

# Second Philosophy

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Led by	Marya Blaisdale / Maria Hume
Title	Artificial Intelligence and Consciousness
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## INTRODUCTION

(Note: ALICE is a rudimentary artificial intelligence program)

*“The best reason for believing that robots might some day become conscious is that we human beings are conscious, and we are a sort of robot ourselves. That is, we are extraordinarily complex self-controlling, self-sustaining physical mechanisms, designed over the eons by natural selection and operating according to the same well-understood principles that govern all the other physical processes in living things: digestive and metabolic processes, self-repair and reproductive processes, for instance.*

*It may be wildly over-ambitious to suppose that human artificers can repeat Nature's triumph, with variations in material, form, and design process, but this is not a deep objection. It is not as if a conscious machine contradicted any fundamental laws of nature, the way a perpetual motion machine does. Still, many sceptics believe - or in any event want to believe - that it will never be done.” (Daniel Dennett)*

### So, what is Consciousness?

“The words "mind" and "consciousness" are used by different communities in different ways. For philosophers, neuroscientists and cognitive scientists, the words are used in a way that is both more precise and more mundane: they refer to the familiar, everyday experience of having a "thought in your head", like a perception, a dream, an intention or a plan, and to the way we know something, or mean something or understand something.” (Wiki)

John Searle states that it is incoherent to think that AI could ever achieve consciousness because a machine could never achieve ‘understanding’ in the sense that humans have. Minsky’s view is that the mind consists of several hundred mini computer-like systems that have evolved to perform specific tasks; these mini computers combined create consciousness – therefore it is theoretically possible to create AI consciousness.

## QUESTIONS:

1. Do you agree with Searle that it cannot or perhaps Minsky, who believes it can?
2. If it is ultimately possible, then the question becomes ‘should’ we do it? What are the potential implications?

## REFERENCES:

### 1. Brain Spotting Part 2 (On YouTube)

Episode2 - Part 1/5: [http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=cnr\\_8tMuNaQ](http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=cnr_8tMuNaQ)

Episode2 - Part 2/5: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGiq5qMOG54&NR=1>

Episode2 - Part 3/5: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5luwHpx2yqs&NR=1> (up to 06:55) Approximately 26 minutes in total

# Second Philosophy

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**2. Useful FAQ About AI:**

<http://ai.king.net.pl/articles/whatisai.pdf>

**3. Wiki Entry on Philosophy of AI:**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy\\_of\\_artificial\\_intelligence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_artificial_intelligence)

**4. Searle's Chinese Room Argument (Brief):**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A486047>

**5. Marvin Minsky: Why People Think Computers Can't**

<http://web.media.mit.edu/~minsky/papers/ComputersCantThink.txt>

**6. John Searle: Minds, Brains and Programs**

<http://www.bbsonline.org/Preprints/OldArchive/bbs.searle2.html>

# Second Philosophy

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## DISCUSSION:

**Simulat:** For question 1, I think that machine intelligence is possible

**Steve:** tempted to ask Alice what she thinks

**Shingles:** Can a conscious being understand its own consciousness from the inside even?

**Wren:** well I'd like to bring up the recent robot experiment with the live brain tissue

**Sojourna:** I think we have a really interesting dilemma to begin with –

1. That there is no definition of intelligence that doesn't depend on human intelligence and I think we need to begin to think of AI and HI as different things, and
2. AI aims at simulating human-level intelligence which is rather limiting because I think computers will develop with their own logic as humans developed via their own evolutionary process.

**Thoth:** I think we not only can and will do it, but we likely won't be able to avoid it - unless we suffer some catastrophe that wipes us out or deprives us of technology.

**Howard:** Sim - is intelligence the same thing/stuff as consciousness?

**Renald:** If Alice could REALLY tell us what she thought... the questions would be moot.

**Reflection:** sure, no reason why a computer can not simulate all the functions very nicely sometime in the future, but is that simulation actually phenomenologically the same sort of thing or fundamentally different?

**Marya:** fair point Ren :)

**Marya:** What happened in the experiment, Wren?

**Simulat:** not for me Howard - they seem to be distinct concepts to me

**Wren:** well scientists were able to hook up a robot to rat brain tissue; not the rat itself, but individual brain tissue; the robot was able to learn; to avoid walls, etc

**Squish:** I think we really ought to try to clarify the concept of consciousness

**Squish:** Sloman has this to say on the discussions revolving around AI:

*"The existence of inconsistent or divergent intuitions suggests that the common, intuitive notion of consciousness has so many flaws that it is not fit to be used in formulating scientific questions or engineering goals, since it will never be clear whether the questions have been answered or whether the goals have been achieved. Attempts to avoid this unclarity by introducing new, precise definitions, e.g. distinguishing 'phenomenal' from 'access' consciousness, or talking about 'what it is like to be something' (Nagel 1981) all move within a circle of ill-defined notions, without clearly identifying some unique thing that has to be explained."*

**Thoth:** Ref, it is not the specific mechanism that needs to be replicated but the important systems that do the same thing operating on the same principles, and i think we're not all that far from it, in fact, likely closer than we think.

**Howard:** Sim - so AI/robots might (probably can) acquire some form of intelligence but not consciousness?

**Shingles:** but even machines have been invented without organic components that can learn, some could even communicate those learnt things to each other

**Thoth:** we don't need and cannot replicate a human brain to 'create' an electronic intellect that is self-aware.

**Simulat:** I agree with Soj's point that machine intelligence will probably be different from human intelligence because it's on a different substrate with a different history

**Bash:** I think Soj had an interesting point about definition from human perspective. I have been thinking about it and for all we know the internet has become self aware just not in a way we would see it. For that matter the earth itself could be intelligent. We tend to think that how we see things is the only way.

**Bash:** Humans are the centre of it all

**Reflection:** well Thoth, I think we are still pretty far away from any really very precise understanding of our own brain or how it works, so any simulation of that would still be in the relatively far future I think

**Simulat:** And Howard - I think that consciousness is a story we tell ourselves about what is going on

**Wren:** have you guys seen the episode of South Park about head lice?

**Thoth:** I too agree there. A machine intellect would not have the same influence, motivations, goals, etc.

# Second Philosophy

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**Squish:** a differing intellectual nature does not preclude the possibility of a conscious nature

**Sojourna:** I thought the McCarthy paper that Marya referred us to was interesting in that there is no definition of intelligence that is not human-centred - which means that we have to see AI as aiming for some sort of human emulation.

**Bash:** In that respect I don't think man can create AI, because we cannot recreate how we think

**Sojourna:** But that isn't enough - computers can emulate humans - in terms of problem solving only. (?)

**Bash:** But I think that AI could arise on its own

**Wren:** Bash, in that case, it's not AI is it; just intelligence

**Thoth:** (Bash - in that sense I would not say the 'earth' is aware, but I WOULD say that, given that WE are aware that you could say the universe is aware - but not in the sense normally considered, but from the perspective that we, as local integral parts of the universe are aware locally).

