

Re: Torkel Franzén is dead

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.logic/2006-06/msg00334.html>

- *From:* "George Dance" <georgedance04@xxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 14 Jun 2006 03:45:08 -0700
-

MoeBlee wrote:

George Dance wrote:

Timothy Murphy wrote:

George Dance wrote:

I think that is very unfair.

I disagreed quite strongly, and at length, with Torkel on the subject of Chaitin (Algorithmic Entropy);

Torkel seemed to regard Chaitin as almost a fraud.

But I thought his arguments were always cogent, and thought-provoking.

Then I assume that Torkel believed you had a PhD in math, and thus considered you a peer, capable of understanding logic and worth discussing it with. Which would explain the difference in your experience of him, and that and some the other who have posted on this thread.

You assume.

That's right. I can't ask him.

But you haven't given any reason to think that Franzen considered a lack of a PhD or any degree whatsoever to exclude anyone from understanding logic or discussing it intelligently.

It's a matter of record that Torkel believed some people lacked the ability to understand even propositional logic, and trying to do so would only confuse them. AFAIK, he never spelled out who those people were when he was alive. It's also a matter of record, though, that

Re: Torkel Franzén is dead

(according to his correspondents) he would discuss the subject with some, and refuse to do that with others – and that the difference seems to correlate with the PhD/non-PhD distinction.

You say that the difference in how Franzen treated posters is "explained" by Franzen's belief as to whether the poster had a PhD in mathematics, but that just ignores a more simple possible explanation, which is that Franzen treated people according to his evaluation of their posts, not of their academic credits.

There are lots of possible explanations – FAWK, he could have made assumptions about their race and treated them differently on that basis – none of which is more obviously 'simpler' than any other. One couldn't get him to say when he was alive, as he didn't say, and one certainly get him to say now.

I thought when he was rude it was generally deserved, and nothing I've read in this thread has changed my mind on that.

I don't think anyone expects to change anyone's mind; it is reasonable to believe one's own experiences rather others' testimony, if the two contradict.

The posts are up for everyone to see and evaluate for themselves.

They certainly are.

The subjectivity of experience you mention is not so much that of exposure to different posts (though it is to some extent, since no two people will have read the exact same set of posts) but rather of one's own appraisal and feelings about those posts.

We have evidence for the lack of exposure to different posts; in this thread, for example, both you and Lester Zick have responded to his critics by stating that they haven't read the posts in question. OTOH, the fact that the criticism is coming from more than one person is reason not to chalk it all up to a feeling.

Re: Torkel Franzén is dead

So if you feel that Franzen treated you unfairly (or whatever) then you can remark upon that as a statement of your own feeling.

And similarly, the claim that Torkel never treated anyone unfairly can be pinned on the claimant's feelings, as well – which makes all the testimony equally unreliable. (Unless that, is you also believe in two types of people – those capable of reasoning logically, and those forced by lack of ability to 'think' with their feelings – and arbitrarily assign Torkel's admirers and detractors to the opposing camps on that basis; but that sounds completely arbitrary and ad hoc to me).

But unless you point to specific posts, then other people cannot evaluate for themselves whether your appraisal is justified.

Anyone is welcome to search for, and read for himself, the exchanges between Torkel and those who have written about him in this thread.

.