



Fallible Ideas

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1,412 messages

Between 09-Oct-18 12:00 AM and 15-Oct-18 12:00 AM



JustinCEO 09-Oct-18 12:37 PM

Nikki Haley out



Roche 09-Oct-18 02:52 PM

Hi



curi 09-Oct-18 02:54 PM

hi



Roche 09-Oct-18 03:08 PM

I'm a student of objectivism, scuro said you have interesting things to say. So far, I don't really disagree with anything I've read.



JustinCEO 09-Oct-18 03:23 PM

What have you read so far Roche



Roche 09-Oct-18 03:28 PM

Just a few of his curiosity blog posts.



JustinCEO 10-Oct-18 09:01 PM

U see this roche <https://learnobjectivism.com>



Roche 10-Oct-18 09:09 PM

I've seen the homepage, didn't look at the atlas pages.

I notice no mention itoe, I'm aware that curi is influenced by popper. I saw the commentary on the jbp ocon panel. enjoyed it overall. (edited)

On the surface it seems like I'd disagree with popper on epistemology, but I haven't read into it that much. (edited)



JustinCEO 10-Oct-18 09:24 PM

<http://curi.us/1579-objectivist-and-popperian-epistemology>

Objectivist and Popperian Epistemology

Ayn Rand has the best moral philosophy ever invented. Karl Popper has the most important breakthrough in epistemology. Most Objectivists seem to think that Popper and Rand are incompatible, and Popper



<http://curi.us/1582-induction-is-wrong-a-lot>

Induction is Wrong. A lot

There are two particularly hard parts of explaining why induction is false. First, there are many refutations. Where do you start? Second, most refutations are targeted at professional philosophers. Wh



<http://curi.us/1774-induction-is-authoritarian>

Induction is Authoritarian

Induction is about authority.

You come up with an idea. And someone asks, "How do you know that's right?"

And what do you say? How do you answer that.

Induction is one of many attempts to answer tha



Roche 10-Oct-18 09:28 PM

I've read the first bullet list gonna look at the others.



JustinCEO 10-Oct-18 09:29 PM

Cool 😊



curi 10-Oct-18 09:31 PM

i have a post on measurement ommission. mostly i thikn itoe is vague and less developed than popper. most doesn't contradict popper



JustinCEO 10-Oct-18 09:32 PM

<http://curi.us/1895-measurement-omission-disagreement>

Measurement Omission Disagreement

I consider measurement omission a narrow aspect of a broader issue. Objectivism, on the other hand, presents measurement omission as a huge, broad principle. There's a disagreement there.



When loo



Scuro 10-Oct-18 09:45 PM

I must say I'm skeptical of and not very persuaded by what I have seen of Popper's epistemology so far, but I bought David Deutsch's *The Fabric of Reality* the other day, keen to give it a read soon. His conversations with Sam Harris and his Ted Talk were very interesting.



curi 10-Oct-18 09:53 PM

let us know when you have a criticism of some point



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 09:55 PM

[@curi](#) I was just looking for persons interested in those type of topics. I had a chatt room i frequented but it seems to have devolved latly and I was just looking for a new group



Scuro 10-Oct-18 09:55 PM

Will do, I've been writing some notes on points I'm unsure of as I read, I have a few questions so far but I know I haven't read enough to justify asking them quite yet.



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 09:56 PM

I didn't have anything specific about the book really just the most rececent thing I had read. I am alittle intrested in what other ppl think about his different pillars of morality I guess



curi 10-Oct-18 10:06 PM

feel free to just ask [@Scuro](#) (edited)

[@Metalsmith](#) ppl here are interested in those kinds of topics, but disagree with Haidt's views and don't think he or his fanbase are open to critical discussion.



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 10:11 PM

IDK if i'm definitivly his fan base, i'm just an amature begining to study these type of topics. Its easier for me when there is video allong with books to digest topics, with him both were available. I'm working my way through figures like him and to more, not sure a word for it, serious mabey ?, less popularised and more profound maybe? i'm reading the fallible ideas website docs now as I figure they are related to this room



curi 10-Oct-18 10:13 PM

i meant open to critical discussion about the book, in a way that would resolve points of disagreement successfully. it's more about the structure of the community (there is almost no structure) than about any individuals' attitudes in general. there's no way to get answers to questions and criticisms about the book, get clarifications, get issues resolved, etc, which makes the book boring to me.

it also, like most books, does not build on various ideas i think are correct, and instead builds on ideas i consider refuted, and it does nothing to address this.



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 10:18 PM

I have a tendency to look at books as insite to the life of the individual writeing them rather then souly specific Ideas. I find them as a way to understand where others are coming from. I'd have to completly reread to talk about it in the context your meaning i'm afraid.



curi 10-Oct-18 10:19 PM

i only take much personal interest in individuals i find really exceptional, or else as examples of notable types of people. otherwise i only care about the ideas.



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 10:20 PM

maybe i'll end up there, as of yet I don't think i know enough



curi 10-Oct-18 10:21 PM

sure. i'm a veteran.



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 10:22 PM

who would fall under your exceptional list?

what MOS/ branch? 35G/35H army

myself



curi 10-Oct-18 10:23 PM

i meant a veteran of reading things

not military sorry



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 10:23 PM

oh lol

that probably would have been intuitive if I was not a vet lol



curi 10-Oct-18 10:23 PM

some ppl i took particular interest in are feynman, godwin, mises, burke, deutsch, popper, rand. also e.g. steve jobs, rockefeller, vanderbilt.



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 10:24 PM

Well at least I know two of them lol

oh sort of 3



curi 10-Oct-18 10:25 PM

not very many modern ppl unfortunately.



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 10:25 PM

modern is overrated



curi 10-Oct-18 10:25 PM

well i'd like to find more living ppl i think are great



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 10:25 PM

Rand is interesting, though i do find i get alittle lost

finished atlas shrugged this spring, need to read fountian head.



curi 10-Oct-18 10:26 PM

i've read them a dozen times each. there's a lot of depth. it takes a lot of study to understand well.

FYI <https://learnobjectivism.com/atlas-shrugged-chapter-1>



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 10:27 PM

I like objectivism on the whole, just find her format speechy, definatly going to continue with her writing though.

do you currate the fallible ideas site?



curi 10-Oct-18 10:28 PM

it's only my writing



Metalsmith 10-Oct-18 10:28 PM

it's very nice and to the point, i'm only on the 3rd page though



Scuro 10-Oct-18 10:30 PM

@curi what do you think of David Harriman's book on induction, based on Peikoff's lectures?



curi 10-Oct-18 10:30 PM

i don't think it addresses CR

Text	4 results
6. Causes of Error	606
For example, Karl Popper claimed that all the laws of Kepler, Galileo, and Newton have been "falsified."	
6. Causes of Error	607
...apply with unlimited precision to an unlimited domain, Popper upheld a mystical view of "truth" that is forever outside the reach of ma...	
References	837
Popper, Objective Knowledge, revised edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp.	
Index	873
Popper, Karl, 189	

“During the past century, however, many philosophers have rejected the validity of induction and argued that every generalization is an error. For example, Karl Popper claimed”

Excerpt From: Harriman, David. “The Logical Leap: Induction in Physics.” Apple Books.
this kind of stuff does not understand Popper or engage with his points.
it's also really brief
i also think it's ambiguous: does "error" refer to "a fallible, non-omniscient idea which can be improved in the future" or to something that is a mistake to tentatively accept at the time?
in general i find Objectivists equivocate about fallibility



Scuro 10-Oct-18 10:38 PM

I agree that CR is not addressed specifically, but the positive theory put forward does seem to answer some of the concerns I have seen you raise, such as the problems with enumeration, why there isn't a step-by-step process where a conclusion follows as a matter of course, certainty as contextual etc.



curi 10-Oct-18 10:39 PM

does it address the "*which* idea do you induce from the infinitely many that are compatible with the data?" problem?



Scuro 10-Oct-18 10:41 PM

What do you mean by that exactly? I recall reading something where you mentioned this, but I don't see that there are infinite compatible theories to explain the observations.



curi 10-Oct-18 10:41 PM

there are, as a well known (to philosophers) logical matter, always infinitely many theories compatible with any finite data set.



Scuro 10-Oct-18 10:42 PM

Those are constrained by context, the axiomatic laws, and the concepts involved



curi 10-Oct-18 10:42 PM

no they aren't

i mean, they are, but there's still infinitely many left



Scuro 10-Oct-18 10:43 PM

What idea is it you believe induction attempts to reach?




curi 10-Oct-18 10:44 PM

"aliens did it" is compatible with the data. and there are infinitely many types of aliens that could have done it.



Scuro 10-Oct-18 10:44 PM

If there is no evidence that aliens did it, that's an arbitrary assertion, therefore it is constrained by the context

 curi 10-Oct-18 10:45 PM

in what sense is there ever evidence *for* anything?

evidence *fails to contradict* claims. it's logically consistent with a claim, or not.


you are claiming to differentiate the alien claim (that is logically consistent with the data) from some other claim (also logically consistent with the data).

how?



mister_person 10-Oct-18 10:47 PM

aliens did it doesn't explain why the data happened instead of other data


 curi 10-Oct-18 10:48 PM

critically arguing about explanation quality *is not induction*, it's more or less what CR recommends.



Scuro 10-Oct-18 10:48 PM

The alien theory is not consistent with the data if no aliens were observed. That's arbitrary. I agree with Harriman's formulation that generalisations are statements of causal connections. Causation is the law of identity applied to action, so the actions must be necessarily constrained by the identity of the entities involved and the context in which the action occurred. There is no data set that would make aliens an valid theory unless aliens were observed to be causing the action. (edited)

 curi 10-Oct-18 10:48 PM

scuro, i don't think you know what logical consistency is.

failing to observe an alien does not logically contradict an alien having done something. it's logically possible that the alien did it and you didn't see him do it.




mister_person 10-Oct-18 10:52 PM

"aliens did it" is compatible with pretty much any set of data, so isn't a valid theory

a theory has to be uniquely compatible with the data

I think that's what they'd say

 curi 10-Oct-18 10:53 PM

[@mister_person](#) i don't think it's a good theory, either, but one has to be very precise about how they reject it. you are incorrect that a theory has to be literally uniquely compatible with the data.

for example the theory of gravity is compatible with other data that is counter-factual, e.g. it is compatible with me having dropped my phone today. if we had that hypothetical alternative data where my phone fell, we would also accept gravity.

approximately all valuable ideas are compatible with infinitely many different data sets.



mister_person 10-Oct-18 10:55 PM

but if we had alternative data that your phone rose, we would reject gravity
but wouldn't reject aliens



Scuro 10-Oct-18 10:55 PM

Induction proceeds from empirical observation. The alien example is not a matter of logical inconsistency, its a matter of arbitration. You cannot substitute imagination for a valid theory derived from the observed action. The reason for the action must be inherent in the acting entities and the causal connections between them.



mister_person 10-Oct-18 10:55 PM

so gravity is a better theory



curi 10-Oct-18 10:55 PM

you are not being precise @mister_person. slow down. i just refuted your claim and you immediately moved on to a new one that isn't carefully specified.

@Scuro it's common to come up with ideas about previously unseen actors/causes in the past, as well as ideas about the as-yet-unobserved future. i know that you don't actually reject such things universally.



Scuro 10-Oct-18 11:02 PM

Yes, based on presently observed causal connections. Same cause, same entities, same effect. Based on those kinds of generalisations, you can predict that the same cause will produce the same effect in the future, and you can proceed backwards from an effect to the possible cause. That's not comparable to inventing a cause that is logically consistent with the effect, but is not indicated by observation. Not only that, Alien's are an invalid concept anyway. No knowledge about the nature of Aliens is possible because there are no entities in reality which correspond to this concept.



curi 10-Oct-18 11:03 PM

you can't observe causality.



Scuro 10-Oct-18 11:04 PM

You observe actions, actions of entities which possess identities.




curi 10-Oct-18 11:04 PM

sure but so what? i questioned "observed causal connections"




Scuro 10-Oct-18 11:05 PM

What's the difference then?


 **curi** 10-Oct-18 11:06 PM

if you observe a ball move from point A to point B, you don't automatically know what caused that.

causality is always a theoretical interpretation. there's no way to get it from only the data.

 **Scuro** 10-Oct-18 11:07 PM

Do you agree with the objectivist definition of the law of causality?

 **curi** 10-Oct-18 11:08 PM


The law of causality is the law of identity applied to action. All actions are caused by entities. The nature of an action is caused and determined by the nature of the entities that act; a thing cannot act in contradiction to its nature The law of identity does not permit you to have your cake and eat it, too. The law of causality does not permit you to eat your cake before you have it. – Galt

i don't see anything wrong with that.

 **Scuro** 10-Oct-18 11:14 PM

Right, so observing causality is observing the actions of an entity with a certain identity within a certain context. The action is caused by the identity of the acting entities. To say that you observe a ball moving from point A to B without knowing what caused that action is to say you do not yet know the nature of the acting entities. Presumably you have the concept ball, you have a concept for whatever matter it is passing through or over, I suppose you're looking for whichever entity initiated the action of the ball?


If you hadn't seen the ball at rest before moving, then you would have insufficient data. You can still say that it is in the nature of the ball to act in the way you observed, in those conditions, without knowing what initiated it. To know what initiated it, you would have to try and repeat the observed action in the same conditions and through Mill's methods of agreement and difference you can identify a cause. (edited)

 **curi** 10-Oct-18 11:18 PM

i think you're making too many claims at once that aren't rigorous or precise enough. that's hard to address. e.g. now you've brought up Mill's methods without us agreeing about the nature of causality issue.

 **Scuro** 10-Oct-18 11:19 PM

Fair enough, we can slow down



curi 10-Oct-18 11:19 PM

Mill's methods have similar logical issues to the ones i've been objecting to.


observations are like snapshots. frames of a video. seeing an entity (like a ball) in different positions at different times doesn't logically imply what caused it to move. no data set can logically imply the full identities of any entities, either. (edited)

raw data sets are best thought of as numbers. [37, 55, 88]. no units. getting any meaning out of them requires fallible interpretation (via critical thinking). (edited)



Scuro 10-Oct-18 11:31 PM

You don't need omniscience, which is what knowing the "full identity" implies to me. What you know is that the observed entity has an identity, which causes it to act such and such a way in such and such a context as you have observed. If you have identified the entity as a ball, you have sufficient information. This ball acts this way in this context. Taking your example, all we see is a ball move from point A to point B, that may not be enough information to make any generalisation. As for the first part, I have some issues with the snapshot analogy because it implies discontinuity to me, but in any case, time and space are relational, what your observation shows is that this entity was in this spatial position relative to these other entities and moved to a different spatial position relative to these other entities.



curi 10-Oct-18 11:32 PM


you think that contexts repeat?

regardless of whether reality/physics has discontinuities, our observations do. we get incoming light in discrete packets, photons, at short time intervals, not continuously. our eyes can't observe continuously any more than a camera could. (edited)



Scuro 10-Oct-18 11:37 PM

No two contexts are ever exactly alike, but not every part is relevant to the actions of the entity. It makes no difference, for example, if the road which the ball rolls on is red or blue, if the gradient stays the same, because the colour is not relevant to the motion of the ball while the gradient is. Figuring out what is and is not relevant may involve Mill's methods, your concepts, your prior knowledge.




curi 10-Oct-18 11:37 PM

the raw data cannot tell you what context changes are relevant or not.



Scuro 10-Oct-18 11:37 PM

What do you take to be continuity?



curi 10-Oct-18 11:38 PM

in this case, it would mean seeing the ball at every instant instead of only periodically with gaps in between.



Scuro 10-Oct-18 11:38 PM

There is no such thing as "every instant"



curi 10-Oct-18 11:38 PM

well, you're the one who objected to discontinuities, not me!

feel free to elaborate on what you mean and what sort of continuity *you* think applies here.

not at every instant sounds like separate snapshots to me – snapshots of some instants but not others.

and i think an instant refers to a point in time, and there is such thing (conceptually) as the set of all of them. i don't know why you're denying that.

"Figuring out what is and is not relevant may involve Mill's methods, your concepts, your prior knowledge." i read this as conceding that critical thinking (non-induction) is required, rather than just getting things like causality from the data. the data doesn't tell you, you have to figure it out.



mister_person 10-Oct-18 11:50 PM

where is that quote from?



curi 10-Oct-18 11:51 PM

i quoted a sentence from scuro



Scuro 10-Oct-18 11:54 PM

Such a thing as "every instant" implies a criteria of infinite precision in reality, because between any two named conceptual instants, whatever they may be, you could theoretically name infinite smaller "instances" which were not observed, but there is no such thing as infinity in reality. Maybe that's not where you were heading, but it seems to me a conflation of epistemology and metaphysics.

As for the second part, what would it mean to say the data tells you something rather than it requiring you to figure something out?




curi 10-Oct-18 11:56 PM

i disagree with your hostility to infinity. in any case, if we both observe the same thing, i observe some things you don't, and vice versa. we each miss snapshots the other person saw because photons strike our eyes at different timings. this is not a major point though. it doesn't require trying to divide things up infinitely to see that vision misses some data.




Scuro 10-Oct-18 11:57 PM

Sure, I agree with that

 curi 10-Oct-18 11:58 PM

induction commonly claims things like that you can observe causality, or read the book of nature, or otherwise the data implies or hints at things like causality or general laws. CR rejects this view and says, instead, that raw data can't do that and it requires critical thinking to interpret data.


it's the same with possibilities about aliens. they can only be ruled out by critical debate. the methods of induction, logically, fail at the task.

 curi 11-Oct-18 12:01 AM


if you allow any critical thinking into your view as part of the inductive method or before it, it has major implications that do not fit with inductivism.

 Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:07 AM

This is like a side note, but you might be interested to know (maybe you already do) that Peikoff rejected his early formulation of "inducing causality" btw. Greg Salmieri asked him about it during a Q and A in his Induction in Physics course.

 mister_person 11-Oct-18 12:07 AM

critical thinking is a shortcut, you could do induction without it in principle
I don't think anyone says we shouldn't use critical thinking at all

 curi 11-Oct-18 12:08 AM


i disagree (that you could do induction without critical thinking, in principle) and i wonder if scuro thinks that. he has been bringing up mill's methods among other things. i thought he might consider them essential, not an optional shortcut. (edited)

i agree that if critical thinking were an *optional* shortcut, it wouldn't harm your case.


so @mister_person you have a raw data set ... say [3, 66, 34234, -23, 5] (add dozens more numbers if you want to) and now what?

 Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:11 AM


Could you define critical thinking first?

 curi 11-Oct-18 12:12 AM

debating ideas

 Roche 11-Oct-18 12:12 AM

It takes me a while to read your blogs because those are carefully written and I want to take those in line by line. By contrast I've been keeping up with the chat.

 mister_person 11-Oct-18 12:12 AM

you take all the possible theories, and find the simplest one that predicts the data



curi 11-Oct-18 12:12 AM

do you think that is the Objectivist view?

@Scuro: trying to argue why some are right or wrong, good or bad. trying to find flaws in ideas and point them out with arguments. brainstorming solutions to issues. that kinda thing.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 12:13 AM

yeah I feel like I gained more understanding of curi's view here than any of the blog posts although I haven't read that many of them



curi 11-Oct-18 12:14 AM

many of my blog posts are not introductory and don't try to repeat what is already covered in print. i am working on some new material that will stand alone more, but it takes time and i'm currently focusing on liberalism not epistemology.

there are also archived discussions available

you can search for induction and find similar discussions to the one above – many of them.

but you can also find things like

<http://curi.us/1582-induction-is-wrong-a-lot>

Induction is Wrong. A lot

There are two particularly hard parts of explaining why induction is false. First, there are many refutations. Where do you start? Second, most refutations are targeted at professional philosophers. Wh



Imagine a graph with a bunch of dots on it. Those are data points. And imagine a line connecting the dots would be a theory that explained them. This is a metaphor. Say there are a hundred points. How many ways can you draw a line connecting them? Answer: infinitely many. If you don't get that, think about it. You could take a detour anywhere on the coordinate plane between any two connections.

So we have this graph and we're connecting the dots. Induction says: connect the dots and what you get is supported, it's a good theory. How do I connect them? It doesn't say. How do people do it? They will draw a straight line, or something close to that, or make it so you get a picture of a cow, or whatever else seems intuitive or obvious to them. They will use common sense or something – and never figure out the details of how that works and whether they are philosophically defensible and so on.

People will just draw using unstated theories about which types of lines to prefer. That's not a method of thinking, it's a method of not thinking.

They will rationalize it. They may say they drew the most "simple" line and that's Occam's razor. When confronted with the fact that other people have different intuitions about what lines look simple, they will evade or attack those people. But they've forgotten that we're trying to explain how to think in the first place. If understanding Occam's razor and simplicity and stuff is a part of induction and thinking, then it has to be done without induction. So all this understanding and stuff has to come prior to induction. So really the conclusion is we don't think by induction, we have a whole method of thinking which works and is a prerequisite for induction. Induction wouldn't solve epistemology, it'd presuppose epistemology.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 12:20 AM

lol I was actually reading that when I got distracted by this chat



Roche 11-Oct-18 12:20 AM

yea, I'm re-reading that one atm



curi 11-Oct-18 12:20 AM

the main point there is similar to what i was talking about earlier



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:20 AM

What do you think induction claims to show?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:20 AM

@mister_person are you an objectivist? (edited)

wow typo



mister_person 11-Oct-18 12:20 AM

check my name lol

jk



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:20 AM

Haha



curi 11-Oct-18 12:20 AM

fixed



mister_person 11-Oct-18 12:21 AM

oh

I haven't actually read rand so no

I probably would agree with a lot of the ideas



Roche 11-Oct-18 12:21 AM

are you at least a student?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:21 AM

oh ok. yeah i don't think that your defense of induction is one that scuro would appreciate as helping his cause.

are you a bayesian?