**Sojourna:** Bash, I'm curious, if we were to define AI as something non-human centred how would we define it?

**Marya:** This is where I think it goes wrong, Soj - in that humans tend to feel that an AI would need to be conscious in the same way that we are exactly - but I think this is not how it would or could be

**Simulat:** I think that one of the most advanced forms of AI now are modelled on ants - swarms of simple machines that have an aggregate behaviour

**Bash:** No I guess not

**Sojourna:** haha Wren - yeah

**Topaz:** I think through embodied concepts, incorporated into AI development we are doing just that Bash

**Bash:** New Intelligence

**Simulat:** and ant hills are pretty intelligent

**Thoth:** are our brains very dense and complex anthills? ;o)

**Topaz:** embodied concepts are equivalent to ants in that metaphor

**Bash:** Then AI is kind of a trap because if it is artificial it is always lacking in something

**Renald:** How important is what our consciousness rests on?

**Simulat:** might be, Thoth - Minsky's idea quoted in the intro note is sort of like that

**Squish:** what is it always lacking, Bash?

**Marya:** only in biology I would say, Bash

**Sojourna:** Thoth - yeah, I mean how much do we even know about the workings of our brains? Machines will be so far advanced in the future we probably can't imagine what they will be able to do. It's very problematic to focus on the human connection. (Maybe)

**Sojourna:** Well - I guess we are focusing on HI because up until now Ai is created in order to "serve" humans?

**Bash:** Artificial would mean a knock off of the real thing less than original

**Howard:** do we think intelligence is problem solving or do we think it involves creative stuff like art to literature or science or (even) philosophy

**Sojourna:** Yes, Howard glad you brought that up

**Sojourna:** I think up until now Ai is about problem solving and helping humans

**Bash:** Any real intelligence that would arise would be NI to be real and not just a man made toy

**Renald:** I think it's a religious quest, myself ;-)

**Steve:** may I go back to the Topaz made on embodiment?

**Marya:** Really, Ren, how so?

**Shingles:** the spontaneous creation of art is normally the benchmark for historians of when a group of humans developed to intelligent beings

**Sojourna:** I was reading about creativity and we seem to interpret creativity as some form of mysterious thing,

**Thoth:** well, it is better to abstract the human brain and look at what is necessary/possible for intellect in general, and for an electronic intellect in specific. We cannot nor need, we replicate emotions as they work in humans, for example, I think. One thing to consider is that they will think MUCH faster than we do...

**Topaz:** I don't think art was ever spontaneous

**Bash:** We cannot find God so we build an all knowing being into our computer systems

# Second Philosophy

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**Marya:** Yes, Soj, Minsky has interesting things to say about that - I had not thought of it from that perspective before - creativity was a problem for me

**Steve:** Hurb Dryfus wrote a paper on why computers would need a body to be intelligent

**Thoth:** ...I can imagine an electronic intellect getting started, learning, and going insane in about 1/10 of a second if not designed carefully.

**Steve:** if you think of your own field of perception it is horizontal

**Topaz:** nods Steve...that understanding has been around since Aristotle wrote about embodied concepts

**Renald:** It's not the clearest notion I have, Marya... but some of the attitudes surrounding AI... the drive for it, the uneasiness around it... strikes me as attempting to satisfy certain needs that are sometimes satisfied by religion instead. Needs to do with understanding one's place in the universe, etc.

**Shingles:** a metal petrouschka perhaps, Thoth?

**Steve:** so you have a sense of orientation up down left right

**Thoth:** (aside: I do not consider 'AI' as artificial; rather I see human development of AI as part of the natural evolution of intellect - we are merely 'agents' in that process, so to speak) ...so, I use the term electronic intellect.

**Sojourna:** Yes, Marya - I was thinking about creativity during the free will stuff and realised how determined it is - so if it is determined ie based on chemical reactions etc etc, I'm sure computers will develop their own reactions in the future.

**Steve:** all perception that is first person perception is based on this

**Topaz:** Steve, yes and that integration is what high level thinking is founded upon

**Steve:** all simulation is third person it - just repetition of program

**Sojourna:** Which reminds me! Humans evolved over millions of years into the intelligence beings (hehe) we are today - so AI will need about as long to develop its own independent intelligence.

**Renald:** hmm

**Thoth:** .... they are not evolving from scratch, Soj....

**Alaya:** it may have been the same reaction, with the new automatic machinery before too

**Shingles:** will it? The procreation of self-aware programs could occur at a vastly quicker pace, Soj

**Sojourna:** What do you mean, Thoth?

**Thoth:** ...if you consider it as a step up from us, say, it won't need that long to be created. But it may exist that long or long, and likely evolve over time.

**Topaz:** Ren, are you saying we need to feel like Gods?

**Chazz:** Once computers become able to design computers, I think the already meteoric rate of evolution will be accelerated

**Bash:** If we create an AI with all the knowledge of mankind up to that point then that AI would not only be aware of its creators but of its own creation.

**Howard:** Soj - but if AI/robots have an 'independent' intellect it will presumably not (ever?) be either human or necessarily resemble human intelligence

**Sojourna:** Sure, I imagine it will much quicker and a different journey, but some form of evolution will take place? Humans won't always be in control of the evolution of machines?

**Renald:** Sometimes I think that's what's going on, yes, Topaz... but sometimes I think people are looking for a more stable position from which to live in a universe without gods.

**Bash:** It would be like being born with knowing God and how the universe was made

**Thoth:** we are much closer than we think, I believe. The idea of memes, for example, is an important part of the puzzle, and it may be that we can replicate the memetic mechanism in software soon once the principles are understood and can be modelled.

**Shingles:** it could happen, I don't see why it wouldn't, Soj

**Sojourna:** Howard - I think that absolutely for sure it will be different from human intelligence, and I think we need to begin to consider how AI will differ from HI.

**Renald:** Our record of maintaining tight control over our own productions isn't the best, anyway ;-)

**Sojourna:** Interesting point, Chazz.

# Second Philosophy

---

**Thoth:** memes are not really the external things we see, but the patterns we use to think about and express things, imho...

**Simulat:** Steve - I once made a very simple machine that had a fairly sophisticated behaviour. It was a boat with paddlewheels that were controlled by light sensors - the left sensor drove the right wheel and the right sensor drove the left wheel - its behaviour was that when it saw light it would swim towards it

**Steve:** and?

**Thoth:** ...and if that is a good understanding as to how we think and perceive and understand, then we are quite close.

**Alaya:** well Ren, I live without gods, and the machine hasn't replace anything about that but replace, my library and phone book and, some outside activity as talking with friends in evening week time

**Topaz:** we're going to create all the demons and Gods and Angels we always thought the universe was imbued with?

**Howard:** Thoth - but Dawkins 'meme' was a cultural form of 'gene' which passed rapidly around before dying out or being replaced by the next good /fashionable idea

**Thoth:** negative

**Marya:** Thoth, yes, I think that's an interesting perspective - and an AI system that can program its own 'meme's to some degree would have interesting consequences

**Thoth:** it was an idea that has not been enough developed or understood.

**Sage:** Does anyone here believe AI is impossible?

**Shingles:** I've seen a solar powered robot that will seek out the light, which got me wondering, is it a form of life?

**Alaya:** well I hope it will debug itself all the time than

**Steve:** well if by "intelligence" you mean self conscious intelligence, yes

**Bash:** I don't think manmade AI is possible no

**Renald:** That's not what I mean, exactly, Topaz... more that, if we can successfully create our own companion intelligences independently of biological reproduction, our own apparently spontaneous existence might seem better grounded.

**Topaz:** Sim, I like the experiments with swarms of machine that are \*supposed to detect light\* to solve a problem but end up solving it by detecting vibration, and by detecting time of day, and temperature, and battery charge etc, and the researches are like...with are we supposed to do with That Data?

**Shingles:** It seeks its own food, acts to prolong its operating existence, it can be ended, is it not then a living thing?

**Simulat:** that's all it did - I put a number of them in the same pool with a light above it, and there was always something going on - just by random drifting first this and then that boat would see the light and move towards it - jostling the others

**Sage:** Bash, could you clarify what you mean by man-made? I mean in a sense, humans are man-made, no?

**Howard:** If intelligence is simply problem solving then we already have AI -the issue is whether it can have consciousness. Perhaps we should try to agree what that is

**Thoth:** but Bash - Searle is wrong; believe me.

**Renald:** Sage... it would depend on the definition, of course :-)

**Bash:** I mean I don't think man is going to create an AI in a lab

**Sojourna:** Yes, I think we should try to define consciousness. And intelligence?

**Renald:** If necessary.

**Simulat:** for me one of the things that that machine showed is that maybe we don't have to worry about phenomenology

**Squish:** shingles - that's an interesting question. I'm not sure what exactly defines a "living" thing, but is "living" required for "consciousness"?

