

Re: death of the mind.

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.cognitive/2004-07/0536.html>

From: Lester Zick (lesterDELzick_at_worldnet.att.net)

Date: 07/29/04

Date: Thu, 29 Jul 2004 19:20:10 GMT

On Thu, 29 Jul 2004 17:04:58 +0100, David Longley
<David@longley.demon.co.uk> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:

>In article <41091309.69861905@netnews.att.net>, Lester Zick
><lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net> writes
>>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>
>>>> 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 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 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?*

>>>

sci.cognitive: Re: death of the mind.

>>>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

>>>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

>What's quite clear is that you, Ozkural, Michaels etc just get "it" all

>hopelessly wrong. If you got "it" right and *then* presented some

>objections, it might be an entirely different matter. At least then

>there would be the opportunity for some "intelligent" discussion. As it

>is, you just prompt Glen, I and a few others to repeatedly tell you that

>none of you know what you are talking about! There are two points here.

Exactly what is it that I've said that is incorrect with respect to behaviorists' denial of mind and mental effects? And exactly what have I said regarding behaviorists' denial of mind and mental effects that prevents intelligent discussion of mind and mental effects?

>First you don't understand what you are told and then you make silly

>remarks about what you don't understand attributing your misconceptions

>to source!

The last time I checked Glen denied the mind in so many words.

[. . .]

Regards – Lester