

Re: death of the mind.

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From: Glen M. Sizemore (gmsizemore2_at_yahoo.com)

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SN: The trouble with behaviorists is that they refuse to develop their
> > *theories past the operant conditioning level. We all know that we*
> > *generalize things. We are able to acquire abstract representations*
> > *of invariant features of kitchens, houses, cities, libraries, etc.*
> > *Our behavior is influenced by these abstract representations, up*
> > *to a point where no theory based solely on behavioristic constructs*
> > *will satisfactorily explain. The price they pay for this radical*
> > *vision of science is the sterile state of their explanatory theories.*
> >
> > *GS: You don't know anything about the basic facts of the science, so you*
> > *do*
> > *not know how behaviorists use it to explain complex human behavior.*
> > *Generalization is part of stimulus control. What variables affect*
> > *generalization Sergio? You are ignorant, and you are arrogant.*
>
> *SN: And so once more one avoids dealing with the main issue: how are*
> *we able to acquire the invariant features of kitchens, houses, cities,*
> *libraries, language, reasoning heuristics, and a host of other*
> *phenomena?*
>
> *GS: First be clear on the OBSERVATIONS you would like explained in terms*
> *of*
> *basic behavioral processes.*

SN: When I say "invariant features of kitchens" I am certainly not talking about direct observations. But I'm talking about an understandable abstraction.

GS: I'll ask you again: what observations are you asking me to explain.

> *SN: How can the explanation of such things be correlated*
> *with neurobiology?*
>
> *GS: By hard work, and by not looking for metaphors (i.e., things that*
> *can't*
> *be found because they don't exist).*

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SN: Without metaphors and abstract models one can hardly enter into such complex domains as the understanding of brains. Hard core neuroscientists talk about memory, []

GS: The term "memory" is not a metaphor. It is a label applied anytime an animal's behavior can be shown to have been influenced by some feature of the world that was present, but is not present at the time the animal engages in the behavior said to "show memory." In that sense "memory" can be considered an intervening variable (i.e., something that names an empirical relation). It is when memory (and "memories") is used as a hypothetical construct that causes trouble.

SN: [retinotopic maps,[]

GS: This is not a metaphor. I have no problem with retinotopic maps.

SN: activations of populations of neurons, etc. These may be metaphors, but I doubt one would make any progress without using them.

GS: None of what you mentioned are metaphors. You don't seem to know what you are talking about. Surprise, surprise!

>

> SN: *How can these explanations be coherent with evolutionary biology,[]*

>

> GS: *How can they not be (except that "coherent with" is not really proper usage)? The basic mechanisms of learning result in the modification of behavior during an organism's ontogeny, but the processes themselves exist because of natural selection.*

SN: These explanations must be *compatible* with evolutionary biology. Memory, for instance, is a concept that fits well with evolutionary biology.

GS: Do you even read what I write before you comment?

>

> SN: [*computer science,*

>

> GS: *Why should behavioral phenomena "fit in" with computer science. You can*

> *use computers to test mathematical hypotheses about behavior, I suppose, but*

> *computers aren't animals and probably aren't like them in very many ways.*

SN: You are confusing computers (the machines we have in front of us) with *computation*, which is the main theme of what one studies in computer science. Have you heard of Computational Neuroscience? They talk about memory, representation, maps, information.

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GS: Yes, the last class I took as a graduate student was a seminar that covered Randy Gallistel's book. Needless to say, I found what Randy had to say quite stupid, even though he's a very smart guy. What a waste.

>

> SN: [*linguistics*,

>

> GS: *Some of what linguists point to are facts about languages. The level of*

> *explanation for some of that is cultural – not strictly behavioral in the*

> *sense I mean it. As to psycholinguistics, behaviorism demolishes it by*

> *showing that the phenomena are functions of reinforcement contingencies.*

SN: Linguistics have important links with evolutionary biology. Linguistics have also important links with computer science. Cognitive science is able to contribute with all these disciplines, which increases our overall understanding of all these phenomena.

GS: I am aware that this is your claim, as well as the claim of many others. I see nothing to back it up. Is filling journal pages necessarily a measure of the quality of the "science?" I think not. But other than that, I see nothing; no technology, little experimental control of their subject matter, etc.

>

> SN: *mathematics*,

>

> GS: *By pointing to the behavior of mathematicians.*

SN: And by disregarding all that can be learned with topics such as information theory,[]

GS: I haven't ignored it, it just hasn't proven useful to me in trying to understand behavior. I know in your little made up world where messages are sent to and from homunculi it is considered important, but I'm talking about real science.

SN: computational learning theory,[]

GS: Ditto.

SN: statistics,

GS: Four semesters. Nothing wrong, by the way, with descriptive statistics. And I've published inferential statistics when forced to – which was most of the time that I worked in a physiology/pharmacology department. And unlike you, I understand what the use of null-hypothesis statistical testing has done to mainstream psychology. I showed you how statistical significance can be obtained when very few subjects are actually changed in any way by an independent variable, and I urged you to consult a statistician to verify my assertion. I have pointed out to you that real mathematical science makes

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predictions and tries to falsify that prediction. This is the opposite of what mainstream psychology does when it strives to disprove the null hypothesis. And I have pointed out how one may obtain significance simply by adding more subjects. This guarantees that much will be made of trivial effects.

SN: probability, etc.

GS: Now, "probability" is a notion that I have thought a lot about.

SN: Have you heard of Bayesian modeling?

GS: Yes.

SN: Cognitive science have important links with all such topics.

GS: Ooooooh daddy.

SN: Behaviorism?

GS: Yes?

"Sergio Navega" <snavega@intelliwise.com> wrote in message
news:41312bc6\$1_5@news.athenaneews.com...
> "*Glen M. Sizemore*" <gmsizemore2@yahoo.com> *escreveu na mensagem*