

Re: Neural netss (was Re: death of the mind.)

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Date: 09/24/04

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Lester Zick wrote:

[...]

>

> *Let me give you an example. I have repeatedly asked the behaviorist
> camp to explain how and why self contradiction can occur in human
> behavior, all without response. Clearly it does occur because we see
> it happen all the time. And yet everyone wants to explain human
> behavior without being able to explain this or even recognizing it.*

It's not at all clear what you mean by self-contradiction, but what the hell, what's life without risks?

If you mean making statements that explicitly or implicitly contradict themselves, the answer is fairly simple: The contingencies that control language use include the language itself. That is to say, any utterance can evoke another, and it doesn't matter much whether the utterance comes from another or from oneself, since speech is one of the behaviours one monitors in oneself. We say that S contradicts itself when we encounter S, IOW, when S is a contingency. The fact that people may disagree, ie, produce different utterances in response to S means that the behaviour is learned, and is not learned equally by different people. Note that to be able to say that S contradicts itself may require education, specifically education in logical and/or linguistic analysis. I was going to give you a behaviouristic description of logical/linguistic analysis, but I'm sure you can do that yourself.

If you mean saying one thing and doing another, well, I think that means that the contingencies evoke several behaviours (more precisely, that some combination of contingencies present evoke one behaviour, and some another.) When that happens there's no guarantee that the behaviours are consistent with each other. In fact, some kinds of humour depend on such inconsistencies. :-)

If there's some other meaning of self-contradiction I've ignored, kindly explain.