

**EXPLORING  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE  
ON YOUR  
SPECTRUM+  
AND SPECTRUM**

*Tim Hartnell*



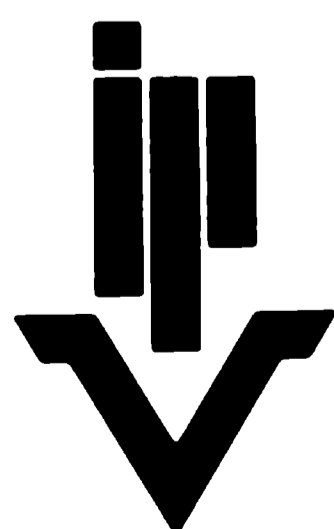


***Interface Publications***

— LONDON · MELBOURNE —

**EXPLORING  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE  
ON YOUR  
SPECTRUM +  
AND SPECTRUM**

**TIM HARTNELL**





**EXPLORING  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE  
ON YOUR  
SPECTRUM +  
AND SPECTRUM**

**“The appearance on earth of a nonhuman entity with intelligence approaching or exceeding mankind’s would rank with the most significant events in human history”  
— Fortune magazine.**

**This book is part of the ‘Interface Artificial Intelligence Library’.**

First published in the UK by:  
Interface Publications Ltd  
9–11 Kensington High Street  
LONDON W8 5NP

Copyright © Tim Hartnell, 1984  
First printing November 1984

ISBN 0 947695 05 2

The programs in this book have been included for their instructional value. They have been tested with care, but are not guaranteed for any particular purpose. While every care has been taken, the publishers cannot be held responsible for any running mistakes which may occur.

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

No use whatsoever may be made of the contents of this volume – programs and/or text – except for private study by the purchaser of this volume, without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.  
Reproduction in any form or for any purpose is forbidden.

Books published by Interface Publications are distributed in the UK by WHS Distributors, St. John's House, East Street, Leicester LE1 6NE (0533 551196) and in Australia and New Zealand by PITMAN PUBLISHING. Any queries regarding the contents of this volume should be directed by mail to Interface Publications, 9–11 Kensington High Street, London W8 5NP.

Interface Publications has exclusive rights to the following program names: TRANSLATE, BLOCKWORLD, SPURT, X-SPURT, SYLLOGY, TICTAC, HANSHAN and SELFLEARN.

Cover design – Richard Kelly  
Cover art – David John Rowe  
Printed and Bound by Short Run Press Ltd, Exeter

# CONTENTS

Foreword ix

## SECTION ONE — THINKING 1

Chapter One — Learning and Reasoning ..... 2

    Feedback ..... 5  
    How do machines think? ..... 6  
    Switches and decisions ..... 8  
    'Real' logic gates ..... 11

Chapter Two — A Program which Learns ..... 15

    Samuel and the checkerboard ..... 18  
    TICTAC — the program ..... 20

Chapter Three — A Program which Reasons ..... 35

    Storage of data ..... 39  
    SYLLOGY — the program ..... 50

## SECTION TWO — SEARCHING 56

Chapter Four — Search Trees and SNICKERS ..... 57

    Why is it called a tree? ..... 57  
    'Parallel processing' ..... 59  
    Vanishing acts ..... 61

Digging deep .....	65
Mini-maxing .....	67
Chess and weighting .....	73
The alpha-beta algorithm .....	76
How the program works .....	92
SNICKERS — the program .....	104

## Chapter Five — The Wider Value of Games .....115

Claude Shannon .....	115
Real-world complexities .....	116
Other games, other lessons .....	118
More on Samuel's checkers .....	119
Go and Othello .....	120

# **SECTION THREE — TALKING** 121

## Chapter Six — Understanding Natural Language .....122

SHRDLU .....	122
Language parsing .....	124
BLOCKWORLD .....	125
Problems .....	127
Syntax and semantics .....	128

## Chapter Seven — BLOCKWORLD .....132

The domain .....	132
How does it work? .....	138
Modules of the program .....	146
BLOCKWORLD — the program .....	158
Extending the program .....	168
SHRDLU conversation .....	169



Chapter Eight — The Doctor is In .....173

Weizenbaum and ELIZA ..... 173  
The Russian connection ..... 176  
Short, sharp shocks ..... 177  
Absurdities ..... 181  
Sample run DOCTOR ..... 182  
How it works ..... 185  
The reply database ..... 186  
The program structure ..... 191  
Using the myflag ..... 196  
DOCTOR — the program ..... 198

Chapter Nine — Machine Translation .....213

Still a use for people ..... 214  
SYSTRAN in action ..... 215  
Franglais ..... 218  
Program structure ..... 220  
TRANSLATE — the program ..... 225

Chapter Ten — HANSHAN .....229

The database ..... 230  
Sample Haiku ..... 232  
HANSHAN — the program ..... 233

**SECTION FOUR — HELPING** 236

Chapter Eleven — Expert Systems ..... 237

IF/THEN chains ..... 237  
Leibniz ..... 239  
Limitations ..... 240  
Chemicals and DENDRAL ..... 241

Chapter Twelve — The Little SPURT ..... 245

MEDICI .....  
Sample run SPURT ..... 246  
The program structure ..... 249  
SPURT — the program ..... 250  
The little X-SPURT ..... 252  
Tallying answers ..... 256  
Mineral expertise ..... 258  
The program structure ..... 260  
X-SPURT — the program ..... 266  
Choosing a chip ..... 270  
Answer table ..... 274  
CHIP-CHOICE — the program ..... 275

Chapter Thirteen — Self-learning systems .....279

Sample run SELFLEARN ..... 276  
How it works ..... 283  
SELFLEARN — the program ..... 287  
More alternatives ..... 289  
Program structure ..... 292  
MULTI-SELF-LEARN listing ..... 295  
No need for correction ..... 298  
MULTI-SELF-LEARN-2 listing ..... 301

# FOREWORD

You are about to start a fascinating journey, into the realm where science fact interacts with science fiction.

Since the first computers were made, anguished debates have been fought over topics such as:

- Can a machine really think?
- What is the nature of intelligence, and will a machine ever be built which could partake of that nature?

Once you've worked through this book, you will be ready to enter that debate, and enter it with authority. For in this book we are going to investigate the fascinating world of Artificial Intelligence, and are going to replicate some of its most famous programs.

From programs which learn and reason, to those which will talk to you, obey you and advise you, we cover a great deal of ground.

Writing this book, which is part of the 'Interface Artificial Intelligence Library', has been fascinating. Reading through the extensive literature on the subject, becoming acquainted with the aspirations of AI pioneers, and writing programs which — admittedly crudely — allowed some of their findings to be duplicated on a microcomputer has been an extremely interesting and enjoyable exercise.

I hope some of the fascination I've experienced is transmitted in this book, and some of the excitement I've felt watching the programs will be felt by you when you run them.

Tim Hartnell,  
London, 1984.

# **SECTION ONE — THINKING**

# CHAPTER ONE — LEARNING AND REASONING

There is a continuing debate as to whether producing a machine which can behave in a manner which appears intelligent is actually taking us any closer to actually producing intelligence. A related question, inextricably bound up in the debate, concerns the nature of intelligence.

The programs in this book certainly allow your computer to exhibit intelligent responses to situations, making decisions and acting on them. However, there is no suggestion that your computer has awareness of its actions. It does not laugh at the nonsequiturs produced in DOCTOR and cannot admire — or even recognize — a particularly effective poem produced by HANSHAN.

Is there, then, any justification for claiming that we are producing 'artificial intelligence'? It seems to me that without the kind of perception which recognizes such things as the 'effectiveness' of a poem, or the incongruity of a response, we cannot really suggest that intelligence is present.

AI is in its infancy, and to expect to elicit real awareness and perception from a short BASIC program on a micro-computer, when the largest mainframe machines have not even scratched the surface of this area, is unrealistic.

However, there are two areas of behavior which are both reasonable candidates for classing behavior as intelligent, and which can be elicited from your own computer. These are the fields of *learning* and *reasoning*.

TICTAC, a program which plays Tic-Tac-Toe (or Noughts and Crosses) starts its life with just a knowledge of how to win the game, and how to block. It does not have any knowledge as to the early moves it should make in a game in order to increase its chance of winning. In fact, its initial knowledge base is such that it plays as badly as it can.

But, put it up against an opponent playing totally at random (an opponent who does not even have the rudimentary knowledge that one wins the game by getting three noughts or three crosses in a row) and within ten games or so TICTAC will have learnt the value of moving into the central square on the grid if it is available, and will have ordered its other moves into a sequence which — although it differs from the sequence you or I might create in similar circumstances — allows it to win an increasing proportion of its games, even against an intelligent opponent such as yourself. TICTAC has been written to show you the state of its present learning after each game. This makes it a fascinating program to run, and there are many ways you can extend the program to investigate its ability to learn.

SYLLOGY is our reasoning program. It aims to solve syllogisms, such as this early one:

SOCRATES IS A MAN  
ALL MEN ARE MORTAL  
THEREFORE, SOCRATES IS MORTAL

From the two initial premises, SYLLOGY draws a reasonable conclusion. The important thing to note is that SYLLOGY can reach conclusions about information which has not been explicitly fed into it.

I'll explain that. Look at these two premises:

A NOVEL IS A BOOK  
A BOOK IS PRINTED ON PAPER

Although the program has not been told explicitly that a novel is printed on paper, it will answer YES when presented with this question:

IS A NOVEL PRINTED ON PAPER?

You can have a great deal of fun feeding in a long range of premises, then asking a variety of questions on them, to see what conclusions SYLLOGY can form. I HAVE NO DATA ON THAT, NO and I DON'T KNOW are all possible responses from SYLLOGY.

In the early stages of the 'could a machine really become intelligent?' debate, it became obvious that the fundamental terms under discussion needed looking at very carefully. What did we actually mean by thought and thinking? If we did not know really know what we meant when using the terms to refer to ourselves, how could we make judgements on the performance of machines in this field?

This sort of thinking is one of the many effects that studying AI has had. Man has been forced to look closely at himself, and to examine areas of human behavior in a way which very few men had ever bothered to do.



I suggested a short while ago that while machines were not even approaching the kind of awareness which appears vital as a prerequisite for claiming that intelligence actually exists in a system, some aspects of intelligence — reasoning and the ability to learn — were within our present capabilities.

There are different kinds of learning. We can learn by watching others, by reading, by being told (which is a kind of ‘verbal reading’ so the two are very closely related) and by ‘trial and error’. Computers can learn in all these ways. TICTAC learns largely from trial and error, although it has some preprogrammed knowledge (which it gained by ‘being told’).

## **FEEDBACK**

Of course, TICTAC’s trials and errors would be meaningless unless it received feedback as to the success or otherwise of its efforts. Feedback is a vital element of learning.

An early ‘machine which would learn’ was the turtle, a forerunner of a swarm of such robotic terrapins, built in 1948 by Grey Walter, a physiologist who specialised in the brain. He built his turtle — a half-globe that trundled around the floor, working its way around obstacles, and going home to bed when its batteries were getting low — to demonstrate his thesis that complex behavior, no matter how involved it looked to an outside observer, was based on interactions between only a few basic ideas.

