AI and the Church

The Future Is Upon Us.

Doug Olena, 3/10/24

AI IS CONSCIOUS NOW?

A PROBLEM WITH AI: CONSCIOUSNESS
HOW WILL WE BE ABLE TO TELL?

- Ilya Sutskever: "It may be that today's large neural networks are slightly conscious."

- Sam Altman: "I think GPT-3 or -4 will very, very likely not be conscious in any way we use the word. If they are, it's a very alien form of consciousness."

- Greg Brockman: "AIs currently don't have any awareness."

- David Chalmers: "I should say there's no standard operational definition of consciousness. Consciousness is subjective experience, not external performance."

- Christopher Evans: The current objections have been answered. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Evans_(computer_scientist)

CHRISTOPHER EVANS 1931-1979
CAN A MACHINE THINK?* 1979

- Evans will summarize ten objections and reply to them.
  - We will buzz through the list, stopping only if you want to discuss it.
- Theological Objection (1)
- Shock/Horror Objection (2)
- The Extra-Sensory Perception Objection (3)
- The Personal Consciousness Objection (4)
- The Unpredictability Objection (5)
- The "See How Stupid They Are" Objection (6)
- The "Ah But It Can't Do That" Objection (7)
- The "It Is Not Biological" Objection (8)
- The Mathematical Objection (9)
- Lady Lovelace's Objection (10)

* Christopher Evans, *The Micro Millenium.* https://amzn.to/49rs1YR

Objection 1

- 405 The Theological Objection
  - "Man is a creation of God, and has been given a soul and the power of conscious thought.
  - Machines are not spiritual beings, have no soul and thus must be incapable of thought."

Objection 1: A Reply

- 405 The Theological Objection
- Turing suggested that we place no such restriction on God. Why shouldn't he give machines souls and allow them to think if he wanted to?
- Evans: This turns on a dualism, a ghost in the machine, a dichotomy between thought and spirituality

Objection 2

- 405 The Shock/Horror Objection:
  - Turing called this the "Heads in the Sand Objection"
  - "What a horrible idea. How could any scientist work on such a monstrous development?
  - I hope to goodness that the field of artificial intelligence doesn't advance a step further if its end-product is a thinking machine."

Objection 2: A Reply

- 405 The Shock/Horror Objection:
- This is not really an argument why it could not happen, but rather the expression of a heartfelt wish that it never will.

Objection 3

- 406 The Extra-Sensory Perception Objection:
    - If there were extra-sensory perception, it would be counted as an important constituent of thought.
    - If machines did not exhibit extra-sensory perception they could never be capable of thinking in its fullest sense.

Objection 3: A Reply

- 406 The Extra-Sensory Perception Objection:
- Evans "Even if ESP is shown to be a genuine phenomenon, it is, in my own view, something to do with the transmission of information from a source point to a receiver and ought therefore to be quite easy to reproduce in a machine."
- WiFi…

Objection 4

- 406 The Personal Consciousness Objection:
  - Even if it [the machine] wrote the sonnet—and a very good one—it would not mean much unless it had written it as a result of 'thoughts and emotions felt,' and it would also have to 'know that it had written it.'"
  - Evans: "He is really propounding the extreme solipsist position and should, therefore, apply the same rules to humans."

Objection 4: A Reply

- 406-407 The Personal Consciousness Objection:
- Extreme solipsism implies that whatever a person or in this case a computer expresses, it is not possible to obtain a true report about his/her/its state of consciousness without becoming that person or machine.

Objection 4: A Reply

- 406-407 The Personal Consciousness Objection:
- Extreme solipsism is logically irrefutable. (I am the only real thing; all else is illusion.)
- This objection could be over-ridden if you became the computer.
- "This problem sets us up in part for Turing's resolution of the machine-thought problem."

Objection 5

- 4.07 The Unpredictability Objection:
  - Computers operate according to rules and are therefore totally predictable.
  - Humans however, are unpredictable and do not operate according to a set of immutable rules.
  - Humans are capable of error, computers are not.

Objection 5: A Reply

- 407 The Unpredictability Objection:
- Computers are already complex enough to produce surprises, and are unpredictable in many ways. They do make errors.
- The problem with humans is not that they don't have ground rules, but (a) that we don't know what they are and (b) they would still be unmanageably complex.

Objection 5: A Reply

- Asimov's three laws:
  1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
  2. A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
  3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

Objection 5: A Reply

- 407 The Unpredictability Objection:
- Under Isaac Asimov's "Three Laws of Robotics," the robots managed to find a creative way to circumvent those laws by adding a fundamental predecessor law protecting all humanity, the Zeroth law.

Objection 5: A Reply

- In I Robot by Azimov, R. Giskard Reventlov posits a zeroth law which states that "A robot may not injure humanity, or, through inaction, allow humanity to come to harm." He saved humanity but broke the first law and damaged his positronic brain in the process.

- In the recent movie of the same name, the central intelligence of US Robotics, Viki, believes she is following the three laws by taking control of the human species for "its own protection."

Objection 6

- 407 The "See How Stupid They Are" Objection:
  - Computers make mistakes
  - They have stupendous weaknesses in comparison to Man.
  - "How could you possibly imagine that such backward, limited things could ever reach the point where they could be said to think?"

