

Can machines have qualia?

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Abstract

An important aspect of consciousness is the fact that we seem to have of an inner world or an inner reality. It is also often claimed that this inner reality is characterised by subjective experiences or qualia and that this involves more than just being able to respond to inner stimuli. We have previously argued that a crucial mechanism for generating an inner world in humans is the ability of our brains to simulate behaviour and perception. A simple robot has been designed in which perception can be simulated. It is argued here that this robot, or one that has been extended in various ways, in particular a mechanism for comparing different a simulated experiences with an actual experiences or with another simulated experiences will enable a robot to have an inner world of subjective experience in the same sense as humans.