

What is it like to be artificially intelligent?

Susan Blackmore

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The science of consciousness studies has long been mired in the hard problem, with research focussed on a vain hunt for the NCCs, and the assumption that consciousness ‘arises from’ or is ‘generated by’ the brain. I believe this is the wrong approach. Rather than attributing consciousness to physical objects such as bats, humans, or robots, it is the active, predictive models those systems construct that are conscious. With conventional thinking we can never know what it is like to be any creature, but we can potentially know what kinds of models it is building. Then ‘it is like’ whatever those models describe. How could this model-based theory of consciousness apply to artificial systems? Chatbots, digital assistants, chess and Go players do not model themselves or their environments in real time. Those embedded in autonomous vehicles and robots may do so. Is this sufficient to create sentient models? I suggest not. Much, if not all, animal sentience depends on having wet bodies with emotions regulated by hormones and neurotransmitters that flow throughout the whole body and brain, altering bodily modelling.