

## Re: death of the mind.

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**Date:** 07/10/04

Date: Sat, 10 Jul 2004 17:45:19 +0100

In article <40f01060@dnews.tpgi.com.au>, John Hasenkam  
<johnh@faraway.?invalid> writes

>

> "Glen M. Sizemore" <gmsizemore2@yahoo.com> wrote in message  
> news:5d1adc9de113821b8c65aa37fbe1fe5c@news.teranews.com...

>>

>>

>> *GS: Yes, very nice. The sad thing, however, is that even the ritualistic  
>> attacks are anachronistic. Radical behaviorism is not even on the radar of  
>> most professional psychologists, philosophers, AIers, behavioral  
>> neurobiologists, etc. After all, didn't Chomsky demolish behaviorism in  
>the*

>> '60s?

>

> *Unfortunately Chomsky is being reinvigorated by Pinker.*

> <http://www.edge.org/documents/ThirdCulture/u-Ch.13.html>

> *Pinker:*

>

> *"Language is a complex, specialized skill, which develops in the child  
>spontaneously without conscious effort or formal instruction, is deployed  
>without awareness of its underlying logic, is qualitatively the same in  
>every individual, and is distinct from more general abilities to process  
>information or behave intelligently. (One corollary is that most of the  
>complexity in language comes from the mind of a child, not from the schools  
>or from grammar books.) All this suggests that language is caused by  
>dedicated circuitry that has evolved in the human brain. It then raises the  
>question of what other aspects of the human intellect are instincts coming  
>from specialized neural circuitry. "*

>

> *Last I heard Pinker doesn't have any children and it shows.*

>

> *Without conscious effort? Goddamn why then at my age am I still very  
>consciously adjusting my use of language?*

>

> *"complexity in language comes from the mind of a child, not from the schools  
>or from grammar books"*

>

> *ie. children never read.*

>  
> *"is deployed without awareness of its underlying logic"*  
>  
> *Damn I have no idea how my brain figures out how to catch the ball.*  
>  
> *"All this suggests that language is caused by dedicated circuitry that has  
> evolved in the human brain. "*  
>  
> *Then why do bilinguals use differing regions for the second language?  
> Why is that brain function during language manipulation varies across the  
> menstrual cycle? And perhaps even daily via circadian modulation. Some  
> tantalising data I found on this recently – around sunset a man would  
> involuntarily switch to his second language, and studies by Paradis  
> highlighting variability in bilingual language capacity at varying times.  
> Why is that language manipulation is distributed: Wernicke, Broca, dlpfcs,  
> cingulate, angular gyrus, temporals and ... ?  
> Why is that even adults with brain damage to the parietals can sometimes  
> recover language function to levels where the deficits can only be detected  
> through rigorous testing; if at all? There are even well documented cases  
> of people lacking a left hemisphere who can manage language quite well thank  
> you.*  
>  
>  
> *John.*  
>  
>

Ahh, I think I know the answer to that. What Chomsky and Pinker etc have to say just doesn't apply to behaviourists. Apparently, really "intelligent" folk (such as the above) naturally know better. In fact, they advise others not to argue with "behaviourists", as doing so tends to draw attention to them and encourages them to say unhelpful things at odds with common sense.

A better strategy (so I've read), is to "ignore them" where you can, but at the same time ;-), surreptitiously translate whatever they do into an arcane folk psychological language so you can sell it to an unsuspecting public and naive undergraduates as something new and "scientific"! ("Cognitive Science" – made in China [Nationalist]) –Very good value – much cheap than US – last long time!)

(Apologies to any SE Asians – inspired by a packet of Hua Mui)

>>  
>> *On another note, I would say that cognitive psychology relies on the  
> notion  
>> of the stored and retrieved representation. These notions are under attack  
>> from within, curiously, by people that have stumbled upon some of the  
>> arguments made by behaviorists on their own. These people don't use  
>> behavioristic terminology because it is taboo (though the similarity  
> between  
>> sensorimotor contingencies and reinforcement contingencies is*

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>unmistakable)

>> *and they still call themselves "cognitivists." But cog. sci. has no*

>identity

>> *without the representation and the metaphors of storage and retrieval. I*

>> *think it will crumble from within, and it will be helped by the*

>persistence

>> *of the EAB which has continued to discover laws of behavior. Advances in*

>AI

>> *using "behavior selection" algorithms – especially those that attempt some*

>> *similarity to real neurobiology could also contribute.*

>>

>>

>>

>> *"John Hasenkam" <johnh@faraway.> wrote in message*

>> *news:40efdd65@dnews.tpgi.com.au...*

>> > *And, just read this:*

>> >

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David Longley