

A Similoid Thought Experiment

The Similoid is a hypothetical robot for thought experiments and benchmarking. It has everything humans have and can do everything they can do. It has an organic body, including a nervous system, a circulatory system, a hormone system, a brain with the same components and functionalities as the human brain.

Moreover, the Similoid is produced with so much variation, both in physical appearance and in mental processing that no single copy is the same as another. There are differences in skin color, length, thickness, character traits, intelligence, social skills, dominance, sensitivity, physical condition, strength, speed, care, aesthetic design, and whatever else you can think of.

Neurologically, there are quite some variations. One functions better if there is clarity and predictability, another needs some more stimulation to function reasonably, yet another has a very rich imagination, some are more extraverted, others more introverted, one develops a bit faster than the other, and so on.

That is amazing in itself and means that the Similoids can form versatile teams, but it can also lead to copies that do not fit well in Similoid society, and they could even require a lot of help if a somewhat unfortunate combination of traits occurs. Anyway, the positive side is that a single extreme case can turn out to be a genius who can help the Similoid society advance tremendously in a relatively short time.

In addition, there are male and female specimens of the Similoid that can breed in a joint effort. There is even a certain attraction, usually between two of different sexes, but there is also quite a bit of variation that even goes so far that two of the same sex can also feel a pull that is stronger than attraction to the opposite sex.

Similoids are born, just like humans, and the life expectancy is about 80 years, on average. And, just like humans, they want to survive and to feel good.

One of the thought experiments that can be done with this Similoid concerns populating a planet. Imagine that a new planet has been discovered that looks astoundingly much like Earth. There is even life, but not in a form that we would classify as intelligent.

Your superiors have decided that we have insufficient technical resources to go there ourselves, and it would take ages before we can, but it's a good idea to send a group of a thousand Similoids. They could populate the planet, reproduce on it, and build and develop a nice society.

And to experiment with this first, a simulation is built, in which it is possible to go fast forward in time. In it are our new planet and the colony of 400 Similoids, so we can already establish if there will indeed be a sociable society where we would be welcome after a hundred years or so. *Within this simulation, it is possible to change one aspect of the Similoids if it would lead to a better result.* This change would mean that in at least one aspects Similoids would be different from humans.

Participants can be divided into groups, and each group has the assignment of thinking about what the purpose of such a simulation could be and what aspect they would like to change. They have to indicate how their society would look after 1,000 years, after 5,000 years, and after 10,000 years.

They have to write down the target, the change, and the expected results, then pass these on to the next group. The next group then has to critically evaluate the results and indicate to what extent the expectations are realistic. Then, all the ideas can be presented and discussed in plenary. And if significant differences occur, considering the anticipated outcomes, all participants can vote on what would be the most probable results.