

Florian Neukart

Reverse Engineering the Mind

Consciously Acting Machines and Accelerated Evolution

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The only way to discover the limits of the possible is to go beyond them into the impossible.

Sir Arthur C. Clarke

Preface

What we perceive as consciousness seems to be an anomaly, and so is intelligence. Earth features a biodiversity of around $8.7*10^6\pm1.3*10^6$ SE (between ~7,400,000 and ~10,000,000) organisms, ¹ from those just a few show rudimentary forms of both consciousness and intelligence, and only one seems to be aware and discuss what it means to exist. Although more than 1,000 exoplanets have been detected thitherto (latest estimations predict around $1.7*10^9$ only in our galaxy), and 12 of them are probably habitable, there has not been any indication that intelligent life apart from earth has emerged elsewhere. This may be interpreted in many ways, whereby the most appealing ones for me are:

- Intelligence is an anomaly.
 - This assumption states that the probability for the evolution of human-like intelligence in a species is infinitely small. No other species on earth seems to have developed it, which can be considered as strong indication for the hypothesis that if extraterrestrial species exist, they may not have developed it either. A similar thought experiment is about the physical laws governing our universe. If universe parameters, such as the speed of light or the strength of gravity, would have been allowed to take any value from 0 below infinity, then the occurrence of the current set of parameters and parameter values governing the very existence of the universe (and life) as we know it is infinitely low. Although I personally do not hope and guess that this hypothesis is true, it has not yet been disproved by scientific evidence.
- We are the first ones searching for intelligent life in our galaxy. Considering the size of our galaxy and the time the universe already exists, it is very likely that if intelligent life except from ours exists in whatever form, we will detect it sooner or later, but: if we are not the only intelligent species in the universe it is, given the almost 14 billion years that elapsed since the big bang, very unlikely that we are the first ones having evolved intelligence, and in consequence the technology to communicate and travel through space. More than half a century ago, even Enrico Fermi has faced the paradox that considering the age of our universe, it should be very likely that intelligent life has already emerged elsewhere. But where is it, then? This became widely known as the Fermi-paradox.
- Other intelligent species have already discovered us, but do not (or cannot) show up for some reason.
- No other species has solved the problem of how to produce exotic energy, which is, as to current knowledge, required for travelling faster than light (to be exact, it is not travelling faster than light, but bridging of distances by warping space-time). As no matter can travel faster than light, it must be space-time that is moved through space-time. This can theoretically be done by creating a warp-field around an area of space-time (and an object like a spaceship within this area), which is bordered by a singularity in front of the object and controlled expansion of space-time behind it. In theory this is possible, as has already been shown with a special solution of Einstein's field equations in general relativity. This solution states that the creation of an energy-impulse-tensor modifying the space-time around a spacecraft in the sense that the distance between start- and endpoint can be

¹ Tittensor Derek P. et al. (2011): How Many Species Are There on Earth and in the Ocean? [2013-10-24]; URL: http://www.plosbiology.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pbio. 1001127

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reduced is possible. However, for creating such a warp-field exotic matter, thus matter not only not consisting of protons, neutrons or electrons, but additionally being of negative energy density must be available² – this may be a problem, as we have not even been able to proof that it exists.

From a solely scientific point of view all of these and a lot more arguments are valid options, but I will focus on the first one here. Mankind has always dreamed of immortality, which has, amongst others, been one of the major reasons for why our species devised the concept of religion. Our brain provides us with the abilities required to understand the universe, and the more we understand about our role in the universe and life itself, the more transhumanistic our views become. It may be not easy to accept that we will most likely take care of our immortal soul ourselves in the not-so-distant future, but this is exactly what will happen. Problems like starvation or over-population may be solved by leaving our bodily existence behind, and hundreds of years-lasting journeys to exoplanets for colonization will not pose a challenge for human minds transferred into the computers of spaceships. This is just a first impression of what the future of mankind could be like. The ideas are countless, and history taught us that advancement of science not always bears only good. Anyway, this work marks the beginning of a journey – the journey towards consciously acting machines and artificially accelerated human evolution.