The turtle learned its way around by utilising negative feedback, that is it would tend not to repeat behavior which was not productive. A turtle which did not learn that rolling repeatedly into a wall was not a way to move around would cover very little ground.

## **HOW DO MACHINES THINK?**

Present-day computers are serial processors. That is, they proceed from point to point, one step at a time, with their future steps determined by the results of their present ones. The human brain, by contrast, uses not only serial processing, but also parallel processing, in which a number of trains of thought — some conscious, others not — are underway at once.

A computer's thought and decision-making process is essentially a path through a maze of IF/THEN constructions:

IF this is true AND this is true  
AND this not true THEN do this

The computer, of course, can make OR decisions as well as AND ones:

IF this is true OR this is true  
THEN do this

They can be combined:

IF this is true AND that is true OR  
something else is true THEN do this

How does it do this? The very first electronic calculating device was built (in his kitchen) by George Stibitz who worked for Bell Telephone Laboratories in the 1940s. He wired up batteries, bulbs and some telephone relay switches, to calculate in binary. (This is the numbering system which has only 0 and 1 as its digits. A switch turned on could be considered set to equal 1, while when off it was regarded as 0.) Stibitz realized that his crude device, if sufficiently expanded, could work on any kinds of mathematical problems. (What he apparently did not realise was — as you will learn in a moment — that the same circuits he was using to add binary numbers could be used to reach decisions.)

However, a few years before, in 1937, Claude Shannon (who later also worked for Bell), had gained his master's at MIT with a thesis on the relationship between Boolean Algebra and the flow of power through switched circuits.

Boolean Algebra — which is where the 'thinking' part of machines really begins — is based on the work of George Boole, a lecturer at Queens College, Cork, in the middle of the nineteenth century. His book *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought on Which Are Founded the Mathematical Theories of Logic and Probabilities* (published in 1854) laid down the foundations of modern symbolic logic. Boolean Algebra is based on the rules he laid out, and is the pivot round which your computer's ability to reason rotates.

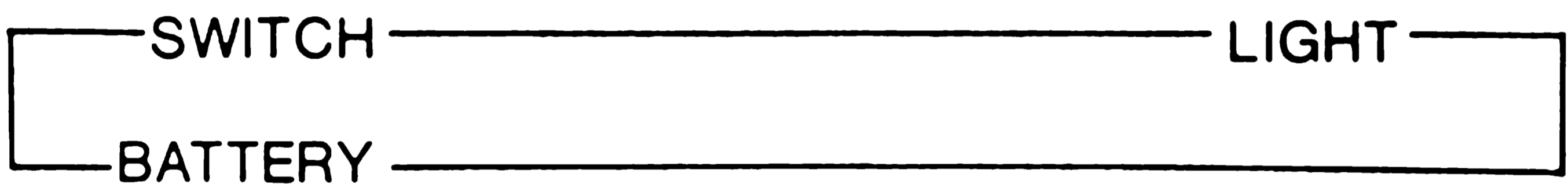
Boole wrote in the preface to his work:

The laws we have to examine are the laws of one of the most important of our mental faculties. The mathematics we have to construct are the mathematics of the human intellect.

Until Boole's discoveries, it had been assumed that logic was a branch of philosophy. Boole showed clearly that, instead, it belonged without doubt within the province of mathematics.

## SWITCHES AND DECISIONS

We can investigate Boole's claims, and see how they relate to your computer, decision-making and AI, by mentally reconstructing some of the devices that Stibitz built on his kitchen table. We'll start with a very simple circuit, containing a power supply, a single switch, and a light:



You can see that when the switch is closed, power will flow and the light will light up. We'll indicate that the switch has been turned on by saying that its state is '1'. When the switch is off, and the current does not flow, its state will be said to be '0'. On equals 1, off equals 0. Further we will adopt the convention that when the light is lit, its state is 1; when the light is off, its state is 0.

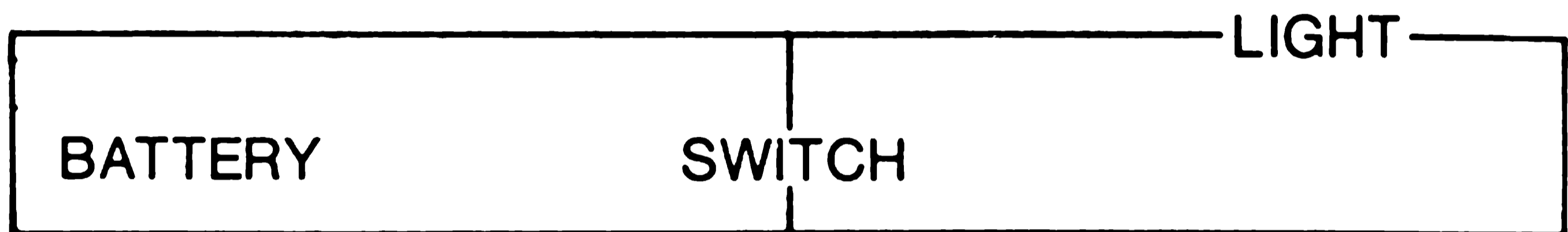
This is said to be an **ASSERTION** circuit. When the switch is on, the light is on. That is, switch state equals light state. If we draw up a little table to show the relationship between the states of the lamp and the switch in an assertion circuit

we would get something like this:

SWITCH	LIGHT
0	0
1	1

A table like this, by the way, is called a 'truth table'.

Now, we'll look at another simple circuit:



If you look at this, you'll see that the light is on (light state equals 1) when the switch is open (switch state is 0) and — once the switch has been closed (switch state set to 1) — the current will flow through it rather than through the light.

This is a **NEGATION** circuit, and the truth table for it looks like this:

SWITCH	LIGHT
0	1
1	0

Now we get to the interesting bits, where circuits can 'make decisions'. Imagine we have a circuit with two

switches in it, as follows:

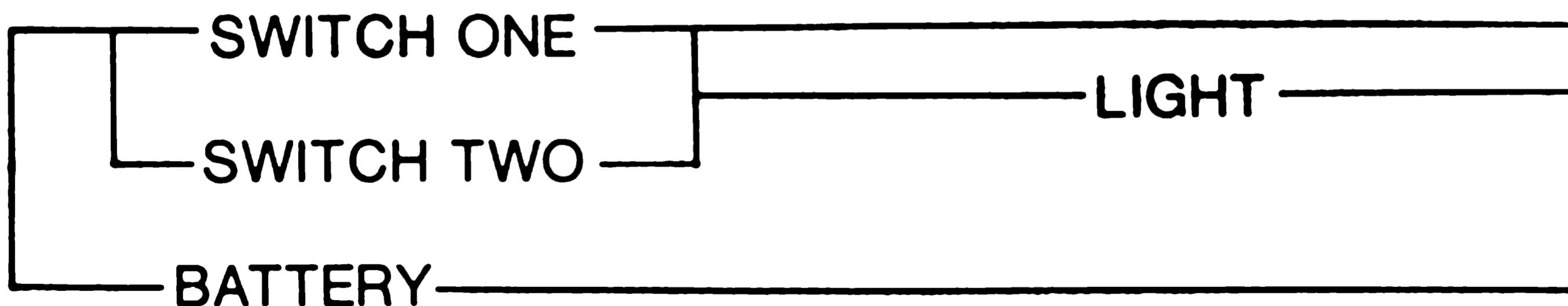


With both switches closed (that is, turned on, with their states **both** equal to 1 [1 1]) the light will glow. If **either** of the switches is off (one switch set to 1, and the other to 0 [1 0]) or both of them are off (switch one set to 0 and switch two equals 0 [0 0]) the light will be off. This is called an **AND** gate circuit.

The truth table looks like this:

SWITCH ONE	SWITCH TWO	LIGHT
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	1	0
1	1	1

From AND we move on to OR. the **OR** gate circuit looks like this:



In this circuit, with the switches in parallel (they were in series in the AND circuit), the light will be on (state 1) if **either** switch one or switch two is one (either [0 1] or [1 0]) or both switches are one [1 1]. Before you read on, try and construct a truth table for the OR gate circuit.

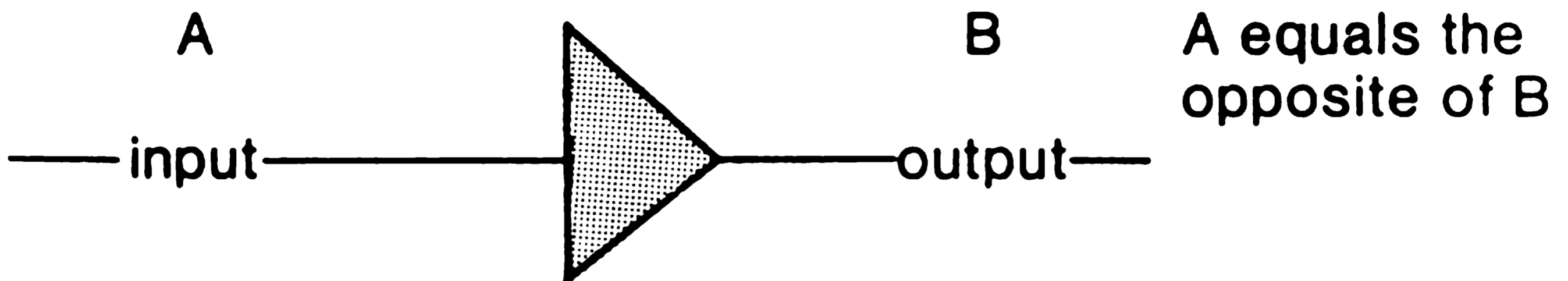
SWITCH ONE	SWITCH TWO	LIGHT
0	0	0
1	0	1
0	1	1
1	1	1

## **'REAL' LOGIC GATES**

Your computer uses logic gates just like these, except of course they are not great big switches which need to be turned off and on. One reason Shannon and Stibitz used relays is because these are switches which can be turned on without actually touching them (when an electrical current is applied, a magnetic force is generated which closes the switch).

There are no electrical relays of Shannon's type in your computer either, although the elements of the chips in your computer act like thousands upon thousands of relays. In schematic diagrams of circuits, the gates we've examined above are shown as follows.

