected to get an opportunity to directly ask questions of the tech execs; the usually loquacious senators were instructed to submit written questions.

While organizers emphasized the bipartisan nature of the forum, Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., said he chose not to attend.

"I think the idea that it is some great breakthrough to hear from the biggest monopolists in the world – and that they are going to share with us their great wisdom – I just think the whole framework is wrong," said Hawley, who announced a bipartisan AI framework with Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn.

"You got to take it with a grain of salt. You got to realize that they're interested parties, right? They stand to make a lot of money on this, which is fine," he continued, "but you got to know that I just think the whole framing that 'Oh, aren't we so graced by their presence?' – I mean, give me a break. These people are – they've done bad things for our country."

CORRECTION (Sept. 14, 2023, 7:55 p.m. ET): A previous version of this article misstated Elon

Musk's position at X. He is its owner, not its CEO. 🦋

Scott Wong

Scott Wong is a senior congressional reporter for NBC News.

Frank Thorp V

Frank Thorp V is a producer and off-air reporter covering Congress for NBC News, managing coverage of the Senate.

Ryan Nobles

Ryan Nobles is chief Capitol Hill correspondent for NBC News.

Liz Brown-Kaiser

Liz Brown-Kaiser covers Capitol Hill for NBC News.

Kate Santaliz, Brennan Leach and Van Barth contributed.

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