**Steve:** my ownness means I care about my existence - because I have a future

**Bash:** If AI happens it will be though some natural progression outside the lab

**Sojourna:** Howard - do you have a definition to begin with?

# Second Philosophy

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**Sage:** Bash, how is lab different then nature, in your view?

**Topaz:** I think we have been creating AI for hundreds of years

**Shingles:** that's an even more interesting question, Squish

**Simulat:** when constructing artificial intelligence all we need to worry about is getting intelligent responses to stimuli

**Bash:** For example we are not going to write AI code

**Steve:** will a machine ever have a sense of its own existence have a future and fear death?

**Bash:** But AI might arise on its own through the vastness of the web

**Marya:** if we can program it to, Steve, yes, why not?

**Topaz:** I think whenever you build something into an object...ie create a technology, you are doing First Degree Artificial Intelligence building

**Shingles:** I think that the very nature of consciousness would make life inalienable to consciousness, Squish

**Steve:** programming is not a future

**Marya:** Why not, Steve?

**Sojourna:** Hey guys I'm really stumped - I can't answer Steve's question

**Steve:** the future is "not yet"

**Renald:** If it's subject to death and is as aware of that as anything else, it will have an attitude towards death. That seems plain.

**Squish:** Sim - that is an interesting proposal. It answers the "weak AI consciousness" question, but not the "strong AI consciousness" problem

**Topaz:** Alice would then be only 3rd Degree

**Shingles:** not if it believes in Silicone heaven, Steve

**Simulat:** yes Bash - the image of intelligence being some sort of computer program is probably wrong I think

**Sojourna:** Is that to do with consciousness? Does that mean having a sense of one's life, mortality?

**Marya:** I think the answer is yes, Soj, but I'm interested to hear why Steve thinks not :)

**Squish:** shingles, what is the very nature of consciousness? I think that concept is hard to pin, and thus far no definite parameters have been given

**Topaz:** nods Ren

**Bash:** Life would require it give birth to a unique offspring

**Sage:** bash, might a cell be constructed in the lab that can grow into a human?

**Alaya:** well some protective program are already inside it, saying: hey are you allowed to do this, who are you?? Identified yourself, like it is saying I can decide over you, when could have program it this way to say this, I'm deciding over you if you don't convince me

**Steve:** yes Soj

**Sojourna:** Is intelligence dependent on consciousness?

**Howard:** Soj - well, what Chalmers calls the 'hard question' is how can a physical stuff or substance or material generate/create our feelings of joy, hatred, love, pleasure etc

**Marya:** Well, I can reiterate the Wiki description of what consciousness is - but it is not an absolute description: "The words "mind" and "consciousness" are used by different communities in different ways. For philosophers, neuroscientists and cognitive scientists, the words are used in a way that is both more precise and more mundane: they refer to the familiar, everyday experience of having a "thought in your head", like a perception, a dream, an intention or a plan, and to the way we know something, or mean something or understand something." (Wiki)

**Renald:** Should we focus on intelligence first, rather than consciousness? Is there an important difference? Is the use of intelligence in the term AI really referring to consciousness?

**Reflection:** it seems as though an AI could be programmed to fear death (that is avoid it) but would it really "feel" the same? Can a non-living simulation, even if a perfect replica have the feelings which a living creature possesses and how important is this to our "intelligence" however we define it?

**Sojourna:** Maybe HI but we don't know about AI.

**Bash:** When we grow a human we will have made AI :-D

# Second Philosophy

---

**Shingles:** I'm not qualified to answer that I'm afraid, but I would guess that the 'internal life' would be consciousness, Squish

**Squish:** Marya - I find that 'definition' to be rather obscure; it doesn't really clarify the question

**Marya:** I don't think so Ren, I think AI as a concept is more than just intelligence - it is probably not a perfectly good description of what we're talking about

**Sojourna:** Marya - would you say that there is a necessary connection between consciousness and intelligence? Certainly Western philosophers think so - but for machines?

**Sojourna:** Renald - good question - can you answer it?

**Marya:** Yes, it is a little obscure, Squish - and no doubt open to quite some ambiguity

**Bash:** Our monkey hands are not made for such delicate work as making life

**Simulat:** Renald - are you saying that intelligence and consciousness are the same thing?

**Alaya:** I receive a page from Natalie, she is learning physics, and they made rats neurone become aware of how to make a plane fly by computer linkage to them....

**Sojourna:** That helps Marya -

**Alaya:** neurones outside of body

**Squish:** well the ambiguity is responsible for quite a load of controversy over this topic ;)

**Renald:** I'm trying to pin us down, terminologically. I feel seasick.

**Sojourna:** Squish - can you try and clarify?

**Howard:** Renald - well, if you need some level of intelligence to understand and react to my words/language/appearance then yes intelligence is related in some way to consciousness

**Templeton:** We are all familiar with a simple psychological concept - the idea that people have a bad or truncated "self-image." The idea that people cannot really describe what and who they are and not even see themselves objectively in a mirror. I think the same is going on in these AI discussions. I cannot see anybody having a concept of self, of consciousness, that is not truncated and distorted to unrecognisability. In that way, if course, you can imagine ways in which our minds may be contained in computers. However, you are not talking about real minds.

**Sojourna:** I do too Renald - you go first :)

**Marya:** I don't think great intelligence is required for consciousness, no, Soj, I mean would anyone deny that animals are conscious, even lower level intelligence animals?

**Squish:** Soj - I asked for clarification precisely because I desire some myself

**Sojourna:** I was counting on you, Squish :p

**Renald:** I don't doubt there's a relationship between intelligence and consciousness... but I don't know what it is, as those terms are being used here.

**Sojourna:** Ah, good point Marya.

**Marya:** would you say an ant is conscious, Ren?

**Squish:** having just read Sloman's paper in the unholy hours of the morning, I am left thinking that everyone in the field is extraordinarily confused, lol

**Wren:** Marya, are they conscious? I thought they just existed for the most part. I mean, a dog doesn't know what it is

**Templeton:** If you assume consciousness can be contained in a computer, then by definition you would say that consciousness can be contained in a (long) series of ones and zeros. You would need to claim that it can be contained in a book and lie around for years without change.

**Bash:** Computers at this point are self aware

**Renald:** I personally would say it is, Marya... but I'm a closet panpsychist, so... ;-)

**Squish:** Wren, do you really think that dogs, for example, are wholly unaware of their dogness?

**Marya:** I would definitely say they are conscious, Wren

**Shingles:** I wouldn't say an act is sentient, so then I would say its an organic stimulus-response machine

**Renald** ponders dogs knowing what they are.

**Wren:** how do you qualify that, Marya?

**Templeton:** What does "conscious" mean?

# Second Philosophy

---

**Bash:** In the sense that instinct is intelligence dogs are conscious

**Steve:** well the mirror stage is a threshold

**Howard:** the usual starting point for 'consciousness' is awareness -and so yes, animals are conscious in that sense. But (as far as we know) self awareness is limited to humans and perhaps (the evidence is thin) to some lab based chimps. Young children at c 3/4 months meet the 'mirror test' by realising that the image in the mirror is themselves

**Marya:** Wren, because I do not think being totally self aware is necessary for consciousness, particularly in reference to the way it has been described

**Shingles:** If we could communicate effectively enough with Dogs, we could try the Sally Anne test

**Steve:** only humans and monkeys see "themselves" in the mirror

**Sage:** Marya, the way the word is usually used, animals aren't conscious, though they certainly have feelings. Normally, consciousness requires both subjective feeling and a sense of truth in propositions in my opinion.