Florian Neukart³

² Alcubierre Miguel (1994): The warp drive: hyper-fast travel within general relativity; Classical and.Quantum.Gravity 11:L73-L77, 1994

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List of Abbreviations

AI Artificial Intelligence

AIS Artificial Immune System

ANN Artificial Neural Network

AOD Agent Oriented Development

AOP Agent Oriented Programming

APC Antigen-Presenting Cell

BP Back propagation

CI Computational Intelligence

CSV Comma separated values

DBN Deep Belief Network

DM Data Mining

FFANN Feed-forward Artificial Neural Network

ETL Extract, Transform, Load

GA Genetic Algorithm

MLP Multi Layer Perceptron

NDS Neural Data Set

OOP Object Oriented Programming

PAMP Pathogen-Associated Molecular Patterns

QANN Quantum ANN

RANN Recurrent ANN

RBM Restricted Boltzmann Machine

RP Resilient-propagation

(R)MSE (Root) Mean Squared Error

SA Simulated annealing

SHOCID System applying High Order Computational Intelligence in Data Mining

SRANN SHOCID RANN

Introduction

This elaboration is, in some sense, the first version of a manual describing how to implement an artificial conscious entity and how to extend the very human existence beyond biological limitations. Subsequent versions depend on future research not only conducted by the author, but by numerous scientists from various fields.

Since there is the research field of artificial intelligence (AI), one of the biggest hurdles has always been the creation of conscious experiences in machines. Not only lots of different definitions of what exactly consciousness is exist from a philosophical point of view; it is yet also not completely understood on a neuroscientific level how our brain creates conscious content. Within this elaboration, I will provide a foundation for understanding how conscious experiences emerge by approaching the topic by means of actual and future technology. In my opinion, one of the most important foundations of consciousness is, amongst self-awareness, the ability to understand concepts, or more generally, the understanding of 'things'. I define these things to comprise everything that exits, be it a single atom or a complex lifeform. When it comes to understanding things, learning is an important aspect, and for being able to measure levels of understanding, it is first required to define and quantify when something has been understood. I want to emphasize this challenge at the very beginning of this elaboration, as words such as 'learning', 'understanding' and 'consciousness' are suitcasewords from psychology helping us to discuss complex subjects science has not yet entirely understood. Suitcase-words such as consciousness enable us to include yet unknown processes and (changes of) states associated with the human brain in our everyday-language with ease, not only without being able to describe what accounts for a conscious experience on neuronal or (sub-) atomic layers, but also without being able to explain what consciousness is on a more abstract layer. Lots of scientists from different fields have been working on disclosing the secret of consciousness, and numerous different explanations have been published and discussed controversially. Most of these theories feature a common denominator - the inclusion of a feature set, which is associated with the perception of consciousness. It would be counterproductive to reject such approaches, as only the detailed description and combination of single features will allow us to reproduce conscious behavior in artificial entities. We will deal with this and a lot more in this book, and also define these features crisply, as only then we will be able to create hard- and software capable of not only processing information in the way the human brain does, but also capable of reproducing the conditions that are required for creating conscious experiences.

Not only philosophers, but scientists from numerous different fields have long tried to understand what it is that creates such experiences; from what we can see today, some of the attempts have already been crowned by success. The strength of current AI is not only justified in the fact that today's computers can do things better at which machines have used to be better than humans since the first successful implementations of paradigms of AI. Back in 1996, as IBM's Deep Blue beat Garri Gasparov in chess, one could have argued that this had nothing to do with real intelligence, but resulted from the fact that Deep Blue could calculate $2*10^6$ chess moves per second. However, another of IBM's masterpieces, Watson, showed that by the combination of linguistic pre-processors, expert systems, search engines, machine learning, logic, natural language understanding, and by accessing data sources of various kinds intelligently, understanding can be emulated, which makes it more difficult for opponents of AI to argue against it. Both examples are very impressive not only from scientific and engineering points of view, however although these systems are artificially

2 Introduction

intelligent, they cannot be considered conscious beings (and, as of now, it has never been the aim of making them conscious).

For what it can mean to create conscious machines becomes even more interesting by taking into account the research of Stuart Hameroff and Roger Penrose, who state that quantum physical phenomena take place on cell-basis, or even on the basis of tubulin dimers, elements occurring within nerve (and all other eukaryotic) cells' cytoskeletons: if quantum coherence, which may constitute a requirement for consciousness, may possibly be maintained at this level, this would result in a dramatic increase of the number of operations per second a brain is able to accomplish. Even if quantum physical phenomena have not yet been linked to the creation of conscious content by proof, it is nevertheless useful taking such into account for the implementation of artificial entities that should emulate or experience conscious content themselves. Thus, within this work the implementation of quantum artificial neural networks (by the leveraging the power of quantum computers) is juxtaposed in opposition to classical artificial neural networks in terms of their probable capabilities and usefulness for the implementation of an artificial mind.