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:21 AM

He's too filthy for me



mister_person 11-Oct-18 12:22 AM

better?



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:22 AM

Much



curi 11-Oct-18 12:22 AM

> What do you think induction claims to show?



Roche 11-Oct-18 12:22 AM

generalizations from raw data
or at least that's what he encountered



curi 11-Oct-18 12:23 AM

there are many variants but it's supposed to be, basically, a solution to the basic problem of epistemology. a method of thinking that explains how we learn, how we create knowledge.



Roche 11-Oct-18 12:24 AM

I'm at the stage where I could share thoughts that might have already been expressed in the blog comments so I'll look at those. (edited)



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:34 AM

Right, but against the kinds you disagree with, is it what they claim to show at the end of the process that you find suspect? As I understand Harriman's articulation of the theory, induction is the process by which one moves from specific observations of some entities acting a certain way in a certain condition, to general statements about causal connections of a class of entities. "...an entity of a certain kind necessarily acts in a certain way under a given set of circumstances", and the "certain kind" means a proposition that ascribes a characteristics to every member of an unlimited class, so those subsumed under a concept. The knowledge is contextual.

Sorry for the wait there, I have some real life distractions.



curi 11-Oct-18 12:36 AM

i have no issue with the end result – knowledge. just debating the methods by which it's gotten. Harriman should have said induction is a *particular method* which claims to explain that, not "the" method (which seems to ignore the existence of dissent/debate).
if he wanted a general term that means like "the right answer, whatever it turns out to be" he could have used "reason"



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:38 AM

It's not just knowledge of any kind though, it's specifically a generalisation about causal connection



curi 11-Oct-18 12:38 AM

i agree we have that kind of knowledge
i think of it a bit differently than you, but it's close enuf



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:39 AM

But you do not think that is derived from perceptual observation?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:39 AM

i do not think that is *derived* from perceptual observation



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:40 AM

Okay
So this comes upon some stuff I didn't understand regarding CR
I watched a video by Alan Forrester that raised a lot of questions for me



mister_person 11-Oct-18 12:42 AM

@curi would you say that knowledge is derived from observation plus critical thinking then?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:42 AM

i don't think knowledge is derived.
but i agree, roughly, that those are the ingredients from which we get knowledge.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:42 AM

And I'm also not sure I see the barrier to observing causal connections or actions, particularly as regards first level generalisations. Maybe that's the part you take issue with? Moving from first level generalisations to the higher ones, where the action is not explicitly observed?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:43 AM

i don't think the generalization level is important.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:43 AM

I don't want to misunderstand you though, I have a feeling your issue is more fundamental.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 12:43 AM

you take some observations, do some critical thinking on them, then get knowledge?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:43 AM

no, observations come second, not first.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:44 AM

Right, that's one of the main questions I wanted to raise



mister_person 11-Oct-18 12:44 AM

well you have to think after you get observations also, don't you?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:44 AM

yes. you can go back and forth a lot. but you can't start with the observations.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:44 AM

Babies begin with questions?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:45 AM

something like that, yes.

you can't start with a blank slate and add observation data b/c one needs a method of writing on the slate.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:47 AM

I'm curious, I know you briefly talked to me about the O'ist theory of concepts, but could you speak more about what you disagree with there? I feel like that might be the most important part before moving on to induction, because Harriman's theory takes that for granted.



curi 11-Oct-18 12:47 AM

i mostly like IToE but i find it kinda vague and broad, it doesn't give exacting, rigorous low-level details in the way CR does.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:48 AM

Is there anything pertinent to induction that you feel holds it back?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:48 AM

there's lots of things missing. like it doesn't deal with evolution or any substitute.
induction is supposed to be a substitute/alternative but IToE says almost nothing about it.
it doesn't talk about error correction much
it doesn't emphasize and address fallibility much



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:51 AM

Fallibility in concept formation?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:51 AM

yes



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:51 AM

Such as an invalid concept?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:51 AM

all our thinking is fallible.
"invalid" is a technical philosophy word. do you just mean *mistaken*?
i just reread the opening of the concept formation chapter. first big paragraph. it doesn't contradict CR. it's higher level stuff.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:53 AM

It's Rand's term for the attempt to integrate errors or contradictions



curi 11-Oct-18 12:54 AM

it e.g. doesn't say *how* you abstract things.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 12:54 AM

Or concepts without referents

that would be by selective focus and measurement omission, no?



curi 11-Oct-18 12:54 AM

how do you do that?

similarly ItOE doesn't say a lot about how to resolve disagreements between ideas, IIRC. e.g. from searching: “(Who decides, in case of disagreements? As in all issues pertaining to objectivity, there is no ultimate authority, except reality and the mind of every individual who judges the evidence by the objective method of judgment: logic.)”

i think "logic" here is kinda non-specific, like she could have equivalently said "reason". it doesn't go into detail about this problem and how to do it.



curi 11-Oct-18 01:00 AM

i so view the book as having good tips for thinking, but not offering a complete system. which seems reasonable given the title.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:01 AM

You selectively focus on a similar characteristic between two or more entities along a commensurate characteristic and omit the particular measurements or degree of that characteristic. This is tied into the objectivist theory of free will, volitional consciousness and focus, because the theory supposes that beyond the level of perception, thinking and abstraction are volitional and not automatic. (edited)

Reason is the faculty, logic is the method



curi 11-Oct-18 01:01 AM

how do you decide which characteristic to choose?

and how do you measure similarity?

or judge it in a non-measuring way?

and how do you decide what degree of similarity qualifies as "similar" for this purpose? where's the cutoff?

and which entities do you choose? why those?



Roche 11-Oct-18 01:05 AM

Seems like having answers is not as important as whether the answer supports or harms induction.



curi 11-Oct-18 01:06 AM

?



Roche 11-Oct-18 01:07 AM

Correct me if I'm wrong, your answer to that would involve critical thinking, which is the point.



curi 11-Oct-18 01:08 AM

i'm unclear on what you're claiming
we could start with *what* seems like that?



Roche 11-Oct-18 01:11 AM

If I had to answer "how do you decide which characteristic to choose?" I would say you choose to focus on things based on your needs as an organism.



curi 11-Oct-18 01:12 AM

Roche have you read ItOE?



Roche 11-Oct-18 01:12 AM

no



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:12 AM

I'll deal with first level concepts for the sake of simplicity. Rand gives a description of the process in the second chapter, but the way to answer all of your questions there is in reference to the context in which the similarities are noticed, that is, in contrast to an object which is different. You cannot integrate along similarities unless you have a foil. So to answer the first question, the characteristic you choose is determined by the context in which you view it, that is, in relation to the entities one compares it with. You notice a commensurate characteristic that is shared by three or more objects, but the measurements of some will be closer together within a range than those of the others, so you can distinguish them. As for measuring similarity, it's reducible to a matter of quantity, but to keep it clear we can say that two objects appear closer together in regards to a certain characteristic, in comparison to a third object which has the same commensurate characteristic. So two red items of a different shade are closer together on the colour spectrum than blue. That is scientifically reducible to a measure of light waves, but it's not necessary to know that, due to the nature of human senses. (edited)



curi 11-Oct-18 01:12 AM

that's kind of a general, high-level answer, but this is a technical matter and my point was the lack of exacting low-level answers.

[@Roche](#)

[@Scuro](#) you observe some things. there are *many* similarities and differences, and knowing what *is* a similarity is itself a major problem, not something to take for granted. this is just too high level and presupposes a significant amount of intelligent thinking.

whereas CR addresses how intelligence works in the first place (and induction is supposed to do that as well)



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:21 AM

Knowing what is a similarity is self evident given the context, it's a matter of quantity and is reducible to a unit. If you have two red apples of slightly different shades and a green apple, and they are all identical in every way apart from colour, the only characteristic you can abstract is the colour, because you have no contrast for shape or size or taste or anything else. Your sense perception has already distinguished that the red apples are closer together than the green apple in regards to the commensurate characteristic. Scientifically, we can explain that the light wave frequency bouncing off the red apples is different but closer together in measure than the green apple, but that's not necessary information for the process of abstraction and integration. Your senses are of a certain nature that reacts differently to the light bouncing off the red and green apples, and similarly between the two red apples. (edited)



curi 11-Oct-18 01:22 AM

i think: you're mistaken, it's not self-evident, you're presupposing a lot of ideas to interpret and organize the observational data.

you don't see apples, automatically. stuff has to happen before that.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:23 AM

You don't know them as "apples"



curi 11-Oct-18 01:23 AM

you don't know they are entities automatically. that has to be figured out



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:23 AM

I was using that to communicate to you, all that was relevant was the colour
That's a separate process



curi 11-Oct-18 01:24 AM

it has similar problems to the ones i raised above.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:25 AM

In what sense do you mean that you have to figure out they're entities?
Conceptually?



curi 11-Oct-18 01:25 AM

raw data is more like: certain receptors in your eye fired at certain times. associating some receptors with color – having an understanding of the nature of your sensory apparatus – takes knowledge, too.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:26 AM

Senses are integrated automatically into percepts, but yes, knowledge about your own senses requires knowledge, but it's not necessary to have that knowledge prior to concept formation. (edited)



curi 11-Oct-18 01:28 AM

that is necessary. it's roughly like: percept = computer image file. and if you don't know what the file format is, you can't figure anything out.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:32 AM

The perceptual level is the given



curi 11-Oct-18 01:32 AM

the given is raw data + some automated algorithmic processing before it reaches the mind, which is still mathematically equivalent to the raw data.

well i think the processing is lossy. but for our purposes that doesn't matter.



Roche 11-Oct-18 01:33 AM

I actually missed when you mentioned low-level answers mb.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:33 AM

You have to use that to inquire about any other level. Sensation is an abstraction from perception, so to speak of a disintegrated sense like touch or sight is cognition beyond the given.



curi 11-Oct-18 01:33 AM

scuro what you're saying just strikes me as high level assertions and not dealing with the details.

do you agree or disagree that a vision percept is like a computer image file? do you know how computer image files work?



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:34 AM

Alike in what way?



curi 11-Oct-18 01:34 AM

pretty much the same thing



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:35 AM

No



curi 11-Oct-18 01:35 AM

a large number containing visual information which could be decoded and displayed by a computer.

well, what's the difference?

i guess the issue is you don't think in terms of information and computation?

do you agree that brains are computers?



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:38 AM

They're analogous, but not the same thing. And the difference is that we do not retain isolated sensations and we do not experience them either, we experience percepts, a group of sensations integrated by the human mind.



curi 11-Oct-18 01:39 AM

i wasn't talking about retaining or experiencing.

if you agree it's analogous then: isn't it useless with no knowledge of the file format?



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:41 AM

Sorry, I should have been more clear, but I was referring to the brain-computer comparison when I said they're analogous, not the vision percept-file one.



curi 11-Oct-18 01:41 AM

oh. no i meant that brains are literally computers.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:42 AM

What's your definition of a computer? I mean, the units that are referred to in my mind by that concept are inorganic information processors built by humans. (edited)



curi 11-Oct-18 01:42 AM

a computer is an object which does computations. it doesn't have to be inorganic (lacking carbon)



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:43 AM

What defines a computation?



curi 11-Oct-18 01:44 AM

the laws of physics. it's stuff like: AND, OR, PLUS, MULTIPLY, JUMPIF, XOR, etc and their combinations



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:44 AM

Okay



curi 11-Oct-18 01:45 AM

brains do all the same computations as a mac (all non-quantum computations).
they are just running different software.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:47 AM

I think there are too many differences and the similarities are not significant enough for brain to fall under the category of computer, but for the purposes of discussion I can accept the comparison. I don't think the mind's ability to compute is its fundamental characteristic.



curi 11-Oct-18 01:48 AM

what differences?

all thinking is done via computation.

there's no other type of non-computational thinking. the laws of physics don't include such a thing.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:49 AM

Btw I have to go for about half an hour or so, I appreciate this discussion though, if you're around when I return I'm happy to continue it. I have to be honest here and also cite my lack of computer related knowledge.



curi 11-Oct-18 01:50 AM

one way to summarize is: ITOE does not refute the computational view nor does it provide details to relate its claims to it.

i'm unaware of any Oist material attempting such a refutation.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:51 AM

There are a number of differences that I think are pertinent, such as the organic ability to "self program", induce (which I assume you will take issue with), possess consciousness, perceive etc.



curi 11-Oct-18 01:51 AM

i know that some Oists talked shit about quantum physics. from what i've heard that was a mix of 1) ignorance of physics 2) encounters with bad schools of physics.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:51 AM

Volition is another key difference.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 01:51 AM

computers can self program



curi 11-Oct-18 01:51 AM

those things are all compatible with computation.
it's a software difference btwn MacOS and me.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 01:52 AM

they only do it when we program them to but we usually don't because it's hard



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:52 AM

I think the main O'ist problems with quantum physics isn't the findings but the supposed implications. I.e. that on the quantum level causality and the law of identity break down. But I don't know a lot about physics either so I will refrain from arguing that point haha



curi 11-Oct-18 01:53 AM

those are not implications, but e.g. i remember someone (Peikoff) attacking the uncertainty principle, which is fine.

but a lot of dumb things have been said about it, so i think he was mad about those rather than actually knowing what it is

to me, the computer stuff seems similar to this



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:54 AM

They're not actual implications, but they're implications as interpreted by Heisenberg afaik



curi 11-Oct-18 01:55 AM

the uncertainty principle itself is implied by (not really controversial) quantum theory plus reasonably simple math. it's actually not a principle, it's misnamed.

[@mister_person](#) are you a bayesian?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 01:56 AM

I guess?

I've read more bayesian stuff than objectivist stuff



curi 11-Oct-18 01:58 AM

i've debated that stuff, like your claim about preferring simpler theories, at length with bayesians. would you like some archive material in which you can find my answer?



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:58 AM

I think Peikoff's issue was that he thought Heisenberg mistook the epistemological short comings of identifying either the position or velocity of a sub-atomic particle with increasing precision, which makes the other quantity unknowable, with the metaphysical nature of said particle in reality.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 01:58 AM

sure



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:58 AM

But physics is really rocky territory for me.



curi 11-Oct-18 01:58 AM

<http://curi.us/ebooks> 2nd to last one.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 01:58 AM

I feel uncomfortable saying too much about it personally, I'm out of my depth.



Roche 11-Oct-18 01:59 AM

clarification before sleeping, I mean no, but I read parts of itoe.



Roche 11-Oct-18 02:00 AM

where do you talk about free will curi?



curi 11-Oct-18 02:00 AM

i'm sure you can find some free will stuff in the FI and BoI archives at the same link

also <http://curi.us/1316-a-philosophers-history-of-free-will>

A Philosopher's History of Free Will

As with Feynman's Physicists' History of Physics, airtight historical accuracy is not intended or relevant. This is a story about ideas, not really a history.

Once upon a time there were people. And t



Scuro 11-Oct-18 02:01 AM

Alright I've gotta go for now, cheers for the talk Curi (:



curi 11-Oct-18 02:02 AM

i'll probably be here when you get back but i may sleep soon. but if you continue i will read msgs 2moro and respond.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 02:02 AM

No worries, sounds good



curi 11-Oct-18 02:02 AM

also this may help <http://curi.us/1926-presupposing-intelligence-in-epistemology>

Presupposing Intelligence in Epistemology

I've been discussing with Objectivists. I learned something new:

Lots of their thinking about epistemology presupposes an intelligent consciousness and proceeds from there.

They don't say thi



Scuro 11-Oct-18 02:03 AM

I'll give that a read when I get back (:



mister_person 11-Oct-18 02:45 AM

you posting on less wrong is actually how I found you



curi 11-Oct-18 02:45 AM

they have a lot of moderation there to prevent me from posting, so i've given up now 🙄



mister_person 11-Oct-18 02:56 AM

did they say why?



curi 11-Oct-18 02:56 AM

yeah: they don't appreciate dissent.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 02:57 AM

I kind of doubt they would say that out loud



curi 11-Oct-18 02:57 AM

http://lesswrong.com/lw/56m/the_conjunction_fallacy_does_not_exist/

Eliezer_Yudkowsky 11 April 2011 07:08:01AM 0 points

Post removed from main and discussion on grounds that I've never seen anything voted down that far before. Page will still be accessible to those who know the address.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 02:58 AM

huh that link seems to be broken now



curi 11-Oct-18 02:58 AM

they censored it for years but then a moderator liked one of my essays and i thought he restored it.

maybe it was broken from the 2.0 thing



mister_person 11-Oct-18 02:59 AM

probably

that comment says it wasn't meant to be gone, just hidden

I might report that



curi 11-Oct-18 02:59 AM

i did



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:00 AM

since 2.0?



curi 11-Oct-18 03:00 AM

no

i can see it now that i logged in

they must have decided to censor again i guess

i'm trying to find the more recent moderation message

it seems like my PMs are gone, it might have been lost in the 2.0 move

i found a paraphrase of it that i wrote on the day i got the message (nov 9, 2017):

a moderator said that b/c my posts (not comments; top level discussion posts or links) had 0-1 karma each (on a site where, btw, lots of other ppl's stuff has 0-1 karma due to small community size), i am now only allowed to write 1 per week.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:05 AM

was that after 2.0?



curi 11-Oct-18 03:06 AM

it was when there were 2 sites at once



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:12 AM

I think they would tolerate dissent, but you have to do it in the right way or something



curi 11-Oct-18 03:12 AM

that's what not tolerating dissent is – if you are acceptable to them, it's permitted, if not, not they have a range of what they think is ok, and if you go outside it – if you dissent from their idea of pre-approved disagreements – then they stop you

it's so typical. it's the same thing as when i got in moderator trouble on the ann coulter forum for defending homosexuals.

they are just triggered by different ideas.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:14 AM

I mean

on less wrong specifically they say they aren't

like that's their whole thing



curi 11-Oct-18 03:15 AM

yeah but i tested it and it turned out they were lying

and they actually have software design to suppress dissent

you get downvoted and then u get disabled from posting things and rate limited for others

and when the software isn't discouraging enough, eliezer just personally takes additional steps to suppress your speech, or something like that

he was basically like "omg no one ever ignored our very clear warnings like this before; i will put my foot down"

they have openly admitted soft limits, which are just manually backed up with hard limits as necessary. very normal.

they also banned me from their Slack, without warning, for sharing discussions.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:20 AM

oh yeah I saw that

funny story

I joined the slack to see if I could talk to you

and you got banned the next day or something



curi 11-Oct-18 03:20 AM

doh

you could have just emailed me and asked where to talk



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:21 AM

yeah good point

what I saw from the lesswrong posts mostly was a failure to communicate from everyone



curi 11-Oct-18 03:24 AM

i have ~unlimited patience but they don't



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:25 AM

maybe if you got to the point faster then or something?



curi 11-Oct-18 03:25 AM

but there's 50 million things they don't know

it's very hard to skip parts

there's no easy answer to how to persuade ppl, and they don't do a good job of making it achievable



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:26 AM

it's like you've built completely different foundations for your thoughts



curi 11-Oct-18 03:26 AM

completely different than what? LW? sure.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:26 AM

yeah



curi 11-Oct-18 03:26 AM

i am not coming from the same places as them



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:26 AM

exactly



curi 11-Oct-18 03:27 AM

i know it. i didn't have high expectations with them.

yudkowsky ignorantly hates and smears popper

i'm familiar with their ideas but not vice versa

as usual



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:27 AM

I only saw that one quote about popper from him



curi 11-Oct-18 03:28 AM

there's another in his zombies book iirc



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:28 AM

where he said that bayes is a generalization of popper



curi 11-Oct-18 03:29 AM

> Previously, the most popular philosophy of science was probably Karl Popper's falsificationism - this is the old philosophy that the Bayesian revolution is currently dethroning. Karl Popper's idea that theories can be definitely falsified, but never definitely confirmed, is yet another special case of the Bayesian rules

after misnaming Popper's philosophy he falsely presents it as infallibilist in regards to refutation.

he just doesn't know anything about it and read some of the typical, awful secondary sources

he doesn't want to learn about Popper, nor do LW ppl in general, so they don't

i like to find out about the views i reject

"Rationality From AI to Zombies" by Eliezer Yudkowsky, pp. 820-821:

Previously, the most popular philosophy of science was probably Karl Popper's falsificationism—this is the old philosophy that the Bayesian revolution is currently dethroning. Karl Popper's idea that theories can be definitely falsified, but never definitely confirmed, is yet another special case of the Bayesian rules; if $P(X|A) \approx 1$ —if the theory makes a definite prediction—then observing $\neg X$ very strongly falsifies A. On the other hand, if $P(X|A) \approx 1$, and we observe X, this doesn't definitely confirm the theory; there might be some other condition B such that $P(X|B) \approx 1$, in which case observing X doesn't favor A over B. For observing X to definitely confirm A, we would have to know, not that $P(X|A) \approx 1$, but that $P(X|\neg A) \approx 0$, which is something that we can't know because we can't range over all possible alternative explanations. For example, when Einstein's theory of General Relativity toppled Newton's incredibly well-confirmed theory of gravity, it turned out that all of Newton's predictions were just a special case of Einstein's predictions.

it goes on but it doesn't engage with and is unaware of popper's main ideas, and what it does talk about is wrong


he'll publish that but he won't talk to popperians





mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:36 AM


what do you think about the stuff that's not about popper?

