

# Reviews of Books

This issue of the AI Magazine initiates a new and (we hope) regular feature, Reviews of Books. Before presenting our first book review, a few comments about the aims of this feature are in order.

We regard a review column as an opportunity for the AI Magazine:

- to inform readers of the existence of new publications,
- continue a discussion of important issues raised in published work, and
- report how work in AI is viewed by others.

Other than serving the interests of our readers, we intend to place few restrictions on the type of review to appear in this column. However, we are particularly interested in reviewing publications that attempt to provide tutorial and other forms of summary discussions of broad areas of artificial intelligence, publications that examine existing research and application techniques employed by practitioners in AI or suggest new methods, and literature that discusses, either critically or supportively, foundational aspects of AI. In addition, since one goal of the AI Magazine is to provide a source of information about the field of AI to non-practitioners, we are very interested in reviews of material that discusses the relation of AI research and practice to other fields such as psychology, linguistics, and biology.

The number of AI-related publications has grown enormously in recent years. Consequently we will not attempt to provide complete coverage. Rather than publishing very brief reviews of a large number of publications, it will be our aim to offer one or two longer and carefully presented reviews. We hope you find these reviews both appropriate and timely.

Writers and artists, inspired by AI concepts, have created visions, sometimes fantastic ones, of what might be achieved by our work. The impression that the public receives from these literary

and artistic efforts can have a real effect on our ability to pursue research directions of interest. Visions of applications of computer technology can serve as a stimulus for discussions of new ideas and directions in this field. Consequently, in addition to reviewing the standard literature produced by those in the AI community, we also seek to encourage reviews and discussions by people outside the field of AI to characterize where we seem to be going and what we are likely to achieve in the future. Reviews of this type can focus on such things as the technical accuracy of these popular treatments, and/or moral conclusions, either explicit or implied. As with any other professional group, the members of the AI community are properly concerned with the image of our field held by the general public. For the reasons outlined above as well as others, review and discussion of popular treatments of work in AI are a useful adjunct to the standard sorts of review to be included in this column.

We welcome suggestions regarding material to be reviewed in this column and other types of discussions that might be valuable and appropriate here. We extend an invitation to anyone interested in submitting a review.

I am pleased to launch this feature with Saul Amarel's review of Feigenbaum and McCorduck's recent best seller (at least around Palo Alto).

— Michael Fehling

Suggestions about material to be reviewed, offers to submit reviews, and other inquiries and general correspondence should be sent to:

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