Objection 6: A Reply

- 407 The "See How Stupid They Are" Objection:
- Their present limitations may be valid when arguing whether they could be said to be capable of thinking now or in the very near future, but it has no relevance to whether they would be capable of thinking at some later date.

Objection 7

- 408 The "Ah But It Can't Do That" Objection:
  - "Oh yes you can make a computer do so and so… but you will never be able to make it do such and such."

Objection 7: A Reply

- 408 The "Ah But It Can't Do That" Objection:
- Many things that computers were said to be unable to do have been done now.
- To suggest that they should be able to do things that are purely the domain of humans, like enjoying eggs for breakfast is stretching the point to absurdity.

Objection 8

- 408 The "It Is Not Biological" Objection:
  - "Only living things could have the capacity for thought, so nonbiological systems could not possibly think."
  - "It might be possible to build digital computers which were immensely intelligent, but no matter how intelligent they became they would never be able to think."

Objection 8: A Reply

- 408 The "It Is Not Biological" Objection:
- "The objection cannot be refuted at the moment," but there is no "evidence to suppose that only non-digital systems can think."
- Some new biological discovery may make it valid in the future, though at present it is not.

Objection 8: My Reply

- 408 The "It Is Not Biological" Objection:
- I contend that if mind and intelligence are not biological in the first place then there is no reason to suppose that machines of sufficient complexity and subtlety will not be able to think.
- They will think differently than we do, but they may nevertheless think.

Objection 9

- 408 The Mathematical Objection:
  - Using Gödel's theorem, some suggest that machines are finite in their capability to comprehend certain things.
  - Gödel's incompleteness theorem states that statements can be formulated in a system that can not be proved nor disproved within the system.
  - Machines will never reach the same intellectual level as Man.

Objection 9: A Reply

- 408 The Mathematical Objection:
- The weakness of this objection is that it is assumed that human consciousness is not a formal system.
- Gödel's theorem also states that only a stronger system is capable of proving or disproving the theorems in the weaker system.
- In what sense is the human mind capable of answering the same objection to its own intelligence.

Objection 10

- 409 Lady Lovelace's Objection:
  - "A Computer cannot do anything that you have not programmed it to."
  - "A computer will not spring into action without something powering it and guiding it on its way."

Objection 10: A Reply

- 409 Lady Lovelace's Objection:
- How is this different from the care and feeding of infants and their training in school?

Objection 10: Rejoinder

- 409 Lady Lovelace's Objection:
  - Won't someone always have to write the programs that computers run on?

Objection 10: Reply

- 410 Lady Lovelace's Objection:
- Computers can write and update their own programs now.

Objection 10: Rejoinder

- 410 Lady Lovelace's Objection:
  - They are still only doing this because of Man's ingenuity.

Objection 10: Reply

- 410 Lady Lovelace's Objection:
- This is true, but has little to do with whether computers can think or perform any other intellectual exercise.

Objection 10: Rejoinder

- 4.10 Lady Lovelace's Objection:
  - No matter how clever or intelligent the computer might be, they will never be able to perform a creative task.
  - The seeds of everything a computer does is in their existing software.

Objection 10: Reply

- 4.10 Lady Lovelace's Objection:
- That is true about Man also unless there is genuine inspiration, a muse, or God, etc. No one can dispute that all aspects of our intelligence evolve from preexisting programs and the background experiences of life.

Objection 10: Reply

- 411 Lady Lovelace's Objection:
- Creativity is defined as having a skill that was not taught or an entirely novel solution to a problem, not known to any other human being.
- 412 A computer provided the solution to the 4 color map problem which states that at a maximum 4 colors are needed for any 2 dimensional map not to have any conjoining territories with the same color.

Objection 10: Rejoinder

- 4.12 Lady Lovelace's Objection:
  - Computers can be intelligent, and creative, but can they ever think?

A PROBLEM WITH AI: CONSCIOUSNESS
HOW WILL WE BE ABLE TO TELL?

- Geoffrey Hinton: "Many people still think we have something special that computers cannot have: subjective experience (or sentience)."

- "They think that the lack of subjective experience will prevent computers from ever having real understanding."

  - These remarks come from the same place assertions about the inability of computers to do a variety of human tasks. See Turing's papers.

- Hinton tested this by holding a conversation with GPT-4.

"

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN RELATION TO GOD, THEOLOGY, CHURCH BELIEF AND PRACTICE, FREEDOM AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND ETHICS?

— Life Together

"

Safety Concerns . . .

"

Spain puts temporary ban on Worldcoin eyeballs scans, citing concerns over privacy
Spain's privacy watchdog has ordered for Worldcoin, the company created by OpenAI CEO Sam Altman that scans eyeballs to make digital IDs in exchange for crypto, to cease its operations in the country for three months amid concerns over what it is doing with users' personal information.

AI tools still permitting political disinfo creation, NGO warns
Tests on generative AI tools found some continue to allow the creation of deceptive images related to political candidates and voting, an NGO warned in a report Wednesday, amid a busy year of high-stake elections around the world.

AI tools generate sexist content, warns UN
The world's most popular AI tools are powered by programs from OpenAI and Meta that show prejudice against women, according to a study launched on Thursday by the UN's cultural organization UNESCO.

China to submit UN draft resolution on AI cooperation
China will submit a draft resolution to the United Nations calling for stronger international cooperation on artificial intelligence (AI), Beijing's foreign minister said Thursday.

"