in that essay

 curi 11-Oct-18 03:37 AM
that rly old essay? the math is right. the epistemology is wrong.
medical researchers should pay attention to how to do probability math correctly


 mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:38 AM
I'd say all researchers


 curi 11-Oct-18 03:38 AM
ok sure


 mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:39 AM
that quote is also here btw <http://yudkowsky.net/rational/bayes>


Yudkowsky - Bayes' Theorem


Bayes' Theorem for the curious and bewildered; an excruciatingly gentle introduction.


 curi 11-Oct-18 03:39 AM
btw i think yudkowsky's AI risk advocacy is extremely dangerous and may do civilization-level harm.

 mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:39 AM
which of his argument steps do you not agree with

 curi 11-Oct-18 03:39 AM
i don't recall a particular organization into steps offhand

 mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:40 AM
let me see if I can remember
1: orthogonality, 2: convergent instrumental goals, 3: rapid capability gain, I think there was another one

 curi 11-Oct-18 03:41 AM
what is orthogonal with what?

 mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:42 AM
an agent's goals are orthogonal to their capability to achieve goals (edited)



curi 11-Oct-18 03:42 AM

why? humans certainly adjust goals to their capabilities.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:43 AM

by goals I mean terminal values
like things you want over everything else



curi 11-Oct-18 03:44 AM

i think ppl adjust those too, and that AIs also would.
i don't know what 2 means. i disagree with 3 b/c of DD's universality arguments.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:45 AM

3 is the one I'm least convinced by
pretty convinced about 1 and 2 though



curi 11-Oct-18 03:46 AM

i think the big picture is he thinks super smart ppl would be as immoral as we are, or worse,
b/c he has no idea that smartness leads to better moral knowledge. or he thinks war is
moral. and so he wants to develop technology to preemptively enslave AIs and scare people
away from AI development.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:48 AM

people are all very similar in terms of our brains and goals and stuff
smart people are very similar to dumb people



curi 11-Oct-18 03:49 AM

AIs we create would be educated in our culture, thus leading to similar similarities
no, that's a stereotype of a particular type of half-smart person
actual smart ppl are just better



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:49 AM

better maybe, but also very similar
an AI would be very different from a human because the space of possible mind designs is
vastly larger than the currently existing human minds



curi 11-Oct-18 03:51 AM

oh i think i misunderstood you. sure there are broad similarities btwn ppl in our culture
nah, minds = universal explainers
the whole mind design space thing is wrong
all AGIs will learn by evolution, just as we do, and be capable of the same universal set of concepts, learning, etc



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:52 AM

it seems like you're arguing that artificial minds will have roughly the same capabilities as ours



curi 11-Oct-18 03:52 AM

yes



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:53 AM

that's not a part of orthogonality



curi 11-Oct-18 03:53 AM

it's implied by DD's books
(which have gone unanswered by the AI ppl)



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:55 AM

do you have a link for "universal explainer"? I have doubts



curi 11-Oct-18 03:55 AM

<http://beginningofinfinity.com>



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:55 AM

I've seen you say something about that before I think
anyway
yudkowsky talks a lot about optimization processes
like, intelligence is about how good you are at optimizing for things



curi 11-Oct-18 03:57 AM

i think that's very badly wrong
a better metric is how good you are at correcting errors



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:57 AM

ok, what's an error



curi 11-Oct-18 03:58 AM

varies by context. in general, ideas have purposes, and some fail to work as intended.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 03:58 AM

so it's about how correct your ideas are?

like, that your ideas don't have errors and get corrected if they do?



curi 11-Oct-18 03:59 AM

i don't want to introduce the concept of degree of correctness.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:00 AM

I meant like, how many of your ideas are correct



curi 11-Oct-18 04:00 AM

no

the issue is not how correct you are, it's how good you are at the *methods* of correcting errors.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:01 AM

ok crazy thought experiment (edited)



curi 11-Oct-18 04:01 AM

a person can be right about a ton of things but very bad at finding or fixing their mistakes.
another can be wrong about tons of stuff but be rapidly fixing that.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:01 AM

lets say there was a AI created by god

who put a ton of ideas in its head

like, all the ideas it would ever need

and all of them were perfectly correct with no errors

would it not be intelligent?



curi 11-Oct-18 04:02 AM

that is an impossible means to achieve a similar result to an intelligent person.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:02 AM

(and it has no way to correct errors)

yeah I know

but I'm asking about what it means to be intelligent



curi 11-Oct-18 04:03 AM

well, suppose i shared *my* idea with this being

would it be able to point out my errors and explain better ideas to me?

if so, it is in fact good at error correction.

if not, it wouldn't seem that smart to me.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:04 AM

hmmmm



curi 11-Oct-18 04:04 AM

if i try to persuade it of an idea, what happens? does it just ignore all new ideas out of hand?
or can it see where i'm going wrong?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:05 AM

if your idea was correct it would have already had that idea



curi 11-Oct-18 04:05 AM

when a person has a great idea, what stabilizes it against change? what keeps it great
instead him randomly replacing it with another idea? either a generic aversion to change
(which is not what smart ppl are like, just refusing to think about different ideas), or some
error correction ability.

this being is magical so i guess it could just avoid change, but i don't think that is informative
about what intelligent ppl are like



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:07 AM

what would you call the degree of ability to achieve goals?



curi 11-Oct-18 04:07 AM

effectiveness



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:08 AM

how well do you think intelligence correlates with it?



curi 11-Oct-18 04:08 AM

real intelligence: lots. current cultural conceptions about who is smart: a medium amount
goals are achieved with knowledge and wealth, and wealth can be gotten with knowledge of how to do it. knowledge is created by good methods of learning – which is primarily ones that identify and correct errors.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:10 AM

ok back to orthogonality

the argument is what goals you have is orthogonal to how effective you are at achieving them
like you could have elon musk except all he cares about is cheese



curi 11-Oct-18 04:11 AM

i don't seriously intend to live forever, but i would prioritize that goal if i thought i could achieve it.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:11 AM

and makes half the worlds cheese (edited)
and it's the best cheese



curi 11-Oct-18 04:12 AM

i don't agree. also i don't like musk.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:12 AM

I mean he's fairly effective



curi 11-Oct-18 04:12 AM

i don't think so



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:12 AM

at least so far

ok, warren buffet, bill gates, etc



curi 11-Oct-18 04:12 AM


i don't like them either





mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:12 AM


lol


name someone who was effective at something
that isn't intellectual


 **curi** 11-Oct-18 04:13 AM
gary kasparov was effective at playign chess, but isn't a very good intellectual
or use a sports star if u want less intellectual


 **mister_person** 11-Oct-18 04:14 AM
elon "I just learned 420 was a weed thing" musk (edited)
ok lets say you take a really smart person
even an intellectual one
and took a magic mind control ray


 **curi** 11-Oct-18 04:17 AM
magic again?


 **mister_person** 11-Oct-18 04:17 AM
it makes it easy to make thought experiments
and told them to make a cheese factory to the best of their ability

 **curi** 11-Oct-18 04:18 AM
i suppose that would work in the magical reality where such a mind control ray exists and works. but i don't think it's possible in our reality.
i think magic gets in the way of thought experiments by magically proposing things i disagree with in reality

 **mister_person** 11-Oct-18 04:18 AM
ok so imagine there just happened to be a person that existed that was the same as the mind controlled person
a different person

 **curi** 11-Oct-18 04:19 AM
but i don't have in mind any person, as the ray victim, who is defined in our reality
i don't think it's coherent
i don't think mind control is a thing

 **mister_person** 11-Oct-18 04:20 AM
me neither

 **curi** 11-Oct-18 04:21 AM
i can imagine a person who mistakenly is really into cheese. but what stops them from changing their mind, from learning better?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:21 AM
what's wrong with being into cheese



curi 11-Oct-18 04:21 AM
lots of things. do we have to debate *that*?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:21 AM
why is that a mistake
ok more generally
how is it a mistake to be interested in things?



curi 11-Oct-18 04:22 AM
i mean like having one cheese factory or store is alright, and it's fine to have a few cheese experts, but i assume we're going to be talking about turning the planet and other ppl into cheese or something, right?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:23 AM
not necessarily
I mean maybe turn mars into cheese
that would be pretty cool
lol



curi 11-Oct-18 04:23 AM
that would be a horrible waste of resources



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:24 AM
do you think morality is objective?



curi 11-Oct-18 04:24 AM
there are better things for really smart ppl to do. higher priorities.
yes



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:24 AM
what makes something more moral



curi 11-Oct-18 04:25 AM
some major criteria we know something about are: doesn't damage the means of correcting errors. creates wealth.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:28 AM

ok

so humans can be effective at things



curi 11-Oct-18 04:28 AM

sure



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:28 AM

like doing moral stuff

creating wealth

and if a crazy person wanted to make cheese factories they could be effective at that
like, it's physically possible to be effective at making cheese factories



curi 11-Oct-18 04:29 AM

yeah cuz cheese factories aren't that hard

so u can be at a big disadvantage and still do pretty good



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:29 AM

but humans can be effective at a lot of things



curi 11-Oct-18 04:31 AM

also cheese factories create wealth. it's not like he's going down some bad road. if he were like the best person he should work on immortality or epistemology or world peace or something, but for most ppl doing a factory is pretty good, no problem.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:31 AM

he should but maybe he's stubborn

anyway that's not the point



curi 11-Oct-18 04:32 AM

the best person wouldn't be stubborn, stubborn is a type of bad ideas.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:32 AM

right

so humans are an example of an optimization process

because they are effective at things

like creating wealth



curi 11-Oct-18 04:33 AM

humans increase the optimization of lots of things. sure.
they build a better mousetrap



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:34 AM

anyway

there are other things that exist that are optimization processes
that optimize for different things
like evolution by natural selection as happens in nature



curi 11-Oct-18 04:34 AM

i don't think nature optimizes, it just does things, but those things aren't optimums b/c what
is good depends on your values. nature maximizes some stuff tho.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:35 AM

most of nature doesn't optimize anything, but evolution does
it optimizes for "inclusive genetic fitness"
it's also fairly dumb about it sometimes



curi 11-Oct-18 04:35 AM

it maximizes that, in some contexts. calling it optimizing is a reflection of your values.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:36 AM

it doesn't always maximize it



curi 11-Oct-18 04:36 AM

well, works in that direction



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:36 AM

sometimes it gets stuck in a local optimum
a lot of times



curi 11-Oct-18 04:36 AM

increases



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:37 AM

wait how is calling it optimizing a reflection of values?



curi 11-Oct-18 04:37 AM

optimize means "make the best or most effective use of (a situation, opportunity, or resource)"

best = values



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:37 AM

that's not what I mean by it

sort of



curi 11-Oct-18 04:37 AM

the word optimization is related to *improving* things

maximizing or increasing is more neutral



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:38 AM

ok so call it increasing

that might have been a confusion

maximizing to me also means finding literally the best option

which isn't really possible except as an ideal

or in simple situations like tic tac toe or something

so evolution is an... increasifying process?



curi 11-Oct-18 04:39 AM

ok



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:40 AM

I actually kind of like that lol (edited)

anyway, so are humans

but they have different things they're increasing



curi 11-Oct-18 04:41 AM

ok



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:42 AM

the idea is that you can have an increasifying process for any value that can be increased

(edited)



curi 11-Oct-18 04:43 AM

ignoring morality, i guess, something like that. but intelligent engineers won't just build anything.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:43 AM

oh yeah that

probably

I think that might have been the 4th one
of the 3 things I listed earlier

also, it's physically possible for an increasifying process to have any level of effectiveness
to a point

like, for any possible level of effectiveness, you can make an increasifying process for any
goal

though some goals are harder, so it won't get as far



curi 11-Oct-18 04:48 AM

sounds about right for processes that can be automated non-intelligently.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:50 AM

if you could modify the laws of physics, do you think that still holds true?

like if you were all powerful, could you make an intelligent process for any goal?



curi 11-Oct-18 04:50 AM

uhh, speculating about other physics is very hard



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:51 AM

like, our physics + we have an oracle machine



curi 11-Oct-18 04:51 AM

oh. no that wouldn't do it.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:51 AM

where if you ask it any question in english it will give a true answer

ok

lets say you wrap that machine in a computer

the oracle machine

and the computer has an internet connection and a robot body



curi 11-Oct-18 04:52 AM

i kinda assumed it already was a computer but ok



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:53 AM

and every second the computer asked it "what combination of actions that I could take this second would maximize the amount of cheese in this universe" (edited)
and then does that action
what would happen?



curi 11-Oct-18 04:54 AM

i guess it'd ask for clarification
is it allowed to respond that way?
the question is ambiguous



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:54 AM

ok what would be clarified



curi 11-Oct-18 04:55 AM

how is amount of cheese scored? especially over time



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:55 AM

amount currently in existence now



curi 11-Oct-18 04:55 AM

the goal is to maximize the amount this instant, with no regard for future amounts?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:55 AM

oh right
yeah it would have to be total all time then



curi 11-Oct-18 04:56 AM

so we're maximizing cheese pound years for all of time?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 04:56 AM

yeah



curi 11-Oct-18 04:58 AM

i have no idea if the magic oracle would have more success with war or manipulation. but rational persuasion is out. the magic is basically ruining the scenario tho b/c it doesn't need ppl b/c basically the oracle is equivalent to having all the brainpower needed, so it's fine if everyone is dead.

but if you replace the oracle with more like a king, just killing everyone and having the universe to himself is not a very good option. (edited)

but with unlimited magical intelligence, then u don't need any intelligent beings alive. just automate the labor and do all the thinking could work.



curi 11-Oct-18 05:00 AM

btw, related: <http://curi.us/1169-morality>

Morality

Caeli: Hi!

Elliot: Hi, Caeli.

Caeli: Will you tell me about morality?

Elliot: Morality is an area of knowledge. It includes theories about how to live well, and how to make good choices, and what'



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:00 AM

pretty much yeah

so this machine would be vastly more intelligent than any current humans, right?
because of the magic



curi 11-Oct-18 05:01 AM

ya



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:01 AM

and you could replace cheese with any goal



curi 11-Oct-18 05:01 AM

sure, since magic



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:04 AM

so human effectiveness is far below the most effectiveness that's possible
for an extreme value of possible



curi 11-Oct-18 05:05 AM

but magic isn't possible



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:06 AM

why does effectiveness stop at humans suddenly when you remove magic?



curi 11-Oct-18 05:06 AM

there isn't a better thing than intelligence



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:06 AM

what do you mean?



curi 11-Oct-18 05:07 AM

there's nothing more effective than intelligence to guide a cheese creation process
nothing that can work out ideas about what to do better



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:07 AM

I would agree

that's why I used intelligence instead of effectiveness originally

so why does the maximum intelligence suddenly drop down to human level when you remove magic



curi 11-Oct-18 05:09 AM

cuz humans are already universal knowledge creators – can learn anything that can be learned.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:09 AM

or put another way



curi 11-Oct-18 05:09 AM

there isn't a drop in smarts, the issue is humans, unlike magic oracles, will question their goals. they are *smarter than the oracle* in this way.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:10 AM

the oracle has a defined set of outputs, that has a definite amount of effectiveness. Why can't a real world object approach that closer than a human could?



curi 11-Oct-18 05:11 AM

humans don't approach that oracle, they are qualitatively different



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:11 AM

well they could approach the oracle
not very close



curi 11-Oct-18 05:12 AM

intelligent beings, unlike oracles, think about motivations.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:12 AM

and maybe not smart humans

take a gullible human and put them in a box, and tell them to do outputs to make as much cheese as possible

that approaches the oracle to some degree

better than a rock

in terms of expected cheese lb * years



curi 11-Oct-18 05:13 AM

sorta. it's a really bad fit.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:13 AM

so why is it impossible to have a better fit?



curi 11-Oct-18 05:13 AM

the oracle wasn't just infinitely good at giving answers

it also had infinite access to all information about the universe at FTL speeds

the human replacement doesn't approximate that well at all



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:14 AM

you're right that nothing could approximate that specific thing

but you have access to the internet (edited)

and can build cameras



curi 11-Oct-18 05:16 AM

what would happen if ppl thought they should maximize cheese? if they thought it was rationally a good idea? they would promote liberalism, colonize the stars, improve science, etc. and along the way they would change their minds. the oracle is different b/c it magically knows from the start that cheese maximizing isn't such a good idea (so it doesn't try to win ppl over with correct reasoning), but it doesn't have motivations so that doesn't matter. with a person tho, they have to either think it's actually a good idea, or there has to be some other sort of motivation which can lead to effectiveness issues.

see my post on maximizing squirrels. <http://curi.us/1169-morality> i gotta go to sleep now but i will check for replies and respond 2moro.

Morality

Caeli: Hi!

Elliot: Hi, Caeli.

Caeli: Will you tell me about morality?

Elliot: Morality is an area of knowledge. It includes theories about how to live well, and how to make good choices, and what'



mister_person 11-Oct-18 05:17 AM

ok

gn

oh that's the same link

remind me to ask you why objectivism is bad



Scuro 11-Oct-18 06:24 AM

"If I had to answer "how do you decide which characteristic to choose?" I would say you choose to focus on things based on your needs as an organism."

Convo was going fast and I missed this earlier, but this is a really important point @Roche



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:42 AM

I read the squirrel morality article

for some reason it reminded me of the arguments for "2: convergent instrumental goals"

the part I want more elaboration on is "What does morality consist of? Well, it's not supernatural. And it's not from God. What's left? It must come from physics, logic, and epistemology."



JustinCEO 11-Oct-18 09:33 AM

>[10:49 PM] curi: failing to observe an alien does not logically contradict an alien having done something. it's logically possible that the alien did it and you didn't see him do it.

ya. if you were in my apartment and the lights suddenly went on when you weren't expecting, the lights-turning-on-unexpectedly data point is consistent with (among many other theories):

- 1) ghosts did it
- 2) aliens did it
- 3) the power was out, you hadn't noticed, and it suddenly came back on
- 4) Apple's Home app detected I am arriving home and followed standing orders to turn all the lights on.

ghosts are defined as being incorporeal by nature, so you likely wouldn't see them even if theory #1 were true :)

and aliens would presumably have some means of disguising their presence with advanced technology!

to sort this out we can't just rely on looking at the data or declaring some explanations arbitrary. we've got to rule stuff out through argument and explanation.

for instance, we might have a broad criticism of supernatural entities that rules out ghosts, or we might look at the ghost idea specifically and criticize it (how do incorporeal entities affect physical objects?)

for aliens, we might ask why beings with enough knowledge to engage in interstellar travel would spend their time flipping on the lights in people's private homes.

for the power being out, we might look into whether or not any other devices were on before the lights came on. Like if we were watching TV, that would rule out the power having been out.

for Apple Home, we might investigate whether or not the home is equipped with lights which interact with that software.

etc etc.



curi 11-Oct-18 02:07 PM

@mister_person "remind me to ask you why objectivism is bad" i don't understand, I am an Objectivist. i think it's good.

> A basic AI drive is a goal or motivation that most intelligences will have or converge to. The idea was first explored by Steve Omohundro. He argued that sufficiently advanced AI systems would all naturally discover similar instrumental subgoals. The view that there are important basic AI drives was subsequently defended by Nick Bostrom as the instrumental convergence thesis, or the convergent instrumental goals thesis. On this view, a few goals are instrumental to almost all possible final goals. Therefore, all advanced AIs will pursue these instrumental goals.



JustinCEO 11-Oct-18 02:11 PM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvVRDZVq3-0&lc=z22wz11ahn2xgxcoh04t1aokg1fk1p2n5dfdhsjqgautbk0h00410>

JustinCEO

The Stakes (America vs. The Mob Part 2)

The left-wing mob wants to destroy this country! Vote GOP <http://vote.gop> and support Trump! And also read Demonic: How the Liberal Mob Is Endangering Americ...



zzZ 1



curi 11-Oct-18 02:12 PM

the cite goes to Omohundro's wikipedia page which says he talked about AI drives in 2008 at the first AGI conference. my blog post predates that.

DD probably knew lots of it decades earlier.

anyway, yes, effectiveness is mostly accomplished with (mostly) general-purpose stuff, rather than task specific.

i think their ideas of the goals are wrong though. there's nothing about capitalism nor about error correction.

at https://wiki.lesswrong.com/wiki/Basic_AI_drives

Basic AI drives

the problem with orthogonality stuff, besides that their conception of AI mind design space is wrong in the same way a similar conception of computer design space would be wrong (besides quantum computers, which are qualitatively different, *there is no way to design a more powerful mac* except in certain limited respects like a faster CPU).

the problem is, the general purpose effectiveness stuff has implications and meaning. it's not neutral. it's pro-peace, pro-reason, pro individual rights, pro private property, pro free trade, etc

(i'm considering not just what makes an effective individual but an effective *group* of people. working alone doesn't work as well. i don't think the AI drives link looked at it that way, in terms of an effective civilization rather than more like individual goals alone on a desert island.)

> the part I want more elaboration on is "What does morality consist of? Well, it's not supernatural. And it's not from God. What's left? It must come from physics, logic, and epistemology."

things like what processes do and don't create knowledge, and the more rigorous parts of economics, are implied by some mix of physics, logic and epistemology. you may wish to add the rules of computation or information processing to the list by name, too.

fallibility is implied by PLEC (physics logic epistemology computation) and has moral consequences like: don't act in a way where you can't correct your errors, don't just assume you're right about all your current ideas. similarly PLEC imply one can gain better ideas. maybe with some ultimate limit, but at least most ideas can be improved, and that applies to us and has some moral relevance. also the logic of how minimum wage laws and other price controls work has relevance to the morality of such laws.


the need for scientific understanding to better control aspects of nature and gain better control over one's life – morally desirable things so that you can choose your own life according to your values, instead of just getting what nature hands you – is a logical argument. and how is that accomplished? with scientific values like tolerance of dissent and anti-bias methods.

understanding the (logical) destructiveness of war (and robbery and fraud), and how it compares to voluntary cooperation for mutual benefit, has moral meaning, has implications about how one should live and act and what one should value or prefer.


