

Re: origin of thoughts

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- *From:* an588@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (Catherine Woodgold)
 - *Date:* Thu, 6 Oct 2005 19:36:17 -0400 (EDT)
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"Glen M. Sizemore" (gmsizemore2@xxxxxxxxxx) writes:

> Similarly, self-awareness requires exposure to discriminative contingencies
> that make aspects of our behavior (perceptual and otherwise) function as
> discriminative stimuli. Non-human animals can be trained to "report" on
> their behavior (subjective or otherwise) and drug discrimination is proof of
> this. Now, one may claim that the animals were always "conscious of their
> own behavior" and were just trained to report that they were. The
> alternative is, of course, that the contingencies that produce the
> "reporting" are what "makes the animal aware."

If an animal's brain is aware of what some other part of the animal is doing, that is not necessarily consciousness (by my definition at least). Even if one part of the brain is aware of what another part of the brain is doing, that doesn't satisfy the definition. A part of the brain has to be aware of what itself is doing (i.e. being aware of ... infinite loop).

I suspect that what humans experience as consciousness doesn't quite fit my definition but is merely a close facsimile thereof, like looking in pairs of mirrors and seeing maybe 12 or so copies of reflection-within-a-reflection before it fades away into vagueness, rather than actually seeing an infinite progression. I think it is conceivable to have the actual infinite progression and that this would not require an infinite number of neurons — just some trick similar to what's used in Godel's theorem.

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Cathy Woodgold
http://www.ncf.ca/~an588/par_home.html
We are all Iraqis now.

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 - ◇ *From:* Glen M. Sizemore

Re: origin of thoughts

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