

Machines having a mind philosophy essay



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Many people over the years wonder if machines function like the human mind does; do machines feel, imagine, think etc. I will show you the arguments that are out there about machines having a mind. I will show the argument of why machines wouldn't have minds. Finally, then going into my opinion of machines not having minds like a human being does.

The "Turning Test" is a good example of how machines could have minds or could replicate how the human mind works. " Contemporary discussions of the nature of the mind are usually dominated by what is known as the computational conception, which identifies mentality with the execution of programs: humans and machines are supposed to operate in similar ways. Perhaps the most important representative of this position is Alan Turing, who introduced the Turing Test (TT) as a means for determining whether the abilities of machines were comparable to those of human beings. Turing's position has been enormously influential within cognitive science, which is dominated by the computer model of the mind. Although the Turing Test has acquired the status of common knowledge among students of artificial intelligence and cognitive science, its character is not so widely known within the intellectual community at large. Turing adapted a party game, known as the imitation game, for the purpose of establishing evidence of the existence of intelligence or mentality in the case of inanimate machines. In the imitation game, a man and a woman might compete to induce a contestant to guess which is female and which male, based solely upon answers given to questions (permitting the male, but not the female, to lie). The game would have to be arranged in such a way that the physical properties of the participants—their shapes, sizes, and voices, for example—would not give

them away. If the contestant correctly identified the genders of the other players, he or she would win. Alternatively, if the contestant incorrectly identified their genders, then the woman would win. Turing's alternative conception was to adapt the test to pit an inanimate machine against a human being, where the property under consideration is no longer the participants' sex but their intelligence or mentality." (Fetzer, 1) This would show that a machine could manipulate a human and could win in this kind of a game. If a machine can be programmed to act like a human being and trick human beings that it is not a machine. This brings up the question could a machine pass off as a human being and have human emotions if it is programmed to have these emotions.

By using the "Turning Test" it has shown us that computers can be programmed to act like a human. But for them to do anything on their own has not been proven. From the scientists that were using the "Turning Test" has resulted in this explanation: "Computers certainly have secondary intentionality imparted to them by programmers and users. But to have a mind a computer would have to have primary intentionality. How would we know if a computer had primary intentionality? A computer's output would be intentional (in a primary sense) if the output were other-referential in a way that was not part of the program. Intentionality that was part of the program (the computer "talking about sports" because the programmer put "talk about sports" into the program) would of course merely be secondary intentionality — the intentionality of the programmer imparted to the machine. A "thinking" computer would have to talk about sports (or some other topic) that was not a part of its program. So primary intentionality

would necessarily not be an algorithm of the computer. But an output by the computer would that was not part of the computer's program wouldn't be computation. Computation is by definition bounded by an algorithm. Mental acts are not bound by an algorithm. If a computer were to manifest acts that were not algorithmic, it would be (in that respect) no longer a computer. No amount or ingenuity of programming can enable a computer to think. Mental acts are intrinsically non-computational. A mind transcends itself and refers to other.”(Egnor 1) Basically what this is trying to say is that computers can not think. Thinking is not something that you can plug into a computer to do, so for a computer to function like a human being it would have to be able to think and use its imagination. But it cannot because for it to do that it would have to be programmed in and then it would cancel out the definition of thinking on its own.

There are definitely two sides to this argument if machines have a mind like a human being do and if a machine can think without being programmed to do it. In my opinion I think that machines are just what they are; and they cannot think or have emotions like human beings do. For a computer to do anything it would have to be programmed by a person. So the only way that a computer would even come close to be a human being would be for it to do something solemnly on its own. This would involve the machine to think by itself and not be told to do the action. So in result a machine can be programmed to think like a human being. But the machine cannot do this action without having a human do it for them, so in result the machine cannot think on its own.

In conclusion of the topic can machines have emotions, and think like humans can there are many test and theories that people have about this topic. There is the “ Turing Test” that proves that a computer can be taught to act like a human but does not show that the computer can think on its own without the programmer. This basically says that a machine only can think if there is a human behind the machine. By showing both sides of this argument it proves that computers can be taught to do many things, but thinking is not something that can be taught to a computer.

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Work Cited:

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Fetzer, James. “ SEHR.” July 23, 1995. Web. 26 February 2012.