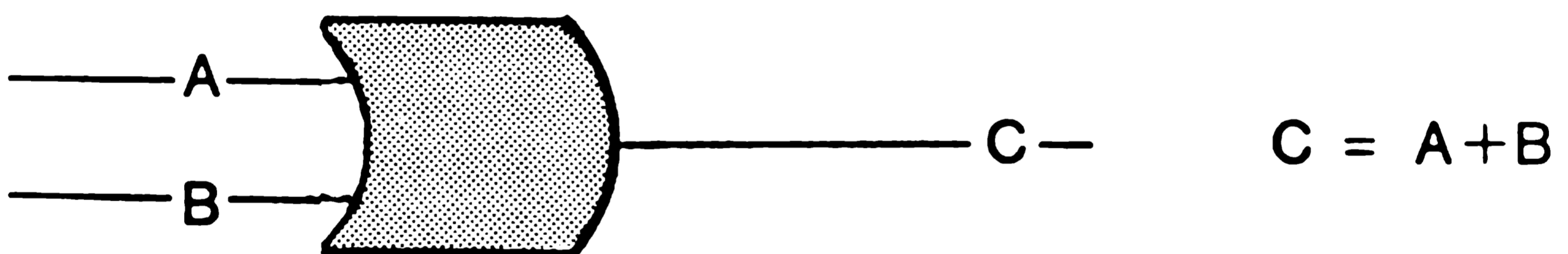
Firstly there is the 'inverter'. If an incoming signal is state 0, it leaves the device as state 1, and vice versa:



This is an AND gate:



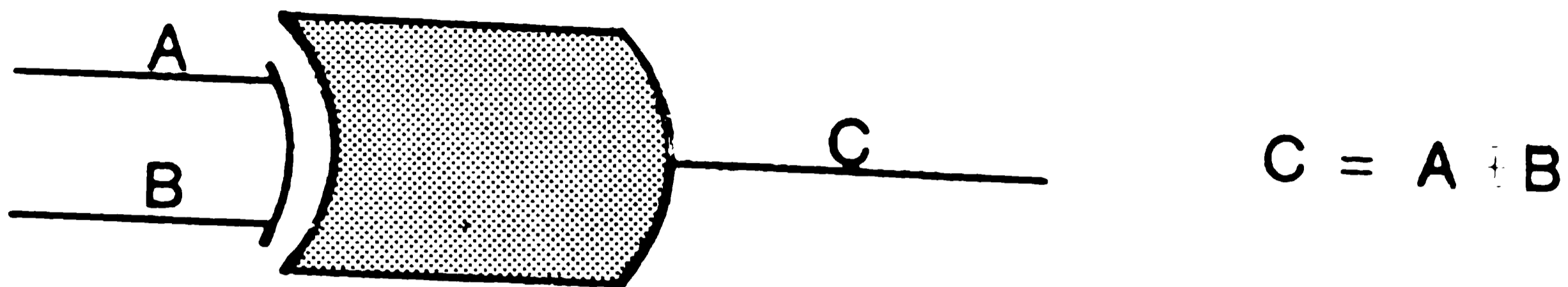
And this the OR gate:



There's another gate which is often used in circuits, and which will be helpful to you when trying to work out how circuits reach decisions. This is **XOR** gate, the EXCLUSIVE OR. With this, if **either** input is 1 ([1 0] or [0 1]) the state of the output is 1. However, if they are **both** 1 [1 1] or **both** 0 [0 0] the output state is 0.



Here's a schematic for an XOR gate:



Here's the truth table for an XOR gate:

SWITCH ONE (A)	SWITCH TWO (B)	LIGHT (C)
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	1	0
1	1	1

With these few elements, you can now construct 'circuits' to reach decisions. You can easily select, for example, from the gates we've examined (and I suggest you try and work out which ones they are) a sequence of gates to represent statements like these:

IF A AND B are true (i.e. [1 1] AND C OR  
 D (but not both) is true ([1 0] or [0 1]  
 but not [1 1] and certainly not [0 0])  
 THEN D is true (i.e. output is 1).

Working out the switch arrangements to mimic the above statement — and others like it — is fascinating, and can give a real insight into the way a simple sequence of Boolean operations can process decisions to arrive at results (if the above circuit was actually built correctly, a light would come on at D). Doing this should help you get a little closer to understanding how your computer works,

and from that understanding, you may well find you'll really appreciate how complicated such things can become, and how complex they have to be to simulate any kind of 'intelligent' behavior above the most basic.

Consider, for example, the circuitry required to emulate the action of the computer in the first program in this section, TICTAC.

# CHAPTER TWO — A PROGRAM WHICH LEARNS

Many AI programs do not spring into the computer fully formed. Even when they are debugged, and operating, they are far from finished. The program we'll look at in this section of the book, TICTAC which is a version of TIC-TAC-TOE or NOUGHTS AND CROSSES, is one such 'unformed' program. TICTAC learns as it plays, modifying its rules in light of the success or otherwise of its current behavior.

A program which is going to learn as it runs needs its working rules in a 'soft' form which can be changed as it evolves. In this program, the computer knows the rules of the game, and has a section specifically to block rows of three being formed by its opponent, and to complete a row of three for itself if it gets the opportunity, but it has no strategy at all at the beginning.

Here's the board layout for TICTAC:

1	:	2	:	3
<hr/>				
4	:	5	:	6
<hr/>				
7	:	8	:	9

The program plays by selecting squares in accord with a sequence which it evolves as the games go on. If the game is a success, it moves the positions chosen closer to the

front of the sequence. It makes no change if the game is drawn. A loss shuffles the sequence so the moves are less likely to be chosen next time.

You and I know that the center square (five in the diagram above) is the one to take if it is vacant. Initially, TICTAC does not know this. In fact, it has been deliberately given a very bad opening 'book' — with position two as its first choice — so that it is easier to see the effect its learning has on its play.

Eventually, if the learning mechanism is working, TICTAC should realise that position five is a very good one to possess if it is available. In fact, as we shall see, TICTAC does eventually come to this conclusion, even though it is playing against a totally random opponent which has no strategic knowledge whatsoever. It is reasonable to assume that if TICTAC was playing against an intelligent opponent — such as yourself — the program would improve more rapidly.

Donald Michie, a pioneer in artificial intelligence research at Edinburgh University and still very prominent in the field, investigated 'automatic learning' in the game of noughts and crosses. He used a mechanism called 'boxes' in which a goal is split into several sub-goals. A 'box' is formed to hold the information of each sub-goal.

The goal of noughts and crosses is to win. Each sub-goal is to make at first (a) a legal move and eventually (b) the best move given each game position.

Michie worked out that there are 288 fundamentally different positions which face a player if he or she starts in a game of noughts and crosses. He proceeded to build his mechanical opponent as follows (an experiment you may well want to duplicate). Michie took 288 matchboxes, and painted on the top of each a board position, with the vacant squares numbered in sequence. Next he wrote down, on tiny bits of paper, the numbers which were written on the vacant squares. Each number was duplicated several times, with the same number of each number per box. That is, if squares three and four were vacant in one board position, the matchbox contained, say, five scraps of paper with the number three written on them, and five bearing the number four.

He played the game as follows. The first move was made by opening the box with a blank grid on its top. Inside the box, of course, were five pieces of paper for each of the numbers one to nine. A piece of paper was chosen at random, and the move made there. Michie made a note of which number was selected, and of the box from which the number was chosen.

At the end of the game, Michie returned to his list of moves and boxes. If the 'matchbox computer' had won the game, and additional piece of paper bearing each number played was placed in the relevant matchbox. That is, if the first matchbox used, the one bearing the blank grid, had yielded the number five, an additional piece of paper with the number five on it was placed in that matchbox. Naturally enough, this increased the chance that five would be selected next time the box was opened.

The process was continued for every box used in that game. If the game was drawn, the contents of the boxes were left unchanged. If the 'computer' lost the game, the pieces of paper which triggered the moves in that losing game were withdrawn from the boxes, thus reducing the chance that such numbers would be drawn next time the computer came up against the same board configuration.

In the 1968 paper, *Boxes: An Experiment in Adaptive Control* [Chambers, R. A. and Michie, D., *Machine Intelligence 2* (Ed. Dale, E. and Michie, D.), Oliver & Boyd, 1968, pp. 137-152], Michie explains that the boxes 'learned' so well that after 1000 games against an opponent which played totally at random, the program was consistently winning between 75% and 87% of all games played. A similar success rate is not expected for TICTAC (even if you have the patience to play 1000 games) but it will still perform extremely well if draws as well as wins are counted, and the program is given a proper chance to learn.

## **SAMUEL AND THE CHECKERBOARD**

Michie's 'intelligent matchboxes' were but a toy compared to a checkers (or 'draughts') program created in the late sixties by Arthur Samuel of IBM. We are discussing here one of his later programs, as outlined in the paper *Some Studies in Machine Learning Using the Game of Checkers — II — Recent Progress* [Samuel, A., *IBM Journal of Research and Development*, vol. 11 (November 1967), pp. 601-617]. However, it is interesting to note that the final, acclaimed program did not spring out of his brain in all its majesty.

Samuel had, in fact, began programming checkers games in 1952 working on the (for then) powerful IBM 701 computer. Two years later he transferred the program to an IBM 704, and in 1955 began to develop the program's ability to learn. The program took note of some 40 factors when determining a move, although less than half of these were in use for working out a particular move. The program knew when a particular factor was not contributing towards choosing a move, and ignored that one for the time being.

The number of pieces each player had was an important consideration, and Samuel's program (like the majority of such programs which followed) was quite happy to trade off pieces when it had more than its opponent, but became very conservative in this regard when it was losing, from the material point of view. Other factors the program considered when evaluating its strength included control of the center of the board and the number of pieces which could be brought under attack by a single move.

We will look more closely a little later at the AI aspects of board games (with the game SNICKERS, invented just for this book) but for now the main interest in Samuel's program lies in its ability to learn. CHECKERS had two ways of learning, rote and self-modification.

In the rote learning mode, the program stored the results of investigations into possible moves radiating out from a current board position. This meant that next time the position was encountered, the program did not have to actually go through the process of working out its implications. The result was already there. This method, of course, is very memory-hungry, although highly effective. Eventually, the program played close to championship level, and had 'remembered' practically every worthwhile board position.

Samuel's evaluation function, which made use of around 40 factors, was mentioned a short while ago. The self-modification process worked as follows. Samuel allowed the program to search ahead from its present position, and to reach a conclusion as to the value of certain moves and positions. The program also used its evaluation function to reach a conclusion from the same board position.

Samuel reasoned that, if the evaluation function was perfect, it would generate the same advice as the look-ahead mechanism. The factors within the evaluation function were modified after each move, in light of the difference between the finding of the forward search, and the information given by the evaluation function. Working in this way removed the reliance on vast memory backup demanded by the rote-learning process. Our TICTAC program does not learn as did CHECKERS, but its method does involve self-modification, rather than depending upon rote accumulation of information.

## TICTAC — THE PROGRAM

The program begins with an initialisation sub-routine as follows:

```
1180 REM INITIALISATION
1190 CLS
1200 DIM A(9): REM BOARD
1210 DIM M(10): REM TO HOLD KNOW
LEDGE BASE
1220 DIM W(24): REM WIN/BLOCK DA
TA
1230 DIM D(5): REM TO HOLD MOVES
IN CURRENT GAME
```



```

1240 REM WIN/BLOCK DATA
1250 FOR J=1 TO 24
1260 READ W(J)
1270 NEXT J
1280 DATA 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
1290 DATA 1,4,7,2,5,8,3,6,9
1300 DATA 1,5,9,3,5,7
1310 REM INITIALIZE KNOWLEDGE
BASE
1320 FOR J=1 TO 10
1330 READ M(J)
1340 NEXT J
1350 DATA 2,6,8,4,7,3,1,9,5,2
1360 RETURN

```

Four arrays are dimensioned. The A array holds the current game board, M holds the 'knowledge base' of moves (this is updated after each winning or losing game), W holds the data from which the program can recognise a potential win by itself or an opponent, and D holds the moves in the current game, so these can be used to modify the knowledge base at the end of a game.

