Free critical thinking on the minds

Health & Medicine, Body

One of the most complex human faculties is the mind. This is the faculty that deals with thinking, consciousness, reasoning, perception and judgment. This usually makes use of the brains and is mostly associated with human beings but to some extent is also associated with other forms of life. Minds are one of the facets that are mostly related to brains and central nervous system and it has been in a point of interests in fields of psychology, philosophy and religion (Shaffer, 295).

Reviewing a brief history on the concept of the minds, this concept came into limelight under the field of cognitive science in the late 20th century and early 21st century. However, this study still existed but only in restrained studies. From this field, the issue of minds being identical to the brain became one of the ideas that defined minds. This was investigated by a number of philosophers and their investigations were based mostly on the ideas of great philosophers like Plato and Descartes among others. This issue led to unclear differences between the brains and the minds. This also led to a number of different approaches to this idea leading to very many diversified concepts of the minds and the brains (Thomas, 320).

There are two main schools of thought that try to determine and universally define what mind is. The two schools are dualism and monism. Dualism was originally developed by Plato but clearly defined by Rene Descartes. According to Descartes, mind can be treated as an independently existing substance that is very independent of the body as in accordance to substance dualism. However, in properties dualism, the philosophers argue that minds are properties of a substance that cannot be independent of the body thus must be always linked to the body. These two arguments give the

most commonly adopted definitions of minds (Thomas, 321). Monism on the other side argues that the mind and the body are not ontologically distinct. This means that the minds cannot exist in a context where the body does not exist. The main argument of this approach is that a certain physical element must first exist for the minds to exist and be defined within the context of the physical entities that are in existence. This is what makes the world itself to be defined as a concept in human minds and if not, it is an illusion created by the human minds. According to these two schools of thought, one can deduce a common conclusion that there is a mind-body problem that cannot be fully resolved to have a definition of the minds that is completely free from the aspect of body (Shaffer, 301).

In one of the examples given in the book on what it is to be like a bat, the author emphasizes that without any aspect of consciousness (Shaffer, 298). This is the main factor underlying the argument of what it means to be like a bat. According to the author, consciousness is one of the least understood concepts in study of the minds. This makes the whole aspect of consciousness to be well elaborated in the aspect of the bat. In the light shed by the author of this article, almost all forms of life show evidence of consciousness (Shaffer, 296). However, this aspect is not well understood or exhibited. In this article, the main ideas elaborated are the aspects of subjective and cognitive reasoning. In the bat, the reasoning appears to be inclined in subjective sphere while in human beings; it is towards the cognitive aspect (Thomas, 322). This is due the fact that bats and most other animals respond to external forces thus react subjectively. In case of human beings, the process of reasoning or reacting to any stimuli depends first on

human imagination (Thomas, 334). This calls for cognitive response and later triggers the most appropriate subjective response. The author further elaborates on the mental states being of the body while mental events are of the physical events. This tries to explain on the mystery in the mind-body problem.

However, of late there have been a number of scientific approaches that tries to oppose the minds are not a special characteristic to human beings. One of such advanced scientific studies or fields is the field of artificial intelligence. In this field, human reasoning is imitated by a machine and this is mainly by using a knowledge pool that is collected and number of algorithms used to help the machine make rational decisions. This aspect makes scientists dispute the idea of minds being a special human aspect.

In one of the articles, the author investigates more about artificial intelligence. In the article entitled ‘ brains, minds and computers’, the author defines that most of human basic cognitive properties can be incorporated in a computer system to make it respond to certain commands in a similar way that a person would respond. However, the author also accepts that some human attributes cannot be inherited in a machine. This makes the computer system to have a mind but not a detectable one. For the machine to respond to situations like a human being would do, the author elaborates that they must have a knowledge base and a complex conditional structure for the response to be in style. This representational data must be fed to the computer memory the same way a person must first conceive an idea before concluding on it (John, 351). Towards the end of the article, eh author has declared some differences between human beings and computer systems

and what makes human beings to have a detectable mind while devices lack. The basic aspect is an understanding of the situation. The machine is just fed with algorithms which help it get the correct response but it does not understand the problem. This is due to lack of a CNS which is the center of communication and understanding in living organism (John, 350).

After analysis on a number of papers concerning technology and artificial intelligence, I can conclusively claim that machines do not really have a detectable mind. This is due to the fact that these devices uses a human knowledge base that can become outdated thus the decision made does not update as a human brain does. The other factor is that human brains and minds involve more than just rationality since the idea of emotional consideration is also looked at. The other factor that makes me convinced that machines lack a detectable mind is its lack of natural ability to make any decision. This is because for a machine to make any decision, it has to imitate a human brain in making decisions. This makes the machine inherit almost everything including thinking from a human brain. However, detection ability of a mind which is greatly interconnected with the idea of consciousness is the only thing that cannot be incorporated in a machine. Its mind is just a replica of human mind but due to the excessive ability contained in the human mind coupled with wisdom instead of knowledge makes human brain to have a detectable mind and the machine to lack it (John 352).

In conclusion, a universal definition of mind is still not yet achieved. However, the best way to approach this is by use of philosophy and psychology that claim mind to be inseparable from the body and never can a

machine have a detectable mind as a human being has. This is the only thing that human beings possess that cannot be fully implanted in any kind of a machine. This also supports the idea that human mind can only be imitated but not even any combination of machines can have a detectable mind (John, 354).

Works cited

Shaffer J. Consciousness and mind-body problem in the book ‘ Introduction to philosophy: Classical and contemporary readings’ by Perry J, Oxford University Press, and 1998 Print

Thomas N. What it is like to be a bat in the book ‘ Introduction to philosophy: Classical and contemporary readings’ by Perry J, Oxford University Press, and 1998 Print

John S. Brains, minds and computers in ‘ Introduction to philosophy: Classical and contemporary readings’ by Perry J, Oxford University Press, and 1998 Print