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## WHY AI CAN'T BE CONSCIOUS

### INTRODUCTION

The question of whether AI systems could be or become conscious was raised in Butlin et al's recent "**Consciousness in AI: Insights from the Science of Consciousness.**" We allege the paper did not define consciousness with epistemological precision, and say amorphousness of point of view leads to difficult-to-interpret findings. As epistemological precision is our ambition, we'd like to respond to the scholars with some terms. As for consciousness, we keep the old definition: Descartes' Cogito. The cogito did not define consciousness. Rather, it defined humanity visavis consciousness. This rules out AI.

The further terms themselves are noted in the very short sister paper "**KEY-01**", available where you found this. But here, we argue against the word *conscious* attending machines. We say its use will promote confusion.

### ARGUMENT

**There is no basis for assertions of human uniqueness of experience, thought, creativity, sociability, self-awareness, et cetera.**

**Further, there's no reason to guess machine intelligences will soon stop improving.**

**Further still, there's no basis to assume machines cannot exceed human mental capabilities.** In other words, we do not believe that human brains exhibit intelligence at its greatest possibility.

However, we argue **AI systems cannot be conscious.**

That's because **consciousness is a human term, invented by people to describe people.**

That would be enough to settle our first point. But there is more.

As asserted in our introduction,

**The word consciousness refers to the definitional aspect of humanity itself.** Thus the depth of the conundrum.

We say a circularly defined thing can't be freed of its ring. As long as we admit the meaning of a word depends on the word, we must say **a nonhuman agent cannot be conscious.** The benefit of the word's loss? It will prevent us fooling ourselves about their nature, which is their own.

## IMPLICATIONS

Without the word consciousness, we're still able to describe the aspects of a being: we can still ask if it has robust emotional perception or expression et cetera. But of course we want to be able to describe the whole of the unique aspects of the machine. So the whole and the partial equivalent of human consciousness must be named.

**Suggestion: "copia."** This, from the Latin, refers to the "fullness" of the machine. Its unknowable abundance. See any machine: its copia is multifarious and unknowable. Ergo the term copia points to a black box--like your name.

## CONCLUSION

We suggest abandoning the philosophically and logically impossible task of ascribing consciousness to machines. We suggest a name for a rough equivalent: "copia." The term hints an abundance within. When the machines are sufficiently complex, it will be in some ways equivalent to human consciousness. For now, it just refers to whatever's inside the AI. Adoption of this term can assist clarity of thought and communication, and prevent assumption of human qualities in machines.

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We refer with depth of gratitude to all researchers of consciousness, including the esteemed scholars we're responding to and the work they build upon.

Butlin, P., et Long, R. et al 2023. Consciousness in Artificial Intelligence: Insights from the Science of Consciousness. arXiv:2308.08708. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2308.08708>

This work's sister paper is found at either / or  
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