

Radical Artificial Intelligence: A Postmodern Approach

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1 Talk Abstract

The title, a variation on Russell and Norvig's popular AI textbook "Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach" (Prentice Hall, 1995), is meant to suggest a possibly radical future for AI than that imagined by most researchers. To explore this issue, this talk will examine some basic questions: Is there a "grand unified theory" (GUT) of artificial intelligence? What if it doesn't have one? What if intelligence, in general, has no unifying principles? What if intelligence is simply a series of clever hacks? Does that spell doom for AI?

If there is a GUT, then we may be well on our way to finding it. However, if there isn't, we may be well on the way down the wrong path and away from building generally intelligent systems.

Although I believe that standard AI techniques may not lead to a generally intelligent system, I will argue that there could still be hope. However, there may be some radical consequences. For example, it may be that we will not understand how our AI systems work. I do not mean that they may involve techniques out of our reach of understanding, but that there may not exist a meaningful abstraction that explains its basic operation. In short, for a generally intelligent system, there may not be a useful description of it more abstract than the actual system itself.

This talk will examine the problems in *designing* generally intelligent systems, the radical alternative, and its research and pedagogical implications.