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Reducing the Identity of the Human Brain to Artificial Intelligence Is Not Compatible with Islam

Saturday, December 11, 2021, with the efforts of the Office of Islamic Studies on Cyberspace (OISC) the first session of a series of academic meetings on religion and cyberspace, titled "Application of Artificial Intelligence in Islamic Humanities; Do's and Don'ts" was held.

In this meeting hujjat al-Islam Dr. Asghar Dirbaz, the president of University of Qom, said: In Islamic philosophy, and particularly transcendent theosophy, reducing the identity of human brain to artificial intelligence and attributing a common identity to them is unacceptable.

Fitra (Innate nature); Indicates the difference between artificial intelligence and the human brain

Dr. Asghar Dirbaz said: The Quranic fact that human has a divine nature, dignity and value, and human can conquer the heavens, the earth, and the planets, indicates that there are areas in human in which we cannot reduce human intelligence to brain, nervous system and artificial intelligence.

The President of Qom University stated: We can use the functions of artificial intelligence and cross the boundaries of knowledge, but AI cannot replace other dimensions of human personality.

He added: "In general, the functions of artificial intelligence can be summarized in terms of acceleration, increasing accuracy and reducing costs. So we can use intelligent techniques instead of statistical methods or use artificial intelligence in classification and predictions in knowledge such as humanities"

China ramps up new restrictions on "religious content on the internet"

According to a report, the Chinese Communist Party, which has been criticized for targeting Christians and wielding its power of internet censorship through big tech companies, is putting even more restrictions on the religious freedom of its citizens with a new law regulating online religious content.

The new legislation, known as Administrative Measures for Internet Religious Information Services, which was promulgated last month, will be enacted on March 1, reports Bitter Winter, a publication produced by the Center for Studies on New Religion which covers human rights issues in China.

The law mandates an "Internet Religious Information Service License" for any religious group that wants to disseminate religious content on the internet. But it says only "legally established" organizations can do so, which practically means only groups that are part of the five authorized religions in China can use the internet to distribute religious content.

The five state-sanctioned religious groups in China are the Buddhist Association of China, the Chinese Taoist Association, the Islamic Association of China, the Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement and the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association.

As per the new law: "[T]hey can broadcast sermons and lessons, but these would be checked by the authorities for their 'Sinicized' content, making sure they promote socialist values and support the party, and are not intended as proselytization tools.

The law follows complaints by President Xi Jinping that prohibitions on the use of the internet to "advertise" religion are not enough to prevent "religious propaganda."

January 15, 2022

Appreciation of the Secretary of the Supreme Council of Cyberspace from the director of seminaries

Appreciation of the Secretary of the Supreme Council of Cyberspace from the director of seminaries for the structured entry of the seminary into the field of contemporary jurisprudence, especially cyberspace jurisprudence.

The message of Dr. Seyyed Abolhassan Firoozabadi - Secretary of the Supreme Council of Cyberspace to Ayatollah A'rafi - Director of Seminaries is as follows:

Jurisprudence courses in seminaries and the in-depth and accurate study of jurisprudential issues could streamline and direct science among students of religious sciences.

On the other hand, the volume of fundamental scientific issues and challenges in various fields of cyberspace is so large that it will not be answered except by the large number of theological elites in the field of Islamic studies of cyberspace, and this can only be achieved by elite and discourse. .

Therefore, the structured entry of contemporary seminary into the field of contemporary jurisprudence, especially cyberspace jurisprudence, holding jurisprudence courses, as well as the interpretation and writing of jurisprudential books on cyberspace issues, is a smart and commendable introduction.

AI ethics & internet governance: global lessons & practices

The workshop about "AI ethics & internet governance: global lessons & practices" was held from December 6 to 10, 2021, with the participation of several universities around the world at Katowice University in Poland and chaired by Professor Bo Jong from Pennsylvania State University.