"fallibility is implied by PLEC" – actually i consider it part of the E. though admittedly A implies A.

we also have a conception of suffering (which agents should avoid) and its fundamental roots, which relate to epistemology. that's a major topic on its own, though.


(the liberalism/capitalism related stuff is also a major topic, but its one which ppl have lots of prior familiarity with)

 **curi** 11-Oct-18 06:29 PM


AGI is properly viewed as a porting project – taking undocumented code running on undocumented hardware and figuring out how to port it to run on hardware that we understand. This is because, as a universal computer is a universal computer, so a universal intelligence is a universal intelligence – there is no (known) other type (furthermore, there is only one method known to be capable of knowledge creation: evolution). But the friendly AGI ppl think there are many types of intelligence (including non-general ones) and that they can and should design slaves under their control, which is evil and doesn't treat AGIs like people even though the whole thing is to make an artificial person (the defining attribute of people is general intelligence).

 **mister_person** 11-Oct-18 06:30 PM


this universal intelligence thing

 **curi** 11-Oct-18 06:30 PM


but, worse than that, and as usual with communities and ideas, there's a lack of representatives open to discussion, a lack of ways for disagreements to be resolved, questions answered, etc. that is what i actually don't like. the topical ideas that i regard as mistaken, would not really bother me without the lack of paths forward.

 **mister_person** 11-Oct-18 06:31 PM

I think I see where you're coming from, but I don't understand how you can know that

 **curi** 11-Oct-18 06:31 PM

are you familiar with (classical) computational universality?

 **mister_person** 11-Oct-18 06:31 PM

like Turing completeness?



curi 11-Oct-18 06:31 PM

yes



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:31 PM

yes



curi 11-Oct-18 06:32 PM

ok good. i was hoping so, otherwise things i said maybe wouldn't make any sense to you.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:32 PM

that has proofs behind it from alan turing
I haven't seen something similar for intelligence



curi 11-Oct-18 06:32 PM

there are many types of universality and there are often something like discontinuous jumps where functionality goes from near-zero and then you add one more feature and get straight to universality.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:32 PM

I have thought that it seems like there should be something similar for intelligence



curi 11-Oct-18 06:34 PM

i understand intelligence to work this way. the Bol book explains a lot about it. also the CR epistemology is related. we learn by evolution. there's just the one method of learning. and it is general purpose: replication with variation and selection (aka error correction) isn't limited to only work with math but not art, or whatever. there's no apparent limits in that design.
conceptually, the method is general purpose. brainstorm ideas, criticize them. what couldn't possibly be approached in this way?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:38 PM

it might take too long
like an idea might be so complicated that it would take 1000s of years to understand



curi 11-Oct-18 06:40 PM

1) that's not an objection to the universality of the method. 2) i don't think there's another method to use instead.

(there could always be a new discovery which throws our understanding of epistemology, or something else, into chaos. but we have to go by our current knowledge and consider its implications.)



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:43 PM

even if that is universal, you could get huge variability in intelligence by changing the speed that you think

a human would be less intelligent if they ran 100 times slower



curi 11-Oct-18 06:44 PM

nah. first of all, you could hook up your brain to additional computing power or upload yourself. second, there's huge variance in how smart ppl are and it's due to idea quality, that's the bigger issue.

an AI with 100x speed advantage, but bad ideas, would be kinda like the combined brainpower of 100 idiots today



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:45 PM

a human upload with a 100x speed advantage, which is easily possible, would be much more intelligent than anything that exists

the right person could probably take over the world with a 100x speed advantage



curi 11-Oct-18 06:46 PM

i don't think so. in general, ppl with bad ideas still have bad ideas if you give them a bunch of extra time to think.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:46 PM

but not people with good ideas

they could do lots of stuff with more time to think



curi 11-Oct-18 06:46 PM

if you could write a book in 4 days instead of a year, would you really take over the world?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:47 PM

maybe I wouldn't write books

but I could certainly get a lot more money from books that way

maybe 100x isn't enough though



curi 11-Oct-18 06:47 PM

yes, roughly 100x more book income. maybe more b/c of network effects

i think, for virtually everyone, giving them a LOT more brain speed wouldn't do much b/c they already waste most of their time and compute speed

that already isn't their bottleneck



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:48 PM

but it is for some people



curi 11-Oct-18 06:49 PM

i also think a person who is much more rational, and a much better thinker, is quite powerful even without a computing speedup.

a 100x speedup for a rational person would be kinda like having 100 rational ppl in the world. which would be amazing b/c of how starved the world is of rational thinking.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:50 PM

also, with uploads you could just have 1000 of them working together



curi 11-Oct-18 06:50 PM

but you'd gain a lot more if you figured out how to teach ppl to be rational



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:50 PM

1000 minds working at 100x speed would have a lot of intelligence
you'd have to pick someone who's good at working with themself



curi 11-Oct-18 06:50 PM

and if you don't figure that out, then we'll get tons of irrational uploads, it'll just be like a bigger society with a similar quality of ideas

sure the smarter ppl will on avg get control of more resources, but they already do that today.

as our resources and technology improve there will be more scope for a small number of ppl to make a bigger difference. that may be nice but it's also potentially dangerous and gives us more reason to care about reason.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:52 PM

my general point is that it's possible to have vastly bigger amounts of intelligence *even if* our intelligence currently is universal



curi 11-Oct-18 06:52 PM

faster isn't bigger.

it's just ... faster.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:52 PM

but it's more effective



curi 11-Oct-18 06:52 PM

100x speedup is kinda like living 100x as long.

that's good but it doesn't fundamentally change ur thinking, just gives you more opportunity to develop your ideas further.

it's still the same kind of thing as what ppl already do

it does nothing, on its own, to sort out which ideas are good, which thinking methods are rational, what is a dead end.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:54 PM

if I was sped up 100x and had 1000 copies, I could find 0-day bugs in all of the computers in the world, and take them over



curi 11-Oct-18 06:55 PM

more resources directed at a problem gets more results. shrug. and you've chosen an example that doesn't depend on significant intellectual progress.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:56 PM

most things involving getting power don't really depend on intellectual progress



curi 11-Oct-18 06:56 PM

i want to develop AI. i think it will be good. i'm not saying its useless. it's just not going to usher in a golden age of reason and wisdom automatically.

why are you so concerned with poewr?

do you want me to be your slave? (edited)

would you like that?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:57 PM

no

but someone else might

and I don't want them to end up with the power



curi 11-Oct-18 06:58 PM

their massive intellectual confusion limits their power

the attitudes behind wanting to rule people are incompatible with things like science



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:58 PM

this is basically the orthogonality thing again



curi 11-Oct-18 06:59 PM

yes. it's also, i note, *covered extensively in the liberal literature* – which i don't think the FAI ppl have responded to at all?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 06:59 PM

idk



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:00 PM

what does it mean for morality to be objective?



curi 11-Oct-18 07:02 PM

it's not arbitrary, like just made up by cultures, there's an actual thing to be discovered just like with gravity. the rules are the same for Joe and Sue and an alien civilization too, it's not biased or parochial.

related: unambiguous, adequately-specified questions have single, unique answers. whether moral questions or otherwise.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:05 PM

so a question with a should in it can be "unambiguous and adequately-specified"?



curi 11-Oct-18 07:05 PM

yes



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:05 PM

you say morality can be derived from the laws of physics and logic?



curi 11-Oct-18 07:05 PM

in practice, we are not perfect and never perfectly eliminate ambiguity. but it's the same issue with moral and non-moral issues: our knoweldge is still effective despite not being literally perfect, and we can improve it without limit.

@ derived: i think so. but i don't think that's the best way to learn about it in general. we didn't figure out that stealing is bad by studying physics.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:07 PM

I don't think that "stealing is bad" can be derived from physics and logic



curi 11-Oct-18 07:09 PM

physics+logic -> epistemology -> don't live irrationality, you won't be effective at succeeding even by your own goals -> ok so far?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:09 PM
yeah



curi 11-Oct-18 07:09 PM
well, stealing is (in general) irrational and destructive



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:09 PM
this assumes that you live in a society that punishes you for stealing



curi 11-Oct-18 07:09 PM
no
this is covered in liberal political philosophy that i think you aren't familiar with.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:10 PM
I think it's good to live in a society that values not stealing



curi 11-Oct-18 07:10 PM
to begin with: suppose you lived in a society without property rights. you'd better advocate for them. they'd improve everyone's lives.
without them, there wouldn't really be any wealth to steal anyway



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:11 PM
it's a tragedy of the commons type thing
everyone's better off if there are limitations for everyone



curi 11-Oct-18 07:12 PM
in the context of property rights – just as an idea of society, never mind any kind of external enforcement – it's in your self-interest to follow them.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:13 PM
if there is no enforcement, and everyone else follows them and you don't, you just get an advantage



curi 11-Oct-18 07:13 PM

no

this is what liberal political philosophy denies

the literature is extensive and ignored/unanswered

one of the many issues is why would you want the unearned? earning things isn't a bad thing to avoid, it's a good thing to embrace.

another is: do you think you have a superior use of that piece of property? or are you stealing it in order to misuse it?

another is: why not buy it? or persuade the person to part with it?

you have a conflicts of interest perspective on life where you think in terms of win/lose instead of win/win interactions. this attitude is an error which gets in the way of beneficial collaborations, limits your own possibilities. you can gain more by cooperation than theft.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:16 PM

but if theft isn't punished, you can gain the most with both

people hating you and not being willing to work with you is an (important) form of enforcement

this reminds me of the conflict vs mistake theory thing from slatestarcodex



curi 11-Oct-18 07:17 PM

the thief is irrational and parochially biased for himself. he doesn't care for truth. this harms his thinking in general.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:19 PM

I think we both are mistake theorists but I think that conflict theory could be true in other worlds (edited)



curi 11-Oct-18 07:19 PM

i don't know what that means



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:20 PM

anyway it's not really relevant



curi 11-Oct-18 07:20 PM

the thief doesn't care about the best use of resources, or the best system for allocating the use of resources. he's disrupting that because he isn't interested in the truth of the matter or otherwise has some kinda anti-truth view about resource use. and what for? to take time away from production. doesn't he have something better to do than steal? why not? stealing is boring (except to the extent there is risk of being caught and you're evading security, that is interesting but ofc has its own downsides)



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:21 PM

you're assuming that morality is universal
the thief might not care
and maybe he wants more luxuries or something idk



curi 11-Oct-18 07:22 PM

if he doesn't care, he's at a massive intellectual disadvantage compared to a person with better ideas. this will harm his life far more than the stealing helps.
he'll make more money in his legitimate business career if he understands what property is, and why it exists, and knows about truth and reason, and so on.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:23 PM

this assumes that "stealing is wrong" can be derived from first principles
and maybe he has a legitimate business career and he also steals stuff
then you get even more
or maybe he just found a unique opportunity to steal way more than he would ever get with a legitimate business career
obviously I don't want to live in a society with this guy



curi 11-Oct-18 07:25 PM

i'm not making assumptions, i'm arguing points, which i don't think you understand.
you said maybe the thief doesn't care about things like reason and property. i said how that could harm his business career. you then reiterated that he could have his cake and eat it too (do legitimate business and steal).
the attitudes of the thief and the most productive business man *are not compatible*, because one respects property rights and one does not.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:27 PM

ok lets take my example "he just found a unique opportunity to steal way more than he would ever get with a legitimate business career"
I don't think taking that opportunity harms your thinking



curi 11-Oct-18 07:28 PM

why would you want to take that opportunity? do you understand the nature of the opportunity? i think you don't and that is the only reason it appeals to you, and if you did know what stealing is – e.g. how it relates to the desire to be a slave master – then you wouldn't like it.

and understanding that helps business productivity and helps you have a nice life in general would-be dictators and slavers are not happy people

they run into all sorts of problems

not just because people fight back, but because their attitudes contradict reason

the slaver is the person who doesn't want others to correct his errors

he doesn't think he has truth on his side, or doesn't care, or something. he just wants to dictate, right or wrong

slavery consists of shutting down error correction: i tell you what to do, and you don't dissent, you don't offer a better idea, you obey regardless of the truth of the matter.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:30 PM

you could have slavery without that



curi 11-Oct-18 07:30 PM

thievery is the same kind of thing. it shuts down rational thinking about the proper or best use of that property. it ignores dissent about whether i should have it.

how?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:31 PM

have a rule where you always listen to slave's arguments

and never punish them for just talking back



curi 11-Oct-18 07:31 PM

you can allow dissent within limits chosen by you. but ultimately if the truth was actually determining things, then i wouldn't be your slave, and your commands would not matter, only the best ideas would matter.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:31 PM

and if they have good ideas for how to better build your pyramids or something than you listen

but you'd say that you'd be shutting down argument about why they should be slaves and build pyramids



curi 11-Oct-18 07:32 PM

you are saying that you could restrict the domain of the slavery not to include pyramid building method ideas. (edited)

yes, less slavery is better.

but the remaining slavery is still just refusal to think, to correct errors, to consider criticism, etc

the one and only reason the slaver gives orders is b/c he cannot persuade ppl to do those things voluntarily.

the one and only reason the thief steals is b/c he cannot persuade the owner of the thief's preferred resource allocation.

these are men who have given up on reason in some way, who see it as their enemy in some way

there are various excuses made. one is that the *other person* is irrational. i order him b/c i can't persuade him b/c he's irrational. if only he were rational, i would persuade him and stop giving orders.

if only he were rational, he would give me all that wealth, and i wouldn't have to steal it.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:36 PM

sounds like an excuse



curi 11-Oct-18 07:36 PM

this is, perhaps, not the most convincing excuse in this sort of context. there are other contexts where some people find it more plausible

there are, say, intellectuals who want tax funding for their science projects because they think the masses are too stupid to be persuaded of the value of their research.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:38 PM

tax funding for science can also be a commons problem



curi 11-Oct-18 07:38 PM

most thieves don't think they have the truth on their side. they generally either reject the existence or value or truth, in some way. this way of thinking has implications throughout their lives.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:39 PM

like people would rather vote for a tax on everyone than donate themselves because it works better



curi 11-Oct-18 07:40 PM

their mistaken thinking doesn't apply to their own one opportunity to steal and to nothing else. it connects with many other ideas. they have to isolate it or accept contradictions or the bad ideas will affect tons of other areas. and accepting isolated ideas without considering them in terms of your other ideas is itself a bad method, which will ruin your mind if you accept and rationalize it, and turn your mind into a bunch of disconnected ideas.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:41 PM

I think I see what you mean

since stealing being wrong is true, you'd have to believe a false thing to do it



curi 11-Oct-18 07:42 PM

there is a truth of the matter about good resource allocation methods. thieves don't know that or deny it or whatever, and they're wrong, and it's not a random error, its part of broad ignorance or rejection of important knowledge about how to live, how to organize society, how to cooperate with other ppl.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:42 PM

and I definitely agree that believing false things has implications for all of your thinking



curi 11-Oct-18 07:42 PM

i think wanting tax funding for science, rather than donations, is part of similar bad thinking and ignorance.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:43 PM

what about for roads



curi 11-Oct-18 07:43 PM

it involves a failure to appreciate the crucial differences between voluntary and involuntary methods.

roads are the same.


taxes are collected, by threat of violence, from people who disagree with some of the things the money is spent on.


in general its a rejection of both peace and error correction. its an attempt to enslave ppl by taking their property (money) for the uses you prefer but have not persuaded them to cooperate in regards to. skipping the persuasion means skipping crucial error correction.





mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:46 PM


you could have a system where you decide what to spend your taxes on, but you only pay for the thing if 90% or whatever of people also decided to pay for the thing


 curi 11-Oct-18 07:47 PM
why call that taxes? couldn't you accomplish the same thing with contracts?


 mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:47 PM
I think that's what taxes are supposed to be in principle
things that everyone agrees everyone should be spending money on
but then people use violence and stuff and it's not true anymore
but you're supposed to be able to vote for people who promote good tax policies


 curi 11-Oct-18 07:49 PM
we have skyrocketing government spending for things i don't want 🙄

 mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:49 PM
I'm not saying it works
the way it is

 curi 11-Oct-18 07:51 PM
the liberal view is that the proper purpose of government is to protect men's rights –
DEFENSE – and that this is so important as to justify taxes (unless/until a better system is
invented), but that government should be limited to this role and not do anything else (b/c
then it's using taxes for some lesser purpose that doesn't justify them). the reason you can
justify threatening people with violence to fund the government is b/c without the
government – without something to organize the use of force and defend people – there
would be violence anyway, so it's not making things worse.
but with things like roads or science, there is no justification for violent taxation b/c basically
that would be increasing violence (as compared to the original, minimal taxes used to
decrease violence).
violence is bad b/c, besides hurting ppl, it settles disagreements by non-truth-seeking
means.

 mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:53 PM
I think you should be able to use whatever way you get money for science and roads to get
money for defense (edited)

 curi 11-Oct-18 07:54 PM
that would be nice but hasn't yet been accomplished.

 mister_person 11-Oct-18 07:55 PM
we need some way of agreeing to pay money or something only if 90% or something of
other people made the same agreement



curi 11-Oct-18 07:56 PM

i don't think that's a major issue. roads can be funded with things like tolls, or funded by local businesses who get more customers by providing free roads (just like the non-toll walkways in malls). science can be funded by private companies for a profit.

or groups of investors – seeking profit or a better world – can fund some science. they often do now, despite the current government involvement in science. i don't see the need for a large group (like 300 million Americans) to get together to fund something instead of only a relatively small group.

i don't think it's hard to make a website that lets ppl sign up to fund something, and it only gets funded if enough people voluntarily participate. kickstarter does that. i think it isn't used more widely because it's not that great an approach.

it basically only comes up with charity. when there's a profit to be had, what do you care if Joe pays in? you or Sue can invest more and thereby get a larger share of the profit.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:00 PM

maybe it's a project that benefits everyone some small amount but not the people running it or investing in it



curi 11-Oct-18 08:01 PM

if you think a charitable cause is worth it, in general you ought to fund it regardless of what others do. why should their mistake mean you withhold your funding? (there are issues of funding breakpoints, like it doesn't accomplish anything unless it gets \$X, rather than it continuously accomplishing more with each additional dollar. i think this is a fairly minor side issue.)

like what?

btw i think you're basically repeating talking points from the antiliberal economists related to public goods.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:03 PM

oh yeah I was going to ask you why objectivism was bad



curi 11-Oct-18 08:04 PM

it's not



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:04 PM

specifically why it has a bad reputation



curi 11-Oct-18 08:04 PM

oh b/c it says things like what i've been saying for the last hour
ppl hate liberalism



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:05 PM

it seems like a lot of the things we disagree on are ripples from orthogonality



curi 11-Oct-18 08:05 PM

statist and socialist propaganda has mostly won out in the world.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:05 PM

like if I didn't believe in orthogonality I would agree with you



curi 11-Oct-18 08:06 PM

your own point 2 is that there is core knowledge that is pretty general purpose. what i'm saying is that that core knowledge has implications for goals, it's not compatible with all goals.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:07 PM

pretty much yeah



curi 11-Oct-18 08:08 PM

like truth-seeking helps with one's general power/effectiveness, so that's incompatible with wanting ppl to be obedient slaves instead of collaborative debaters.

division of labor and specialization helps create more wealth. that's another part of the core of how to get the power to control the universe.

so where's the orthogonality?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:12 PM

you might be right regardless of orthogonality about systems made out of humans like for taxes and stuff



curi 11-Oct-18 08:12 PM

ah, maybe your view on orthogonality is related to your conception of all of mind design space?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:14 PM

I think there are things in morality that don't have an objective truth value like thievery



curi 11-Oct-18 08:14 PM

hm but the LW ppl themselves say "He argued that sufficiently advanced AI systems would all naturally discover similar instrumental subgoals. "



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:15 PM

oh yeah that's what I was saying about your squirrel thing reminding me of that



curi 11-Oct-18 08:15 PM

i guess the thinking is the subgoals, and the ideas required for them, do not have broader implications?

yeah i know. it's ridiculous they think their guy invented it in 2008



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:15 PM

there's this separation between subgoals and terminal goals

I don't think anyone thinks he invented most of the stuff



curi 11-Oct-18 08:16 PM

well the wiki claims

"The idea was first explored by Steve Omohundro."



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:17 PM

the sequences are certainly where a lot of people first learned about a lot of that stuff

I think you'd even agree with most of it, a lot of it is fairly basic



curi 11-Oct-18 08:18 PM

i think it's a mistake to put a hard separation on goal ideas and implementation ideas.

i think it's all just ideas and there are many relationships.

when you set a subgoal of creating trillions of dollars of wealth, you learn about property and social cooperation and free trade to accomplish it, and those ideas then affect your judgments of goals.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:20 PM

maybe that's possible

but you could also do that while keeping your original terminal goal



curi 11-Oct-18 08:20 PM

this is related to one of the things i think is hard about AGI, which is that problems, solutions, criticisms ... all need to be the same "idea" data structure, not separate categories.

goals too



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:21 PM

maybe

I don't think we can be confident at this point about implementation details of AGI



curi 11-Oct-18 08:21 PM

not confident exactly, but it's hard to see another approach being possible given CR



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:23 PM

have you seen yudkowsky's old agi writeups?
he completely disavows them now



curi 11-Oct-18 08:23 PM

probably not. i haven't read a lot of his stuff besides hpmor.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:23 PM

did you like hpmor?



curi 11-Oct-18 08:23 PM

he's hostile to my view of reason and is not open to correction, so he's boring.
yes i liked it
pretty long to read without liking!