The creation of consciousness in an artificial entity brings up lots of new questions, particularly the one after human immortality; this may not be obvious at a first glance, but if artificial entities are capable of producing conscious content and may theoretically live forever, can we humans then benefit thereof in the sense of transferring our minds, dreams and desires into such vessels, one may ask. But then there is the continuous consciousness-problem: if we copy our mind from our biological brain into an artificial vessel, it is just that – a copy, and in the worst case two of us exist at the same time, one doomed to die and the other blessed to live forever. I will also propose a solution to this problem.

Finally, I ask the reader to pardon me for the technical style of writing in which I sometimes slide. I am admittedly used to creating scientific reports/ papers, or technical and functional documentations, but not so much to writing bedtime lecture.

Last, but not least, I sometimes refer to some computational intelligence paradigms with the prefix 'SHOCID'. This is, because the ideas thereto emerged during the specification phase of the data mining system SHOCID (System Applying High Order Computational Intelligence in Data Mining), ⁴ which I developed some years ago. This gives the elaboration at hand a practical touch – most of the discussed and introduced computational intelligence-paradigms have been implemented in SHOCID.

⁴ Neukart Florian (2013): System Applying High Order Computational Intelligence in Data Mining and Quantum Computational Considerations Concerning the Future of Artificial Intelligence; Brasov: Transilvania University of Brasov

Structure

Chapter 1

In this chapter basic brain functionality as well as the rough anatomy of the human brain is discussed. This is mainly because as an artificial intelligence researcher one has to deal with natural intelligence and how the brain works sooner or later. A subfield of artificial intelligence, computational intelligence, comprises many nature-inspired approaches such as swarm intelligence, genetic algorithms or artificial neural networks. Especially some kinds of artificial neural networks, by means of which we are concerned with creating more or less simple imitations of their biological counterparts, have achieved information processing similar to what we currently understand happens within biological brains.

Chapter 2

The major goal of this elaboration is to work out how specific aspects of the human mind, namely those responsible for higher cognitive functions, function, and to figure out which hardware is required to process an artificial mind with the same, similar or superior capabilities. For this, I will focus on any approach that allows us to reproduce cognitive capabilities, but not necessarily achieve this target by the same means as evolution did. It makes sense, at this point, to provide an introduction to artificial intelligence in order to understand which areas of the neocortex are subject to AI research and development. This chapter notabene provides only a brief overview of the pillars of AI, as even the detailed elaboration of just one sub-area of each of those would suffice to fill books. In the later chapters I will mostly focus on artificial neural networks, logic, knowledge representation, and speech in order to illustrate how I think the human thought processes can be rebuilt artificially. I will also give a brief introduction to one of my research fields, autonomously acting cars, which should help to understand what it takes to create intelligent, autonomous, social and adaptive agents; rebuilding collective and intelligent behavior in artificial systems not only allows us to understand a significant amount of brain evolution, but also how intelligence makes us a highly complex species in terms of thought processes.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5

In these chapters the fundamental concepts and standards of artificial neural networks are particularized under the consideration of actual knowledge and research conducted. The field of computational intelligence, to which artificial neural networks belong, comprises nature-inspired approaches for solving complex problem statements. Thus, this is where we will begin the search for paradigms that seem to be suitable for engineering artificial conscious entities.

In chapters 4 and 5, some sophisticated artificial neural network structures and learning approaches, some of which have been developed and published by the author, are particularized. One reason for explaining various algorithms is to show how far we can go with artificial neural networks and classical computers, how sophisticated learning algorithms can become, and how such structures can be manipulated. The more important reason for going into some detail with several algorithms is that I want to free the reader's mind, as for achieving brain-like capabilities we do not necessarily need to copy the inner workings of our brain but rely on other approaches – in this special case not the journey is its own reward. I

4 Structure

will, amongst others, discuss how artificial neural networks can be efficiently trained by simulating the survival behavior of bacteria in hazardous environments.

