

Re: death of the mind.

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On 28 Jul 2004 17:14:58 -0700, erayo@bilkent.edu.tr (Eray Ozkural exa) in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:

>lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net (Lester Zick) wrote in message
news:<4107ec48.62544200@netnews.att.net>...
>> On Wed, 28 Jul 2004 16:25:31 GMT, [patty <pattyNO@SPAMicyberspace.net>](mailto:pattyNO@SPAMicyberspace.net)
>> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:
>>
>>>
>>> *The mind is a vague concept that is not specific enough to talk about*
>>> *scientifically.*
>>>
>>> *Then why does Glen talk about it?*
>>>
>>> *Two points:*
>>>
>>> *1. Sizemore or Longley do not and cannot talk scientifically, for they*
>>> *must adhere to an unscientific (some call it philosophical) dogma.*
>>>
>>> *2. As demonstrated by Sizemore himself, it is useless to try to avoid*
>>> *referring to mind, especially in philosophical discussions, let alone*
>>> *psychology!*
>>>
>>>> *It is mostly a collection of fables that we have*
>>>> *learned from our culture. To say it doesn't exist is a political*
>>>> *statement, not a scientific one. I doubt that the elite of the EAB will*
>>>> *disagree. When i talked of the "death of the mind" (as i did when i*
>>>> *started this subject line) i did so as a dramatization of the politics,*
>>>> *not as a medical examiner doing an autopsy [though, perhaps the latter*
>>>> *would make an interesting story]. The EAB deals with what can be*
>>>> *reliably measured and controlled; and that excludes the fables. People*
>>>> *don't like that because it appears to diminish what they consider*
>>>> *important. It feels like it infringes on their sovereign domain.*
>>>>
>>>> *Glen and David deal with anything they feel contributes to the agenda*
>>>> *of behaviorism whether political or scientific. Whether they deny the*
>>>> *mind out of political or scientific conviction is truly irrelevant to*
>>>> *whether they deny the mind. Glen definitely denies the mind. If he*

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>> *does so out of conviction it's a matter of speculative philosophy and*
>> *not a matter of science and of no interest to those interested in the*
>> *mind and mental effects as matters of science.*

>

>*Their contributions are mostly political. Most of their talk (>80%) is*
>*methodological, based on philosophical speculations that are not*
>*generally accepted (metaphysics of this and that). In fact, such naive*
>*skepticism is not regarded very highly by modern analytic*
>*philosophers. (Philosophical skepticism in general is not! Most of*
>*them are quite silly. Their skepticism is the same sort of saying "Oh!*
>*This is not reality! I'm being fed these dreams while they keep me in*
>*an astral prison!")*

>

>> *Can the EAB talk to people (to us) without evoking a negative political*
>> *reaction? I doubt it.*

>>

>> *Who cares?*

>

>*Nobody.*

>

>*We care about explanations. So far, we have been given none.*

>

>*We don't care about poor philosophy that says "this cannot be*
>*explained!", "this cannot be done!" based on word games and*
>*nonsensical reasoning.*

>

>> *But if we want to understand what they are*
>> *actually saying, if we are just a wee bit curious to learn something*
>> *about our behavior; it is going to be up to us to get beyond our initial*
>> *political revulsion.*

>>

>> *If I want to understand what they are saying, I examine what they are*
>> *saying. What they are saying and have said repeatedly is that there*
>> *are no mind and mental effects. As someone interested in mechanical*
>> *explanations for the mind and mental effects, I have no interest*
>> *whatsoever in what behaviorists imagine they explain about behavior*

>

>*Precisely.*

>

>> *What they explain about behavior is nothing more than how they train*
>> *animals. What they imagine they explain is how these things happen in*
>> *the absence of a mind and mental effects. The technique behaviorists*
>> *use is to train animals and anthropomorphize results. Examples abound.*
>> *David recently recommended a paper by Kahneman in which the behavior*
>> *of pigeons was examined in macroeconomic terms as if they were human.*

>

>*Right. Economy works when you oversimplify things. AI does not work*
>*when you oversimplify things, for instance when reducing cognition to*
>*nothing! That's a very poor explanation for AI!*

>

>> *Just because patty doesn't like to examine arguments of behaviorists*

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>> *critically doesn't mean they can't be examined critically by those who*
>> *are interested in the mechanical origin of the mind and mental effects*
>> *and disregard behaviorism for its denial of mind and mental effects.*
>
>*It's misdirected to think of behaviorists as scientific, Patty, they*
>*are a stupid religious cult. BTW, your ideas about semiotics are most*
>*definitely opposed to philosophical behaviorism. What's that wiggly*
>*thing in the head? You mean there is a "state" or "structure" in the*
>*head?*
>
>*Poor David sliced up brains and couldn't see anything of the sort,*
>*it's just radially arranged layers of cells. Guess what's in there?*
>*Memory? Noooo! Memory can't exist!!!*
>
>*But then, why do memories vanish when we have brain failures? What*
>*makes it different than a harddisk failure? Behaviorism can't even*
>*answer these exceedingly trivial questions about the mind, and thus*
>*must be eliminated from rational context. Consistency alone (which*
>*they think they have, but they do not!) does not entail reality. And*
>*well, they are not consistent, they always use mental terms while*
>*trying to explain their idiotic behavior.*
>
>> *Right now you're just caught up making stupid and irrelevant excuses*
>> *for behaviorists' very obvious and well documented behavior denying*
>> *what I'm interested in explaining mechanically, suggesting I'm at*
>> *fault for not being interested in what else behaviorists have to say.*
>> *And if you want to continue crying in your beer at my lack of interest*
>> *in animal training regimens and the anthropomorphosis of results, I*
>> *heartily suggest you tell it to someone who cares.*
>
>*In effect replicating their well known, and refuted responses to*
>*criticism. When they are completely stuck, they will then start waving*
>*their hands, emitting sentences of silly metaphysics.*
>
>*If it were scientific at all, they would not have to rely on a*
>*particular, odd, and in my opinion, useless, metaphysics.*
>
>*As I said before, it's best to think of Longley-bot and Glen as a sort*
>*of online, interactive Turing/IQ test. If you believe them, you are*
>*probably worse than your favorite chatbot. How many people on*
>*comp.ai.philosophy or elsewhere accept their philosophical and*
>*methodological claims? Who were they? How many didn't? What did*
>*psychologists say to them? neuroscientists? computer scientists?*
>*philosophers? cognitive scientists? linguists?*
>
>*What did they contribute to this newsgroup? "AI is just engineering"?*
>*What kind of a silly thesis is that?*
>
>*If Patty can't see that these guys are some of the most persistent,*
>*sophisticated and twisted kooks on USENET, she really ought to go and*
>*gather intelligence elsewhere to understand what's going on. Or I*

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*>could alternatively tell her why it's a waste of mind. (and not just
>hers as demonstrated by this post!)*

Very good, Eray. At least a few get it.

Regards – Lester