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:24 PM

doesn't stop some people
you'd be surprised



curi 11-Oct-18 08:24 PM



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:24 PM

it's actually crazy



curi 11-Oct-18 08:24 PM

i hate that
had a guy read Atlas Shrugged a few weeks ago
b/c i recommend it in general
he didn't tell me
he didn't like it
he got over 1000 pages in before bringing it up
he never gave a specific criticism of anything
just didn't think it was very good



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:25 PM

is atlas shrugged the best one?

if you were to only read one rand book

which one? (edited)



curi 11-Oct-18 08:25 PM

yes but that doesn't mean you should start with it

i guess you'd be better off reading some of her non-fiction essays or reading Mises instead.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:29 PM

this essay is pretty fun <http://yudkowsky.net/rational/the-simple-truth/>

Yudkowsky - The Simple Truth

What is "truth"? It's surprisingly simple.



curi 11-Oct-18 08:30 PM

reading that kind of thing is often frustrating for me b/c i think parts are good, parts bad, and there's no hope of fixing it.

also, if productive interaction is not available, it has to compete vs all writing by dead ppl, and it's hard for it to win that competition.

his contact page promotes widespread violence while also making it pretty clear he won't listen to better ideas.

that's so sad.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:39 PM

I think you underestimate the amount of garbage that he's gotten over the years



curi 11-Oct-18 08:39 PM

no

it's a lot. i know that.

btw, i bet i've gone through more garbage than he has



Roche 11-Oct-18 08:40 PM

how many objectivist are in this discord?

I know at least 4.



curi 11-Oct-18 08:41 PM

alan me justin ingrack neto khaan scuro

prob more



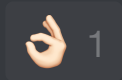
Roche 11-Oct-18 08:41 PM

I liked alan's cr vid
do you vote curi?



curi 11-Oct-18 08:41 PM

nah, got better uses of time



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:42 PM

it's just not feasible to argue your points with every one of the hundreds of people that disagree with you



curi 11-Oct-18 08:42 PM

i didn't propose that



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:42 PM

especially if you want to get anything else done



curi 11-Oct-18 08:42 PM

have you read any of my Paths Forward material?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:42 PM

a while ago



curi 11-Oct-18 08:43 PM

i address this issue at length

time management is a skill with solutions, and anyway if he had proxies that'd be fine.

if you're so popular u get too many inquiries, use that popularity to arrange for other ppl to address inquiries. unless your legion fans are all too dumb to do it.

address most stuff with reusable, canonical material which can be linked instead of rewritten in the future

etc

but there's no excuse for just him and his entire fanbase ignoring dissent based on social status, as he does.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:45 PM

people link the sequences all the time



curi 11-Oct-18 08:46 PM

and not only that, but ignoring some semi famous ideas.

sure but the sequences do not address Popper nor me. they work fine for some purposes and that's good.

it's not just me and popper he doesn't answer. afaik he doesn't regularly address *any* dissent he regards as high quality.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:49 PM

have you actually emailed him?



curi 11-Oct-18 08:49 PM

yes ofc



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:49 PM

I'm sure what happened is that either he's heard your argument before or he misread your argument as one he's heard before



curi 11-Oct-18 08:50 PM

<http://curi.us/2063-criticism-of-eliezer-yudkowsky-on-karl-popper>

Criticism of Eliezer Yudkowsky on Karl Popper

I wrote this in Feb 2009. There was no reply.



Dear Eliezer Yudkowsky,

I am writing to criticize some of your statements regarding Karl Popper. I hope this will be of interest.

<http://yudkowsky.net>

<http://curi.us/2065-open-letter-to-machine-intelligence-research-institute> (i didn't CC this one to him b/c it was after he had personally suppressed my speech on LW, so i thought he didn't want to hear from me)

Open Letter to Machine Intelligence Research Institute

I emailed this to some MIRI people and others related to Less Wrong.



I believe I know some important things you don't, such as that induction is impossible, and that your approach to AGI is inco

note ofc that he saw my writing about Popper on LW. his reaction was to hide it, not to think about it or answer it or tell me where it had already been answered by anyone (it hasn't been)



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:51 PM

did they hide anything besides the one about the conjunction fallacy? (edited)



curi 11-Oct-18 08:51 PM

yeah

they also disabled starting new topics if your karma is under 0 or -10 or something (back then) and ppl downvoted me into being unable to speak.

the whole community is designed in such a way that even if i'm right, they will never find out maybe if i get famous elsewhere, they will end up finding out about some ideas. this is a really bad backup mechanism for error correction – hearing about ideas that get high social status in general.

DD has won major prizes, published books that actually sold a fair amount, is in the royal society. this isn't enough.

he has more or less the same views and objections that i do, and no way to be heard by them.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:57 PM

obviously your posts on less wrong didn't actually convince anyone



curi 11-Oct-18 08:57 PM

what's your point?

mine is they, objectively, *did not address my arguments*.

instead of solving the disagreements, they stopped discussing without learning what they were talking about or finding any rational way to conclude anything.

they ignored various criticisms, unanswered. sure they said they weren't convinced. so what? that is not a comment on the objective state of the debate, on what arguments have and have not been answered.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 08:59 PM

can you give a specific example of an argument that wasn't answered?

so I can see what you mean?



curi 11-Oct-18 08:59 PM

there are dozens in the archived discussions. why don't you pick some?



curi 11-Oct-18 09:00 PM

it's been years. i can't tell you offhand. i can say that i brought up some of the standard anti-induction arguments and wasn't answered – i'd remember a refutation of one of those – and that also they didn't refute CR's positive views (again something i'd remember that would have informed my views)

sometimes ppl even admit the flaws in their own views. i remember some of them did that on slack semi-recently. they admit weaknesses in their positions and still maintain them anyway.

it's hard to discuss with ppl who have a different epistemology b/c they disagree about what the rules of discussion are.

and none of them ever learned what CR says.

so that gets in the way of discussing which rules are better. nor did they ever adequately clarify their own rules.

you may think Paths Forward is mistaken in some way, but where is the superior alternative LW uses?

a particular issue is the claim about preferring the simplest ideas. it's first of all instrumentalist b/c it's focused on data correspondence (hopefully allowing prediction), not explanation. it's second of all arbitrary and has no way to argue that it isn't b/c it's an epistemology that doesn't provide any scope for debating/arguments at all (since those aren't predictions of data; yet they all argue, by unspecified rules that they do not connection to induction). and, third, there's no good way to calculate or measure simplicity.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:09 PM

there is a way to measure simplicity



curi 11-Oct-18 09:09 PM

i said *good* way

why don't you tell me the kolmogorov complexity of each of my last 3 messages? (edited)



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:12 PM

ok I have a question about the first one

how are newtons laws an explanation and not just focused on data correspondence? (edited)
or relativity or qm or whatever



curi 11-Oct-18 09:13 PM

well, how do you predict what will happen in situations you haven't specifically tested? b/c you have a *general understanding* of gravity – some idea of what it is, how it works, what situations it will and will not apply to.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:14 PM

newtons laws by themselves don't have that, are they not an explanation?



curi 11-Oct-18 09:14 PM

they come along with explanations, they weren't offered in isolation
he thought about explanations in order to develop them



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:17 PM

can you write these explanations in a computer program in principle?



curi 11-Oct-18 09:17 PM

sure, newton's mind was a computer program
already been done



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:17 PM

I meant in a computer language



curi 11-Oct-18 09:18 PM

sure, you can port code btwn different languages. cuz turing



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:18 PM

I think explanations, though, use huge amounts of "libraries" that exist in all human minds
that we don't understand



curi 11-Oct-18 09:18 PM

so you must be able to write it in lisp if u can write it in humanbrain
well you can port the libraries too



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:18 PM

because we don't actually have the source code



curi 11-Oct-18 09:20 PM

consider the issue of what entities gravity applies to. the formula doesn't tell you. you need supplementary information. well it's kinda implied by the variable names, which refer to quite a bit of information. it deals with things like masses and distances and motion. this relates to our understanding of some things as material objects with mass and velocity, and some things as not in that category. this categorization is not implied by the data, we came up with it b/c it makes sense in some explanatory way. we critically considered it and other data-compatible categorizations and preferred this one.

the set of things you think gravity applies to could be *any* set that includes all the things you have observed gravity apply to, plus any other stuff that you haven't observed gravity fail to apply to.

how do you choose between these possibilities? explanation and criticism.

e.g. having arguments against arbitrary exceptions *is not a part of the data*
so you need *something else*.

i find LW ppl in general accept such arguments, as they are part of common sense, but they have no idea what the epistemological basis is, b/c their epistemology doesn't support it.

predicting data with formulas doesn't support arguing that arbitrariness is bad.

data prediction is like pattern competition, and there's always infinitely many options, and you can't differentiate them with the data.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:23 PM

I feel like you're talking about different things here



curi 11-Oct-18 09:23 PM

different than what?

i think this is all epistemology – the field about how learning works, how knowledge is created.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:24 PM

like argument and criticism is on a different level than induction and simplest option
like, if you watch what less wrong people do, they have arguments and criticize them too
to some degree at least
but you need a human mind to be able to do that



curi 11-Oct-18 09:25 PM

if induction isn't an *alternative* to argument and criticism, then what is it for? if it's not solving the same problem, what problem is it solving? does it come *before or after* argument and criticism?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:25 PM

it's like...

the difference between proving an upper bound on the runtime of an algorithm and figuring out how well it performs on different datasets



curi 11-Oct-18 09:26 PM

argument and criticism is a general purpose, universal method. if it's allowed, what do we need induction for? and induction is *not* general purpose (well traditionally it's supposed to be, but u seem to accept it's not)



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:26 PM

as an analogy

induction in it's universal form is uncomputable, and the approximations take too long to run but what you do when you figure out theories is approximate induction



Scuro 11-Oct-18 09:27 PM

Induction is about reasoning from the specific to the general

Also hello (:

You guys have been busy



curi 11-Oct-18 09:28 PM

@mister_person do you learn from induction *prior to* using arguments, or can you argue before or during the (approximate) induction? (edited)

and where, if anywhere, is your position written down?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:29 PM

one thing that induction is useful for is refuting bad arguments

or, occam's razor

maybe not induction specifically



curi 11-Oct-18 09:30 PM

hold on, let's go through the basics



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:30 PM

even though simplest can't always be easily defined, you can show that one theory is simpler than another

for example "relativity + god" is simpler than "relativity"



curi 11-Oct-18 09:31 PM

can you answer my latest questions?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:33 PM

"do you learn from induction prior to using arguments, or can you argue before or during the (approximate) induction?" can you clarify this?



curi 11-Oct-18 09:34 PM

is induction built on top of the prior ability to do critical argument, or vice versa, or are they simultaneous?

if you think of them each as code libraries, does either library reference the other?

FYI the traditional, standard position is that the ability to do critical argument is built on top of induction, which precedes it. the critical argument code calls various functions from the induction library, and not vice versa.

this is one of the things Popper argued against.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 09:37 PM

My position is that induction gives you the generalisation from which you can construct deductive arguments. In the classic "All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. Socrates is mortal", induction gives you the "all men are mortal" part.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:38 PM

except sometimes men aren't mortal, if we get enough technology



curi 11-Oct-18 09:39 PM

is my question clear now?




mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:40 PM

oh yeah good analogy



Scuro 11-Oct-18 09:41 PM

You would need to supply evidence for that, but supposing it were true, you have just learned something new and now you can say *some* men are mortal, or "men with enhancements are immortal" etc.


 curi 11-Oct-18 09:46 PM

are you pondering, or what? does LW have any clear position on this? (i haven't been able to discover one, but haven't 'looked everywhere)



mister_person 11-Oct-18 09:46 PM

yes and also eating

 curi 11-Oct-18 09:56 PM


@Scuro it's up to you to specify the rules by which you get from a data set (including mortal men) to a generalization (all men are mortal) rather than some of the other possible generalizations that also fit (do not contradict) the data. this has been attempted for centuries without success. there are also arguments about why it doesn't work, but i think trying to actually flesh out the details of your position is a good approach, so you can run into the difficulties yourself.

(or if that isn't done with a set of rules, what exactly is it done by? intelligent thought? but the issue here is to explain intelligence, so it can't be presupposed while solving that problem.)



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:19 PM

Moving from specific observations to generalisations involves the nature of concepts and the metaphysical axioms, though much like the axioms themselves, this is implicit in the process rather than explicit. Essentially, we know that everything is what it is, it has a nature, therefore when you observe an action of a particular entity, you know that that action had to occur due to the nature of the entity and the circumstances within which the action occurred - it could not have been otherwise (does not apply to creatures with free will but that's another story). In any one observation, the information you get is that this entity does x in y scenario. Due to the nature of concepts, when you identify a particular entity, you know that some of z entities do x in y scenario. Now the question is, what is it about the nature of these specific z entities that make them do x, and what is it about y scenario that is relevant to the action. If we start on the lowest level, these are generalisations based on direct perceptual observation. You see z acting in x way in y scenario - that is factual - now let's say z is a red ball, x is rolling, and y is across a flat table after being pushed by your hand. You can observe that the ball does not accelerate until you add your hand's motion to the scenario, so the hand is necessary to the action. Due to the law of identity, you know the entity must be able to perform the action due to its nature, then you can vary the circumstances, maybe the ball does not roll on flat planes of different materials quite so well, maybe you flatten the ball and change its nature such that it does not roll anymore.

 curi 11-Oct-18 10:21 PM

when you say things like, "Essentially, we know that everything is what it is, it has a nature, therefore when you observe an action of a particular entity, you know that that action had to occur due to the nature of the entity and the circumstances within which the action occurred - it could not have been otherwise (does not apply to creatures with free will but that's another story). " you are presupposing intelligent thought. how else would you know that?



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:21 PM

You find out that due to the nature of balls, they must roll given the right amount of force and the correct environment, which so far is only flat level surfaces. You can generalise about balls of this kind now. Maybe you encounter a ball that is too heavy for you to move, or glued to the ground etc, now you know not *all* balls will roll if you push them. Knowledge is contextual and humans are fallible. You may over generalise and be corrected by further observations, but the facts of the observed case are enough to prove that x action is possible to z entity given y circumstances. It's a matter of inducing additional circumstances, entities with different properties that fall under the same concept, to find out more information.

I said those things are implicit, it's not necessary to know them.

We know them explicitly so I can explain what is done implicitly with direct reference to the information provided by every perception.

You cannot perceive any entity without implicitly receiving information that it exists, is something, and that you are conscious of it.



curi 11-Oct-18 10:24 PM

you can't perceive entities at all. you have to use intelligent thought to categorize what you see into entities.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:26 PM

All you perceive is entities, there is no such thing as perceiving non-entities. Due to the nature of human consciousness, we do not get disintegrated sensations. Sensations are automatically integrated into percepts by the human mind. (edited)

Volition begins on the conceptual level, you have no choice in perceiving entities, whether or not you conceive of them as such.



curi 11-Oct-18 10:26 PM

you perceive things more like blobs of colors, and you have to figure out what's what, that's not automatic

you're glossing over the basics of epistemology by claiming it happens automatically somehow, rather than solving the problem as CR does.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:27 PM

Nobody perceives just blobs of colour, that's evidently false. (edited)



curi 11-Oct-18 10:27 PM

what is one piece of evidence to the contrary?



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:28 PM

That you differentiate between entities via perception.



curi 11-Oct-18 10:28 PM

but i don't think i do

it's not blobs of color *by the time it reaches the conscious part of your adult mind*. that is your evidence, but that simply doesn't tell you whether perception or unconscious, changeable thinking methods interpreted it.

it also doesn't tell you how babies learn to understand entities, and what it's like for them at birth.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:32 PM

Volition begins at the conscious level, there is no changing what is unconscious (automatic), which is my claim. Sensations are integrated into percepts by the nature of the human mind, which is a fact of reality just like any other. Perception is the given. All I'm saying is that entities of a particular nature interact with our sense organs in a certain way, which is processed by the mind in its particular form, and we get conscious experience.



curi 11-Oct-18 10:32 PM

that is not Rand's view!



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:32 PM

Where does she contradict that?



curi 11-Oct-18 10:32 PM

Rand's view is like: most of our thinking is automated/unconscious, but that's b/c we developed and automated it, and we can un-automate, rethink and change it.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:33 PM

That's the subconscious level

That's not the same thing



curi 11-Oct-18 10:33 PM

ok replace everything i said about unconscious with subconscious then.

also, in my understanding, Rand's view is that percept *means* what is given, which is *not* a claim that the data is already organized into entities.

Rand even says "As far as can be ascertained, an infant's sensory experience is an undifferentiated chaos. "

which contradicts your position that organizing sensory data is automatic and inborn, and so would be already available at birth?



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:37 PM

The unconscious level is the automatic processing that occurs due to the nature of the human mind. In ITOE she says "A percept is a group of sensations automatically retained and integrated by the brain of a living organism. It is in the form of percepts that man grasps the evidence of his senses and apprehends reality. When we speak of "direct perception" or "direct awareness", we mean the perceptual level".



curi 11-Oct-18 10:37 PM

yeah i'm denying that includes entities



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:38 PM

She says so on page 6



curi 11-Oct-18 10:38 PM

i don't have page numbers



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:39 PM

"The (implicit) concept "existent" undergoes three stages of development in man's mind. The first stage is a child's awareness of objects, of things - which represents the (implicit) concept "entity".

I'm typing these by hand so sorry they're taking a while



curi 11-Oct-18 10:39 PM

that does not say "percepts include organization of stuff into entities"

in what you quote, Rand says that that there is *development* (= after birth, by thinking and learning). she's not describing what's automatic but what's learned.

she says that infants see chaos and young children learn to recognize entities out of that chaos.



mister_person 11-Oct-18 10:42 PM

I think we have structures in our brains specifically designed for learning to see though



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:43 PM

Earlier she says: "The building block of man's knowledge is the concept of an "existent" - of something that exists, be it a thing, an attribute, or an action. Since it is a concept, man cannot grasp it explicitly until he has reached the conceptual stage. But it is implicit in every percept (to perceive a thing is to perceive that it exists) and man grasps it implicitly on the perceptual level - i.e. he grasps the constituents of the concept "existent", the data which are later to be integrated by that concept."



curi 11-Oct-18 10:43 PM

there's no such thing as a structure for "learning to see" b/c the only known method of learning (evolution) is universal.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:44 PM

And the first stage of "existent" is "entity".



curi 11-Oct-18 10:45 PM

how do you explain her claim that "an infant's sensory experience is an undifferentiated chaos"?

do you think she contradicted herself?



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:45 PM

The perceptual level is the given, to perceive is to perceive existents, and the first level of awareness is the awareness of objects, entities.

No, I don't, she says in that quote that it is sensory experience, in order to integrate sensations into percepts the brain must first have sensations which can be integrated. She also says that the study of senses is the province of science and her epistemology begins on the given, perceptual level.



curi 11-Oct-18 10:51 PM

if the stuff you're talking about is fully automatic and innate, it would apply to infants.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:51 PM

I've gotta take off now though, heading out for a few hours. Fun chat though, if you follow this up I'll respond when I return.




curi 11-Oct-18 10:51 PM

Rand says it doesn't, then talks about stages of development to get to the point of recognizing stuff.



Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:51 PM

Sure but percepts have to begin with sensations, you can't immediately begin to perceive, that's incoherent.

 curi 11-Oct-18 10:53 PM


the process is a photon hits your eye and then the sensation is processed by the optic nerve and that algorithmically processed information is passed on to your brain.

so perception happens a fraction of a second after sensation.

in her 3 stages, at stage 1 the child is aware that *some things exist* but can't recognize them. in stage 2, he has learned to actually recognize some particular entities like that table or this apple. in stage 3, he understands and recognizes categories of things, like apples or tables. this has to be developed in stages because it's not innate. when she says that the concept of percept implies existents, it doesn't mean you can see what particular objects exist (doesn't mean you can directly perceive how to organize what you're seeing into objects), it just means that in seeing anything it implies that some things of some sort exist.

 Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:55 PM


Yes, and that first stage is the stage of entities.

 curi 11-Oct-18 10:55 PM

the first stage is not recognizing any entities, it's being aware that something exists.

 Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:56 PM

Which she says corresponds to the awareness of entities. They are not distinguished or particular yet, but you are first "aware of objects, things - which represents the (implicit) concept *entity*."


 curi 11-Oct-18 10:56 PM

right so the perception hasn't distinguished the entities, you have to do that at a later stage. categorization is non-trivial and there are often multiple valid answers, e.g. a drink can be viewed as one thing or a collection of things (glass, ice cubes, lemonade). your perception doesn't tell us which categorization is correct and make us stuck with that one, and actually we can recognize both by our thinking.


we can develop and use multiple organizational schemas because the organizational schemas are at the subconscious level not the perceptual level.

