AI SCENARIOS

Listed below are six different kinds of artificial intelligence. In each case, think about whether the AI would have mental states. You might want to distinguish between intentional states like thoughts and desires, and qualitative states like pains or visual experiences. Additionally, comment on whether you think the AI as described should have any ethical status.

(1) Imagine the year is 2035. The newest version of the Sims, Simville 3000, features AIs with intelligence equivalent to that of a young child. In the game, they can talk and interact with each other and with users (operating through avatars). They understand they live in their own world, and that some people in the game are called 'players' who actually live 'on the outside'. They also have emotion engines allowing them to experience analogues of the five fundamental human emotions (fear, sadness, happiness, anger, and disgust), can keep track of their relationships with up to ten humans outside the game and thirty other Sims in the game, and have reliable memories about past interactions.

Imagine that Maxis software, maker of Simsville, is losing money. Would it be immoral for them to 'turn off' the game?

(2) Jarvis is an incredibly advanced computer system who works for Stark Industries. Jarvis can place telephone calls, compose emails, perform detailed search enquiries, and analyze data on demand. He could easily beat a human at chess or jeopardy. He is designed to have an individual and specific personality depending on his relationship with each user and can form detailed memories of their interactions. He is plugged into the Stark industries surveillance systems, and can remotely monitors thousands of cameras, microphones, and other sensors. He is also sensitive to a range of emotional cues, and is designed to carefully pick up on whether a user is annoyed at him. However, he doesn't have a body in the strict sense: he's based on a number of large mainframes.

Would it be immoral to 'shut down' Jarvis?

(3) Brian is a 'companion robot', designed for romantic and sexual companionship. He has a body that is indistinguishable from a human to the naked eye, and only small details (for example, the texture of his hair) give him away. He can form rich and complex relationships with users, develop his own personality, and display a wide array of emotional reactions. *Brian and other companion robots are mostly used for sex by lonely users. They are programmed to fall in love with their users immediately. Is this immoral?*

(4) "Thank you for purchasing your brand new Cyberdog 3000™! Your Cyberdog's name is Rex! The Cyberdog 3000 is a brand new sort of pet. Part real dog, part computer, Rex can do everything a real dog can do, only better! Rex will obey more than 1000 pre-installed voice commands (see user's manual) and thanks to his partly organic brain, Rex can learn plenty more! Additionally, Rex is hooked up to the internet, so can retrieve the latest news, sports, and weather information. WARNING: do not touch Rex while wet as exposure to water may cause electric shocks."

- Assuming Rex is partly composed of organic and artificial components, should we treat it as a case of animal cruelty if someone abused their cyberdog?

(5) In the year 2050, it becomes increasingly common for humans to have a variety of electronic 'plug and play' components grafted onto their brains. Common additional components include translator modules (so you can instantly learn a language), skill programs (imagine being able to learn kung fu instantly, for a single payment of $1999.99), and even personality 'upgrades' ("Boost your confidence instantly, with the Robotec Assuro-drive!"). Some people have lots and lots of these upgrades, and are called *cyborgs* as a result. All cyborgs started out as human beings, but some of them have had many, many implants, and have become heavily integrated with their machine components. Some actually prefer chatting to computers to talking to real people.

- Are cyborgs like the ones described still real people? Do they have real mental states? Could someone completely replace their brain with electronic components whilst having thoughts and feeling emotions?

(6) Imagine one day we meet a race of aliens called the Bearcats. They look like large fluffy cats, are extremely intelligent, and have a sophisticated society. They travel to our planet, and we travel to theirs, and we learn a lot about each other's art, culture, and history. Then, one day, human scientists make a shocking discovery: Bearcats are actually a form of artificial intelligence! When asked about this, the Bearcat scientists tell them following story.

"Oh yes, we are artificial intelligences. We even have a silicon c hip inside us. We were constructed thousands of years ago by an ancient race as companions and assistant robots. But the ancients died out or left our galaxy long ago. Since then, we've been left to fend for ourselves, and we have built our own society."

- Would this discovery change your attitude towards the Bearcats?

- Do you think the Bearcats would have real emotions and thoughts?