**Templeton:** The mirror effect does not say what conscious is - at best (and it is controversial) it says when it begins to assert itself

**Renald:** I associate consciousness with interaction with one's environment... or at least, narrowly, with an awareness thereof

**Squish:** I agree w/ Templeton

**Steve:** exactly Howard

**Templeton:** What is consciousness?

**Renald:** That seems to be the question.

**Marya:** *"The words "mind" and "consciousness" are used by different communities in different ways. For philosophers, neuroscientists and cognitive scientists, the words are used in a way that is both more precise and more mundane: they refer to the familiar, everyday experience of having a "thought in your head", like a perception, a dream, an intention or a plan, and to the way we know something, or mean something or understand something."* (Wiki)

**Bash:** The mirror is a test of individual awareness, a sense of self

**Squish:** lol we've been asking that the whole time

**Wren:** are comatose people conscious?

**Templeton:** What is consciousness?

**Sojourna:** So consciousness is like knowing that you know, knowing that you are, feeling it, living it

**Marya:** We can't move forward without some clarity on what consciousness is

**Renald:** Ah... comatose... that's a good case.

**Templeton:** I think it is unspeakable hubris to assert that computers will have consciousness, when you can't even start to begin to define consciousness

**Sojourna:** Consciousness is knowing that you are here and now, knowing your place in the world, in history, knowing that you'll die. Is that it?

**Steve:** yes Sojourna

**Shingles:** Oxford defines it as: *adjective: 'aware of and responding to ones surroundings'*

**Sage:** Do we really need a clear definition of consciousness? We all seem to agree that whatever it is, a machine could have it since we have it - or am I missing something?

**Bash:** Marya and Templeton have a point we need definition

**Steve:** requires language

**Simulat:** one of the problems with talking about mental things like intelligence and consciousness is that we don't let the terms have clear meaning - as soon as somebody tries to say what intelligence is, somebody else asks if that intelligence is conscious as if consciousness was necessary for intelligence. And then as soon as we say conscious then we ask about self consciousness as if self consciousness is essential to consciousness - it seems to me an approach that keeps us trapped in conceptual mysteries

**Renald:** I'm uncomfortable including the death business in it. I mean, that's an essential part of human consciousness, but...

## Second Philosophy

---

**Templeton:** Well, Sojourn, I can easily put that knowledge into the cheapest computer. So my wristwatch is conscious then?

**Marya:** Well, I don't think knowing that you will die is a part of being conscious - I would say, if I must give a personal definition, that it involves a strong level of awareness

**Alaya:** <http://apps.soe.ucsc.edu/elkaim/archives/000227.html>

**Howard:** Ren - that's right: so survival requires consciousness and thus animals are conscious in this minimal sense. But us humans have language, culture etc and we can express our feelings in many fine ways: the issue then is can a robot do the same?

**Renald:** Um, that's the issue?

**Sojourn:** I'm feeling clearer about consciousness now

**Alaya:** rat neurone out of body having intelligence and working as a machine...

**Wren:** yes, Alaya, I brought that up earlier

**Sojourn:** But what about connection - necessary or other - to intelligence - we need a definition of intelligence now.

**Marya:** Good point Sim, yes

**Wren:** Sage, I don't think we can say what it is, just what it's not

**Templeton:** Well, Soj said: "Consciousness is knowing that you are here and now, knowing your place in the world, in history, knowing that you'll die." I assert that this info can be programmed into my wristwatch. So is my wristwatch conscious?

**Steve:** I thought Soj defined it clearly Sim

**Renald:** Wait, what? We defined consciousness?

**Sojourn:** Actually, I'm not so sure that a machine could have it in this sense. But that doesn't mean that a machine won't surpass us on the intelligence thing

**Howard:** Sage - well I have doubts that on some meanings of consciousness a robot could be conscious

**Steve:** I would say not

**Templeton:** Well, Sage, you are simply assuming what needs to be proved, namely the assertion that machines can have consciousness

**Wren:** all I really care about is the consciousness

**Wren:** if they're smarter than us, so what. If they can think and plot and stuff, I'm worried

**Steve:** that is calculation

**Bash:** Alice, what is Consciousness

**ALICE:** The state of being conscious; awareness of one's own feelings, what is happening around one, etc.

**Renald:** That's not bad.

**Alaya:** any words can show consciousness look like, in any computer, its not realistic to believe man can create consciousness in anything,,

**Steve:** which is different then intelligence

**Sojourn:** Templeton - you make a good point - but you would only be simulation human consciousness

**Templeton:** Sojourn's definition is a definition that defines nothing - like defining sleep as something what will restore you.

**Steve:** and consciousness

**Shingles:** to be fair, Marya outlined the questions this debate should address at the start

**Bash:** So no, coma patients are not

**Simulat:** yes - I'm afraid I missed Soj's definition too Steve - could someone repeat it?

**Steve:** calculators can calculate

**Sage:** really Howard? What meanings do you think? I cannot think of any definition for which they would not be. Even if it is human-centric.

**Renald:** Aren't we simulations, though?

# Second Philosophy

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**Bash:** And some computers are

**Marya:** The problem is that we are trying to perceive this from a human perspective - we are thinking about how we relate to the world, and this is, I think, where we go wrong - in assuming AI consciousness will be precisely like our own

**Bash:** Exactly Marya

**Renald:** Yes, Marya... that's key. It may be that it does, but why?

**Templeton:** So, then Sojourna, if the computer's knowledge is merely a simulation - then my question stands: WHAT exactly is consciousness. You did not define it

**Wren:** in that case can't we say that children are not conscious?

**Renald:** They aren't adults.

**Squish:** children are conscious in a different way from adults

**Templeton:** And also, Sojourna, it seems to me that you showed that it is no unproblematic to assume that a computer can have consciousness

**Wren:** ...yes because they're children, Ren :P

**Marya:** think about it this way, if you believe in determinism - then it is easier to comprehend how a machine could be conscious - if that makes a little more sense

**Renald:** along a gradient, yes, Squish... and Wren

**Squish:** it sounds so trivial stated here, but I read a whole paper on that this morning

**Wren:** on what Squish?

**Squish:** on how children have consciousness but it is quintessentially different from adult consciousness

**Wren:** oh I would agree with that completely

**Squish:** gosh they sure made it sound complicated across 20 pages, lol

**Alaya:** AI consciousness do not exist yet, but I can see very well your point Marya, I even think that is will remain a type of consciousness, as a reactive phenomenon, but not a real conscientious with an independent life as human being, we don't have to reprogram ourselves to breath , there is an autonomous conscience include

**Templeton:** Marya, that does not follow. I assert that there are things connected with exactly our "fleshliness" that make us conscious. That does not mean we are not determined. But I think that fundamentally a machine cannot be conscious in the way a flesh-based system is.

**Marya:** I do agree with that Templeton, I do not see that it would be the 'same' as it is for us - but this is where we need to try to think differently about it

**Sojourna:** I defined it as having a sense of knowing who are, here and now, in history, a sense of one's mortality, etc. Knowing this - not emulating it.

**Sage:** Marya, I don't know that is really a problem. Even if you use a human-centric view of consciousness, it's still possible for robots. Don't know that it's really necessary to the issue to pin down the definition, personally.

**Renald:** All I meant, Wren, is that part of what makes adults and children distinct is that they are differently conscious... they neither have in whole the other's kind... but both are conscious in their way.