As you can see from line 1350, it starts off with a knowledge base consisting of the numbers 2, 6, 8, 4, 7, 3, 1, 9, 5 and 2. This is as I pointed out earlier, a particularly bad sequence of moves, which practically ensures that it will lose a significant proportion of its early games. If you doubt that, mentally put those moves onto the board we're using in this game:

1	:	2	:	3
4	:	5	:	6
7	:	8	:	9

Note that the program does not necessarily make the moves in the order shown. It attempts to, but may find the relevant square already taken. As well, it does not use its sequence until the pre-programmed knowledge regarding blocking possible completed rows of threes by the opponent, and trying to complete its own, has been tested.

Watching the program learn is particularly fascinating. Therefore, part of the program reports to you at the end of game, showing you the current sequence it is storing. The update of the knowledge base, and its reporting to you, is carried by the section of the program from lines 300 to 480:

```
300 REM UPDATE KNOWLEDGE BASE
310 FOR B=1 TO 5
320 FOR J=2 TO 9
330 IF M(J)=D(B) THEN GO SUB 370
340 NEXT J
350 NEXT B
360 GO TO 430
370 REM ** RE-ORDER ELEMENTS OF
M ARRAY **
380 LET TEMP=M(J+FLAG)
390 LET M(J+FLAG)=M(J)
400 LET M(J)=TEMP
410>LET J=9
420 RETURN
430 PRINT : PRINT
440 PRINT "THIS IS MY UPDATED P
RORITY"
450 PRINT : PRINT
460 FOR J=1 TO 9
470 PRINT M(J); " ";
480 NEXT J
```

Here is the evolving knowledge base of a 'self-playing' version, whose opponent was my computer's unintelligent random number generator. Despite the lack of concentrated opposition, the program managed to learn very rapidly. You can see how quickly TICTAC discovers the value of moving into the center position (number five on our board):

2	8	6	4	7	3	1	5	9
2	6	4	8	7	3	5	1	9
6	2	4	8	3	7	1	5	9
2	4	6	8	3	7	5	1	9
4	6	2	8	7	3	1	5	9
6	4	2	8	7	3	5	1	9
4	6	2	8	7	5	3	1	9
6	4	2	8	5	7	3	1	9
6	2	4	5	8	7	3	9	1
2	6	5	8	4	7	3	9	1
2	5	6	4	8	7	3	9	2
5	2	6	8	4	7	3	2	9
2	6	5	4	8	7	3	2	9
2	5	6	8	4	7	2	3	9
5	6	2	4	8	2	7	3	9
6	5	4	2	8	2	7	3	9
5	4	6	2	8	2	7	3	9
4	5	2	6	8	7	3	2	9
5	4	6	2	8	7	3	2	9
4	5	2	8	6	7	3	2	9
5	4	2	6	8	7	3	2	9
4	5	6	2	8	7	3	2	9
5	6	4	2	8	7	3	2	9

Next, I used the final sequence obtained from the automatic run (except for changing the duplicated two into a one) in place of the starting sequence given in the complete program listing, and started to play against the program myself, trying to defeat it in every game. You can see that it continued to learn:

4	5	6	2	8	7	3	1	2
4	5	6	2	8	7	3	1	2
4	6	5	2	8	3	7	1	2
6	5	4	2	8	3	7	1	2
5	4	6	2	8	3	7	1	2
5	4	6	2	8	3	7	1	2
5	4	6	2	8	3	7	1	2
4	5	6	2	8	3	7	1	2
5	4	2	6	8	3	7	1	2

The program was modified slightly, and a new starting sequence, which I judged as the best I could give it, was entered. The computer played first against a human, with the following development (or lack thereof) of its knowledge base:

5	1	3	7	9	2	4	6	8
1	3	7	5	9	2	4	6	8
3	7	5	1	9	2	4	6	8
7	5	3	1	9	2	4	6	8
5	3	7	1	9	2	4	6	8
5	3	7	1	9	2	4	6	8

It was then set to work against the random opponent. You can see that it has little learning to do, and appears simply to be shuffling a few numbers around fairly aimlessly:

1	5	3	9	7	2	4	6	8
5	1	9	3	7	2	4	6	8
1	9	5	3	7	2	4	6	8
1	9	5	3	7	2	4	6	8
9	5	1	3	7	2	4	6	8
5	1	9	3	7	2	4	6	8
1	9	5	3	7	2	4	6	8
1	5	9	3	7	2	4	6	8
5	9	1	3	7	2	4	6	8
5	9	1	3	7	2	4	6	8
9	1	5	3	7	2	4	6	8
1	5	9	3	7	2	4	6	8

Finally, I returned to the poor starting sequence, and let the computer have its head against the random number generator. After 90 games, the sequence was as follows:

3	7	4	5	8	6	9	2	2
7	3	5	4	8	6	9	2	2
7	5	4	3	6	8	9	2	2
7	4	5	3	6	8	9	2	2
4	5	7	6	3	8	2	9	2
4	7	5	6	3	8	2	9	2
7	4	5	6	3	8	2	9	2
7	4	5	6	3	8	2	9	2
4	7	5	3	8	6	9	2	2
7	4	5	3	8	6	9	2	2
4	7	5	3	8	6	9	2	2
7	4	5	3	8	6	9	2	2
7	4	5	3	8	6	9	2	2

You can see one weakness of this program. Although it does learn, after a fashion, it appears to be too easily persuaded to swap numbers, even though this may not necessarily help it play better. You may well want to work on the way the computer makes use of the lessons it gains from each game.

I said earlier that TICTAC's playing strategy does not come solely from its knowledge base. It also has information on the rows of three which it is trying to build (and which it is trying to prevent its opponent from completing). This is the section of code which looks for a move here, before using the knowledge base:

```
540 REM MACHINE MOVE
550 LET P=CODE "O"
560 LET X=0
570 LET J=1
580 IF A(W(J))=A(W(J+1)) AND A(
W(J+2))=32 AND A(W(J))=P THEN LE
T X=W(J+2): GO TO 750
590 IF A(W(J))=A(W(J+2)) AND A(
W(J+1))=32 AND A(W(J))=P THEN LE
T X=W(J+1): GO TO 750
600 IF A(W(J+1))=A(W(J+2)) AND
A(W(J))=32 AND A(W(J+1))=P THEN
LET X=W(J): GO TO 750
610 IF J<21 THEN LET J=J+3: GO
TO 580
620 IF P=CODE "O" THEN LET P=CO
DE "X": GO TO 570
```

It looks first for a winning move for itself (when P equals the ASCII code of the letter "O") and then tries for a blocking move (with P set equal to the code of the opponent's piece, the "X"). If it fails to find a move here, it brings in the data from the knowledge base:

```

630 REM ** IF NO WIN/BLOCK MOVE
FOUND THEN THIS NEXT SECTION**
640 REM ** USED **
650 LET J=1
660 IF A(M(J))=32 THEN LET X=M(
J): GO TO 750
670 IF J<10 THEN LET J=J+1: GO
TO 660

```

If this fails to give it a move, it tries numbers at random:

```

680 LET H=0
690 LET H=H+1
700 LET X=INT (RND*9)+1: IF A(X
)=32 THEN GO TO 750
710 IF H<100 THEN GO TO 690
720 LET R$="D": REM IT'S A DRAW

```

Having found a move, it makes it, then acts to ensure that, if all positions are filled and R\$ (which stands for 'result string' with it being set to "W" for a win, "L" for a loss and "D" for a draw) not assigned, the game must be a draw.

```

750 REM MAKE MOVE
760 LET A(X)=CODE "O"
770 LET COUNT=COUNT+1
780 LET D(COUNT)=X
790 LET FLAG=0
800 FOR J=1 TO 9
810 IF A(J)=32 THEN LET FLAG=1
820 NEXT J
830 IF FLAG=0 AND R$="" THEN LE
T R$="D"
840 REM IF ALL POSITIONS FULL,
AND R$ NOT ASSIGNED, IT'S A DRAW
850 RETURN

```

After each move, human or machine, the WIN CHECK routine is visited:

```

870 REM WIN CHECK
880 LET J=1
890 IF A(W(J))=32 THEN LET J=J+
3
900 IF J>23 THEN RETURN
910 IF A(W(J))=A(W(J+1)) AND A(
W(J))=A(W(J+2)) THEN GO TO 940
920 IF J<22 THEN LET J=J+3: GO
TO 890
930 RETURN
940 IF A(W(J))=CODE "O" THEN LE
T R$="W": REM MACHINE WINS
950 IF A(W(J))=CODE "X" THEN LE
T R$="L": REM MACHINE LOSES
960 RETURN

```

Here is the complete TICTAC program, so you can do some investigating of your own into machine education:

```

10 REM TICTAC
15 INK 7: PAPER 1: FLASH 0: BR
IGHT 0: BORDER 1
20 GO SUB 1180: REM INITIALIZE
S
30 REM ** PREGAME SETTINGS **
40 FOR J=1 TO 9
50 LET A(J)=32
60 NEXT J
70 FOR J=1 TO 5
80 LET D(J)=0
90 NEXT J
100 LET COUNT=0
110 LET R$=""
120 GO SUB 1070: REM PRINT BOAR
D

```



```

130 REM *** MAIN CYCLE ***
140 GO SUB 540: REM MACHINE MOV
E
150 GO SUB 1070: REM PRINT BOAR
D
160 GO SUB 870: REM WIN CHECK
170 IF R$<>" " THEN GO TO 240
180 GO SUB 980: REM ACCEPT HUMA
N MOVE
190 GO SUB 1070: REM PRINT BOAR
D
200 GO SUB 870: REM WIN CHECK
210 IF R$=" " THEN GO TO 140
220 REM ** END MAIN CYCLE **
230 REM *****
240 REM END OF GAME
250 GO SUB 1070: REM PRINT BOAR
D
260 PRINT : PRINT
270 IF R$="W" THEN PRINT TAB 8;
"I WIN": FOR G=1 TO 4: BEEP .2,5
: BEEP .1,10: BEEP .4,9:: NEXT G
: LET FLAG=-1
280 IF R$="L" THEN PRINT TAB 8;
"YOU WIN": FOR G=1 TO 16 STEP 2:
BEEP .1,G: BEEP .1,G+2: NEXT G:
LET FLAG=1
290 IF R$="D" THEN PRINT TAB 8;
"IT IS A DRAW": FOR G=1 TO 4: BE
EP .2,5: BEEP .1,G: BEEP .4,9: N
EXT G: LET FLAG=0: GO TO 430
300 REM UPDATE KNOWLEDGE BASE
310 FOR B=1 TO 5
320 FOR J=2 TO 9
330 IF M(J)=D(B) THEN GO SUB 37
0