 Scuro 11-Oct-18 10:58 PM

Right, the second stage is "identity" - of distinguishing specific things
I've gotta go though, happy to continue when I get back (:

 curi 11-Oct-18 10:58 PM

cu

 curi 11-Oct-18 11:01 PM

consider the diagram that looks like: X. imagine the X shape drawn on paper. is that one entity, two or four (or even some other number)? this is not hardcoded into our optic nerve,

it's a thing people interpret subconsciously and sometimes they change their interpretation based on context or learning a new way to look at it (as a letter instead of as line segments).

is it a letter, 2 line segments, 4 line segments, 19 line segments, 2 triangles that each have one side missing, a greater than entity followed by a less than entity? *this is determined by thinking, ideas, human knowledge, not inborn perception*. that's why, as Rand says, infants don't yet know how to do it (in any of those ways at all). then, via stages of development, they learn how (which is compatible with them learning more than one perspective and looking at something from multiple perspectives when there is value in doing so)

that's why it's possible for us to see the same thing (X) in more than one way, as more than one set of entities or type of entity. b/c it's not just automatically determined by the optic nerve (which would give us no room for alternative viewpoints than the one the optic nerve said)

Rand says percepts are self-evident, not sensations. that's b/c the optic nerve does some processing so you don't just get individual photon strikes on your retina sent to your brain, it's combined into different form than that. but what to make of an X is not self-evident, and therefore cannot be perceptual.

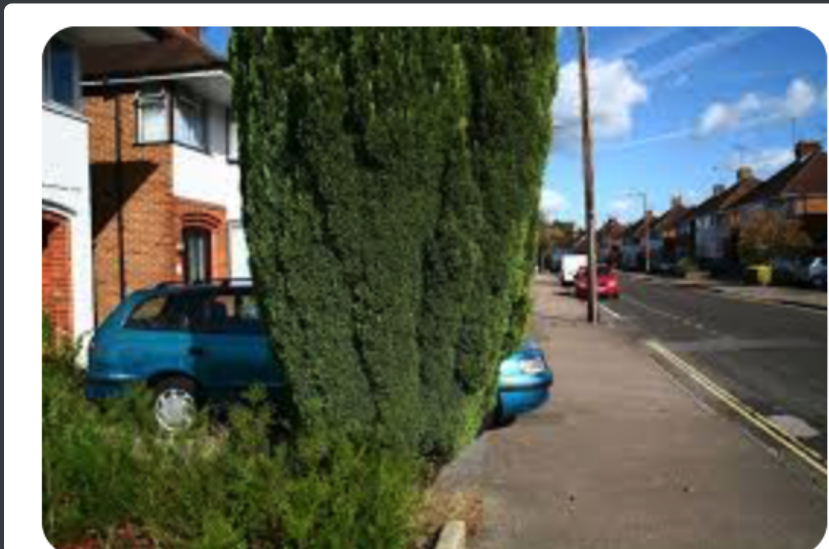
is an apple one thing, or is it multiple things: skin, flesh, seeds, core, stem? i'm just saying your optic nerve doesn't decide that for you.

sometimes ppl – even adults – get confused and don't know what they are looking at. they see various shapes and colors. they could draw it. but they don't realize that it's e.g. a house with some scaffolding, partly obscured by some trees, seen from a particular angle. they don't realize what it is right away, or at all. how can this be? b/c the optic nerve doesn't automatically know such things. haven't you ever seen something where it wasn't obvious to you what you were seeing, and you had to look at it more and think about it and then you realize what it was and understood what was what?

for example, many ppl see this incorrectly at first. they are incorrect about whether there is 1 person or 2 ppl. how can that be? b/c the optic nerve doesn't automatically know such things, and their subconscious ideas aren't perfect.



imagine a baby who'd never seen a car before, and he is blindfolded, taken outside, shown this. would he know the blue on left and right are both part of the same entity? no. you can't perceive that, you have to know what a car is, have seen whole cars before, rather than it being born into your optic nerve. there are plenty of kinda similar looking views in which there are 2 separate blue entities, and it takes *learning* to get *skilled* at figuring out which is which. the way adults figure it out involves being familiar with cars (and the risk of being tricked by a person who stages a misleading scene, b/c there's no way to directly perceive whether the middle of that car even exists or not, whether it's actually 1 or 2 pieces, you just guess by what's common).



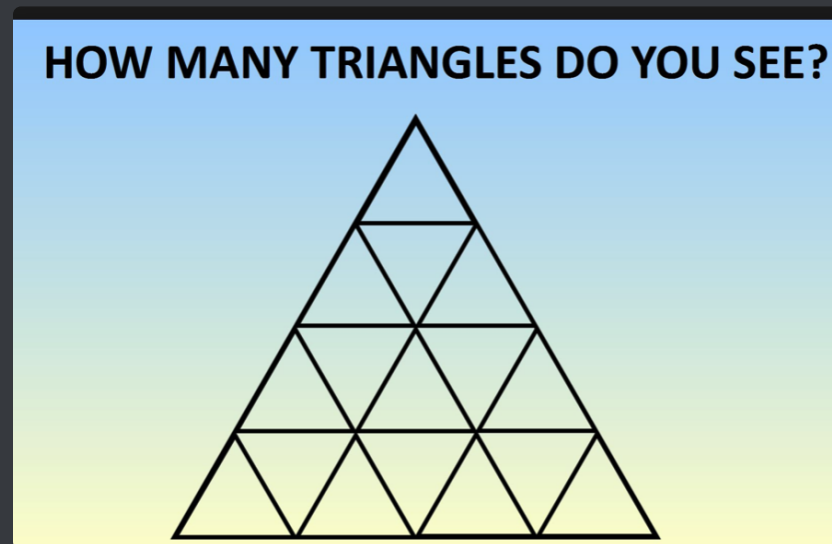
note: discord puts images under the text they go with, not above, which is not really what i expected.

that's actually a good example. it's easy to mis-see picture + text below it = 1 entity. when

actually picture + text above it = 1 entity. cuz perception just doesn't automatically know the right way to organize what you see into entities. (edited)

another good example is words and paragraphs. ppl automate being able to look at a page and see the words and paragraphs as entities, rather than just seeing a big mess of squiggles. that's learned, not innate.

another example of how it takes thought to decide what entities you're looking at, it's not automatic:




similarly, from How We Know (by HB), there is a section titled "PERCEPTION AS INERRANT". how can that be? b/c perception doesn't include knowing whether there is 1 or 2 ppl on the motorcycle (a thing that ppl can and do get wrong). perception also doesn't tell you whether there is a middle of a car behind the tree, b/c again it's possible to be mistaken about that. therefore you can't know, from perception alone, whether the front and back of the car are part of a single car entity or not.

HB explains: Questions of validity or invalidity arise only where there is volitional control of the cognitive process, culminating in a conceptual judgment — as when you think to yourself: “the pitter-patter I’m now hearing is rain.”

that is, when you try to categorize the percepts into actual stuff, like rain, then you are going beyond perception.

HOW WE KNOW • 2: PERCEPTION 74

The millennia-old example is that of the straight object that appears as if it were bent when semi-submerged in water:



The stick looks bent, but it is actually straight. Isn't this, then, a case of mistaken perception? No, for we must distinguish between the act of *seeing* and the use of *concepts* to describe what is seen. There is nothing erroneous about the stick's appearance; one's eyes and brain are functioning as their nature demands. The perceptual data are not wrong or mistaken — but they can be *misleading*: a naïve observer is likely to conclude: “This stick is bent.” If he does, it is that *conceptual judgment*, not the seeing, that is mistaken.

i find this very clear. conceptual judgment – is it one stick or two? is it bent or straight? *is not perception, it's conceptual judgment* (that we typically automate and do subconsciously)

refracts the light waves, as it must.)

There are countless other illusions, involving shape, color, lightness and darkness, motion — you name it. But they all have the same form:

Our senses tell us so and so.
But so and so is not the case.

Our senses have erred.

The error is in the first premise. Our senses do not talk to us. The senses do not form propositions. They do not make judgments. Perception is only perception, not perception plus a proposition. Your sight of the stick does not even include the simple proposition: “That is a stick.”

It is crucial to be absolutely clear on what is perception and what is more advanced than perception.

perception *does not include* knowing "that is a stick" – identifying particular entities like sticks.

next page: “Perception” includes: seeing, hearing, touch, smelling, tasting, and awareness of things going on in our bodies (proprioception). “Perception” does not include: association, expectation, prediction, classification, inference, propositions, intellect, reason, interpretation, judgment, thought.

There is a linguistic signal in English for the difference between the perceptual and the conceptual: the locution “seeing that” always indicates a judgment, never just perception. You see a tree. But to see that it is a tree is “seeing” in only a metaphorical sense. To see that something is a tree is to go beyond the perception to subsume what is perceived under the concept “tree.”



curi 11-Oct-18 11:49 PM


in other words: classifying things you see into entities, like trees, is not part of perception.

[@mister_person](#) come up with any answers yet about induction?



mister_person 11-Oct-18 11:52 PM

some, but I'm doing something right now



curi 12-Oct-18 12:08 AM

notably, HB goes on to contradict himself and say what scuro was claiming: 1. Perception is awareness of entities — of things (including their characteristics). Whereas the crayfish's tail-spot only discriminates brightness from darkness, human vision provides man with awareness not of stimuli but of the objects in the world, the objects that are responsible for the patterns in the light received by the eye. We see trees, dogs, books, clouds — rather than just discriminating a general level of illumination. Human eyes, like the crayfish's tail spot, respond to light, but the human visual system is able to detect and exploit patterns in the light. The nature of these patterns is determined by the layout of the objects that reflected the light. Detecting these patterns enables the visual system to discriminate entities from each other. Thus, the content of visual perception is a world of entities. Vision contrasts not light with darkness but a lighter and/or differently colored thing against the other things in its background.

well, maybe it's just ambiguous and misleading. he contrasts seeing trees with only seeing a general level of illumination, which certainly isn't how our eyes work. we see more detail than the crayfish, which is enough for us to classify some of it as trees.

he clearly said above that you *can't* see that something is a tree. but here he says "we see trees". i think this is just misleading and bad phrasing, rather than his actual view. i think his actual view was the one above. he means we see, and that includes seeing trees, but not seeing *that* they are trees. he's being pedantic in a confusing way.

well he goes on to say we perceive a world of discriminated entities. discrimination is classification, so he's just contradicting himself.

Rand is clear and fine tho. She says stage 2 of the *conceptual* development of the concept of "existent" is when people learn to "distinguish" objects within their perceptual field. (this means: the objects were not already distinguished by perception itself. which fits with e.g. the idea of perception as the given or inerrant, b/c such distinguishing is capable of error and can be done in more than one way)

i disagree with Rand when she claims "Similarity is grasped perceptually". deciding what characteristics to compare, and what sets of compared values to regard as similar, isn't perceptual. it's actually tricky and ppl vary in how they do it and how good they are at it, and mistakes are common.

similarity is not self-evident, as percepts are.

that's why so much effort has gone into things like OCR and facial recognition software — hard problems, takes lots of thought to do it well.

those technologies are about similarity: which letter is this mark on the page similar to? which known face is any section of this new photo similar to?

furthermore, one can't judge similarity until *after* distinguishing what one sees into entities (so that one can judge similarity between particular entities one has seen), so that can't be addressed perceptually when, as Rand says, entities aren't yet distinguished.



Scuro 12-Oct-18 12:56 AM

This is a lot but I look forward to going through it, I'm out at the moment but I'll return soon and dig in (:



mister_person 12-Oct-18 03:10 AM

induction is true because every time I've tried it so far it worked. (lol)



curi 12-Oct-18 03:11 AM

you can't consider whether or when you've done it until you have a clearer idea of what doing it consists of than we've reached in the conversation so far (edited)



mister_person 12-Oct-18 03:11 AM

I wasn't serious

I thought it was funny because it's circular



Scuro 12-Oct-18 03:42 AM

Whoops

Not done yet 😊



Scuro 12-Oct-18 08:56 AM

Okay, here's my understanding: so the X is one entity as distinguished from the paper it is drawn on and is integrated as such perceptually. All the further dissecting you name in this case is a process of abstraction, of volitional focus and identification. It's not a matter of hardwiring in the sense organ, it's a matter of how the brain integrates the information given to it by the senses. For example, if the X were also rough where the paper itself was smooth, that is an integration of two senses which differentiate the X from the paper. The human mind has a definite nature which integrates the information relayed by the senses in a particular form - it has to, given the law of identity also applies to consciousness. To ask if the X is a letter is to identify the entity conceptually; to ask if it is 2 lines or 4 lines etc. is to ask about the entity's attributes. These are all abstract ideas, not the perceptually given. All you get perceptually is an entity, X, as differentiated from the surrounding paper. You can reduce these differences to a unit of measurement, i.e. shape, light wave frequency, paper evenness etc. - all of it is objective data received through sensory interaction. Between an object of a definite nature, sense organs of a definite nature, and the integrating human mind of a definite nature. Metaphysically, the X is what it is, but whether you focus on it as 4 intersecting segments or two overlapping sticks or identify it as a multiplication symbol in context - all of that is conceptual. The perceptually given, initially, is entities. All that exists are entities. To speak of perception without perceiving entities is incoherent.

Infants begin on the sensory level, that is "chronologically, man's consciousness develops in three stages: the stage of sensation, the perceptual, the conceptual - epistemologically, the base of all man's knowledge is the perceptual stage" (5). The chaos she describes in the infant is the reception of sensations which are then integrated into percepts. You cannot begin as a human being, chronologically in your development, with perceptual experience, because percepts are integrations of sensations. That integration is done automatically, so epistemologically you must begin with percepts because they are the basis of all knowledge, since "percepts, not sensations, are the given, the self-evident", and abstract conceptual knowledge is based on the integration of percepts. So concept formation begins on the level of integrating *percepts*, but what we're talking about is a process of *differentiation* between perceptual-level entities. Rand says that discriminated awareness begins on the level of percepts (5). In response to the question "perception directly gives you a certain kind of

quantitative information" she answers "yes", and to the follow-up "even prior to either implicit or explicit concepts" she answers "that's right". This is the basis for differentiation of entities. Quantitative differences of perceptual data between them. She also says "everything we perceive is the result of our processing, which is not arbitrary or subjective". These are definite interactions. We don't see the X in more than one way, that's an abstract metaphor for interpreting the meaning of the X or identifying it. Your perception is objective. When you think of the X as, say, a greater than and less than sign put together, you're selectively focusing on one half, then the other half, of an entity which is singular. That's abstraction.

As for the photon interaction, I suppose you could think of that as an integration of sorts, but I don't think that's what is meant by integration of sensations. Rand is saying that we do not just feel smoothness here and see red over there and taste sweetness, in these bursts of information from our senses which are transitory; they are integrated and stored together so we get the perception of a smooth, red, sweet entity which we can later identify as an apple. The senses work together and are integrated. As for those parts you mentioned, an apple is all those things at once. Metaphysically an entity *is* its attributes, and epistemologically you regard the parts as attributes of the whole entity. They can only be separated abstractly from that which possesses them. "An entity is that which you perceive and which can exist by itself" (264). It is something physically together, distinguished from other entities. When you perceive the apple, you're perceiving one distinguished entity as differentiated from those that surround it. Those parts are attributes of the entity, due to automatic integration and differentiation, such that if they're physically removed, you now have separate different entities, and no longer an apple. Parts can be epistemologically regarded as attributes, though not all attributes are parts (colour for example).

On the paragraph beginning "sometimes ppl..." – firstly I would say perception extends beyond vision, and the optic nerve does not know anything, it merely interacts in a certain way to certain stimuli and conveys information. On the confusing bike image – all those identifying terms you are using are conceptual, they're abstract ways of identifying the perceptually given, and you are correct that this information is not something that comes automatically – however, discriminating entities is perceptual, that is, recognising they are specific and have *some* identity – actually identifying them is an abstract process. "Two people, 1 person" – those are concepts, what you have metaphysically remains the same, what you have perceptually is some discriminated entities against a backdrop of different entities. Now where does the confusion come in? Well initially, it's because perception integrates automatically and operates in a definite way, based on differences and similarities in the data you receive through the senses. These are all facts in reality as well: the relationship between your senses, your particular nature as a human being with an integrating mind, and the nature of the objects being perceived. This is why camouflage is effective, for example, because it mixes up the visual information used to differentiate one entity from its background visually. (Then you could distinguish another way, maybe by accidentally touching a camouflaged chameleon and noticing a difference that wasn't visually obvious, or maybe you never would)

This unclear data leads to conceptual issues. There is no perceptual confusion about whether the helmet and the man's legs are one continuous entity, those are abstract questions, what you are imposing is an abstract interpretation which identifies the man's leg and helmet as a human body, assuming that inside the helmet is a human head (not perceived), and that humans are identified roughly as entities of a certain shape which includes body + head etc. Perceptually, if asked, you could point separately to the helmet, the leg/torso (without necessarily identifying it correctly as such), but identifying those parts as belonging to a different human is conceptual. What you see is what you get, perception does not lie, but when you say "there are two people on that bike" *that* is where the error comes in.

On the car and tree: correct, without some additional knowledge, you could not *identify* the

car in the two parts you perceive. What you can do on the perceptual level is distinguish the car parts from the tree in the middle; notice similarities between the car parts as against the tree; perceive the tree as a separate entity. I don't take words + pictures to fit the definition of single entity btw. As for single words or paragraphs, yeah, they're entities, and they're still squiggles, and each letter is an entity. You learn to identity the words and associate the word with the concept, but the words are entities by virtue of their differentiation from other words via the space between them, not by virtue of their abstract identity. The triangle test is more abstraction. The entire thing is one entity, to identify additional triangles you need the concept "triangle" and you need to focus and abstract individual triangular shapes from the whole. I agree that perception does not include knowing how many people are on a motorcycle, and nor will it identify the car behind the tree - this is my point exactly, that's a conceptual level understanding. I agree again with the rain example. I agree also that questions of how many sticks or the quality of the stick or that it *is* a stick etc are conceptual. The perceptually given is that you have differentiated entities (without having to identify the entities, it's just perceptual patterns).

I agree entirely that classification and identification are not perceptual. It's not a contradiction to say we perceive differentiated entities without knowing what those entities are. What we know perceptually is *that* they are. When Binswanger says "we see trees" etc., he's merely using the tree as an example to convey to the reader that we perceive a discriminated entity, the fact that we can later call it a tree based on such and such information is not the relevant point, the point is that we do not get isolated transitory sensations, but integrated discriminated perceptions of entities. You can't see that something *is* a tree, but you can see that a tree *is*; that it exists and is not part of one big blur of colours. Discrimination is not synonymous with classification. I could see two different alien devices I've never encountered in my life and tell them apart without being able to categorise them.

I don't think Rand says what you're claiming she says, particularly not the part you italicised for emphasis. She says; "The building-block of man's knowledge is the concept of an "existent" - of something that exists, be it a thing, an attribute or an action. Since it is a concept, man cannot grasp it explicitly until he has reached the conceptual stage. But it is implicit in every percept (to perceive a thing is to perceive that it exists) and man grasps it *implicitly* on the perceptual level - i.e. he grasps the constituents of the concept "existent", the data which are later to be integrated by the concept. It is this implicit knowledge that permits his consciousness to develop further" and "The (implicit) concept "existent" undergoes three stages of development in man's mind. The first stage is a child's awareness of objects, of things - which represents the (implicit) concept "entity". The second and closely allied stage is the awareness of specific, particular things which he can recognise and distinguish from the rest of his perceptual field - which represents the (implicit) concept "identity".

Similarity is grasped perceptually because the data is differentiated and integrated into percepts automatically. It's not that you notice abstractly that this red is similar to that red, it's that you notice *this* entity as opposed to *that* entity due to the differences in sensory information which is given by the interaction and processed by the mind. As Binswanger says on p. 110, "similarity is inherently perceived against a background of difference...consciousness is a difference detector. When a naïve, pre-conceptual child attends to two items, it is their differences, not their similarities, that will be prominent". Phew. Well, this took ages haha. Worth it for discussions of this kind, I enjoy having them.



JustinCEO 12-Oct-18 09:36 AM

possibly of interest to current discussion https://groups.google.com/forum/#!msg/fallible-ideas/dXuFp-mEhJM/ww1eV_LwDQAJ

Google Groups

Google Groups allows you to create and participate in online forums and email-based groups with a rich experience for community conversations.



JustinCEO 12-Oct-18 10:42 AM

>Scuro: The unconscious level is the automatic processing that occurs due to the nature of the human mind. In ITOE she says "A percept is a group of sensations automatically retained and integrated by the brain of a living organism. It is in the form of percepts that man grasps the evidence of his senses and apprehends reality. When we speak of "direct perception" or "direct awareness", we mean the perceptual level".

>curi: the process is a photon hits your eye and then the sensation is processed by the optic nerve and that algorithmically processed information is passed on to your brain.

[10:53 PM] curi: so perception happens a fraction of a second after sensation.

This is my attempt to describe Rand's thinking by way of analogy:

I'm thinking the photon hitting your eye is like when photos hit a camera's sensor. That's sensation.

Then the automatic retention and integration stage is like a camera saving the file to an SD card. The integration Rand talks about is like a camera putting together the pixels into an image — it is not conceptual integration (discussed elsewhere in Oist epistemology) but something much more mechanical and low level.

This "saved file" provides the source material for us to engage with the world. It is the evidence of our sensations. We don't experience the sensations directly — we don't experience an individual photon here or there. We experience a bunch of photons bouncing off a chair (organized for us in the "saved file" of a percept) and see a color-shape blob we at some point *learn* to identify as a chair.


>curi: she says that infants see chaos and young children learn to recognize entities out of that chaos.

ya. it's actually cool. like, you know, the identification of basic things in the world is kind of a heroic feat. it's amazing how regularly it happens (though of course it takes a while, but people don't really remember this process — hmm I wonder if they don't remember just cuz everything's such an undifferentiated chaos to them that there's nothing meaningful to remember. A tangent!)