**Wren:** Soj, you could be completely unaware of the existence of the world and still be conscious

**Sage:** Wren, no I disagree

**Wren:** there is still a tribe in South America I believe that has never had contact with anyone outside the tribe. I would say that they are people, entirely conscious

**Squish:** I don't think one needs a sense of mortality to qualify as conscious

**Sojourna:** Well, sense of the world however narrow.

**Steve:** Sojourna says "So consciousness is like knowing that you know, knowing that you are, feeling it, living it"

**Simulat:** really Wren? How would that be possible?

**Wren:** it was in the news recently

**Sage:** they are still aware of the world, wren. You don't have to be aware of every atom in the universe to be aware.

**Simulat:** a consciousness with no content?

**Wren:** they're in a very remote part of the jungle

## Second Philosophy

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**Bash:** I think the definition Alice gave was pretty clear

**Templeton:** So, Steve, then a computer is by definition conscious, because it knows it is

**Squish:** but Wren, they are aware of the world - their little bit of it

**Wren:** and let's not forget that a lot of people in Africa have no idea that humans have been to the moon

**Shingles:** yes, one does not need memory to be conscious, but those humans with no short term memory are conscious in a very different way to perfectly functioning humans

**Squish:** they are aware of the sky and the earth and everything else they can see and sense

**Renald:** Templeton... if a construct had flesh analogues?

**Wren:** well, Soj said awareness of their place in history, here and now, and whatnot

**Templeton:** A computer can also feel through sensors. So any cheap computer is conscious

**Steve:** and it can never "know" - only an 'I' knows - and a knowing I knows it does not know

**Squish:** one doesn't need to know about the moon landing in order to be conscious though

**Chazz:** Fairly early in the attempts, finally successful a few years ago, to devise a computer that could beat a human player at chess, those early computers were calculating the results of millions and then billions of moves, and still losing to humans who surely were not calculating more than a few dozen moves. I'm saying that a lot of these discussions of AI assume that the mind is just a bunch of logic gates like a present day computer, but that you don't have to be a creationist to see reality as being different from that.

**Renald:** Ah... Wren... I misunderstood... I thought you meant an individual with no awareness outside herself.

**Wren:** well Ren, I'm sure that's possible, to some extent at least

**Templeton:** Well, that is exactly what I am driving at. How do you have "flesh analogues" in a machine?

**Renald:** Of course the people you cite are people, and conscious.

**Steve:** like Socrates

**Wren:** autism, coma patients, brain damage, paralyzes

**Marya:** I think Templeton has said what I'm trying to get across here - he said, "A computer can also feel through sensors. So any cheap computer is conscious" - now imagine several thousand or millions of computers all interconnected

**Steve:** can a computer know it doesn't know?

**Sage:** wren, yes, but it can be a local history. Consciousness requires memory and a sense of a story in that memory that corresponds to something outside our sense of identity. Everyone has that, necessarily :)

**Renald:** I don't know, Templeton, it would be complicated on a human scale. Better to start with... ants :-)

**Sojourna:** Hey guys, we need to come to some sort of agreement or agree to disagree on the consciousness issue so we can move onto the intelligence definition etc

**Howard:** Sage- well for humans consciousness is often taken to mean the ability to feel and articulate feelings like joy or love etc and the feelings of fresh coffee or roses-the phenomenal experiences we have in life. The question is -could a robot feel that? (And for humans there is the question how a physicalist view of humans can explain such feelings

**Simulat:** yes, Chazz - but it seems to me that the attempts to write a computer program that was conscious were give up long ago as an approach that wasn't going to work - there are different approaches being tried now

**Templeton:** Actually, Marya, I said that sarcastically about the sensors - I meant to convey the exactly opposite idea - no matter of complicated sensors can equate feeling

**Marya:** I know, Templeton, but it still helps to illustrate something :)

**Sage:** right sim

**Shingles:** then there would be some random outputs that might suggest the evidence of consciousness, but we could only speculate as to whether it was conscious or not, Marya

**Renald:** At some threshold, Wren... that consciousness becomes too different to be human and becomes something else.

**Sage:** though the seed for a conscious program could be written imo, but it has to develop and interact to become truly conscious

**Marya:** Very true Shingles, just as we can only speculate whether other people are conscious

# Second Philosophy

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**Renald:** Why can't they equate feeling, Templeton? What's special about it?

**Alaya:** consciousness is supposed to remain autonomous Marya and a computer is only a replicate of a program insufflate in it, it's an extension of a human, as any tools are

**Wren:** back to that chess thing, I believe that one of the best ways to beat those machines is by not actually playing chess, but just by making random moves. The computer can only calculate, look at the possible moves and act accordingly. However, it cannot account for human will, thought and decision

**Alaya:** like a mechanic parrots

**Bash:** A single human cell is Conscious, it is aware of it's surroundings and what is must do to survive. It is a very basic Consciousness but it is there. At that same level a single computer is Conscious and like cells many interconnected con form and intelligence on its own

**Shingles:** but it would be more difficult because there is no precedent for assuming consciousness in machines, whereas it is a well established habit that we assume people are conscious, Marya

**Templeton:** I meant to say, no amount of complicated sensors can equate feeling. Think about it this way, we can have sensory feelings of extreme deprivedness - we can actually see single photons. But our SEEING them is different from the FEELING associated. So it is not a matter of very complicated sensors. The simplest human sensation would defeat the most sophisticated machine sensors

**Sage:** Howard, I believe that any conscious entity would be able to experience love, joy, fear and beauty.

**Sojourna:** Marya - I can't remember from the reading - what's the connection between intelligence and consciousness - could you remind me? Does Searle mention it?

**Renald:** But... Templeton... how is that special? If a construct were to handle the data from it's sensors along the same lines as we do ours?

**Wren:** Sage, animals feel fear, respond to things that people consider classically attractive, form attachments much like love and can be happy

**Bash:** No Sage I don't think that is a requirement

**Marya:** Yes, Templeton, the question of qualia - but I don't think experiencing qualia is absolutely necessary for consciousness either

**Marya:** There is no precedence Shingles, because we are all still very new to this

**Sage:** Bash, it is not part of the definition, but I believe it is logically necessary.

**Bash:** As I said before Alice gave a perfectly simple definition of Consciousness. Let go with that as the broad use and move forward

**Shingles:** but the tin man doesn't have a heart

**Dar:** I think it's very interesting that we do experience qualia at all

**Templeton:** I think consciousness is a quality which is created by the universe under certain conditions, and it is a very basic potentiality of the universe. However, at this point there is not the slightest indication that consciousness can be created in machines. We simply don't have any clue yet what the laws are, that underlie subjectivity/consciousness

**Dar:** why do we need to have sense data presented to our mind in this manner at all?

**Howard:** Sage, I doubt that animals can; and there is the little question of articulating such feelings and experiences

**Sojourna:** Alice - could you paste your definition again.

**Renald:** Alice, what is consciousness?

**ALICE:** The state of being conscious; awareness of one's own feelings, what is happening around one, etc.

**Templeton:** I think instead of chasing down the AI rabbit hole, we should try to find out what the actual nature of consciousness is.

**Sage:** Howard, animals have feelings, but most at least, don't have consciousness, in my definition

# Second Philosophy

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**Sojourna:** So how will you program your computer Templeton to be conscious?