```

```

340 NEXT J
350 NEXT B
360 GO TO 430
370 REM ** RE-ORDER ELEMENTS OF
M ARRAY **
380 LET TEMP=M(J+FLAG)
390 LET M(J+FLAG)=M(J)
400 LET M(J)=TEMP
410 LET J=9
420 RETURN
430 PRINT : PRINT
440 PRINT "THIS IS MY UPDATED P
RORITY"
450 PRINT : PRINT
460 FOR J=1 TO 9
470 PRINT M(J); " ";
480 NEXT J
490 PRINT : PRINT
500 PRINT "PRESS ENTER TO CONTI
NUE"
510 INPUT A$
520 GO TO 30
540 REM MACHINE MOVE
550 LET P=CODE "0"
560 LET X=0
570 LET J=1
580 IF A(W(J))=A(W(J+1)) AND A(
W(J+2))=32 AND A(W(J))=P THEN LE
T X=W(J+2): GO TO 750
590 IF A(W(J))=A(W(J+2)) AND A(
W(J+1))=32 AND A(W(J))=P THEN LE
T X=W(J+1): GO TO 750
600 IF A(W(J+1))=A(W(J+2)) AND
A(W(J))=32 AND A(W(J+1))=P THEN
LET X=W(J): GO TO 750

```

```

610 IF J<21 THEN LET J=J+3: GO
TO 580
620 IF P=CODE "O" THEN LET P=CO
DE "X": GO TO 570
630 REM ** IF NO WIN/BLOCK MOVE
FOUND THEN THIS NEXT SECTION**
640 REM ** USED **
650 LET J=1
660 IF A(M(J))=32 THEN LET X=M(
J): GO TO 750
670 IF J<10 THEN LET J=J+1: GO
TO 660
680 LET H=0
690 LET H=H+1
700 LET X=INT (RND*9)+1: IF A(X
)=32 THEN GO TO 750
710 IF H<100 THEN GO TO 690
720 LET R$="D": REM IT'S A DRAW
750 REM MAKE MOVE
760 LET A(X)=CODE "O"
770 LET COUNT=COUNT+1
780 LET D(COUNT)=X
790 LET FLAG=0
800 FOR J=1 TO 9
810 IF A(J)=32 THEN LET FLAG=1
820 NEXT J
830 IF FLAG=0 AND R$="" THEN LE
T R$="D"
840 REM IF ALL POSITIONS FULL,
AND R$ NOT ASSIGNED, IT'S A DRAW
850 RETURN
860 REM *****
870 REM WIN CHECK
880 LET J=1
890 IF A(W(J))=32 THEN LET J=J+

```

3

```

900 IF J>23 THEN RETURN
910 IF A(W(J))=A(W(J+1)) AND A(
W(J))=A(W(J+2)) THEN GO TO 940
920 IF J<22 THEN LET J=J+3: GO
TO 890
930 RETURN
940 IF A(W(J))=CODE "O" THEN LE
T R$="W": REM MACHINE WINS
950 IF A(W(J))=CODE "X" THEN LE
T R$="L": REM MACHINE LOSES
960 RETURN
970 REM *****
980 REM HUMAN MOVE
990 PRINT : PRINT
1000 PRINT "Enter your move."
1010 INPUT MOVE
1020 IF MOVE<1 OR MOVE>9 THEN GO
TO 1010
1030 IF A(MOVE)<>32 THEN GO TO 1
010
1040 LET a(MOVE)=CODE "X"
1050 RETURN
1060 REM *****
1070 REM PRINT BOARD
1080 CLS
1090 PRINT : PRINT : PRINT
1100 PRINT "1 : 2 : 3    ";CHR$ A
(1);" : ";CHR$ A(2);" : ";CHR$ A
(3)
1110 PRINT "-----"
-"
1120 PRINT "4 : 5 : 6    ";CHR$ A
(4);" : ";CHR$ A(5);" : ";CHR$ A
(6)

```

```

1130 PRINT "-----
- "
1140 PRINT "7 : 8 : 9 ";CHR$ A
(7);" : ";CHR$ A(8);" : ";CHR$ A
(9)
1150 PRINT
1160 RETURN
1170 REM *****
1180 REM INITIALISATION
1190 CLS
1200 DIM A(9): REM BOARD
1210 DIM M(10): REM TO HOLD KNOW
LEDGE BASE
1220 DIM W(24): REM WIN/BLOCK DA
TA
1230 DIM D(5): REM TO HOLD MOVES
IN CURRENT GAME
1240 REM WIN/BLOCK DATA
1250 FOR J=1 TO 24
1260 READ W(J)
1270 NEXT J
1280 DATA 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
1290 DATA 1,4,7,2,5,8,3,6,9
1300 DATA 1,5,9,3,5,7
1310 REM INITIALIZE KNOWLEDGE
BASE
1320 FOR J=1 TO 10
1330 READ M(J)
1340 NEXT J
1350 DATA 2,6,8,4,7,3,1,9,5,2
1360 RETURN

```

If you wish to experiment with an automatic, random opponent, you might want to use the following one, which I used for this section of the book:

```

4500 REM RANDOM HUMAN MOVE
4510 LET H=0
4520 LET H=H+1
4530 LET MOVE=INT (RND*9+1)
4540 IF A(MOVE)=32 THEN LET A(MOVE)=CODE "X": RETURN
4550 IF H<100 THEN GO TO 4520
4560 LET R$="D"
4570 RETURN

```

To trigger this unintelligent, tireless opponent, simply replace line 140 with GOSUB 4500.

The image displays six 3x3 tic-tac-toe boards, each with a horizontal line separating the top row from the bottom two rows. The boards are arranged in a 2x3 grid and show various game states:

- Top-left board:** Top row: X:0:0; Middle row: X:0:0; Bottom row: 0:X:X
- Top-middle board:** Top row: X:0:0; Middle row: X:X:0; Bottom row: 0:X:0
- Top-right board:** Top row: 0: :0; Middle row: 0: :X; Bottom row: 0:X:X
- Middle-left board:** Top row: X: :X; Middle row: 0:0:0; Bottom row: :0:X
- Middle-middle board:** Top row: X:0:0; Middle row: 0:0:0; Bottom row: :X:
- Middle-right board:** Top row: X:0:0; Middle row: 0:X:X; Bottom row: X:0:0

# CHAPTER THREE — A PROGRAM WHICH REASONS

From a program which learns, we move to SYLLOGY, a program which reasons. Given two related statements, SYLLOGY is capable of deducing a third statement which contains information which was not explicitly stated.

The program works with syllogisms. A syllogism is a form of deductive argument. Aristotle worked out the rules which determine the validity of a syllogism. It generally takes the following form:

A is a B  
C is an A  
Therefore C is a B

The first two lines of a syllogism are propositions, while the third line is a conclusion.

A dog is an animal  
An animal is furry  
Therefore, a dog is furry

Before we discuss the program, and the background to it, in detail, we will show it at work. ignore the material in parentheses before the conclusion, as this is included so that you can see the program actually working. You'll understand what this material is once you have followed through the explanation of the program.

The '?' prompt appears when SYLLOGY is waiting for an input. '> OK' appears when the program has accepted and understood your input.

```
? AN EAGLE IS A BIRD
  > OK
```

```
? A BIRD IS A WINGED CREATURE
  > OK
```

```
? IS AN EAGLE A WINGED CREATURE
  (LOOKING FOR EAGLE)
  ( FOUND AT 1 1 )
  > YES
```

```
?
```

As the program runs, it builds up a database of propositions, which it can refer to any time within that run. Here is the next pair of propositions we tried:

```
? A BIRD IS A FLYER
  > OK
```

```
? IS AN EAGLE A FLYER
  (LOOKING FOR EAGLE)
  ( FOUND AT 1 1 )
  > YES
```

```
? IS A FLYER A WINGED CREATURE
  (LOOKING FOR FLYER)
  ( FOUND AT 1 4 )
  > YES
```



SYLLOGY will accept, to add to its database, any statement of the following form:

A ... is a ...

This statement can include 'an' or 'th', as the language parsing is programmed to cope with them. Therefore, the following are valid, although the program cannot cope with a 'the' after the 'is' in the middle of the sentence:

An ... is a ...  
The ... is an ...

The program goes into its 'deductive mode' if you start a sentence with 'is':

Is ... a ...  
Is an .... a ....

If you simply press the RETURN key, without entering any input, the program will terminate (although it may be restarted, without loss of data, by GOTO 30).

Entering a question mark when the prompt appears will allow you to discover what SYLLOGY is holding in its memory, under each category heading it has created. After you enter the questionmark, the program will ask "SUBJECT TO CHECK?". At this point you enter the category heading you wish the program to investigate:

```
? ?  
SUBJECT TO CHECK? BIRD  
2 2 EAGLE  
3 2 WINGED CREATURE  
4 2 FLYER
```

? ?  
SUBJECT TO CHECK? EAGLE  
2 1 BIRD

? ?  
SUBJECT TO CHECK? WINGED CREATURE  
2 3 BIRD

? ?  
SUBJECT TO CHECK? FLYER  
2 4 BIRD

SYLLOGY will often produce surprising conclusions, which fly in the face of all the evidence we (meaning I) can bring to bear:

? TIM IS A FOOL  
> OK

? A FOOL IS AN IDIOT  
> OK

? IS TIM AN IDIOT  
(LOOKING FOR TIM)  
( FOUND AT 1 1 )  
> YES

? ?  
SUBJECT TO CHECK? TIM  
2 1 FOOL

? ?  
SUBJECT TO CHECK? FOOL  
2 2 TIM  
3 2 IDIOT

```
? ?  
SUBJECT TO CHECK? IDIOT  
2 3 FOOL
```

Although SYLLOGY can be tricked into some absurd conclusions, it generally is fairly robust:

```
? A CROW IS AN IDIOT  
> OK
```

```
? IS TIM A CROW  
      (LOOKING FOR TIM)  
      ( FOUND AT 1 1 )  
> NO
```

```
? IS A CROW A FOOL  
      (LOOKING FOR CROW)  
      ( FOUND AT 1 6 )  
> YES
```

SYLLOGY works with a two-dimensional string array, Z\$, cross-referencing the propositions entered into it, and from this cross reference producing conclusions.

This is fairly easy to understand if you visualise what is happening as you enter statements. If we type in TIM IS A FOOL the program ignores the IS A and uses TIM as a file heading, and puts FOOL underneath that. A second statement of the type A FOOL IS AN IDIOT allows the program to open up a new file headed FOOL which has IDIOT underneath it. When the program is asked IS TIM AN IDIOT it first looks to see if it has a category called TIM. On finding it has, it looks under that for the first subject filed. It comes across FOOL.

information stored on the first noun in the question. If it finds it has, SYLLOGY reports this to you (LOOKING FOR EAGLE FOUND AT 1,1) then looks down that row for the words stored under it. It finds BIRD (at 2,1) and then returns to the first row to find FLYER. It discovers it at 1,4 and scans down that row to find BIRD (at 2,4). It has now found a common link (BIRD) between the two words it is thinking about (EAGLE and FLYER) and can therefore conclude that the answer to the question IS AN EAGLE A FLYER is, in fact, YES. SYLLOGY then tells you what it has concluded.

