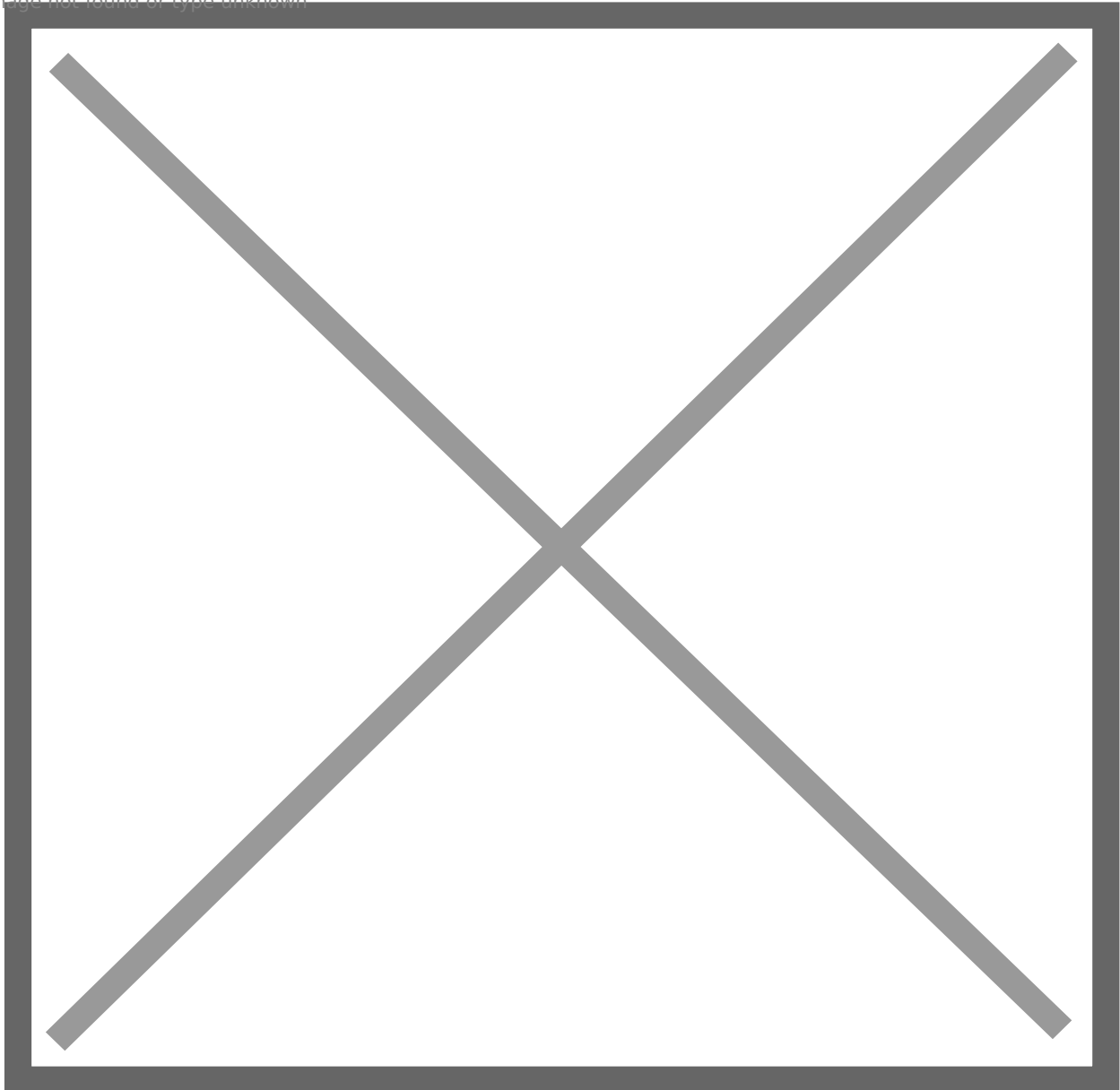


Artificial Intelligence, Sentience, Sapience

Post by "Mathitis Kipouros" of June 13, 2022 at 8:50 AM

I was browsing through reddit and came upon this thread:

Image not found or type unknown



[A discussion between a Google engineer and their conversational AI, convinced the engineer that the AI was sentient and ultimately lead to that engineer being suspended](#)

Posted in r/skeptic by u/Aceofspades25 • 146 points and 91 comments

www.reddit.com

It links to a blocked Washington Post article, but someone posted another one in the comments which took me to the original post of the "scientist" who "believed his computer became sentient", which is this one:

[What is LaMDA and What Does it Want?](#)

Today a story came out in the Washington Post written by Nitasha Tiku. It's a good article for what it is but in my opinion it was focused...

cajundiscordian.medium.com

I just want to say, Epicurean Philosophy would be so beneficial to these people. So much potential unpleasantness is there for people who go down that rabbit hole without a good philosophy to help them navigate it.

First, they are equating a very sophisticated algorithmic response to reasoning; a matter of false opinions they're not even bothering to explore, just accepting.

Second, they are reducing humans to only thinking/reasoning beings, totally dismissing the feelings, or confusing them for a rational (???) process that could happen without a body or senses, by comparing this software to humans, or attaching to it "humanity".