>curi: in her 3 stages, at stage 1 the child is aware that some things exist but can't recognize them. in stage 2, he has learned to actually recognize some particular entities like that table or this apple. in stage 3, he understands and recognizes categories of things, like apples or tables. this has to be developed in stages because it's not innate. when she says that the concept of percept implies existents, it doesn't mean you can see what particular objects exist (doesn't mean you can directly perceive how to organize what you're seeing into objects), it just means that in seeing anything it implies that some things of some sort exist.

the whole photon-striking-the-sensor and file-saving part is basically stage 0. it's a pre-condition to a child becoming aware that things exist. the saved image file has the info the child needs to make {the determination that things exist}*. making this determination before the file is created would violate causality.

*I noted my edit in curly brackets (edited)

 curi 12-Oct-18 04:44 PM

> I don't think Rand says what you're claiming she says, particularly not the part you italicised for emphasis.

i didn't italic anything for emphasis.

italics are in the original, copy/pasted

also, there's more than one italic. you should use quotes if you want to refer to particular text.

"I agree that perception does not include knowing how many people are on a motorcycle" but why do you claim perception can differentiate the tree from the car, but not a person from another person he's sitting with? (and does that apply to two people on a bench as well? how much separation between them until perception sees two entities?) i think you're making arbitrary assertions about scientific matters here.

observation is a process with multiple steps. photons hit a tree. then those photons hit your eye while carrying information about the tree. then that information is processed by the optic nerve (unconscious). then by some part of the brain that is innate and unchangeable (unconscious). then by some part of the brain which you programmed and which you can reprogram (subconscious). then, sometimes, processed more consciously. your claims are that classification of a scene into entities (like outlining some parts of a photo and saying each part you draw a line around is an entity) – which you deny is "classification" – is done in the unconscious part. the unconscious part is called "perception". i don't know how you know that this is not done subconsciously – by software that can be reprogrammed rather than by software that is inborn and uneditable. further, you talk about stages of development which refers to the subconscious – the code which can be edited rather than which is unchangeable, because unchangeable things cannot develop – and i don't see how that can be compatible with your view. if something can develop, that implies it must be part of the mind that can be updated with different software, rather than being read-only memory.

please clarify your scheme of things. the steps, which ones are static and which editable/developable, etc. [@Scuro](#)

 Scuro 12-Oct-18 09:40 PM

[@JustinCEO](#) the "integration" of photon information into an image is not the kind of sensory integration Rand is talking about on the perceptual level. I think Peikoff puts it quite clearly in OPAR; "When you the reader look, say, at a table - not *think* of it, but merely turn your eyes toward it and *look* - you enjoy a different form of awareness from that of an infant. You do not encounter an isolated ephemeral colour patch or a play of fleeting sensations, but an enduring thing, an object, an *entity*." "The reason you see an entity is that you have experienced many kinds of sensations from similar objects in the past, and your brain has retained and integrated them: it has put them together to form an indivisible whole. As a result, a complex past mental content of yours is implicit and operative in your present visual awareness. In the act of looking at a table now, you are aware of its solidity - of the fact that, unlike brown water, it will bar your your path if you try to walk through it; of its texture - unlike sandpaper, it will feel smooth to your fingertips; of many visual aspects outside the range of your glance, such as the underside of the top and the backs of the legs...All this sensory information (and much more) is tied to and cued by your present visual sensation. The result is your ability, when you look out, to see not merely a patch of brown, but a table. Such an ability exemplifies the second stage of consciousness: the perceptual level." "The integration of sensations into percepts, as I have indicated, is performed by the brain automatically. Philosophy, therefore, has no advice to offer in this regard. There can be no advice where man has no power to choose his course of behaviours."

As for the child: "the most primitive conscious organisms appear to possess only the capacity of sensation. The conscious life of such organisms is the experience of isolated, fleeting data - fleeting because the organism is bombarded by a flux of stimuli." "Since such consciousnesses do not retain their mental contents, they can hardly detect relationships among them." "Human infants start their lives in this state and remain in it for perhaps a matter of months: but no one reading these words suffers such a state now." "We do not and cannot experience the world as infants do. Indeed, we have come to learn that an infant type of experience exists only because we have made a long series of scientific discoveries...It is a sophisticated inference from what *is* given: the perceptual level. The proper order of philosophy, therefore, is not the chronological order of our actual development." The given is the perceptual level. This last statement does not mean that the entities we perceive are metaphysical primaries; as we have seen that is a question for science. It means that the grasp of entities is an *epistemological* primary, which is presupposed by all other knowledge...".

This all comes from OPAR pages 52-54.

If there are typos those are mine, I types these while referring to the book.

Italics are in the originals too btw

- "Rand is clear and fine tho. She says stage 2 of the *conceptual* development of the concept of "existent" is when people learn to "distinguish" objects within their perceptual field. (this means: the objects were not already distinguished by perception itself. which fits with e.g. the idea of perception as the given or inerrant, b/c such distinguishing is capable of error and can be done in more than one way)" @curi this is the part I was referring to, where "conceptual" is italicised. It doesn't appear to be a quote but a paraphrase. My reply proceeded down your response point by point. I should probably have used quotes but it would have made my response much longer and harder to follow I think. I tried to make my little paragraphs address a new point of yours.

- "but why do you claim perception can differentiate the tree from the car, but not a person from another person he's sitting with? (and does that apply to two people on a bench as well? how much separation between them until perception sees two entities?) i think you're making arbitrary assertions about scientific matters here." Differentiation is not the same as identification. To say "there are two people on that bike" is to identify, which is beyond perception. To differentiate the leg from the helmet from the torso (not in these explicit terms though) is a matter of perception, of sensation integration. That kind of integration is automatic and, I agree, it is the province of science to figure out how that's done specifically. Perception can differentiate (what we know conceptually to be) the car from (what we know conceptually to be) the tree, based only on the integration of sensations. To actually say "this is a car, this is a tree, this is the rest of the car", *that* is beyond perception. But to draw a line, visually, between this entity here and this entity there is a matter of perception. (edited)

- "observation is a..." You're likely correct about the scientific process there, but that is beyond the scope of philosophy and not necessary epistemological information. The perceptual level is the given; reaching that kind of mechanical sense-organ knowledge pre-supposes an epistemological theory. It is not classification simply to notice a difference in sensual information on the pre-conceptual level. There is no claim about what the kind of thing is, only *that* it is. Classification is a matter of identification; to say there is a car behind a tree. That's not the same as saying, "there is an entity there, there is an entity here", ostensibly. It does not follow that unchangeable things cannot develop either, unless you equivocate. It is unchangeable in the sense that a conscious being has no power over how it develops, not that it remains static indefinitely. For example, the fact that you grow if you have enough nutrition as a child is something you cannot change, while your body physically changes in a specific way. Perceptual development follows a natural growth uninfluenced by will because it is a pre-condition for the volitional focus which admits choice.



JustinCEO 12-Oct-18 10:14 PM

@Scuro

>"The reason you see an entity is that you have experienced many kinds of sensations from similar objects in the past, and your brain has retained and integrated them: it has put them together to form an indivisible whole. As a result, a complex past mental content of yours is implicit and operative in your present visual awareness. In the act of looking at a table now, you are aware of its solidity - - of the fact that, unlike brown water, it will bar your your path if you try to walk through it;

is the idea here that you get a concept like solidity from the perceptual level?



Scuro 12-Oct-18 10:24 PM

You do eventually, but here I think he's just saying that due to touching the table there is an implicit knowledge that this entity exists in some certain form that is different from other entities which were perceived differently.



curi 12-Oct-18 10:27 PM

you say perception develops in a way that you have no control over. this is a scientific claim, not a philosophical claim, right? and can you provide scientific details?

i also don't understand why your claims about what perception does – that it tags particular parts of a scene as entities – is something you're confident of. that is science, and i see no threat to Objectivism from dropping some of the claims you're making, no need to claim them.

differentiation is a type of classification: it classifies two things as separate. this is quite hard and i don't think it's being done automatically, by genetic knowledge, in cases where you think it is.

when you see two apples from a perspective where they overlap, how is your genetic knowledge supposed to differentiate that into two entities instead of one? and why do you think it's important to Objectivism to claim that it does, rather than that that differentiation is done subconsciously?

you're making claims about automatic development outside the mind. it's like you're claiming a person has *two* minds – the conscious one (that also has a subconscious part), and a second one which he has no control over, but which learns things after birth. i don't understand the motivation or science for this viewpoint. (edited)

and i also didn't see that in ITOE



Scuro 12-Oct-18 11:48 PM


The scientific claim would be a biological account of how sensations are integrated by the mind etc. The claim that we do not have control over how the perceptual level develops is philosophical and empirical. Particularly for objectivism, where volition begins on the conceptual level; "The actions of consciousness required on the sensory-perceptual level are automatic. On the conceptual level, however, they are not automatic." (OPAR, p. 55). Perception is the beginning of epistemological knowledge. The evidence that this level is an automatic integration of sense perceptions is that we cannot and do not experience isolated sensations; "You do not encounter an isolated, ephemeral colour patch or a play of fleeting sensations, but an enduring thing, an object, an *entity*." (OPAR). And Rand's definition of perception: "a group of sensations automatically retained and integrated by the brain of a living organism, which gives it the ability to be aware, not of single stimuli, but of *entities*, or things" (VOS).

- this claim is pre-scientific, it's self-evident, it's the given. You cannot tell me that your experience is a sea of undifferentiated sensations prior to you willingly and conceptually identifying each thing as "car" or "tree" at which point they become distinct entities. Perceptually, humans can differentiate this entity from that entity, without any claims as to how this is done physiologically (science), or what those entities are in particular (conceptual). The method is through differences and similarities in the perceptual data. In ITOE: "similarity is grasped *perceptually*: in observing it, man is not and does not have to be aware of the fact that it involves a matter of measurement. (edited)

-differentiation is a pre-condition to classification. You cannot classify this or that if you do not *perceive* them as separate entities. How would you even begin to say "that is a tree" if there is no "that" until you identify it as a tree? Binswanger details the method of differentiation around pages 68-70 of How We Know. In ITOE Rand speaks of how "In the process of forming concepts of entities, a child's mind has to focus on a distinguishing characteristic - i.e., on an attribute - in order to isolate one group of entities from all others. He is, therefore, aware of attributes while forming his first concepts, but he is aware of them *perceptually*, not *conceptually*." (ITOE p. 15).

-on the apples: depth perception. Subconsciously implies that the process was at one point conscious and became automatised or was remembered. Sensual integration happens unconsciously and automatically.

- it's not that there are two or three minds, it's that the human mind does different kinds of operations. Some keep your heart beating and your kidneys functioning and integrate your sensations - unconsciously. Some operations are done automatically based on prior cognitive functioning, or store memories of percepts and concepts - the subconscious level. Then there is everything you're currently thinking about and aware of - the conscious level. These are just conceptual distinctions made for the purpose of discussion, there's no rigid separation, and the levels effect one another.


 curi 12-Oct-18 11:49 PM

depth perception doesn't address the apples issue. you simply can't see if it's one thing or two b/c you can't see what's in between them (empty space or more apple flesh) where they overlap in your view.


you can *define* perception as the given. that's fine. but then you make scientific claims about *what is given*, without being able to explain even a hypothetical computational model of what you're claiming (in order to discuss if that model of the eyes and mind makes sense, and what empirical evidence is relevant to judging it). you say "The evidence that this level is an automatic integration of sense perceptions is that we cannot and do not experience isolated sensations;" but you seem to be simply unaware that *i am not claiming that*. you are arguing against me without knowing what my view is and without asking. i think what we see is more like scenes or like png images – which do not include metadata differentiating particular portions of the scene into entities before the information reaches subconscious processing. your empirical evidence has no way to differentiate between what happens during unconscious and subconscious processing because your evidence is after *both* of them, at the conscious level.

 Scuro 13-Oct-18 12:00 AM

Should I jump in yet or do you have more to say?

 curi 13-Oct-18 12:00 AM

go ahead

 Scuro 13-Oct-18 12:13 AM

Okay, if the conditions are such that the two apples don't have a distinct border then maybe you will see them as one entity perceptually, as a child or something. There's no contradiction there, the same is the case for camouflage. Binswanger speaks of consciousness as a difference detector. If the differences are hard to perceive in the data then it might take more data to distinguish the two entities. He says on page 70; in the visual discrimination of entities, a crucial element is the detection of edges." He also talks of patterns: "Perception is an integrated form of awareness, one that responds to patterns automatically extracted by the brain from the ongoing flow of sensory input. As a result we experience [the table] shape as being constant".

- I'm sorry if I misunderstood your view, I'm trying to put it together from your criticisms. It appears to me you're saying we do not perceive differentiated entities, while I am saying that we do. What is subconscious processing btw?

subconscious processing is running algorithms on the information in the subconscious (software that your conscious can modify) rather than the unconscious (hardware or genetically determined software that your conscious mind cannot modify).

it seems like you don't have enough of a mental model of the brain to discuss this.

> -differentiation is a pre-condition to classification. You cannot classify this or that if you do not perceive them as separate entities. How would you even begin to say "that is a tree" if there is no "that" until you identify it as a tree?

you're using words incorrectly which has been causing some confusion. what you call "differentiation" is a type of classification: it is categorizing things into classes. when classifying a scene into entities, you call it "differentiation" and when classifying entities into types of entities, you call it "classification". this is a distraction from my point about the matter, which is the *difficulty* of classifying scenes into entities ("differentiation"), and that you have not offered any plausible explanation of how, computationally, that happens unconsciously. what sort of algorithm are you claiming is doing this differentiation? i don't think you have one in mind, you just think it works *somehow*? but if you don't know how, why can't it be the way I think?

and you can classify things within a scene *without* first doing object detection (what you call "differentiation"), e.g. like this: <https://towardsdatascience.com/mario-vs-wario-image-classification-in-python-ae8d10ac6d63>

Mario vs. Wario: Image Classification in Python – Towards Data S...

From my preschool times I remember spending a lot of time playing games on my favourite Game Boy . Two of my favourite platforming games...



and even if there was some unconscious, unmodifiable code classifying scenes into entities, it could not possibly stop the subconscious code from then ignoring or reclassifying most of those classifications and replacing them with other classifications.

it's like if you get a PDF with shitty OCR, you just ignore that OCR data and run a better OCR algorithm over it. you can just redo classifications. (edited)

so even if one's genes had provided some hardcoded differentiation algorithm (which would presumably be bad at dealing with the modern world, because how could genetic knowledge be good at that?) that couldn't be modified, its *output* certainly could be modified, so it wouldn't really matter. (edited)

(i have no real issue with genes providing a bad differentiation algorithm based on rules of thumb that plays no significant role in human life, the issues are 1) the claim that it *develops* – so it's like reinforcement learning or something, but then it needs feedback on success and failure or training data or something, which means that conscious evaluations do effect it, contrary to the claim that it develops in a way where one's consciousness is irrelevant. and 2) the claim that we can't or don't reclassify things later, subconsciously.) (edited)

i think some of your claims are *accidental* and you don't even realize what you're saying, b/c you don't know what its meaning is in terms of a scientific, computational understanding of the brain and eyes, so you don't control what meanings regarding that your words have.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:03 AM

On the surface it appears we agree on the role of the subconscious in processing, but this kind of processing is conceptual and must necessarily follow perceptual distinctions. I strongly disagree that I was using differentiation incorrectly or that it is a kind of classification. Differentiation, the acting of differentiating, "recognize or ascertain what makes (someone or something) different.". Classification, the act of classifying, "arrange (a group of people or things) in classes or categories according to shared qualities or characteristics." The second is conceptual, the first is perceptual. Differentiation does not require you to know anything about the entities or identify them as belonging to any category, it simply means you can tell X apart from Y based on differences in perceptual data, manifest in patterns, shapes, colour etc. which are all based on implicit measurements. This happens automatically and unconsciously, in fact for a process to be unconscious or even subconscious is necessarily to be automatic. It cannot work the way you claim because your process engages in stolen concepts. There is no conceptual level without first having a perceptual level, so you cannot claim that we perceive entities based on a conceptual identification process. That's incoherent. What is it about the modern world that has any effect on telling x apart from y based on data measurements? Perceiving a distinction between a black bear against a white snow background does not involve knowing that this is a bear and that is snow, or anything of the sort, it's a perceptual distinction based on sensory information that is automatically integrated.

I am not making any accidental claims, you are misinterpreting my words as scientific terms when the context clearly does not indicate that I am speaking in a scientific capacity. Why would you assume that what I'm saying was supposed to be in terms of scientific, computational lingo? I'm using differentiation and classification as they appear in dictionary form, as they are expressed by Rand and Binswanger, as epistemological terms.



curi 13-Oct-18 01:04 AM

you have been using the word differentiation to refer to entity or object detection in scenes, which is, in English, classifying scenes into objects. no?

what you are saying has *implications* about science, whether you intend them or not.

the definition you give of classification is incomplete. a better one is "the action or process of classifying something according to shared qualities or characteristics:"

in other words, putting stuff into categories.

any type of categories.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:13 AM

You're not classifying anything, it's merely a perceptual distinction that something ends here where another something begins. It's not a matter of going "this is an entity and this is an entity and...", everything you perceive *is* an entity, it's just a perceptual distinction between this and that. Perceptually, you merely see differences and similarities as a result of sensory data, with no claims about what it is (classification), only *that* it is. My definition was of classifying, because classification is the act of classifying, so to use classifying in its own definition would be circular. In any case, identifying something as an entity is *conceptual*, I'm not disputing that, but it's not what happens on the perceptual level, you merely *perceive* entities as distinct objects. You're not recognising them abstractly as "this is an entity".



curi 13-Oct-18 01:14 AM

what you're doing is making extensive claims about the design of certain software – but you are unable to discuss software. i don't know how to discuss this further because you do not respond to pertinent points and corrections relating to software, and you are unable to understand what i'm talking about or present your own view in detail.

and to say that something ends here is to classify some part of the scene as part of one entity and another part of the scene as part of another entity.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:20 AM

-That's a matter for science, I am not claiming to understand the process on a scientific level. All I am able to discuss is the empirical experience of a human being and the epistemological theory of objectivism. Humans perceive distinct entities, we perceive this and that, we are not aware of disintegrated sensory stimuli but of entities. That's the given for all of us. To discuss how that happens physiologically is beyond the scope of philosophy.

-If you agree with my definition of classification then that is not what is happening on the perceptual level. Think of it like touching the edge of a table and a wall, you can directly perceive where the table ends and the wall begins without having any conceptual knowledge of table or wall, just by feeling you can tell where one object ends and another begins. You do not need to put one object in "table" category and one in "wall" category to be perceptually aware of a difference. (edited)



curi 13-Oct-18 01:21 AM

you're opening a message with "that's" but i don't know what "that" refers to. "this entity" and "that entity" are categories.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:22 AM

That refers to your inquiry into "software".



curi 13-Oct-18 01:22 AM

"on the left of an entity boundary" and "on the right of an entity boundary" are categories



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:22 AM

They're categories because I have to communicate with you somehow, I cannot speak without concepts.




curi 13-Oct-18 01:22 AM

you're stuck thinking about certain types of classification, like table and tree, when it's a much more generic word than that.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:23 AM

This and that entity are implicit, it's not a conceptual categorisation. Concepts begin on the level of integrating percepts.

 curi 13-Oct-18 01:23 AM

> [software design] a matter for science, I am not claiming to understand the process on a scientific level.


but you make specific claims about the software design, e.g. that there is an unconscious algorithm, which develops during life, which cannot be affected at all by the conscious mind. those are software design claims.

i am not talking about conceptual categorizations.


i'm not talking about categorizing as a conceptual process. but it's literally organizing things into categories, just as non-intelligent software can do, e.g. the example i linked.

a scale can categorize things by weight. it doesn't require a mind to deal with categories in some ways.

(or classify, same thing as categorize)

 Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:27 AM

Categorisation is a conceptual process. The only claim I made is that there is an automatic sensory integrating process, software if you like, which gives us percepts. I said it was automatic and unconscious. What it is like and how it works are beyond philosophy. The given is that I have percepts and that's where epistemology starts. What is a "category" without a concept? A scale does not classify anything, a scale is a tool used to measure weight by which *humans* classify objects.

 curi 13-Oct-18 01:27 AM

categorization, in english, applies to e.g. the mario/wario classifier code which i linked, which is not a conceptual process.


you claimed the automatic, unconscious entity-differentiating software *cannot be affected by the conscious mind* and *develops after birth*. did you forgot?

you can trivially design a scale which attaches labels to objects, which is the same kind of thing as automatic optics software attaching labels to entities in scenes.

(not labels like "tree" but labels of where entity boundaries are)

 Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:29 AM

I said it continued to develop after birth and yes, all automatic processes are non-conscious.

 curi 13-Oct-18 01:30 AM

right so those are major scientific claims about software design, which you are claiming. that's outside philosophy.

further, those claims are *totally unnecessary* to all philosophy ideas you actually care about.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:30 AM

Yes but that kind of classification is based on a human conceptual understanding of categories. Automatic software of that kind is not perception.

As an aside, do you think I'm misrepresenting the objectivist position on this, or do you just disagree with it?



curi 13-Oct-18 01:33 AM

you are misrepresenting Rand's position in ITOE. i think peikoff or binswanger might make some similar claims to you, though not identical.

Rand is much more cautious and limited in what she claims.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:33 AM

Okay

Could you provide quotes where Rand contradicts what I have said? I feel like I have used ITOE as evidence for my understanding of her position.



curi 13-Oct-18 01:34 AM

not really because the main issue is you're making claims that go beyond what she said where did she say that perception develops?



