

# Re: Torkel Franzén is dead

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.logic/2006-06/msg00460.html>

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  - *Date:* 19 Jun 2006 16:23:37 -0700
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George Dance wrote:

All right; that's a good place to begin by introducing evidence. So I'd like to introduce the following link, which I'll label Exhibit B (Exhibit A was the quote from his exchange with xyz):

<http://tinyurl.com/lmyxl>

Read it and make your own judgement. I would make two claims about that thread: :

1) In it, Torkel advances his thesis that there are some people who are incapable of understanding symbolic logic; and that for them to try use it would only muddle their thinking. (For convenience, I will call those "Submathematical" humans, or SMs.)

Until I have time to respond to the rest of George Dance's posts, I want to catch the above comment.

What Franzen actually wrote in that thread is:

"Formal logic is essentially a mathematical subject, and experience supports neither the idea that people who reason well in non-mathematical contexts should have an aptitude for formal logic, nor the idea that a study of formal logic will help people reason well in non-mathematical contexts."

Maybe elsewhere Franzen claimed that there are people incapable of understanding symbolic logic (well, there are people who are incapable, so what is at stake is a claim that some people who are otherwise fairly intelligent are incapable of understanding symbolic logic). But in the very thread that George Dance cites, Franzen did NOT mention incapability but rather that certain people who are otherwise logical don't have an APTITUDE for symbolic logic. To say that someone does not have an aptitude (in the sense of a talent or special inclination) for something isn't a claim that he or she is incapable of understanding it. I don't have an aptitude for car mechanics, but I am capable of understanding it if I choose to concentrate upon it. Nor does Franzen

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argue that the fact that some people who lack aptitude get muddled with symbolic logic entails that they must always be muddled by it. But most important here is that Dance goes on to call such people "submathematical humans". But that is entirely unsuitable if we are discussing Franzen's, not Dance's, views on this matter, since Franzen never devised such a rubric, which as it is devised by Dance, carries truly terrible connotations such as 'sub-human' and other rubrics of horrible ideologies. There is nothing gained in evaluating Franzen's views by tainting them with such horrible connotations; I suggest that Dance let Franzen's remarks speak for themselves and that Dance not burden Franzen with rubrics that Franzen did not himself propose.

MoeBlee

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