

## 10 Salient Sentences from Preface 4 of Hofstadter's "Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies"

### 1) Eliza Effect

This type of illusion is generally known as the "Eliza effect", which could be defined as the susceptibility of people to read far more understanding than is warranted into strings of symbols - especially words - strung together by computers. A trivial example of this effect might be someone thinking that an automatic teller machine really was grateful for receiving a deposit slip, simply because it printed out "THANKYOU" on its little screen.

### 2) Kid doing somersault analogy

When there's a little kid trying somersaults out for the first time next to a flashy gymnast doing flawless flips on a balance beam, who's going to pay any attention to the kid? Our projects in microdomains come across, at least on the surface, as the equivalent of the little kid doing a somersault.

### 3) ACME Program:

A computer model of analogical thinking called "ACME" ("M" is for Mapping) has interpreted Socrates' remark appropriately, showing just how a mid-wife's role in aiding the birth of a new baby resembles a philosopher's elicitation of ideas in his pupil's mind - and how it does not. So far as I know, this program has not been tried out on Macbeth's speech about sleep. But I'd be prepared to bet that it could make something of it. For ACME uses highly abstract procedures for recognizing (and assessing the strength of) analogies in general.

#### 4) Cross-Domain Analogies:

In fact, giving their program the ability to make cross-domain analogies is clearly one of the achievements of which Holyoak and Thagard are most proud. They devote a full paragraph to a critique of programs that can only do “intradomain analogies”, which they characterize as “virtually trivial”.

#### 5) Claims

What generally results in some kind of intermediate level of description, in which a bit of caution is used but much is left ambiguous, so that readers are still free to draw conclusions that often will amount to some kind of Eliza effect-benefiting the researchers, needless to say. It may well be that his book, precisely this kind of thing takes place in our discussions of our own work, but there is one difference: our domains are deliberately so stripped-down that the claims made cannot be very grandiose.

#### 6) Eliza Program:

The Eliza effect borrowed its name from the ELIZA program, written by Joseph Weizenbaum in the mid-1960's. That infamous program's purpose was to act like a nondirective Rogerian psychotherapist, responding to the typed lamentations of patients with very bland questions that echoed their own words back to them, most of the time simply urging them to continue typing along the same lines (“Please go on”), and occasionally suggesting a change of topics

#### 8) Letter to NY Times editor: “written by a computer”

On the other hand, the claim that a novel has been “written by a computer” is extraordinarily distorted and misleading. It's most unclear from the article what Scott French's computer was actually able to do, but the impression was clearly given that the computer was handling sophisticated concepts such as 'Jealousy', 'sex', 'competition', and so forth, not to mention more everyday ones like 'woman', 'throat', and 'Jump’.

#### 9) Hofstadter's Criticism 1:

"One has to bear in mind that the English words are completely vacuous. Not only is there an utter lack of imagery behind them, but there is not even any kind of attempt at a dictionary definition. A compound word like "knows-truth-or-falsity", so transparently evocative to readers of English, might as well be, for all the computer could care, "xjs-beuglh?" or "doesn't-give-a-damn-about" or the digit "8" or any other alphanumeric string."

#### 10) Hofstadter's Criticism 2:

"The mind of even the trashiest of human authors is filled to the brim with life experiences adding up to the most unanalyzable depths of mental complexity and subtlety. The difference between Vikram Seth, say, and Jacqueline Susann is microscopic in comparison with the difference between the mind of Jacqueline Susann and the micro mind of any computer program in existence today."