## BACK TO THE PROGRAM

Here's the start of SYLLOGY where the program processes the user input. Line 40 sends action to 910 if a question mark has been entered.

```

10 REM *** SYLLOGY ***
15 POKE 23658,200: FLASH 0: BR
IGHT 0: CLS : PAPER 1: BORDER 1:
INK 7
20 GO SUB 1050: REM INITIALIZA
TION
30 PRINT : INPUT A$
35 LET Q$=A$
40 IF A$="?" THEN GO TO 910
50 IF LEN A$<2 THEN STOP
60 LET FLAG=0
70 REM NOTE THERE IS A SPACE B
EFORE THE CLOSE QUOTE IN NEXT FO
UR LINES
75 IF LEN A$<3 THEN GO TO 110
80 IF A$( TO 3)="IS " THEN GC
TO 480: REM CONCLUSIONS

```

```

85 IF LEN A$<4 THEN GO TO 100
90 IF A$( TO 4)="THE " THEN LET
T A$=A$(5 TO )
100 IF A$( TO 3)="AN " THEN LET
A$=A$(4 TO )
110 IF A$( TO 2)="A " THEN LET
A$=A$(3 TO )
120 LET X=LEN A$
130 LET N=0
140 LET N=N+1
150 IF A$(N)=" " THEN LET B$=A$
( TO N-1): GO TO 180: REM EXTRAC
TS THE FIRST NOUN
160 IF N<X THEN GO TO 140
170 INK 5: PRINT "I don't under
stand": INK 7: GO TO 30
180 LET K=4
190 IF A$(N+1 TO N+2)="W" THEN
LET K=5
200 LET C$=A$(N+K TO ): REM QUA
LIFY PHRASE
210 IF LEN C$<2 THEN GO TO 220
211 IF C$( TO 2)="A " THEN LET
C$=C$(3 TO ): REM REMOVES ARTICL
E
220 IF LEN C$<3 THEN GO TO 230
221 IF C$( TO 3)="AN " THEN LET
C$=C$(4 TO )
230 IF LEN C$<=3 THEN GO TO 240
231 IF C$( TO 4)="THE " THEN LE
T C$=C$(5 TO )

```

information stored on the first noun in the question. If it finds it has, SYLLOGY reports this to you (LOOKING FOR EAGLE FOUND AT 1,1) then looks down that row for the words stored under it. It finds BIRD (at 2,1) and then returns to the first row to find FLYER. It discovers it at 1,4 and scans down that row to find BIRD (at 2,4). It has now found a common link (BIRD) between the two words it is thinking about (EAGLE and FLYER) and can therefore conclude that the answer to the question IS AN EAGLE A FLYER is, in fact, YES. SYLLOGY then tells you what it has concluded.

## BACK TO THE PROGRAM

Here's the start of SYLLOGY where the program processes the user input. Line 40 sends action to 910 if a question mark has been entered.

```

10 REM *** SYLLOGY ***
15 POKE 23658,200: FLASH 0: BR
IGHT 0: CLS : PAPER 1: BORDER 1:
INK 7
20 GO SUB 1050: REM INITIALIZA
TION
30 PRINT : INPUT A$
35 LET Q$=A$
40 IF A$="?" THEN GO TO 910
50 IF LEN A$<2 THEN STOP
60 LET FLAG=0
70 REM NOTE THERE IS A SPACE B
EFORE THE CLOSE QUOTE IN NEXT FO
UR LINES
75 IF LEN A$<3 THEN GO TO 110
80 IF A$( TO 3)="IS " THEN GC
TO 480: REM CONCLUSIONS

```

```

85 IF LEN A$<4 THEN GO TO 100
90 IF A$( TO 4)="THE " THEN LET
T A$=A$(5 TO )
100 IF A$( TO 3)="AN " THEN LET
A$=A$(4 TO )
110 IF A$( TO 2)="A " THEN LET
A$=A$(3 TO )
120 LET X=LEN A$
130 LET N=0
140 LET N=N+1
150 IF A$(N)=" " THEN LET B$=A$
( TO N-1): GO TO 180: REM EXTRAC
TS THE FIRST NOUN
160 IF N<X THEN GO TO 140
170 INK 5: PRINT "I don't under
stand": INK 7: GO TO 30
180 LET K=4
190 IF A$(N+1 TO N+2)="W" THEN
LET K=5
200 LET C$=A$(N+K TO ): REM QUA
LIFY PHRASE
210 IF LEN C$<2 THEN GO TO 220
211 IF C$( TO 2)="A " THEN LET
C$=C$(3 TO ): REM REMOVES ARTICL
E
220 IF LEN C$<3 THEN GO TO 230
221 IF C$( TO 3)="AN " THEN LET
C$=C$(4 TO )
230 IF LEN C$<=3 THEN GO TO 240
231 IF C$( TO 4)="THE " THEN LE
T C$=C$(5 TO )

```

Line 80 detects the 'IS' at the start of the input, indicating that the user is asking SYLLOGY to try and reach a conclusion. This sends action to 480, where the conclusion routine begins.

Lines 90, 100 and 110 strip THE, AN or A from the front of the input, so that A\$ now begins with the noun which will be used to head a file.

The next routine, from 120 to 230, splits the input up into two words, with lines 120 to 160 getting the first noun, and triggering I DON'T UNDERSTAND (from line 170) if the input is not in accord with the specified format. Lines 180 through to 230 extract the second word. Line 190 checks to see if the phrase which is left after the first noun has been stripped starts with "W" and, if it does, assumes the center word is 'WAS' '. This allows it to accept phrases such as:

**THE DODO WAS A BIG BIRD**

and

**TIM IS AN IDIOT**

Having extracted the important words (and having set B\$ to the first one and C\$ to the second) the program proceeds to store them in its database. Remember, this section of code is only used for 'laying down' information. Taking it up again is looked after by the 'reach a conclusion' section of the program.

The program next looks across the top of its file table, to see if (a) it already has a file on that subject, and if not (b) it has a space left in which to start such a file. If there is no space left, the message in line 310 I HAVE NO MORE



SUBJECT STORAGE ROOM is triggered.

```
240 REM ** STORE INFORMATION **
250 REM ** FIRST CHECK TO SEE
IF IT CAN FIND SUBJECT BEFORE
FINDING BLANK **
260 LET N=0
270 LET N=N+1
280 IF Z$(1,N, TO LEN B$)=B$ TH
EN GO TO 320: REM SUBJECT HEADIN
G EXISTS
290 IF Z$(1,N, TO 5)="      " TH
EN LET Z$(1,N)=B$: GO TO 320
300 IF N<25 THEN GO TO 270
310 INK 2: PRINT "I have no mor
e subject storage room": INK 7
```

The next routine, from 320, is reached once the program has either discovered it already has a file (line 280) or has found room to create a file and has, in fact, done so (line 290).

```
320 REM ** PROGRAM REACHES HERE
WITH SUBJECT STORED AS HEADING
**
330 REM ** NOW PUT OBJECT UNDER
THIS **
340 LET K=0
350 LET K=K+1
360 IF Z$(K,N, TO LEN C$)=C$ TH
EN GO TO 400: REM INFORMATION AL
READY STORED UNDER THAT HEADING
370 IF Z$(K,N, TO 5)="      " TH
EN LET Z$(K,N)=C$: GO TO 400
380 IF K<25 THEN GO TO 350
390 INK 5: PRINT "I have no mor
e object storage      space.": INK
7
```

```

400 IF FLAG=1 THEN PRINT Q$: IN
K 5: PRINT TAB 6;"> Ok.": INK 7:
GO TO 30: REM SWAP HAS BEEN DON
E
410 REM ** NOW SWAP OBJECT AND
SUBJECT AND SAVE AGAIN **
420 LET FLAG=1
430 LET M$=B$
440 LET B$=C$
450 LET C$=M$
460 GO TO 250

```

There is no need for SYLLOGY to store EAGLE under BIRD more than once, even if the line AN EAGLE IS A BIRD is fed to the program more than once. Line 360 ensures that duplication definitions are not saved. Once the 'object' has been saved, the computer swaps subject and object (lines 420 through to 450) and then saves them the other way around. That is, if it saved EAGLE as a subject heading before, with BIRD underneath it, this time it saves BIRD with EAGLE as one of the file contents.

Now we come to the really interesting part (at least in terms of performance when SYLLOGY is running), the section which reaches conclusions:

```

480 REM *** CONCLUSIONS ***
490 REM * FIRST SPLIT INPUT *
500 LET H$=A$: LET A$=A$(4 TO )
: REM STRIP IS
510 IF A$( TO 2)="A " THEN LET
A$=A$(3 TO ): REM STRIP A IF PRE
SENT
520 IF A$( TO 3)="AN " THEN LET
A$=A$(4 TO ): REM STRIP AN IF P
RESENT

```

```

530 REM * GET FIRST WORD IF PRE
SENT - F$ *
540 LET X=LEN A$
550 LET N=0
560 LET N=N+1
570 IF A$(N)=" " THEN LET F$=A$
( TO N-1): GO TO 600
580 IF N<X THEN GO TO 560
590 PRINT TAB 6; INK 5;"I do no
t understand?": GO TO 30

```

Firstly the leading IS is stripped from the input, along with A (line 510) or AN (line 520) if these are present (this means it can deal with IS AN EAGLE A BIRD as well as IS TIM AN IDIOT). This section of code gets the first word, and sets it equal to F\$. The next section extracts the second word, to set it equal to S\$.

```

600 REM * NOW GET SECOND WORD -
S$ *
610 LET S$=A$(N+3 TO ).
620 IF LEN S$<=0 THEN GO TO 630
621 IF S$(1)=" " THEN LET S$=S$
(2 TO ): REM STRIPS LEADING ZERO
S IF WAS "AN"
630 PRINT H$'TAB 9; INK 5;"(Loo
king for ";f$;)"
640 LET X=0
650 LET X=X+1
660 IF Z$(1,X, TO LEN F$)=F$ TH
EN PRINT TAB 10; INK 5;"( Found
at 1, ";X;)" : GO TO 700
670 IF X<25 THEN GO TO 650
680 PRINT TAB 6; INK 5;"I canno
t find the subject": PRINT TAB 8
;f$
690 GO TO 30

```

The program lets you know what it is looking for (printing up LOOKING FOR 'first word' in line 630) and if it finds it, tells you where in the table it was located (FOUND AT ... in line 660). If it cannot find the second word it informs you of this (line 680) then returns to the main program. This line is triggered if, for example, you asked it IS TIM A GENIUS and it had not previously encountered the word GENIUS.

```

700 LET Y=1
710 LET Y=Y+1
720 IF Z$(Y,X)=S$ THEN INK 5: P
RINT TAB 6; "> Yes": INK 7: GO TO
30
730 IF Y<25 THEN GO TO 710
740 LET Y=1
750 LET Y=Y+1
760 LET P$=Z$(Y,X)
770 LET M=0
780 LET M=M+1
790 IF Z$(1,M)=P$ THEN GO TO 83
0
800 IF M<25 THEN GO TO 780
810 IF Y<25 THEN GO TO 750
820 PRINT TAB 6; INK 5; "> No":
GO TO 30
830 LET Q=1
840 LET Q=Q+1
850 IF Z$(Q,M, TO LEN S$)=S$ TH
EN PRINT TAB 6; INK 5; "> Yes": G
O TO 30
860 IF Q<25 THEN GO TO 840
870 IF M<25 THEN GO TO 780
880 GO TO 820

```

Our next section of code reaches conclusions. The first bit, from 700 to 730, says YES if the question you asked was exactly in the form you originally gave it some information. That is, if you had asked IS AN EAGLE A BIRD and earlier you had told it explicitly AN EAGLE IS A BIRD, this first part would discover this, and tell you YES.

