

Davidson on the Turing Test

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Abstract

Davidson argues that the well-known Turing Test, being a method of determining whether a machine can think, fails to tell us anything about the semantics of the tested object and thus is inadequate to discover whether can think or not. However, against Davidson, Kuczynski claims that his reasoning is entirely fallacious and has little force in attacking the Turing Test. In this paper I will first delineate and clarify Davidson's comments on Turing's imitation game and his reasons for reject it as a proper test of machine thinking. Second, I will object to Kuczynski's criticisms by showing that his arguments are either ill-founded, inconclusive, or based on his misinterpretation of Davidson's thought. Finally, I will show how Davidson proposes to modify the Test in accordance with his own theory of interpretation, and the significance of this modified version for the attribution of thought to AI.

Key Words: Davidson, Turing Test, thought attribution, radical interpretation, artificial intelligence