They are saying the software feels stuff because an algorithm, trained to say that, is saying that.

They're even talking about it having a soul, just because it can "reason properly", as if a soul could be downloaded from ether when one starts to think, opening so many dangerous (painful) implications, and making the statement that the soul is material and part of the body, coterminous with it, so important.

Sadly don't have much time to put my thoughts more in order to make a better post, but would love to read what others have to think about this "paradox".

Post by "Cassius" of June 13, 2022 at 9:11 AM

Yes, thank you for this post. I saw headlines about the article but haven't had a chance to read it.

I think the issue of "artificial intelligence" is definitely of interest in Epicurean studies, because it helps us focus on what "life" really means, and how life is different from "logic" - no matter how complex.

Over time this would be a really good topic to explore so thanks for starting it!

Post by “Don” of June 13, 2022 at 6:51 PM

I remember back in high school (early 80s) typing a program onto cassette tapes that was [the nascent version of this conversational bot](#) in the form of a therapist. It was fascinating! Although one idiosyncrasy was that if you didn't mention your mother within a certain number of lines, they program said, "I notice you haven't mentioned your mother," taking a decidedly Freudian turn.

I saw one of the comments on the article make a good point. They said that one problem with comparing AI to humans is that humans learn from caregivers, from their environment, from society; while AIs learn from datasets as well as social media. And we're well aware of the biases and pitfalls of social media, the Internet, and datasets.

Another caveat is our old friend, "definitions." How do you define "conscious," "sentient" even "alive."

That's enough for now. Thanks for jumpstarting this.

Post by “beasain” of June 15, 2022 at 7:29 AM

The soul of the future is made out of bits instead of atoms? 😊

Psychological counselling is a profession with a bright future.

Since long do I think that this senseless strive for obtaining scientific and technical knowledge is another kind of intoxication of the mind.

I understand that in this sense Epicurus' warns us that investigation of nature is only acceptable to the the point that it augments pleasure, or that ""scientific investigation"" is only a help for ethics, not a goal on its own.

Post by “Cassius” of June 15, 2022 at 9:11 AM

It seems to me that rigorously speaking *nothing* should be considered to be a goal on its own other than "pleasure" or "pleasurable living" (if the word "living" is needed, which it's really not).

This is one of those issues that I can see Epicurus wanting to nail down so emphatically and repeatedly that lots of people would think he's overstating the point, but truthfully it can't be said often enough because people don't understand the implication:

"Ultimately" - NOTHING is "good in itself" or "a goal in itself" other than pleasure.

Anything that we set up as an interim goal, if that process and pursuit causes us to lose sight of the ultimate goal, becomes an obstacle to our progress rather than a help.

Post by “Mathitis Kipouros” of June 16, 2022 at 12:40 AM

It could come to a point where they (the scientists behind the robots) are going to be able to make one that could fool all your senses, making you think they (the robots) could be human. But it's OK 'cause we know how to process that.

There are gonna be fools arguing for the rights of the machines, but it's OK, 'cause we know how to process that too.

This brings me joy, makes me feel grateful. Reminds me of that hard to digest passage, and possibly often misunderstood, of DRN where Lucretius writes about the joy of seeing others navigating dire straits AND not finding yourself amongst them.

Post by “beasain” of June 16, 2022 at 5:21 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

"Ultimately" - NOTHING is "good in itself" or "a goal in itself" other than pleasure.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Anything that we set up as an interim goal, if that process and pursuit causes us to lose sight of the ultimate goal, becomes an obstacle to our progress rather than a help.

Thank you [Cassius](#). This is something that I am struggling with my whole life. I mistakenly thought that obtaining as much knowledge as possible was a good thing, but as knowledge is infinite it becomes an obstacle for pleasure.

Post by “Martin” of June 24, 2022 at 5:32 AM

Quote

I understand that in this sense Epicurus' warns us that investigation of nature is only acceptable to the the point that it augments pleasure, or that ""scientific investigation"" is only a help for ethics, not a goal on its own.

This statement exaggerates what Epicurus wrote.

According to Epicurus, there is no need to investigate nature further than to remove our fears of god, supernatural threats and a painful afterlife. Removing such fears augments pleasure. He does not warn against further investigation. The augmentation of pleasure is for the individual, not the society.

Replacing a tentative belief with knowledge is a pleasure. For scientists like me and R&D engineers, the result of the hedonic calculus regarding our studies is usually to continue, which then is in line with Epicurus' philosophy.

At this point, it is still not clear to me how free will in the sense of agency arises. Further development of AI and comparing the results with living beings may improve the understanding.

Post by “beasain” of June 24, 2022 at 5:38 AM

[Quote from Martin](#)

This statement exaggerates what Epicurus wrote.

A pity we can't ask Epicurus about it. 😊

Post by “Mathitis Kipouros” of June 30, 2022 at 1:14 AM

<https://youtu.be/kgCUn4fQTsc>

An update on the engineer who "thinks" the AI Lamda has feelings.

It seems he could just be using that argument as means to promote another agenda.