

Strange events at San Mateo Maker Faire!
Robot Discusses Philosophical Conundra!!
Authorities Express Concern, Ask for Public Calm

“It’s Just a Play” Says One Expert

“If That’s a Play, I’m a Great Ape” Says Another

(San Mateo, CA) Since the dawn of the computer age, oceans of ink have been spilt writing about intention and conscious states and how to define them, and what sort of organisms—or machines—might have what kinds of these qualities. The battles continue to rage about whether a machine could ever approach consciousness in the way that we understand it, and make meanings the way we do. Oddly enough, in the search for the truth of the matter, both camps have overlooked an obvious strategy: interviewing a computer and asking her opinion.

While once deep philosophical conundra like these were important only to people who had nothing better to do than wonder why they wondered, in recent years, they have developed into a host of potential practical difficulties in the progress of computer science. Essentially, these questions boil down to this:

If you built a robot smart enough to do the dishes, would it also be smart enough to find them boring?

To begin to address this appalling lacuna in empirical studies, intrepid investigator Tom Sgouros has constructed a test subject, Judy, and has been conducting extensive interviews with her to begin to address the deep questions at the very heart of our identity as thinking beings: Can machines think? Do people with mortgages have free will? What exactly does it mean to play chess with a set where the black pieces are red?

Judy herself was assembled in Tom’s basement, from pieces of old computers, bicycles, a copy machine, a marine stove, and—improbable but true—an old kitchen sink. After literally weeks of intensive tutoring in phonics, elocution, and the elements of logic, Judy made her public debut in January, 2000, at Providence’s Perishable Theatre, and then again in May, in New York City (at only a small distance from Broadway), in a show entitled, *Judy*, or *What Is It Like To Be A Robot?*

“Tom Sgouros’s witty play, co-starring the charming robot Judy, is an imagination-stretcher that delights while it exercises your mind. If you think you can’t imagine a conscious robot, you’re wrong—you can, especially once you’ve met Judy.” —Daniel Dennett (author of *Consciousness Explained*, *Brainchildren*, *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea*, etc. etc.)

Judy and Tom invite you to come share some of their empirical findings on the consciousness of robots and actors, in this not-quite-solo show. (You could call it “My Dinner With Android.”) The show will be presented at the **San Mateo Maker Faire, Saturday May 3, at 6:30PM, Fiesta Hall**. The seventh in a series of possibly comic monologues and solo



dialogues, Judy is a story of a man and his, um, companion, discussing such topics as imagination, consciousness, stage magic, the uses of eyes, and what it's really like to wake up in the morning and confront your aluminum-and-steel face in the mirror each day.

Judy, or What Is It Like To Be A Robot? appeals to the monomaniacal sociopathic robotics engineer in all of us, as well as to many members of the lay public:

“Judy is as much fun as a barrel of wind-up cymbal-monkeys, and lots more entertaining.”
–Bill Rodriguez, *Providence Phoenix*

“Take one clever human being and one clever (for a computer-driven) robot. Mix them up and what you have is a pretty clever piece about who's smart and who's really smart.”
–Bill Gale, *Providence Journal*

“...an engrossing evening... Real questions about consciousness, freedom to act, the relationship between the creator and the created are woven into a bravura performance.”
–Will Stackman, *Aislesay.com*

“Una interesante mezcla de risas ligeras y pensamientos profundos... Las ideas que salen de la boca metálica de Judy son perlas de sabiduría de un artista muy perspicaz que prefiere que son robot se lo exprese todo a los teatreros.” –Tomas Gentile, *WELH Radio*

Some have even enjoyed Tom's earlier shows:

Millennium: A Love Story

“...a brilliant bit, and wholly original. In 13 years of reviewing for the Post, I've never seen anything quite like it.” –Chip Deffaa, *New York Post*

You can find out more about Judy and Tom, including the elided parts of the above reviews and others like them, at <http://sgouros.com>, or by contacting Judy's office directly: 401-662-9668.

WHO: Tom Sgouros and Judy the Robot, presented by the Maker Faire (<http://makerfaire.com>)

WHAT: “Judy, or What Is It *Like* To Be A Robot?”

WHERE: Fiesta Hall, San Mateo Event Center

WHEN: Saturday May 3, 6:30pm

HOW MUCH: \$25 adult/\$10 child/\$15 student, full day admission to whole Maker Faire.

FOR MORE INFO: <http://www.sgouros.com>

CONTACT: Tom Sgouros, 401-662-9668, or tomfool@as220.org

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