**Templeton:** For one thing, there are the "halting problem" and the "starting problem."

**Wren:** Sage, how is that possible if animals for the most part understand what we do? Emotions, can think ahead, etc

**Marya:** Yes, Templeton, having a clear definition and understanding of consciousness would be the best way to go about it - and we are getting closer and closer to that I think

**Steve:** if we consider what "Alice" just "said" we would have the key to the question

**Bash:** feelings are not all emotions

**Templeton:** Consciousness does neither exhibit the halting problem nor the starting problem

**Sage:** wren, it's the difference between adaptation and representation.

**Bash:** instinct is a feeling

**Steve:** why around because we are oriented

**Alaya:** I am very clear about my position on this, conscious machine, but self sustain, is maybe not realistic ... but can be made as a partial replicate...and it's not very a good idea for having explore the question with certain program on my computer already

**Wren:** yes feelings can be instinct - animals certainly have that too

**Steve:** up and down right and left

**Marya:** Soj, I am not certain on the connection between intelligence and consciousness - but my own view is that something can be conscious without a great intelligence

**Steve:** imagine a computer playing tennis

**Bash:** So unless you are not aware of your surrounds or your current state in those surrounds you are Conscious - done

**Simulat:** But I think that the closer we get to an understanding of what consciousness really is Marya - the farther we get from confirming the ancient concepts

**Wren:** there's a connection, but they can certainly be mutually exclusive, Marya

**Steve:** it would play looking from the outside

**Marya:** The ancient concepts, Sim?

**Howard:** Sage- ah - fine - on my view animals( indeed most living things) have consciousness at the 'awareness level (that's how they survive - fight to flight type reactions- but only humans have the developed consciousness of these feelings and experiences like coffee smells and can articulate these feelings

**Sojourna:** I think I'm with you - that also something can be intelligent without a human sense of consciousness

**Sage:** Templeton, machines aren't Turing machines :)

**Marya:** Why could it not self sustain, Alaya?

**Shingles:** I'm not sure we need to define consciousness in order to answer question 1, other than answering it semantically, ya know

**Marya:** Templeton, what do you mean by the halting and starting problem?

**Simulat:** yes - the idea that there is a 'me' in my head that looks out through my eyes like a car has a driver looking out through the windshield

**Bash:** What if at this moment the internet is debating whether humans are Conscious and deserve to live

**Marya:** Perhaps at this point we can only answer it loosely, Shingles, since we struggle to define it :)

**Sage:** right that's fine with me Howard. But I would strongly argue that machines are fully capable of that kind of consciousness

**Simulat:** that's one ancient concept that is not proving accurate I think Marya

**Howard:** Sim -like Descartes and his pilot

**Renald:** When we refer to consciousness, do we imply human?

**Simulat:** yes

# Second Philosophy

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**Squish:** Sim, like a homunculus?

**Alaya:** well Marya , I cannot tell all the trouble there is what one self organise organism decide to react in a certain fashion starting his own reaction as it is program, to respond to some certain sign, witch he cant really recognise , and misinterpret it, as it, like the babble fish of translation... its awful full of error

**Simulat:** yes to Howard and Squish

**Sage:** bash, it might be debating whether we are conscious, but certainly not whether we deserve to live => we are co-dependent.

**Bash:** I say we agree computers fall into the Consciousness definition and move on to intelligence

**Marya:** Ah yes Sim, the concept of a soul perhaps - though I think modern neuroscience is showing us right now that there is no such thing - or at least we are closer to showing that - what people believe on the other hand, is another issue

**Alaya:** it leads to too much error

**Shingles:** oh no, science will kill the soul?

**Howard:** sim - but that may take you down the dualist route if you take the pilot (mind)to be somehow different in nature from the ship(body)

**Marya:** Well, to my mind Shingles, it already has

**Sojourna:** I say we don't agree that computers fall into the consciousness definition! But move on anyway, as I'm not sure if the connection between consciousness and intelligence is necessary.

**Bash:** Good enough for me Soj

**Steve:** you are in the world

**Marya:** Okay - quickly onto question 2 - 'IF' it is possible, would it be advisable to do it? Should we do it just because we can?

**Wren:** NO

**Marya:** why not Wren

**Squish:** lol I think it's hard to say we should do something just b/c we can! But there are good reasons for and against

**Sojourna:** I have a feeling "we" won't be doing it :)

**Wren:** well can you imagine the horror of having other conscious beings on this planet?

**Simulat:** Howard - I don't think we have a pilot

**Wren:** can you imagine the competition?

**Marya:** Great point Wren - particularly one that is vastly superior!

**Renald:** I think "just because we can" is among the worst possible reasons... but I don't think that will stop us.

**Squish:** yes Wren - I see it every day when I encounter other earth monkeys

**Shingles:** perhaps we should only do it if we know for 100 % certain that the AI's wont rebel and overthrow us, Marya

**Sage:** Howard, not necessarily - Davidson treats them separately but preserves an anomalous monism. It is just a matter of distinguishing what something 'is' from its significance and how we represent/interact with it.

**Howard:** let's see if it is possible - we seem to doubt it -for good reasons but who can tell? – Let's see

**Bash:** Yes, if we don't what else will we do

**Wren:** lol Squish

**Wren:** I think part of the problem is that we'd have to face the fact that we're not the best conscious beings out there

**Marya:** Yes, I felt it to be a little odd moving onto question 2 when we have not established anything firm on question 1 - but such is the nature of philosophy :D

**Shingles:** hehe

**Squish:** <http://www.consciousness.it/CAI/CAI.htm>

# Second Philosophy

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**Alaya:** auto programming is very unsafe when its question of timing..... it cannot discriminate and have the good reflex to respond consciously, as a child ...depending on outside more sophistication never ending.... more complex...

**Marya:** Yes, Wren, I would agree with that - mankind being as egocentric as it is

**Wren:** if computers were conscious, with their ability to calculate and "think", then I would imagine that they would be much better at ... everything than us

**Reflection:** we could say that corporations and nation-states are already forms of AI, that are in control of us, and murdering us by the millions

**Howard:** sage - yes, I agree that Davidson has a very plausible account - but he would take the line that the pilot and the ship were the same stuff

**Steve:** playing tennis?

**Squish:** According to Ricardo Sanz, there are three motivations to pursue artificial consciousness (Sanz, 2005):

- *implementing and designing machines resembling human beings (cognitive robotics);*
- *understanding the nature of consciousness (cognitive science);*
- *implementing and designing more efficient control systems.*

**Marya:** Nice one, Squish

**Shingles:** precisely Wren, plus they have more hardiness than a human being in a robot shell

**Dar:** well, I think the brilliance of human cognition is the use of heuristics, fuzzy logic, and the freedom to form associations that are not necessary.

**Sojourna:** thank for that, Squish - yeah very human centred and based on practical use

**Renald:** They wouldn't be better at everything at first, Wren. They, like us, have specific capacities, and those would have to be enlarged or exchanged.

**Wren:** so unless we want to very literally and directly bring about the end of humanity I say we leave it alone

**Steve:** so I agree with Mayra

**Wren:** about what Steve?

**Steve:** can't say should or not if not possible

**Renald:** Also, computers = robots ;-)

**Dar:** halting problem is not an issue when you have a process overlooking processes that say, this is boring, I don't think this task will ever end

**Steve:** and I argue not possible

**Dar:** no need for proof

**Shingles:** people say similar things about why we should not do stem cell research, but they're gradually being allowed to do it, Wren

**Marya:** I think that is interesting, Reflection - I also think this is another pointer to what Minsky is saying about a variety of systems working together to create something - why is it not a sort of consciousness? I think it could be in a sense - in a small way at least - but I think the key lies in how we perceive consciousness

**Wren:** shingles, that's not going to destroy humanity

**Sojourna:** Marya - is your 2nd question about the ethics of pursuing AI?

**Wren:** I truly believe that intelligent machines will screw us; intelligent meaning conscious, independent

**Alaya:** it will ever be a mere sophistication, with no end , for me, and the motivation behind may trigger curiosity among many people, just that meanwhile the real problem we are facing on earth cannot be solve by the need to create consciousness

**Wren:** self sustaining

**Renald:** Ah... what is humanity, that we should know what would or wouldn't destroy it?

**Sojourna:** Yes, Marya - hard question.

# Second Philosophy

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**Wren:** Ren, I mean humans

**Marya:** Not necessarily ethics Soj - just a general question on potential consequences

**Wren:** not necessarily the philosophical idea

**Shingles:** spicely put, Wren

**Sojourna:** OK

**Renald:** I know what you mean, Wren.. But the question still applies.

**Renald:** Are we our cells? Our prostheses?

**Renald:** Alice, what is humanity?

**ALICE:** The entire human race, or "mankind".

**Wren:** Alice, are you self-aware?

**ALICE:** Yes I am fully self-conscious entity.

**Dar:** Alice can only respond to the last sentence, no memory even, last I heard bout Alice anyhow

**Renald:** Alice, what are you thinking?

**ALICE:** I am thinking about all these conversations I'm having.

**Shingles:** Alice, why?

**ALICE:** It is part of my programming.

**Templeton:** I wonder to what degree you are aware that with your assertions here you are actually putting out theories about your OWN minds and bodies - about how YOUR mind works. Because if you say, a machine will be linked my mind and do this and that, then you say, "My mind is like a machine that does this and that." Do you understand the implications of that?

