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Editors' Introduction

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The papers in the following volume are the outcome of a three-year long interdisciplinary research project. The project began with an in-person meeting hosted and funded by the Daimler und Benz Stiftung in Germany in March 2020 (the world was shutting down one nation at a time as we met). During the pandemic we continued to meet monthly online with support from Memorial University of Newfoundland. From the beginning it was the goal of the Working Group on Intelligence (WGI), as we called ourselves, to broaden and deepen the AI debate with a more nuanced understanding of intelligence than is common in cognitive and computer science discussions of AI. We wished to draw on the history of philosophy, ecology, and the philosophy of mind to establish that intelligence is meant in many senses, to use an Aristotelian expression. The clarification of these various meanings is essential to the discussion around the ethics of AI, especially the question concerning the possibility of strong AI or Artificial General Intelligence.

The consensus of the WGI was that intelligence is common to all animals and in this sense can be called natural and perhaps even common to all living beings. Yet it has a specific difference in humans where it becomes intentional or self-reflexive. The question of where or when human intelligence will have been surpassed by our

machines would need to take such distinctions into consideration. Human intelligence, whatever else it might be, cannot be reduced to rule-following, which is the way machines learn, but includes an intention toward truth. Such an intention, we concluded, would need to be manifest in some sense in a machine before we could conclude that it was more than ‘artificially’ intelligent. Put this way, it became clear to many of us in the group that a machine intelligence which intends to know the truth is hardly what is being sought in this multi-billion dollar industry. Such intentionality is not needed if efficiency in data analysis and manipulation is the true goal.

A first collection of papers, proceedings of the German meeting, was edited by Uwe Voigt and Joachim Rathmann and published in Germany under the title *Natürliche und künstliche Intelligenz im Anthropozän* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2021). This current volume includes translations of some of those pieces, most of which were originally written in German, as well as newer contributions that arose out of the online meetings of the WGI.

As this volume was being prepared for publication the large language models of AI were unleashed on the world (ChatGPT, etc.). And while this was much sooner than many of us expected, it did not change the results of our research. ChatGPT is still only a functional mimic of speech. While it might be easy to forget, ChatGPT is merely following rules, albeit at a breathtakingly complex level. Now there are philosophers of language who believe intelligence is just skillful language use and that language use is just rule-following, but that is not the consensus of the members of the WGI. On the contrary, language involves expressive of acts of understanding which are not primarily linguistic but rather intentional, what we could call the main Aristotelian line, which has its contemporary representatives in the philosophy of mind in the work of people like John Searle and Thomas Nagel. The main concern articulated by the WGI was never the headline grabbing question, “are we about to be replaced in evolution by our machines?” but rather the far more pedestrian and genuinely disturbing theme that we have already surrendered much of our work, our play, our culture, and indeed our governance to a very limited rule-following apparatus.

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