

Artificial Intelligence, Consciousness and Religious Beliefs

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to show that the belief that one day an artificial intelligence - conscious and possessing free will - will be created by humans is compatible with the doctrines of the Abrahamic religions regarding the origin and nature of the human soul/spirit, its persistence, and its reward or punishment in the afterlife. The structure of the article is as follows: first, a brief overview of the history and types of artificial intelligence is presented. Then, several topics from the philosophy of artificial intelligence and the characteristics of human intelligence - namely, those that appear to be more relevant to religious teachings - are discussed. Finally, we examine the relationship between beliefs arising from the human creation of artificial intelligence and beliefs derived from religious teachings on concepts such as human identity, the persistence of the soul, resurrection, and reward and punishment in the hereafter. The paper concludes that even if artificial intelligence were someday to become a phenomenon comparable to human intelligence in terms of consciousness and free will, it would not be incompatible with religious teachings.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; consciousness; soul/self; resurrection; religious beliefs.

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