The major question to be answered in this chapter is whether these complex approaches are already powerful enough for generating conscious experiences in an artificial entity. Furthermore, some simple application scenarios for the introduced approaches are explained, creating a basic understanding of how such approaches may be applied practically.

Chapter 6

Deep artificial neural networks are, in some aspects, the most human-like artificial way of processing information we have thitherto. Very impressive and important achievements have been made due to complex network structures and sophisticated training algorithms, and what can already be achieved is not that far from the capabilities of what parts of the human brain, such as the visual cortex, can achieve. However until recently, the typical research in that area concerned problems that are perfectly suitable for being processed on a computer, like the prediction of numerical values or clustering of unstructured data. Furthermore, once trained to data of a sub-domain, an ANN can only be used in that sub-domain. What I want to say is that individual approaches are simply not potent enough for approaching the full stack of capabilities of a human brain. But a combination of several techniques may... With actual training algorithms it would be impossible to train a structure consisting of billions of neurons and thousands of neuron layers. This chapter serves the purpose to understand what ANNs are often used for, and for this we start with simple data analysis and evolve towards more complex information processing in the latter chapters.

Chapters 7 and 8

Quantum mechanics is of utmost importance within this elaboration, as, thanks to some of humankind's greatest scientists, within the last century the knowledge within this field has grown extensively and allows more than just an outlook on future developments in artificial intelligence. Some theories of consciousness make use of quantum physical phenomena within the brain for explaining awareness, or conscious experiences. Both chapters are used to explain the most important fundamentals of quantum mechanics and how they may find application within a biological brain. However, as the sole reduction of the brain by means of a quantum computer may not solve all problems, some objections against such hypotheses are raised, contributing to the groundwork for the main chapter of this elaboration.

Chapter 9

Before being able to reverse engineer a human mind, one has to understand some of the most commonly accepted philosophical views of what a mind actually is. Trying to implement algorithms without having thought about what the mind actually is, is impossible. Only philosophy can deliver some answers to this question and I, for my part, chose eliminative materialism to be the most suitable approach to pursue, when grappling with implementation scenarios for an aware, artificial entity. Some of the readers may wonder about the statement that I 'chose' one of many philosophical approaches as useful means for what achieving what is discussed in this book; this is because I encounter consciousness from an engineering point of view, and engineers usually solve problems by the means that are to their disposal. Thus, I consider philosophical views as a means of implementation only in the context of this book.

Structure 5

Chapter 10

The objective of writing this book was the introduction of paradigms and ideas that may serve the purpose of reverse engineering the mind in the near future. Amongst others, in this chapter self-organization in both human and artificial brains, which I consider to be another important aspect for the development of our mental abilities, is discussed. So are some more concepts such as search, information retrieval, or data representation, which form, together with what has been elucidated before, the foundation for giving an artificial conscious entity the ability to understand and interpret the world. Furthermore, I am of the opinion that the implement-tation of artificial neural networks on quantum systems represents one of the most valuable approaches for achieving the objectives of this research, as only such may deliver the computational power for processing what we understand to be our mind. Of course, everything is connected in order to form a big picture – the picture of how to reverse-engineer the mind.

Finally, the question on how we humans may benefit from such developments in the sense of transferring our minds into artificial vessels is addressed. How can the continuous consciousness-problem be bypassed, thus the required information in and structure of our brain be extracted instead of just being copied? There seems to be a solution for the dilemma in the sense of a distributed mind, which is discussed likewise.

1 Evolution's most extraordinary achievement

When doing research in the field of artificial intelligence, sooner or later one is required to deal with what I consider the most fascinating thing Nature has equipped us with – the human brain. This extraordinary organ does not only allow us to understand the universe, but additionally provides us with feelings, conscious perception or the ability to control our bodies in highest precision. I have always tried not to shelve myself into a specific field of research; however, above all I am a computer scientist and from a computer scientist's point of view it is, at first, interesting how the brain is capable of processing, storing or recalling information. Inevitably, when starting to deal with the matter this yields a lot more questions – questions that cannot be answered as easily for the brain as for hard- and software we are used to work with every day, even if one is equipped with knowledge about the field of artificial intelligence. Later in this work we will see that today's artificial intelligence is something that strongly differs from what we consider to be biological or human intelligence. Thus, I consider a rough explanation of the human brain's anatomy as well as the known and studied workings of its parts to be a good starting point.

