

INTG 388

Paper #3

Fall 2017

Prompt

In his The Atlantic article title *Mind vs. Machine*, Brian Christian tells the story of his experience as a participant in a Turing Test. By the end he argues, “Perhaps the fetishization of analytical thinking, and the concomitant denigration of the creatural—that is, animal—and bodily aspects of life are two things we’d do well to leave behind. Perhaps at last, in the beginnings of an age of AI, we are starting to center ourselves again, after generations of living slightly to one side—the logical, left-hemisphere side.” Another way we might phrase his argument is that we have too long put deep rational thought on a pedestal while turning our noses up at emotionally driven decision making, and that our experiences with AI can teach us to balance these aspects of our selves.

The AI we looked at in this section of the course likely pushed your rational and emotional selves in ways that the earlier AI did not. You saw Chatbots trick people into love and friendship. You saw AI take on the personality of lost loved-ones. You saw Robot care for Frank and through lying and stealing help him to recover some sense of the family he’d fractured and lost.

For this paper you are to engage Brian Christian’s assertion through reflection about the AI we explored¹. Perhaps you disagree with his premise, feel there is no such thing as being too rational, and you imagine a Vulcan like future governed by logic. Or maybe you agree with Christian and are starting to feel your pendulum swung too far towards the rational. Could it be that your lack of balance tends too much towards the emotional, the creatural? Reflect on what has your experience with these new kinds of AI and the confusion they can bring has told you about your rational and emotional self.

¹ or similar AI that you seek out on your own

Requirements & Logistics

DUE

In class on Friday 11/3

FORMAT

Typed. Printed. Double-spaced. Stapled.

LENGTH

750–1250 words

MINIMUM REQUIRED EXTERNAL SOURCES 3 minimum.

Grades are based on the quality and clarity of the writing, the appropriateness and quality of observations, the depth and sufficiency of the analysis, and the clarity and validity of the conclusions with

respect to the overall reflections. Be sure to review *On Reflection and Reflective Writing*² if needed.

² <https://jlmayfield.github.io/teaching/INTG335/intg335-reflection.pdf>

The Writing Center

Wonderful ideas and deep reflection can be lost or ruined by muddled writing. I grew most as a writer when I cared deeply about the things I was writing and didn't want there to be any uncertainty on the part of my readers. Perhaps more than other forms of writing, reflective writing is ultimately a reflection of ourselves. You should want to put your best word forward when it's you on the page. Writing well is hard. It takes practice. It requires help. I encourage *all* of you to take this opportunity to step up your writing game. The writing center is here to help you. They're awesome. Don't wait until my grade to get feedback on the quality and clarity of your writing.

The Monmouth College Writing Center offers unlimited, free peer tutoring sessions for students at MC. Peer writing tutors work with writers from any major, of any writing ability, on any type of writing assignment, and at any stage of their writing processes, from planning to drafting to revising to editing. We are located on the 3rd floor of the Mellinger Teaching and Learning Center, and the Writing Center is open Sun-Thurs 7–10pm, and Mon-Thurs 3–5pm on a first-come, first-served basis. No appointment necessary! International students can sign up to work with the same writing tutor for a weekly session. Learn more about the Writing Center at our website: <http://blogs.monm.edu/writingatmc/writing-center/>