Qeios

Peer Review

Review of: "Human Artistic Discernment as an Evaluative Criterion in the Age of Artificial Intelligence"

Marc Heimann[1]

1. Independent Scholar, Germany

The manuscript addresses a relevant tension in current evaluation: the preservation of human judgment in an increasingly automated evaluative landscape. However, the paper suffers from a fundamental category error in its treatment of technology. Rather than engaging with Artificial Intelligence as a technical object of analysis, the author employs "AI" as a broad metaphor for rule-based automation. This results in a critique that is disconnected from the functional reality of contemporary models, particularly Transformer-based architectures, which are inherently designed for the very "contextual thinking" the author claims is exclusive to humans.

The manuscript's primary philosophical pivot, that human discernment is "meaning-oriented" while AI is merely "data-driven" and lacks context, rests on an outdated understanding of machine learning architecture. Specifically, the author overlooks the Transformer model, which has become the dominant paradigm in artificial intelligence.

However, the paper treats "Artificial Intelligence" as a monolithic entity, using it more as a metaphor for automation than as a specific object of analysis. In reality, "AI" describes an incoherent sum of different technical traditions; from Symbolic AI (rule-based) and Expert Systems to Connectionist models (Neural Networks) and modern Large Language Models (LLMs).

Each of these traditions handles "evaluation" and "judgment" in fundamentally different ways. By failing to specify which AI tradition is being contrasted with human discernment, the paper's argument loses its analytical precision. The author is essentially comparing a highly specific, idealized version of "Human Wisdom" against a vague, generalized metaphor of "The Machine." To be a contribution to the field, the paper must address which specific AI architectures it claims are incapable of discernment and why their specific method of processing context is insufficient.

doi.org/10.32388/Q51N8S

The defining feature of a Transformer is its Self-Attention mechanism, which allows the system to evaluate every element of an input (a word, a musical note, a pixel) in relation to every other element. This is not a "pattern-matching" exercise in the traditional sense; it is a dynamic, high-dimensional calculation of context. By framing AI as a system incapable of situational or relational interpretation, the author creates a "straw man" version of technology that does not reflect the current state of the art. If "artistic discernment" is defined by the ability to situate a work within a broader structure of relations, modern AI, which exists entirely as a map of semantic and contextual relations, deserves a much more rigorous comparison than the paper provides.

Artistic capabilities are elevated in importance with Transformer models because constructing a context, rather than reading it, marks a much more distinctive problem for AI. The challenge for AI is no longer "reading" context (which it does mathematically through attention layers), but rather the construction of a novel context. If the author intends to defend human discernment, the argument must shift from the claim that AI cannot process context to an investigation of how humans and machines differ in the *origination* of those frameworks. The "artistic" act is found in the creation of the context itself, rather than the subsequent act of evaluation. Without addressing this shift from the reading of context to the construction of it, the manuscript remains anchored in a historical debate that modern technology has already bypassed.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.