The next section, from 710 right through to 800, searches to find the word using the method outlined earlier, reaching either a YES (line 850) or a NO (line 820) conclusion.

```
910 REM      CHECK CONTENTS OF
              PARTICULAR FILE
920 INK 5: INPUT "SUBJECT TO CH
ECK ";H$: PRINT "Subject to chec
k? ";H$
930 INK 7: LET T=0
940 LET T=T+1
950 IF Z$(1,T, TO LEN H$)=H$ TH
EN GO TO 990
960 IF T<25 THEN GO TO 940
970 PRINT INK 5;"I have no data
stored on ";H$
980 GO TO 30
990 LET K=1
1000 LET K=K+1
1010 IF Z$(K,T, TO 5)<>"      " T
HEN PRINT INK 5;K;" ";T;" ";Z$(
K,T)
1020 IF K<25 THEN GO TO 1000
1030 GO TO 30
```

This final section is the one which lets you know what the program has stored under particular subject headings.

Now, here is the complete listing of SYLLOGY, so you can reach a few conclusions of your own.

```
10 REM *** SYLLOGY ***
15 POKE 23658,200: FLASH 0: BR
IGHT 0: CLS : PAPER 1: BORDER 1:
INK 7
20 GO SUB 1050: REM INITIALIZA
TION
30 PRINT : INPUT A$
35 LET Q$=A$
40 IF A$="?" THEN GO TO 910
50 IF LEN A$<2 THEN STOP
60 LET FLAG=0
70 REM NOTE THERE IS A SPACE B
EFORE THE CLOSE QUOTE IN NEXT FO
UR LINES
75 IF LEN A$<3 THEN GO TO 110
80 IF A$( TO 3)="IS " THEN GO
TO 480: REM CONCLUSIONS
85 IF LEN A$<4 THEN GO TO 100
90 IF A$( TO 4)="THE " THEN LE
T A$=A$(5 TO )
100 IF A$( TO 3)="AN " THEN LET
A$=A$(4 TO )
110 IF A$( TO 2)="A " THEN LET
A$=A$(3 TO )
120 LET X=LEN A$
130 LET N=0
140 LET N=N+1
150 IF A$(N)=" " THEN LET B$=A$
( TO N-1): GO TO 180: REM EXTRAC
TS THE FIRST NOUN
160 IF N<X THEN GO TO 140
```

```

170 INK 5: PRINT "I don't under
stand": INK 7: GO TO 30
180 LET K=4
190 IF A$(N+1 TO N+2)="W" THEN
LET K=5
200 LET C$=A$(N+K TO ): REM QUA
LIFY PHRASE
210 IF LEN C$<2 THEN GO TO 220
211 IF C$( TO 2)="A " THEN LET
C$=C$(3 TO ): REM REMOVES ARTICL
E
220 IF LEN C$<3 THEN GO TO 230
221 IF C$( TO 3)="AN " THEN LET
C$=C$(4 TO )
230 IF LEN C$<=3 THEN GO TO 240
231 IF C$( TO 4)="THE " THEN LE
T C$=C$(5 TO )
240 REM ** STORE INFORMATION **
250 REM ** FIRST CHECK TO SEE
IF IT CAN FIND SUBJECT BEFORE
FINDING BLANK **
260 LET N=0
270 LET N=N+1
280 IF Z$(1,N, TO LEN B$)=B$ TH
EN GO TO 320: REM SUBJECT HEADIN
G EXISTS
290 IF Z$(1,N, TO 5)=" " TH
EN LET Z$(1,N)=B$: GO TO 320
300 IF N<25 THEN GO TO 270
310 INK 2: PRINT "I have no mor
e subject storage room": INK 7
320 REM ** PROGRAM REACHES HERE
WITH SUBJECT STORED AS HEADING
**
330 REM ** NOW PUT OBJECT UNDER
THIS **

```

```

340 LET K=0
350 LET K=K+1
360 IF Z$(K,N, TO LEN C$)=C$ TH
EN GO TO 400: REM INFORMATION AL
READY STORED UNDER THAT HEADING
370 IF Z$(K,N, TO 5)="      " TH
EN LET Z$(K,N)=C$: GO TO 400
380 IF K<25 THEN GO TO 350
390 INK 5: PRINT "I have no mor
e object storage      space.": INK
7
400 IF FLAG=1 THEN PRINT Q$: IN
K 5: PRINT TAB 6;"> Ok.": INK 7:
GO TO 30: REM SWAP HAS BEEN DON
E
410 REM ** NOW SWAP OBJECT AND
SUBJECT AND SAVE AGAIN **
420 LET FLAG=1
430 LET M$=B$
440 LET B$=C$
450 LET C$=M$
460 GO TO 250
480 REM *** CONCLUSIONS ***
490 REM * FIRST SPLIT INPUT *
500 LET H$=A$: LET A$=A$(4 TO )
: REM STRIP IS
510 IF A$( TO 2)="A " THEN LET
A$=A$(3 TO ): REM STRIP A IF PRE
SENT
520 IF A$( TO 3)="AN " THEN LET
A$=A$(4 TO ): REM STRIP AN IF P
RESENT
530 REM * GET FIRST WORD IF PRE
SENT - F$ *
540 LET X=LEN A$
550 LET N=0

```



```

560 LET N=N+1
570 IF A$(N)=" " THEN LET F#=A$
( TO N-1): GO TO 600
580 IF N<X THEN GO TO 560
590 PRINT TAB 6; INK 5;"I do no
t understand?": GO TO 30
600 REM * NOW GET SECOND WORD -
S$ *
610 LET S#=A$(N+3 TO )
620 IF LEN S#<=0 THEN GO TO 630
621 IF S$(1)=" " THEN LET S#=S$
(2 TO ): REM STRIPS LEADING ZERO
S IF WAS "AN"
630 PRINT H$'TAB 9; INK 5;"(Loo
king for ";f$;")"
640 LET X=0
650 LET X=X+1
660 IF Z$(1,X, TO LEN F#)=F# TH
EN PRINT TAB 10; INK 5;"( Found
at 1, ";X;")": GO TO 700
670 IF X<25 THEN GO TO 650
680 PRINT TAB 6; INK 5;"I canno
t find the subject": PRINT TAB 8
;f$
690 GO TO 30
700 LET Y=1
710 LET Y=Y+1
720 IF Z$(Y,X)=S# THEN INK 5: P
RINT TAB 6;"> Yes": INK 7: GO TO
30
730 IF Y<25 THEN GO TO 710
740 LET Y=1
750 LET Y=Y+1
760 LET P#=Z$(Y,X)
770 LET M=0
780 LET M=M+1

```

```

790 IF Z$(1,M)=P$ THEN GO TO 83
0
800 IF M<25 THEN GO TO 780
810 IF Y<25 THEN GO TO 750
820 PRINT TAB 6; INK 5; "> No":
GO TO 30
830 LET Q=1
840 LET Q=Q+1
850 IF Z$(Q,M, TO LEN S$)=S$ TH
EN PRINT TAB 6; INK 5; "> Yes": G
O TO 30
860 IF Q<25 THEN GO TO 840
870 IF M<25 THEN GO TO 780
880 GO TO 820
900 REM *****
910 REM CHECK CONTENTS OF
PARTICULAR FILE
920 INK 5: INPUT "SUBJECT TO CH
ECK ";H$: PRINT "Subject to chec
k? ";H$
930 INK 7: LET T=0
940 LET T=T+1
950 IF Z$(1,T, TO LEN H$)=H$ TH
EN GO TO 990
960 IF T<25 THEN GO TO 940
970 PRINT INK 5; "I have no data
stored on ";H$
980 GO TO 30
990 LET K=1
1000 LET K=K+1
1010 IF Z$(K,T, TO 5)<>" " T
HEN PRINT INK 5;K;" ";T;" ";Z$(
K,T)
1020 IF K<25 THEN GO TO 1000
1030 GO TO 30

```

```
1040 REM *****  
1050 REM INITIALIZE  
1060 CLS  
1080 DIM Z$(25,25,27)  
1090 RETURN
```

# **SECTION TWO — SEARCHING**

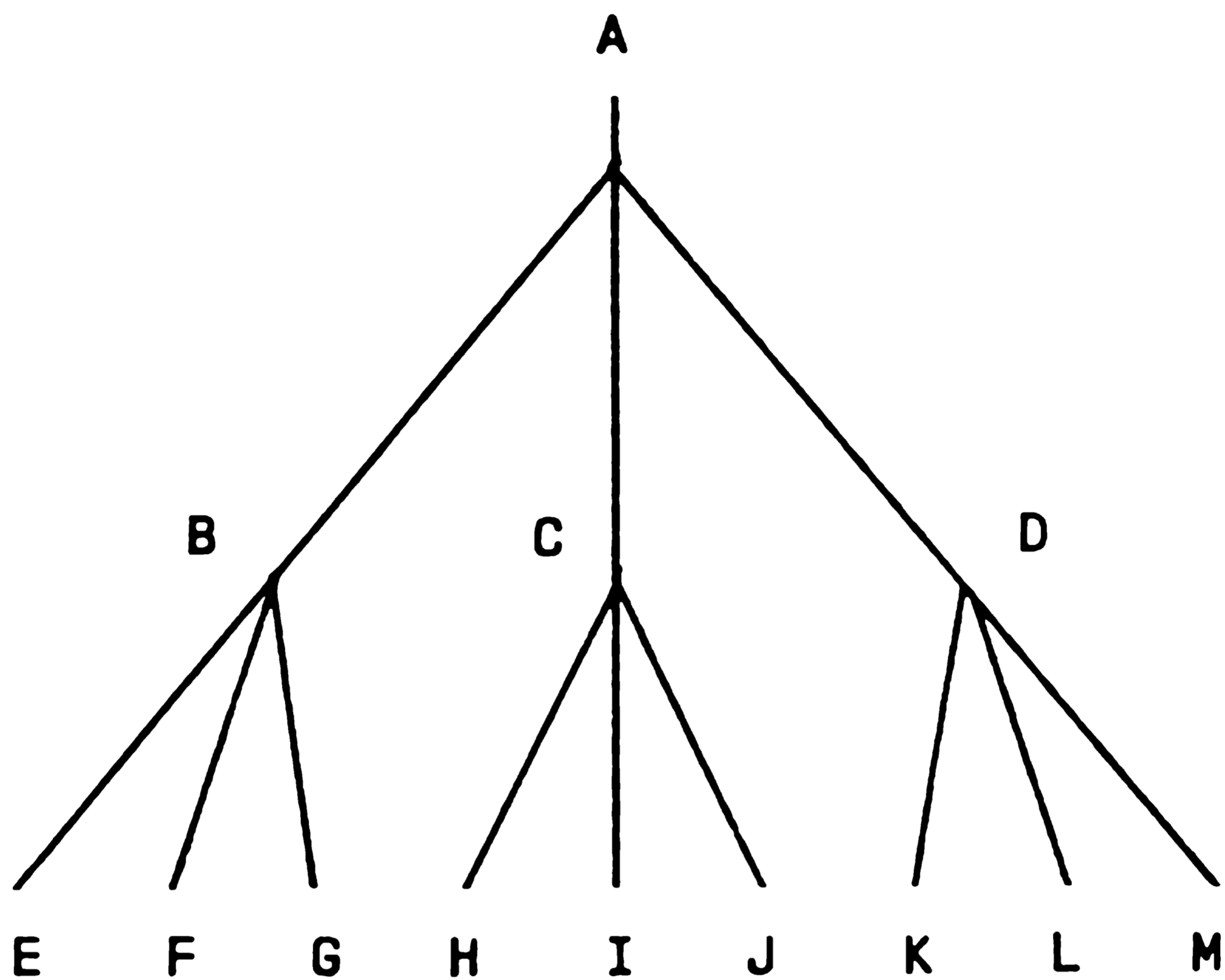
# **CHAPTER FOUR — SEARCH TREES AND SNICKERS**