Social media and mobile apps are currently part of everyday lives. This means that people often see the outside world through the lens of artificial intelligence.

However, for most users, AI-based systems are simply 'black boxes', leading to massive information asymmetries between AI developers and users or policymakers.

In this workshop, the panelists discussed concerns and moral dilemmas such as whether AI and robots will pose a threat to humans in the long run.

Each panelist gave a brief outline of relevant talking points to discuss during the workshop, coming from different perspectives.

Mr Lu Wei (Professor and Dean, College of Media and International Culture, Zhejiang University) claimed that AI should not be taken as an unquestionable panacea. There are risks to adopting this kind of technology and these deserve scholarly attention. For instance, there is a concern about the creation of filter bubbles online that only echo people's pre-existing biases. Wei also mentioned privacy concerns.

AI is not a monolithic entity. There are many different AI systems and applications, with different degrees of autonomy, noted Mr Matthieu Guitton (Professor, Faculty of Medicine chez Université Laval). The question that stems from this perspective is then, what will be the degree of autonomy we humans allow the AI systems to have and to decide over our lives?

AI systems have a hard time understanding human emotions and they do not have empathy, Ms Renata Carlos Daou (international student from Brazil, Penn State University) pointed out that. Therefore, AI companies must think beyond profit and give further importance to ethical considerations when developing and implementing AI systems.

The panelists also discussed how AI might impact the already existing inequality between countries. There was a call for collaboration through international organisations to reduce the digital divide. Furthermore, it was suggested that underdeveloped countries should invest more in education and training for the development of technology. That would not only help bridge the technology gap between countries, but also within countries given the rural/urban divide.

Bulli Bai: India's Muslim women again listed on app for 'auction'

On January 1, Photographs of more than 100 Muslim women, including prominent actress Shabana Azmi, wife of a sitting judge of Delhi High Court, multiple journalists, activists and politicians were displayed on the app for auction as "Bulli Bai" of the day.

Quratulain Rehbar, a journalist from Indian-administered Kashmir, woke up to see herself listed for an "online auction". Her photograph was sourced without her permission and uploaded on an app for "sale".

Even Fatima Nafees, 65-year-old mother of disappeared student Najeeb Ahmed, and Pakistani Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai were not spared by the perpetrators behind the app.

After last July's "Sulli Deals", in which nearly 80 Muslim women were put up "for sale", "Bulli Bai" was the second such attempt in less than a year. "Both 'Bulli' and 'Sulli' are derogatory words used for Muslim women in local slang.

Pressure on Muslims in India has increased since Narendra Modi of the Hindu Bahariyat Janata Party came to power. In many cities and states, Muslims are persecuted by extremist Hindus every day.

Rehbar, who had previously reported on the "Sulli Deals" auction in July last year and she was shocked to see her photograph on the app.

For Introducing the Character of Imam Hussain, Cyberspace Should Not Be Neglected

"The Ashura International Foundation, using various methods such as films, publishing books, introducing the companions of Imam Hussain (a.s.), etc., can play a crucial role in introducing the Ashura uprising in the international arena and with international literature for Muslims and non-Muslims. Of course, in introducing the character of Imam Hussain (a.s.), cyberspace should not be neglected," said Ayatollah Ramazani the Secretary-General of the AhlulBayt (a.s.) World Assembly, regarding the duty of the Ashura International Foundation.

It is worth mentioning that Ayatollah Mohammad Hadi Yousefi Gharavi, Hojat al-Islam Sayed Monzar Hakim, Hojat al-Islam Dr. Hadi Ashrafi Darvishi, and Dr. Ahmad Reza Meftah, members of the Scientific Council of the Ashura International Foundation were present in this meeting and expressed their views.

The Ashura International Foundation has four deputies, including the Deputy Office of Media and Cyberspace, the Deputy Office of Culture, Education and Research, the Deputy Office of International Affairs, and the Deputy Office of Administration, Finance and Support, who organize the Foundation's executive programs.

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