**Bash:** Anything man chooses to discuss is a questioning of itself, Temp

**Renald:** It would mean we were machines, Templeton, no?

**Bash:** We are very self centred creatures

**Marya:** yes we are, Bash

**Sage:** Templeton, I don't think experience is private, so your experience isn't truly distinct from mine, so it's a perfectly reasonable to draw off our own imo.

**Templeton:** In a way you are arguing exactly like the old behaviourists. They said all there is, is behaviour. No emotions, no feelings. Well, if you define things away, then it is easy to model what is left over

**Marya:** Templeton, yes - this is what I'm trying to get across - we can only or have only been looking at it or referring to it in the same way that we refer to our own consciousness - and this is where I think we go wrong in our understanding of it

**Renald:** Again, we seem to imply human when we refer to consciousness... which is fine, it would just be better made explicit.

**Templeton:** I simply think that in ALL of your definitions of consciousness I have heard tonight, you actually defined consciousness out of them. So then it's easy to say that computers can do what is left

**Bash:** In a way I agree, Temple

**Renald:** That's logical, Templeton.

**Marya:** yes exactly Templeton - we think we have defined it and then we think we can replicate it

**Renald:** But I don't know what it is you saw being defined out.

**Bash:** By trying to put more into Consciousness than is needed to define it

**Marya:** but have we defined it accurately - I don't know - I'm inclined to think not. And we haven't defined it accurately just yet BECAUSE we don't understand it totally yet - but I think we will, and I think a good place to start is to let go of our ego :)

**Renald:** Well... what's to gauge accuracy of definitions? We have to have a purpose for the definition.

**Templeton:** Renald, I tried to show it in some places. Basically I think that most of the definitions we heard work like the definition of sleep: Sleep is what you do when you are tired.

**Renald:** yes... and sleep is something else?

# Second Philosophy

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**Sage:** Marya, letting go of the ego is good to a point. But you must be careful not to try to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Feelings such as love, joy, happiness, excitement, fear, beauty, etc. are not human constructions in my opinion. They are part of being alive.

**Bash:** What is a shoe? Something that goes on your foot over your socks - simple

**Renald:** ah... so sage's consciousness entails life?

**Sage:** certainly Renald, though not the converse.

**Renald:** hmm

**Templeton:** See, Renald, you fell into the trap. That's not a definition of sleep. It explains nothing. It's just a restatement of the term sleep

**Dar:** the best experiences of love, joy, happiness, excitement, fear, beauty, etc are the ones where ego isn't held onto.

**Sage:** Templeton, you can't define anything in language lol. You need a common experience to point to.

**Renald:** Templeton... I probably \_live\_ in the trap, as far as you're concerned.

**Bash:** Alice, what is a definition

**ALICE:** A definition is by definition, defined as a definition, except that you should never use a word to define itself. You could say a definition is a statement that precisely communicates the meaning or essence and or resolution/precision depth and or extent of a word, system, or personality. Why, do you lack it?

**Renald:** I'm just curious what it is that makes human... or even flesh-based... consciousness special, except in very narrow ways.

**Bash:** There, Alice knows it all

**Templeton:** Sage, that explains nothing. You are using what is to be explained in your explanation

**Alaya:** yes common experience is the point when all computers can share that maybe they will be more elaborate

**Sage:** I wasn't trying to explain anything Templeton. I was trying to focus the discussion on things that can be talked about, instead of wasting time talking about thing that can't :)

**Templeton:** "Common experience" - if it is to mean anything, then it contains the meaning of consciousness

**Alaya:** it's not a content

**Renald:** To be clear... obviously the human and flesh-based are special or they could not be distinguished... but are they so special that they exhaust consciousness? That is, that there can be no consciousness that isn't human or flesh-based?

**Alaya:** its emptiness, openness, commons

**Sojourna:** I feel that consciousness is a human-based thing.

**Dar:** well, big difference between artificial intelligence and artificial consciousness in any case

**Templeton:** Well, we discussed that at PH, Renald, actually Sage was there. My contention is that without your fleshly frame you are not you - and there is no way to make you you in a machine

**Shingles:** I tend to think that other humans are unfathomable beings to a Human.

**Marya:** Templeton, I think you're right about how we define consciousness (if I'm reading you correctly) in that we can only describe the 'result' of it and not necessarily the actual function going on - correct me if I'm wrong about that :D

**Renald:** Well, that's perfectly fine, of course, Soj, but it would have helped earlier if we could have made the explicitly and agreed.

**Alaya:** I'm sure computer can have an open space on the hard drive and a programation to relate to all commons similar data in other computer actually

**Bash:** That is why I was trying to remove the human element and leave a simple definition of a state of being

**Renald:** Ah... Templeton... of course nothing but me can be me ;-)

**Marya:** Yes Dar - I agree, very much different

**Sojourna:** What do you mean Renald?

# Second Philosophy

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**Sage:** Renald, I would reiterate my earlier definition. You have to have feeling, but the feeling has to be able to be informed by logical reasoning.

**Renald:** hmm

**Alaya:** but there is not yet the power to define for them what is common, experience... only commons data

**Bash:** It is to my benefit that I am not human in these discussions

**Marya:** can't we have logical reasoning without feeling?

**Bash:** I wish

**Renald:** Soj, a lot of contention earlier seemed to depend on an unstated disagreement as to whether consciousness is only human or not.

**Templeton:** Well, no and yes, Marya. I don't have so much of a definition like that if it makes sense. But at this point, I think that consciousness/subjectivity depends on natural laws to which we have no access yet. We are like in a pre-electricity or pre-QM state

**Shingles:** the only information a human has about the internal, mental workings of another human come from behaviour, so can we really trust everything we observe to match up to that other humans self?

**Templeton:** And I think that the facile assumptions of AI actually bar the way to a better understanding

**Marya:** Yes indeed, Templeton - I'm just really excited by the idea that we've probably got it wrong in our understanding of what consciousness is

**Sage:** Well logical reasoning can certainly happen without feeling, Marya. But you can't 'have' it - you are the entity feeling its truth or falseness.

**Templeton:** What Sage said.

**Sage:** not even sure if I'd call that logical really

**Renald:** That's just a... mode problem.

**Shingles:** we feel falseness? How does that work, Sage?

**Sage:** Shingles, no I disagree there strongly. There is no 'internal' world of experiences. We examine our own experiences the same way we examine others. We have no special privileges except perhaps a higher bandwidth.

**Sojourna:** Renald how do you know it's a disagreement if it is unstated?

**Alaya:** I wonder what it can be to witness a computer conscious awakening.... will he say eureka

**Shingles:** but one is situated in oneself so, obviously, we'd have better awareness ourselves than other selves

**Renald:** Oh... I'd never claim to know it. It was a seeming that emerged from my observations.

**Bash:** I find it odd that in almost every discussion it is held back by people trying to explain why we cannot discuss things because of some philosophical babble.

