

Daniel Dennett

"Turing's gradualist vision: making minds from proto-minds"

In the early days of computers, the media often referred to the enormous mainframes of the day as "giant electronic brains" but this was a misnomer: they were better seen as giant electronic minds, or proto-minds, not at all like brains. Turing had a vision, however, of reproducing all the powers of a human brain in the computer, and GOFAI (Good Old Fashioned AI--Haugeland) was just the first wave of research and development intent on proving him right. We've learned a lot in the decades since Turing gave us the computer, but traces of his initial vision still shape, and discipline, the field of cognitive science. Having climbed Turing's ladder, we are not going to discard all of it, but from our current vantage point we can see elements that were obligatory in Turing's day but optional today.