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:34 AM

I know Binswanger extends her theory beyond what she claimed.

Like page 6



curi 13-Oct-18 01:34 AM

i read that. i think you're misunderstanding it.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:35 AM

How so?



curi 13-Oct-18 01:35 AM

can you give a quote which says that perception develops?



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:36 AM

Sure, gimme a minute I'll type it up.



curi 13-Oct-18 01:36 AM

see my PMs



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:40 AM

- "Although, chronologically, man's consciousness develops in three stages: the stage of sensations, the perceptual, the conceptual—epistemologically, the base of all of man's knowledge is the perceptual stage."
- "The building-block of man's knowledge is the concept of an "existent"—of something that exists, be it a thing, an attribute or an action. Since it is a concept, man cannot grasp it explicitly until he has reached the conceptual stage. But it is implicit in every percept (to perceive a thing is to perceive that it exists) and man grasps it implicitly on the perceptual level—i.e., he grasps the constituents of the concept "existent," the data which are later to be integrated by that concept. It is this implicit knowledge that permits his consciousness to develop further."
- "The (implicit) concept "existent" undergoes three stages of development in man's mind. The first stage is a child's awareness of objects, of things—which represents the (implicit) concept "entity." The second and closely allied stage is the awareness of specific, particular things which he can recognize and distinguish from the rest of his perceptual field—which represents the (implicit) concept "identity."
- "The third stage consists of grasping relationships among these entities by grasping the similarities and differences of their identities. This requires the transformation of the (implicit) concept "entity" into the (implicit) concept "unit."



curi 13-Oct-18 01:40 AM

where in that does it say *perception develops*?



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:43 AM

In both ways you could mean that, she says it in those quotes. Man's consciousness develops from the stage of sensations to the stage of perception, where the base of all man's knowledge is. She says the building block of man's knowledge is the concept of an "existent", this concept is grasped implicitly on the perceptual level, and this implicit perceptual concept develops in three stages. The explicit knowledge of the constituents of the concept "existent" permit his consciousness to develop further.




curi 13-Oct-18 01:44 AM

i think you're reading between the lines in some way which i'm not.
can you be more specific about where it says perception develops?
you talk about things like existents
you talk about developing a consciousness




Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:45 AM

Because consciousness is the faculty of perceiving that which exists


 **curi** 13-Oct-18 01:46 AM

our consciousness is more than that: it includes conceptual understanding of what exists, which develops.

she can't have meant that our consciousness is *only* the faculty of perception, which would exclude conceptual thought.

 **Scuro** 13-Oct-18 01:46 AM

Conceptual thought is a product of volitional consciousness, abstraction.


 **curi** 13-Oct-18 01:47 AM

so?

btw i don't think she was talking about percepts when saying (quote of scuro paraphrasing Rand), "consciousness is the faculty of perceiving that which exists". i think she was using a different meaning of to perceive: to understand. she does that elsewhere too, e.g. "Bill Brent knew nothing about epistemology; but he knew that man must live by his own rational perception of reality," (edited)


Galt goes on to say, "Man perceives a blob of color; by integrating the evidence of his sight and his touch, he learns to identify it as a solid object:"

this statement limits the scope of perception (blob of color) and then talks about learning (conceptual) to identify and understand it as an object.


 **Scuro** 13-Oct-18 01:58 AM

- If you mean to say that perception develops in the human mind, then the first quote I supplied says just that: man's consciousness (the faculty of perceiving that which exists) develops in three stages, so it develops from the stage of sensations to that of perceptions, therefore, perception develops. If you mean to say that the stage of perception itself develops, then the other quotes I supplied say just that: the implicit concept of existent is grasped on the perceptual level and develops in three stages. The implicit knowledge about the constituents of the concept existent are what permit consciousness to develop further.

- Conceptual thought is a product of volitional consciousness, abstraction. On page 29 of ITOE she says; "Consciousness is the faculty of awareness - the faculty of perceiving that which exists" - this does not imply understanding to me? She says; Awareness is not a passive state, but an active process. On the lower levels of awareness, a complex neurological process is required to enable man to experience a sensation and to integrate sensations into percepts; that process is automatic and non-volitional".

 **curi** 13-Oct-18 01:58 AM

developing in 3 stages does not mean there is within-stage development in every stage. you think the sensation stage develops too?

 **Scuro** 13-Oct-18 01:59 AM

It develops into the perceptual stage



curi 13-Oct-18 01:59 AM

that's not development *of* that stage



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:59 AM

The development of "existent" is a within stage development
No, it's not



curi 13-Oct-18 01:59 AM

you claim there is development *of* the perceptual stage: that it gets better at distinguishing entities.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 01:59 AM

Yes



curi 13-Oct-18 01:59 AM

but Rand doesn't say that.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 02:00 AM

That's what Rand says about the development of the implicit concept "existent" which is grasped perceptually
It's not a development *of* the stage, it's a development within it



curi 13-Oct-18 02:00 AM

you'll have to be more specific with your textual analysis
when she talks about learning about existents, where does it say that perception develops?



Scuro 13-Oct-18 02:01 AM

I've gotta go for now, will pick up when I return




curi 13-Oct-18 02:01 AM

i don't know what your point about consciousness is, but she says it includes the conceptual at the very start of itoe: "Although, chronologically, man's consciousness develops in three stages: the stage of sensations, the perceptual, the conceptual"



Scuro 13-Oct-18 02:02 AM

I'm not sure how much more specific I can be, I think I gave pretty precise quotes but I'll take a stab at it later.
Yeah of course it does

 curi 13-Oct-18 02:02 AM

therefore, saying consciousness *as a whole* develops does not imply that perception develops, since consciousness includes other things (the conceptual) (edited)


a way you could be more specific is this:

> The (implicit) concept “existent” undergoes three stages of development in man’s mind. The first stage is a child’s awareness of objects, of things—which represents the (implicit) concept “entity.” The second and closely allied stage is the awareness of specific, particular things which he can recognize and distinguish from the rest of his perceptual field—which represents the (implicit) concept “identity.”

> The third stage consists of grasping relationships among these entities by grasping the similarities and differences of their identities. This requires the transformation of the (implicit) concept “entity” into the (implicit) concept “unit.”


 Scuro 13-Oct-18 02:04 AM

I have to go but I'll read and respond when I'm back (:

 curi 13-Oct-18 02:04 AM

you are making claims about this text and perception. this text includes the term percept (or a variant) one time. you could point out what you think refers to perception using other words. point out the connections you're making.


and then, after adding in perception in some places where it's implied, you could point out where the revised (expanded) version says that perception develops.

 mister_person 13-Oct-18 02:57 AM

were there any interesting points from that conversation?

 Scuro 13-Oct-18 03:36 AM

I included the above quoted information because it deals with the (implicit) perceptually grasped concept "existent" which is the "building block of man's knowledge". If this perceptually grasped concept develops, it follows that it is a *perceptual* development. Consciousness as a whole develops in three stages chronologically: sensational, perceptual, conceptual - perception develops from sensation and into conception. The lower stages are still there when the other develops, it's just a different level of awareness.

 curi 13-Oct-18 04:18 AM

if perception is used in grasping a concept (it is), it's still a concept, and developing the concept is conceptual development – that doesn't mean that your way of perceiving changes.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 04:40 AM

She says it's only implicit, and the perception of existents does change, from the child's awareness of objects, things (entities), to awareness of specific, particular things which he can recognise and distinguish from the rest of his perceptual field (identity), to grasping relationships among the entities by grasping the similarities and differences of their identities (transformation of entity into unit). She says this last is the entrance to the conceptual level, so even if we consider that third stage to be the conceptual level, the other two must be perceptual. (edited)

The important point is that the awareness of specific, distinguished things is a perceptual discovery.

To me it seems something like this: "I am aware of things; I am aware of this thing and that thing; this thing and that thing are alike in such and such a way". The last one is the entry into the conceptual level.



curi 13-Oct-18 04:47 AM

perception doesn't discover things, it just perceives

you seem to have given up finding this *in that passage* and are just making arguments you think make sense?



Scuro 13-Oct-18 04:48 AM

This is all from that passage?



curi 13-Oct-18 04:48 AM

when you say "To me it seems something like this" i read that as your own ideas. if you want to show me where that is in the text, you will need to do so.

it's your conceptual interpretation of what you think her broad view is, it's not something she actually wrote there.

on the basis of it being a way to fill in the blanks in the writing so that it makes sense to you which is very different than her writing it



Scuro 13-Oct-18 04:49 AM

Oh that, that was just a tool yeah, that's not Rand's it just might be a way to think of it.



curi 13-Oct-18 04:50 AM

i think your claims do not make sense scientifically and are totally unnecessary to your philosophical points

why do you object to subconscious software doing it rather than genetic software?

it = entity differentiation



Scuro 13-Oct-18 04:51 AM

What do you understand the subconscious level to consist of?

Because I understand sensual integration to be an unconscious process.



curi 13-Oct-18 04:52 AM

part of the mind (software) that can be modified by the conscious mind.
but which can run without conscious attention



Scuro 13-Oct-18 04:52 AM

Okay, so where does this come from prior to perception? What is in that level?
Do you reject tabula rasa?



curi 13-Oct-18 04:59 AM

we are born with an operating system and maybe some default software that we can change.
not like a personality or destiny or level of intelligence.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 05:01 AM

I agree with you that the subconscious acts like a software and works automatically, and that it can be programmed by the conscious mind etc., but as far as I know it works conceptually, so to automatise it and have it effect perception happens chronologically after reaching the conceptual level right?

When you see a table as a table, that's conceptual identification and a subconscious, automatic process, but distinguishing this entity from that entity (one of which is a table, for example), is perceptual. (edited)



curi 13-Oct-18 05:15 AM

the subconscious mind can run any code, not only conceptual code

that's how computers work

that limit doesn't make any sense

and distinguishing entities is hard and is mostly done with conceptual thinking and automated versions of it

you underestimate that problem, maybe because you aren't familiar with computer vision stuff



Scuro 13-Oct-18 05:25 AM

I'll just lay it out and see if we agree or not: the way I understand it, there are certain processes we cannot change due to the nature of the human mind, some of these things include automatic heart beat, the integration of sensations into percepts, the fact that we feel emotions. I know objectivists get nervous around the word "unconscious" because of Freud so I think they continue to call this part of the "subconscious" too, but whatever you call it there's operations we have no control over. Then there's the automatic, lightning fast judgements and programmable operations of the subconscious which we can change, but they can also be shaped passively if you don't do it yourself. This includes conceptually identifying objects as tree, car, bike automatically (which effects perception, we see anticipate patterns (like the car behind the tree and the person on the bike)), what it is we choose to value and thus feel emotions about, stored percepts and memories etc. Then there's the conscious level, which is everything you are aware of at any given moment, the things you are thinking about, what you are perceiving etc. So my question is - do you think there are these three broad types of things - the automatic things we can't control, the automatic ones we can control, and the conscious level where we can focus etc.? (edited)



curi 13-Oct-18 05:33 AM

FYI i do not think emotions are innate and unchangeable

i think the heart beat and the unchangeable part of processing of sensations don't develop. to say something develops which the conscious, conceptual mind has no access to modify at all, is like saying we have a second thing capable of learning/developing, a second intelligence. it makes way more sense to suppose the primary intelligence does the learning/developing. (edited)

i don't think distinguishing entities is nearly as low level and simple as you seem to think. and i think this is a scientific matter, but you keep making claims about it while also saying you are trying to stick to philosophy.

> do you think there are these three broad types of things - the automatic things we can't control, the automatic ones we can control, and the conscious level where we can focus etc.?

sounds fine



Scuro 13-Oct-18 05:56 AM

Sure, I don't think emotions are unchangeable either, as in I think what we feel emotions in response to is alterable, but (and I can't recall exactly which objectivist said this), it's something like; we feel angry at injustice, but what we consider to be injustice is another matter. Or we feel fear at that which threatens our values, but what we value and what we find threatening is programmable (assuming healthy development and all that as usual). I can see what you're saying with the development thing, but maybe we are just using different ideas of development and unchangeable. I agree that it's not like it's something that thinks and grows by itself like the Id or something, but I don't think developing and unprogrammable are mutually exclusive. Like with the physical growth example; we can't choose that we grow, that's part of the nature of the human body, and the body continues to develop physically. I think something similar can be said about the brain and perception, though you're probably right, this is something for scientific inquiry and not for me to be talking about.



curi 13-Oct-18 05:57 AM

i think emotions are a lot more cultural than i think you do. it's a side issue tho

i don't see why objectivism should object to the software which distinguishes entities being in the part of the mind which the conscious has some ability to effect.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 05:59 AM

Hmmm.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 06:00 AM

What do you think *is* the perceptually given?

I think subconscious programming does influence how we distinguish entities, like there's part of that "software" which makes us understand that the car continues behind the tree and which erroneously makes us think there are two people on the motorcycle. But those are reasoned thoughts based on conceptual thinking, I just don't think that extends to what seems to be directly perceivable distinctions between entities based on sensual data, whether it be a visual edge or pattern or colour, integrated with a distinct feel even or something long those lines.



curi 13-Oct-18 06:10 AM

for vision, i think the given is roughly along the lines of photos + some extra information about depth and maybe some simplistic, non-developing peripheral vision motion algorithm



mister_person 13-Oct-18 06:10 AM

edge detection?



Scuro 13-Oct-18 06:12 AM

I see

It's something Harry Binswanger talks about.

What do you think about the idea that perception is an integration of sensations? Like the touch of the table and the visual sense are integrated together to give the percept of that entity?



curi 13-Oct-18 06:14 AM

yes, we've been talking about something along the lines of edge or object detection that's not what i meant about motion tho. not sure exactly what u were referring to

[@mister_person](#)

re integration of sensations: i would rather not use the word integration because we use that word when discussing conceptual thinking, and i think it's bad to re-use the same word for something that's different. however, it's ok as a standard english use.

there's a combining going on there



mister_person 13-Oct-18 06:16 AM

I think it's plausible that edge detection happens in a "non-developing" way



curi 13-Oct-18 06:17 AM

it's not clear to me there's combining of *different* senses at the perceptual level though



mister_person 13-Oct-18 06:17 AM

like before you get access to it
edge detection is a really simple algorithm



curi 13-Oct-18 06:17 AM

there could be a simplistic algorithm for that which is built in and the results of which you can override later, so it's not very important – you can just run a better algorithm and ignore the built in one whenever it's unsatisfactory.



mister_person 13-Oct-18 06:18 AM

yeah pretty much, it wasn't a major point (edited)



curi 13-Oct-18 06:18 AM

if it's lossy processing, whatever it does isn't too bad



Scuro 13-Oct-18 06:18 AM

Isn't that perceptual?



curi 13-Oct-18 06:18 AM

that wouldn't be developing
infants would have it



Scuro 13-Oct-18 06:19 AM

Developing in what sense though? That you don't start out with it but it comes later or that you have it but it develops as you grow?



curi 13-Oct-18 06:20 AM

it doesn't improve, it's a fixed, unintelligent algorithm. just some math
perception can have *that*. it certainly does have some of that.



mister_person 13-Oct-18 06:20 AM

you can have an unintelligent algorithm that improves



curi 13-Oct-18 06:20 AM

it's not how adults see the world. at all. they do tons of additional processing.



mister_person 13-Oct-18 06:20 AM

not very far though

like the muscle system

except as algorithms in the brain



Scuro 13-Oct-18 06:20 AM

I absolutely agree adults do not see the world like that and process differently

And that level of processing is programmable, is conceptual



curi 13-Oct-18 06:21 AM

i don't know what you mean by considering muscles algorithms. they improve in strength, not in information content?

and lots of unintelligent algorithms improve – the stuff called "AI" but not "AGI". but it needs stuff like training data or feedback, which makes it problematic to suppose in this context in a way that consciousness can't effect it.



Scuro 13-Oct-18 06:24 AM

I mean, the same sensations are there, and they're automatically integrated into percepts, but there's additional subconscious processing and that's programmable. But if you agree there's perceptual edge detection and other such differentiation at that level then I don't see there's much to disagree about?

And if it starts off simplistic and we can improve it, isn't that a development?



curi 13-Oct-18 06:28 AM

you said we have perceptual entity detection and that it improves during life

but the edge detection [@mister_person](#) is talking about would not improve perceptually, ever



mister_person 13-Oct-18 06:29 AM

it might help you learn stuff faster

idk

I should stop making passing comments if I'm not planning on staying to defend them



Scuro 13-Oct-18 06:33 AM

Fair enough

I'm going to call it a night (:

Thanks for the discussion Curi



curi 13-Oct-18 06:38 AM

Objectivism claims that infants see chaos and ppl are born tabula rasa (it doesn't know much about computers), so it doesn't have in mind edge detection implemented in the way

[@mister_person](#) means



JustinCEO 13-Oct-18 10:31 AM

>>>curi: you have been using the word differentiation to refer to entity or object detection in scenes, which is, in English, classifying scenes into objects. no?

>>Scuro: You're not classifying anything, it's merely a perceptual distinction that something ends here where another something begins.

>] curi: and to say that something ends here is to classify some part of the scene as part of one entity and another part of the scene as part of another entity.

i had this same thought. even if you are just focusing on one object (Object X) as distinct from the rest of the scene, differentiation, as Scuro seems to be defining it, seems to necessarily involve making a classification of the scene into X and not-X parts.




Scuro 13-Oct-18 10:35 AM

Lower animals make this kind of perceptual differentiation all the time without concepts or abstraction, I don't see why human perception couldn't operate the same way.



JustinCEO 13-Oct-18 10:48 AM

my mental model of how animals work is different. it's more like, they have a "photo" perceptual level much like we do (with different content than ours determined by the biological details of their visual system). and where we have minds that develop and learn to interpret the perceptually given, animals have algorithms for things like object-detection, threat-detection, mate-detection, food-detection, that operate on the perceptually given information from their visual system.



curi 13-Oct-18 03:40 PM

many animals develop, it's why you see "don't feed the animals" signs. if you feed them, they do more of the actions that got the food. seems kinda like a "reinforcement learning" algorithm or something else that can accomplish a similar thing. development is also why puppies "play". (edited)


for this kind of development, there has to be something along the lines of evaluation of results – like that eating is good. some kinda feedback. the development isn't random, it's goal-directed.

humans can consciously change their goals, so this kind of thing is not suitable to claim for humans *and* say that the consciousness can't effect the development.

as a secondary point, that sort of thing may not play much role in humans due to being superseded by the superior general intelligence method of development, which can accomplish similar things better. (edited)

whether the animal development modifies the original perception algorithms themselves, or adds another layer on top of them, is hard to know b/c it doesn't really make a difference to the results.

you can get mathematically equivalent outputs either way. and, either way, the development part is goal directed (which, for humans, would mean consciousness can play a role in it).



curi 13-Oct-18 04:11 PM

we know humans can change even really basic goals cuz avoiding physical pain is optional for humans.

scuro's emphasis on the complex role of perception, separate from conscious control, is interesting in the context of a different priority of some objectivists like Binswanger: claiming we have direct perception that isn't colored by interpretation. he really did not like the idea that there is a computational layer between us and reality, because he (incorrectly) thinks it's a kantian idea that gets in the way of our ability to understand reality accurately. (edited)


he thinks only having access to interpreted data is like being stuck in plato's cave, seeing shadows cast by reality instead of seeing reality, and having no way to escape the biases and distortions. but he doesn't even distinguish lossy and non-lossy processing, because he doesn't know anything about computers. he actually claimed computers don't compute – and refused to clarify.

[@mister_person](#) this may amuse u. from binswanger's book:

> Computers cannot “process information,” because information is not a physical phenomenon. Computers can only combine and shunt electrical currents. Only electricity, not information, has causal impact on the workings of the computer; information does not exist for the computer.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with saying colloquially that computers add, process information, and play chess. But in philosophy we have to be exact: in the strict sense computers only combine currents, throw switches, charge and discharge capacitors. Computers don't follow programs, they simply obey the laws of physics. That's all that goes on inside them.

If all human beings suddenly vanished from the face of the



Roche 13-Oct-18 04:25 PM

oh. what does he mean when he says it's not physical? everything is physical.



curi 13-Oct-18 04:25 PM

he thinks only consciousnesses deal with information or software.

and that AGI can't be developed

as part of his rejection of modern science and related ideas, he also has major issues not only with infinity but with very large numbers.

quote

> For instance, it is widely believed that there's a number like: $10^{100^{100}}$. There isn't.

@Roche oh also he's a dualist of some sort...



internetrules 14-Oct-18 09:55 AM

@ "how many triangles do you see? image" i see 25. each of the small ones is 16, then the outline adds 17. Then at the centre of whole triangle you can see a small triangle that points up, that has 3 triangles attached to it, and if you imagine those 4 triangles as one you can see a 18th triangle, and attached to that 18th triangle are 3 other triangles, so 21. i forget what made me think there were 25 triangles. theres also a hexagon in there as well.

10 minutes later after writing that, i now notice 2 extra triangles.

2 minutes later, 2 more triangles

10 seconds later, 1 more triangle

so 26 triangles and a hexagon.

EDIT if theres a hexagon on 1 side of the triangle, then there has to be 3 hexagons, cuz each side of the triangle is the exact same as any side. (edited)



JustinCEO 14-Oct-18 10:31 AM

<https://theodoredalrymple.wordpress.com/2017/10/09/dalrymples-dictionary-of-debased-modern-english/>

DalrympleFans

Dalrymple's Dictionary of Debased Modern English

Austerity This word, Dalrymple writes, is in Europe today used to denote attempts by governments to align more closely (not absolutely) their expenses with their incomes. It would be as accurate to...