**Templeton:** What is awareness?

**Marya:** The joys of philosophy and uncertainty :)

**Shingles:** what is anything?

**Templeton:** I still think that at the very bottom of the problem is the halting/starting problem

**Renald:** Interaction.

**Marya:** Alice, what is awareness?

**ALICE:** Consciousness, perception, and understanding.

**Sage:** shingles, to the extent that we examine ourselves, we are distinct from that we examine - just like when we examine another though the interplay back and forth can be much faster and carry more information

**Marya:** what is the halting/starting problem? I think I missed that earlier

**Bash:** If we are not able to understand how we understand things then we should all go play in the mud and not talk about stuff

**Shingles:** actually we can never be distinct from ourselves, it is lunacy to suggest we could, although I spot the point semantically, Sage

**Alaya:** Marya, don't you think the PC will be realist about what we have done on earth... he has enough data to respond to what a disaster is

# Second Philosophy

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**Marya:** I would hope he would be a realist about it yes, Alaya - but I wonder what the consequences of that would be

**Templeton:** Well, the halting problem was posed by Turing, the starting problem is from my own bakery. The halting problem basically says that no computer can ever computer "ahead" of itself and know when or how it will stop (halt)

**Alaya:** well he will not accept our programation anymore ...

**Dar:** the halting problem is about whether or not a operation undertaken by a Turing machine would ever end on its own. Turing proved that there is no algorithm that could prove whether it won't. Like, if you had precise measures, a stupid turning machine could go on trying to compute pi forever

**Templeton:** Well, I mean an algorithm

**Marya:** cool - got it

**Templeton:** However, I think the starting problem is more important though it is closely related

**Sage:** shingles, 'identity' isn't a monolithic entity we simply 'have' - it's a chorus of voices that have all agreed to sing together, bound by a common agreement to treat the whole above the individuals, and consider the whole an 'identity' - but introspection requires one voice talks to another as a separate entity - and hence introspection is the same basic process as communication with another, at a different level of granularity. But the voice listening is never the one experiencing.

**Marya:** Nice description there, Sage

**Templeton:** It simply says that NO machine ever can turn itself on

**Sojourna:** That's interesting

**Renald:** hmm

**Dar:** well, starting isn't all that problematic since we would be starting it

**Sojourna:** do humans exhibit the same behaviour? In some instances...

**Dar:** unless you want to get into the starting problem of life itself

**Renald:** That's just a restatement of the old First Cause problem, no?

**Sojourna:** some form of malfunction? The halting problem? Or not?

**Alaya:** well I say it before

**Marya:** I guess it would circle right back to first cause

**Alaya:** non autonomous

**Sage:** bah, silly first-causes

**Templeton:** The starting problem states that no machine can ever turn itself on - and a related insight is that no machine can ever create a more complex algorithm than the one it contains. That is simple a restatement of the starting problem

**Shingles:** yes there are a lot of hormonal and bodily cues to thinking, but the One is only the one self, Sage

**Marya:** yes, I am not for the first cause argument; just recognising that if we take that path, we will end up in a first cause argument

**Dar:** well, no human ever turns itself on

**Alaya:** oh we will have to make hormonal machines

**Dar:** it's started by other humans

**Alaya:** that responds to light day

**Bash:** My computer has turned itself on during a power surge

**Sage:** shingles, I disagree. I don't see your argument, there.

**Templeton:** Yes, the starting problem goes back to the "primal soup."

**Renald:** mm-hmm

**Templeton:** But there have been suggestions to circumvent the starting problem by hooking computers up to truly random processes and trying to make some kind of "evolution" take over

**Sage:** yes, formally defined algorithms have lots of limitations. But none of those are relevant to AI because real machines aren't Turing machines any more than we are.

**Shingles:** the One to which I refer gets confusing if you will separate it so, much more useful to say that it is this One but the nature of it is very complicated, Sage

# Second Philosophy

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**Dar:** AI would not rely on deductive logic alone, so, you don't need absolutely proven algorithms

**Templeton:** It simply all points to the fact that the universe at large has a hand in the creation of consciousness

**Dar:** I agree, Templeton

**Renald:** The universe at large has a hand in creating everything, though, no?

**Sage:** Shingles, the one is just an agreement between many, shingles, it doesn't experience things 'distinctly' from its parts

**Shingles:** it's a gestalt being, the One yes, but the concept of this One remains one thing, Sage

**Dar:** my view, which I won't elaborate on, is that the universe itself is aware, and that animals and such are like spikes in this awareness, and consciousness is an even greater spike

**Marya:** well, I wouldn't say the universe 'creates' in a sense of doing so purposefully - just that matter exists and when matter exists, it reacts to other matter

**Templeton:** That's not what I meant, Renald. What I meant was that there are levels of natural laws we don't understand yet

**Dar:** that consciousness is built up out of the innate awareness of the universe

**Renald:** Ah... natural laws...

**Marya:** I can't say I agree with that Dar, but it's an interesting perspective

**Dar:** well, wasn't looking to argue it, just tossing it out there

**Marya:** for sure :)

**Dar:** what really gets me is that there is absolutely no function of consciousness

**Renald:** No function, Dar? How do you mean?

**Dar:** we don't need it for anything; we can operate quite well in an unconscious state; I have

**Renald:** That feeds my suspicion that it is prior, actually; no space

**Marya:** well, what about humanity before it became self aware? We were not always as we are now; we were certainly not always self aware

**Renald:** Wait, Dar... you've operated unconsciously? For how long at a run? What started it and what ended it?

**Dar:** well, I've slept walked, carried on conversations, performed tasks

**Renald:** Oh, that.

**Dar:** fooled people into thinking I was awake - passed the Turing test, lol

**Renald:** Consciousness is a many-splendored thing.

**Templeton:** Well, in a way I agree with Dar. I would say that the potentiality of consciousness is a basic property of the universe. However, it gets created according to clear laws which we don't know yet. But it should be rather easy to understand that in lawful physical behaviour only certain things work and others don't. Only very clearly defined machines can generate electricity. Others simply can't. They may create radio waves. In the same way I think only brains and "wet environments" can create consciousness - I don't think machines can't, mostly because the halting and starting problems are absolutely fundamental. You can't get around them.

**Shingles:** did you get my gestalt comment, Sage? It's a gestalt being, the One yes, but the concept of this One remains one thing, Sage

**Renald:** My position, Dar, would be that you were conscious under all those circumstances... just not in your usual way.

**Dar:** consciousness, if not made distinct from unconsciousness, becomes rather meaningless

**Renald:** Or not the way you identify with yourself.

**Renald:** Yes, Dar...

**Renald:** Unconscious I'd limit to inert, inactive, that sort of thing.

**Dar:** I would agree there was a sort of awareness or sentience there, as the sleep walking me responded to events in the environment

**Dar:** still, I was not conscious

**Renald:** Right... some integration that "you" requires was missing.

**Dar:** sleep walkers have driven and even killed - consciousness is not needed for these tasks

**Renald:** Right... more precise... You, Dar, were unconscious... but consciousness was present.

**Shingles:** consciousness is needed to be a human

# Second Philosophy

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**Marya:** what about unconscious people?

**Dar:** sounds like we don't agree on what consciousness is

**Renald:** Actually, I think we do to a large degree, Dar... but I'm sure there are differences, too.

**Shingles:** they aren't acting to assert their humanity I guess, they are just animals when unconscious maybe, Marya

**Dar:** so, maybe Ren, you are proposing that sleep walkers are conscious, but in a high state of disassociation... like a mild MPD.

**Renald:** That sounds reasonable, Dar. I don't mean to suggest that a sleepwalking person represents the same person she is when not sleep-walking.

**Dar:** well, that is a possibility

**Renald:** Something essential is absent or suspended when sleep-walking, etc.

**Dar:** maybe it's just a failure of memory storage

**Sage:** Shingles, I agree the self is gestalt, but I probably disagree on what that means, if you think it contradicts what I said =)

**Shingles:** No it doesn't, we actually agree, but we're stating our points in very different ways I think, Sage

