"The human mind in dialogue with its replica AI – A Historical Perspective"

Prof. Em. Sven Hroar Klempe, Dept. of Psychology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)

Abstract

Psychology has been in transition since the first appearance of this word sometime at the end of the fifteenth century. One may say that all the transitions psychology has gone through for the last 500 years have been provided by a need for changed understandings of the human nature and the human mind in dialogue with current cultural streams in the actual society. This is exactly what we are facing in 2025, in which the digitally based communication has invaded the complete society from micro to macro levels all over the world. Even the human mind is so infused with computer-based communication that it is natural to think about the mind as if it is a computer itself.

Although the development of artificial intelligence has exploded for the last couple of years, the idea about the human mind as something comparable with a computer is not a new idea. In psychology, all historians agree upon the fact that this idea got off to a flying start through the symposium arranged by the "Special Interest Group in Information Theory" at Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sept. 10-11, 1956. This symposium was sponsored by IBM, and it was here Noam Chomsky presented for the first time his ideas about a transformational generative grammar. There were several contributors to the cognitive revolution, but Chomsky's presentation of a linguistic system with a precision with mathematics was symptomatic for how a cognitive model for the human mind aimed to be conceptualized. This brings the question about artificial intelligence to the core of psychology, namely how it actually understands the human mind.

However, psychology's understanding of the human mind has changed along the history. This is what will be focused on in my presentation. After a short presentation of some of the premises for the available artificial intelligence of today and some aspects of the idea behind the computational mind, I will follow a link back to the 18th century when psychology was explicitly included in philosophy by Christian Wolff in 1732. He was also a mathematician, and he understood the human as if it is governed by logical thinking. His student, Alexander Baumgarten, on the other hand, is the founder of modern aesthetics. He also contributed to psychology but argued instead for the human aesthetic mind. Those two perspectives on the human mind paved the way for experimental psychology in the 19th century, and both Fechner and Wundt followed up the two perspectives. The fundamental question that will be pursued in this presentation is therefore how the human *aesthetic* mind will act in dialogue with its *apparent* replica – AI.