1.1 Anatomy of the human brain

Most of the readers will remember the lessons in school where the human brain has been explained according to its evolutionary development: this will also be the way the matter will be dealt with in this chapter. Some of the following explanations have been inspired by the ones given by Bruce F. Katz⁵ and at dasgehirn.info, ⁶ as the former perfectly well outline the functional principles of the human brain from an engineering point of view, and the latter from a medical point of view. From the abstractive Figure 1 - Human brain below we can see that the brain consists of four big lobes, the brain stem and the cerebellum, the latter looking like a ball of wool attached to the undersurface of the temporal lobe. However, there is a far more abstractive scheme describing the human brain, called triune brain model, which has been introduced by Paul Maclean (Figure 2 - Triune brain).

The triune brain model shows three differently colored areas, stacked according to their occurrence in the brain evolution. The brightest area in Figure 2 - Triune brain represents what is considered to be the most ancient and basic part of the nerve system, the reptilian brain, which has evolved about $3*10^8$ years ago. The reptilian brain is responsible for regulating autonomous functions like the heart rate or breathing. The medial part in the figure represents the limbic brain, or paleomammalian, which has evolved about $3*10^8$ years ago and which is partially responsible for recalling information, thus memorizing things, and emotions. The neocortex, or neomammalian, which makes up most of the visible part of the human brain (once it has been made visible in some way) has evolved only $1.2*10^5$ years ago, and merges not only with the structure of the paleomammalian, but also in its functionality.

⁵ Katz Bruce F. (2011): Neuroengineering the future - Virtual minds and the creation of immortality; Massachusetts: Infinity Science Press LLC, p. 16 ff.

⁶ dasgehirn.info: [2013-06-22]; dasgehirn.info; URL: http://dasgehirn.info/

[©] Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH 2017 F. Neukart, *Reverse Engineering the Mind*, AutoUni – Schriftenreihe 94, DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-16176-7_1

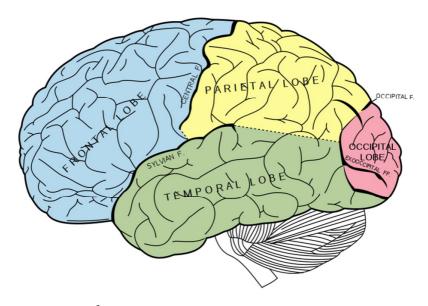


Figure 1 - Human brain⁷

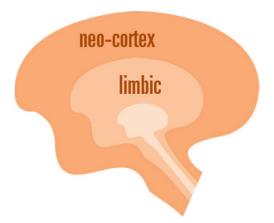


Figure 2 - Triune brain⁸

Wikipedia: Human brain [2013-06-19]; Wikipedia; URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_brain

⁸ Steven White: Triune brain [2013-06-20]; Steven White; URL: http://blog.stevenwhite.com/

1.1.1 Truncus cerebri

The truncus cerebri (Figure 3 – Truncus cerebri), or brain stem, is the oldest part of the human brain and only as large as a finger, but nevertheless an essential part of our brain, as it regulates circulatory, breathing or sleeping. It consists of four major parts, whereby each of those may be subdivided into further areas. However, the description of the most basic parts does suffice for our purposes here.



Figure 3 – Truncus cerebri⁹

1.1.1.1 Cerebellum

The cerebellum (Figure 4 - Cerebellum) is known to be responsible for coordination, equilibrium, motor movement and muscle tone. It consists of white matter in the inside and is surrounded by a very tightly folded outer layer of gray matter, called the cerebellar cortex. The number of neurons in the cerebellum makes up one half of all neurons in the brain (~500,000,000), which are used for relaying information between itself and the cerebral cortex' (which we must distinguish from the cerebellar cortex) areas involved in motor controls. An injury of the cerebellum results in disturbances of bodily movements, like a loss of coordination, impossibility of judging distances, the inability for performing fast movements, etc.

⁹ dasgehirn.info: Der Hirnstamm [2013-06-22]; dasgehirn.info; URL: http://dasgehirn.info/entdecken/anatomie/der-hirnstamm/ (reprinted with permission from dasgehirn.info)