

Intelligence and Comprehension : Response to Neuromancer

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Our ability to understand and comprehend that which goes on around us both blesses and boxes us into a set of relationships with those things we experience. Our consciousness is the lens that refines the world's million fidgetings, presenting them to us in a way that we can organize, understand, and interact with. Intertwined with this consciousness in ways we do not nearly understand, our intelligence monitors the ways in which we deal with our environment. For the most part, humanity acknowledges the existence of other consciousnesses, but is notably more reluctant to admit any comparable form of intelligence in any non human organism. Underlying nearly all of humanity's behavior, our assumptions of anthropomorphic superior intelligence runs into a particularly difficult opponent in the field of AI.

Gibson's *Neuromancer* is a sign of things to come. Perhaps not so much in it's bleak, decidedly technology-dominated discussion of 21st century earth, as in the introduction of multiple sentient machines. No one can guess how true most of Gibson's predictions of earth will hold, but one certainly seems a excellent bet, that is, **as our eyes begin to outgrow our egos we will start to see some very upsetting things**. Already, computer scientists preoccupied with the study of AI are beginning to find that the difficulty in artificial intelligence is not so much in creating it, but in decoding it. Again, the problem springs not from the dearth of "[intelligent and complex systems](#)" in the world around us, but in our ability to comprehend their immense complexity. Physical systems once thought to behave in utter simple ways now confuse and frustrate us, we can no longer understand what they are doing. Even in the murky, logically driven realms of computer science we can still see the border approaching. Standing fairly entrenched on the side of "intelligence" that can be explained/understood/compared to our own standards (even though no one on this side seems capable of actually describing what exactly these standards of intelligence are) we find that our tools fail when we attempt to measure the "other".

Even Gibson himself, who uses his narrative to bring us to such a border with his introduction of the superintelligent computer Neuromancer, cannot break free of the bounds of his human intelligence. Gibson is forced throughout the story to betray the tremendously alien being by endowing it with thoroughly human sentiments, and ultimately, placing it under a most human undertaking : seeking out others like itself.

While *Neuromancer* means to tell a story of the future, it is definitely grounded in the present. While Gibson had to worry about telling a story that his readers could understand and moreover, enjoy, the future, and all of the human and nonhuman intelligences that it seems to be producing, will not hold back.