

9.7.97 JM Expo: Consciousness.

I'm going to discuss ~~consciousness from the world outside~~ ^{Thray} ~~Two~~ kinds of problems associated with what we call "consciousness".

The first, is the problem of defining it. ~~Quite often~~ ~~many people discuss~~ ~~consciousness without~~ Different people often have quite different ideas as to what ~~it~~ ~~may~~ mean by consciousness. ~~Discussion of consciousness~~

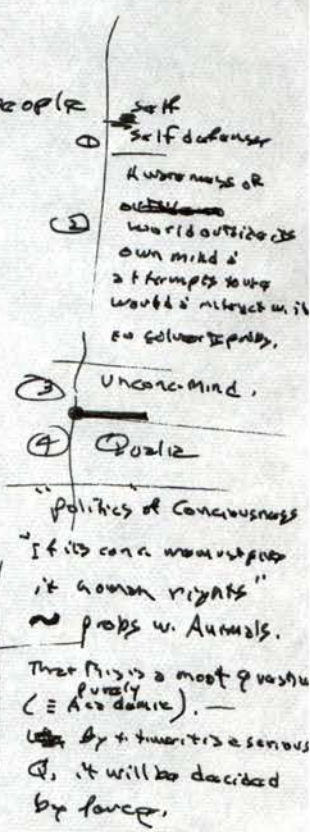
~~before~~ ~~people~~ It is not surprising that people would fail to agree on conclusions about things that are quite different from one another.

One way to think about consciousness is to consider its ~~having several~~ components. Different people have different ideas as to what these components are — or if they agree on the components they can disagree as to the relative importance of each.

I will list ~~several~~ ⁴ aspects of consciousness that many people include in their persons (definition of it). These four are by no means exhaustive; Many people include quite ~~different~~ ^{qualities} ~~behavior patterns~~ in their conception of what "consciousness" is.

The second problem involves robots: To what extent can we design robots that have these qualities?

The third problem is a political/ethical problem: If we have robots with these qualities, to what extent should we regard them as human? — To what extent do they have the rights and privileges that we have learned to associate with humans?



To start with ~~a~~ a definition: The four aspects of consciousness I'll discuss are

3. ~~Knowledge~~ ^{Knowledge} ~~Concept of Self~~ Concept of Self.

4. Awareness of a world outside its own mind ~~and~~ ^{the ability to assimilate} ~~that world~~ ~~attempts to~~ ^{exploitation of that knowledge in} solving its own problems. ~~hard to get at from outside.~~ ^{solving its own problem.}

1. The Unconscious mind { 2 possl. meanings: awake v.s. sleeping

2. Qualia.

The first two properties are common in many ^{large, complex} machines. The second two properties develop of themselves in machines that are given suitably difficult problems.

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w.r.t. Some of these 4 qualities: To what extent do various things have them?

- a) Men b) non-human Animals c) bacteria d) plants.
e) corporations (In many ways, treated, legally, like "Persons")
f) Nations
g) Earth (Gaia Hypothesis): Australian ~~sub~~subcontinent (some bio isolation)
Screenwriter Community
Physics Community; Biology Community...)

On: Empathy: This is an impt. quality of an object determining to what extent a human will regard it as living & near human: It is a ability of human to model behavior of entity in itself (human) & do successful predn. Paradox. It doesn't have to be very successful to qualify, hvr. Humans are able to empathize w. animals, plants, automobiles, & many not very intelligent computer ppgms!

Empathy is impt. in determining how "human" people are willing to consider a robot.

9.27.97 New Tack:

01997 (I may have written on this already): T. idea is that there is a problem in defining

"Vague Mind" is a Gray (or multidimensional or complexity metric) ~~is~~/fuzzy concept —
Hardy to do w. how difficult. These ideas are for an outside observer to protect them.

T. problem is that a person might say "I'm very conscious of certain ideas but I just want to keep them private" — so an outsider would have lots of trouble getting at that info.

Well, to deal w. this we might postulate a part of the ego (person) that he/she want to keep private. This private part can result in is, and it can also result in an idea of "free will" — i.e. The person, making decisions based on his "private self" will behave in an unpredictable way, to outsiders who are not privy to his "private self". So the unpredictable "private self" is where the "free will" is.

On the other hand: What is "Determinism"? Not so clear. Physicists have this Laplacean idea that if they knew the initial conditions & the "Laws of physics" they could predict everything ("in principle"). w. Q.M. ideas, hvr, they don't think that anymore. What they do think now about determinism — I don't know.

Even w. is ~~is~~ Laplacean model: "Initial conditions" even in the past. T. past is often quite difficult to ascertain — not always as hard as it is the future — but certainly very difficult for initial conditions that are distributed in space & time. So obtaining the "initial conditions" can be a difficult similar difficulty to predicting the future from present data.

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The ideas of Consciousness; its components; are always dependent upon the state of technology. Our present ideas stem mainly from a low tech culture. As we introduce new technological possibilities, the old concepts (of conscious (i.e. "components" of consciousness)) — some of them become meaningless or have to be much modified to retain any utility at all.

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Some kinds of actual &/or hypothetical tech advances that would seriously erode our concepts of consciousness, & ~~is~~ a/c other current concepts

1) If we could duplicate a human w. fair accuracy — then the "secret self" of one of them would no longer be a ~~secret~~ secret. The other individual may have a somewhat different idea as to what he wants to keep secret from the rest of the world.

2) If we have ^{very} intelligent machines: what does "murder" mean? If we backup a robot ~~so~~ ^{enough} memory before destroying him, is this really "murder"? — We can reproduce him exactly if we like, at any time.

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