

"Can Computers Think?"

The philosopher John Searle distinguished two approaches in Artificial Intelligence (AI) that he called "Weak AI" and "Strong AI". Weak AI holds that the mind can be simulated by a digital computer, whereas strong AI holds that the mind is a digital computer. In the lecture I will examine strong AI and the question whether computers can think. I'll start with a brief sketch of the basic principles of strong AI. I'll then examine Turing's test and the arguments against it. To this effect I will concentrate mainly on the Chinese room argument that, among other things, aims to show that Turing's Test does not provide a sufficient criterion for distinguishing whether computers can think. The Chinese room argument supposedly shows that computers do not have intentionality, since they are merely syntactic machines. In the final part of the lecture, I will examine the objections that have been raised against this argument and I'll suggest possible ways to complement Turing's Test that make it more adequate as a criterion for distinguishing whether a creature can think.

Bibliography

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