

Lecture 4: Problem Set 4 (Due Mar. 9)

Reading: Emotion Machine, Chapter 3

Problem 1

Minsky: "What makes feelings so hard to describe? Is this because feelings are so simple and basic that there's nothing more to be said about them? No, its precisely the opposite, because...what we call feelings are the results of attempts (by some parts of one's mind) to describe entire mental conditions. However, every mental state is so complex that any brief description of it could capture just a few aspects of it."

- a) How does this imply a limitation on our introspective abilities?
- b) How does this relate to using abstract or ambiguous terminology?

Problem 2

The words we use to describe emotions (eg, 'happy', 'dazed') are distinct from the complex mental arrangements of resources that these terms try to describe. Minsky uses the term "Ways to Think" to describe these large-scale mental configurations (such as emotions) in addition to smaller configurations of problem solvers. For instance, if you need to catch a taxi, some Ways to Think about the problem are:

- Wait outside for the taxi
- Call the company to ask for one to be sent
- Walk to a place you expect to find a taxi

- a) Describe another common problem and several Ways to Think about it.

Problem 3

Specify the four critics (corrector, suppressor, censor and encourager [p86]) in this story:

"Joan is applying for a job at two AI companies, 'Intelligence Vacuum' and 'Emergent Design', and begins to write applications. In her first email, she discusses her credentials, education and a question about her salary. After she sends the email, she reflects and concludes that it was premature to discuss financial issues. Joan begins her next email, this time she only includes education and her credentials. In the credentials section, she sees a great opportunity for a joke and lists her programming skills, "LISP, C and SNOBOL," under the title 'Foreign Languages.' Impressed with her humor, she thinks about inserting an emoticon ':-)' but does not. Ending her email, she misspells her name and then quickly corrects it before sending."

Problem 4

In 3-8, Minsky discusses emotional exploitation as a method of self-control. Describe how you conjure memories to indirectly control your reactions to these situations:

example) You want to study for a test, and you are tired.
 Conjure a memory of failing the test to elicit a Fearful state, or
 Imagine a competition between another colleague to obtain Anger.

- a) You are on a diet, and want to eat Double Fudge ice cream.
- b) You want a good grade, and you are bored in class.
- c) You want to yell at a police officer, and not be arrested.

Bonus

In 4,000 words or fewer, describe how you are feeling.