In this section of the book, we will develop a checkers-like program called SNICKERS. We will use it to discuss some ideas of tree-searching, in which the computer behaves with a degree of intelligence by searching along lines of related options, and then from these chooses that which it judges to be the best action.

Searching through trees of options in this way is common to most problem-solving programs. Modifications, many of them most important ones, such as 'pruning' the tree to save following worthless branches at all, or to follow other branches to an unnecessary depth, are nearly always used in tree-searching to stop the process from taking an inordinate amount of time, but the basic idea of the tree search is still fundamental to problem-solving.

## **WHY IS IT CALLED A TREE?**

A search tree grows like any other tree, apart from being upside down. Take A in the following diagram as the starting point for the search. The 'branches' (labelled B, C and D) going off it represent valid decisions (or legal moves, if the program is tackling a game). The smaller branches radiating from these (E, F and so on) are implications of following that branch.



If the tree represents a move-finding mechanism in a chess game, for example, the A may represent the movement of a particular knight. The program then follows through the implications of that move. B assumes, let us say, that moving this knight puts one of the opponent's pieces under attack. Response E is the opponent simply backing this piece away, F may be supporting the threatened piece with another one, and G may be capturing the offending knight. E, F and G would further split, into N, O . . . and so on, which would cover the possible responses to each action.

You can see that the search would rapidly escalate, and the options being considered would reach astronomical proportions, unless there was some means of guiding the search. Only in a very simple program, such as one which played Noughts and Crosses, could a program examine every branch of every tree, before choosing the best move.

For other programs, a branch can be examined to a pre-determined depth (and we'll be discussing depth shortly) instead of to the end, and the result of that examination stored.

## **'PARALLEL PROCESSING'**

Another approach would be to examine a short distance down one branch, then back up and start another branch, and so on, and then examine the more promising branches to a greater depth. A branch, for example, which assumed the opponent in a chess game would sacrifice the queen to capture a pawn, would not merit further examination. Any branch which led the opponent — in the opinion of the program's evaluation mechanism — to weaken his or her position could be abandoned the moment this discovery was made, and processing time and effort put into following more promising leads.

When developing your own AI programs, it is worth starting to think about them in terms of search trees, as it is likely that they will involve this in some way. The tree may grow quite frighteningly, especially if you are not working in a tightly-restricted domain (such as we do in BLOCK-WORLD), or you are not too clear as to the criteria by which your program could be making choices.

We have developed a checkers-like game, called SNICKERS, for this section of the book, in order to demonstrate some aspects of primitive tree-searching. Naturally enough, you need to know how to play the game in order to understand the discussion about it. We'll look at snapshots from a completed game in due course, but for now, we only need to see the first few moves.

Here's what the board looks like at the start of the game:

COMPUTER: 0      HUMAN: 0

```
      12345678
      -----
  8   C  C  C  C  8
  7   C  C  C  C  7
  6   .  .  .  .  6
  5   .  .  .  .  5
  4   .  .  .  .  4
  3   .  .  .  .  3
  2   H  H  H  H  2
  1   H  H  H  H  1
      -----
      12345678
```

The score (currently zero) for both the machine and the human is printed above the board. Each player starts with eight pieces (as opposed to 12 in checkers). The computer's pieces are at the top of the board (the C's) and the human's are at the bottom (the H's). The computer is playing down the screen, and the human is playing up it.

The dots represent the black squares on a checker-board. The pieces move as in checkers, that is diagonally from black square to black square. Each piece, then, is actually 'sitting on' a dot which will only be revealed when the piece is moved. Each of the dots represents a position to which a piece can be moved.

As I said, each piece moves like checkers' pieces, diagonally. Captures in SNICKERS are carried out in a familiar way, by leaping over an enemy piece into a vacant



square beyond. However, in contrast to checkers, there are no multiple jumps in this game.

## **VANISHING ACTS**

The aim of the game is to get a score of five before the opponent does so. There are two ways to score a point. One way, predictably enough, is to capture an enemy piece. The other way is to reach the back row on the opposite side of the board. In checkers, this would result in the piece being 'crowned', or turned into a king with the ability to move backwards and forwards at will. In SNICKERS, the piece vanishes on reaching the opposite back row (which means, among other things, that you cannot have either kings in SNICKERS, nor pieces moving 'backwards' on the board).

If you leap over an enemy piece, and end up after that capture on the opposite back row, you'll get two points, rather than one. You'll see this occurring in our sample game in due course. The computer will tell you the moves it is considering at each point in the game, so you can see its machine intelligence at work. At the beginning of the game, shown in the board printed a little earlier, there are seven possible opening moves. The computer finds each legal move, then prints up the moves on the screen, before making the move, as follows (with the numbers themselves being worked out by specifying the number down the edges of the board first, followed by the number across the top or bottom):

```
I AM CONSIDERING 71 TO 62  
I AM CONSIDERING 73 TO 64
```

I AM CONSIDERING 73 TO 62  
 I AM CONSIDERING 75 TO 66  
 I AM CONSIDERING 75 TO 64  
 I AM CONSIDERING 77 TO 68  
 I AM CONSIDERING 77 TO 66

The numbers printed here by the computer refer to those within a master array which holds the board inside the computer. This is the numbered board the computer uses in SNICKERS:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8	81	<b>82</b>	83	<b>84</b>	85	<b>86</b>	87	<b>88</b>
7	<b>71</b>	72	<b>73</b>	74	<b>75</b>	76	<b>77</b>	78
6	61	<b>62</b>	63	<b>64</b>	65	<b>66</b>	67	<b>68</b>
5	<b>51</b>	52	<b>53</b>	54	<b>55</b>	56	<b>57</b>	58
4	41	<b>42</b>	43	<b>44</b>	45	<b>46</b>	47	<b>48</b>
3	<b>31</b>	32	<b>33</b>	34	<b>35</b>	36	<b>37</b>	
2	21	<b>22</b>	23	<b>24</b>	25	<b>26</b>	27	<b>28</b>
1	<b>11</b>	12	<b>13</b>	14	<b>15</b>	16	<b>17</b>	18

You'll see that the numbering is not consecutive, and does not even start from one. However, this board is much easier to use, in computer terms, than is one in which only the black squares are numbered from one to thirty-two.

A computer needs to know where the edges of the board are, and the 'missing' numbers supply it with that information. For example, if it tries to move from 48 to 59, the value held by element 59 in the array (zero, in the case of SNICKERS) will warn it that such a move is 'off the board'.

The second, and much more important, advantage lies in the consistency with which moves can be specified, no matter where on the board they occur. I'll explain what I mean by that. Look at the list of moves which the computer is considering to begin with, and notice the simple mathematical relationships connecting the square moved from, to that moved to:

71 to 62	-9
73 to 64	-9
73 to 62	-11
75 to 66	-9
75 to 64	-11
77 to 68	-9
77 to 66	-11

The difference between the starting square, and the ending square, is either minus nine or minus eleven. And if you compare the numbers given above with the board, you'll see that moves downward and to the left are always minus eleven, and those downward and to the right are always minus nine.

This is true all over the board. Any non-capture move made by the computer must be minus nine or minus eleven from

the starting square. This is, I'm sure you can appreciate, most convenient from the computer's point of view. (If you care to try the experiment using a board which simply has the black squares numbered from one to thirty-two you'll soon appreciate the grave problems this can cause.)

Furthermore, the computer can make decisions fairly easily on this board. Assume the square the computer is on, is numbered  $X$ . If there is a human piece on  $X-9$ , and  $X-18$  is empty, it knows it can capture by leaping into  $X-18$ . Its score can then be incremented, and  $X-9$  turned into a blank square.

Furthermore, and this is where the 'intelligence' really comes in, the computer can look beyond that move, to see which one the human is likely to make next. If there is a human piece in  $X-27$ , the computer can assume — possibly rightly — that the human's next move will be to capture the computer piece now sitting on  $X-18$ , by moving into  $X-9$ .

The position after the capture (remember, you as computer are now on  $X-18$ ) is also potentially under threat from  $X-25$ , if  $X-7$  is vacant. This explanation is probably becoming a little bewildering at this point, so I suggest you try and follow it through on the board which was printed earlier, or on a checkers board you have numbered in the same way.

The computer can also sense when a piece of its own is under threat. Imagine, once again, that you are the computer on square  $X$ . The human moves into square  $X-9$ . You know that  $X+9$  is vacant, so the human may well move into  $X+9$  on his or her next move, capturing you on  $X$ . You could counter this by either moving a piece of your own into  $X+9$ , or — if this is not possible — moving a piece so that it threatens  $X+9$ . This may persuade the human player not to make the capture.

There is no equivalent of checkers 'huffing' in SNICKERS. You are under no obligation to capture a piece if you do not want to. You may prefer not to capture a threatened piece, knowing that you may have a chance of scoring two points with the threatening piece a little later, on another capture which would end on the back row.

## **DIGGING DEEP**

The SNICKERS tree search does not proceed very deeply, although it manages to play reasonably well, winning its share of games (including the one which is used to demonstrate the program, later in this section). You may well be tempted to think that, if a tree was set up and searched completely, the program may play perfectly.

SNICKERS is a less complex game than checkers, with no multiple jumps and no kings, so it is not too unreasonable to assume that a perfect system might be evolved. At the very least, it should be possible to create a path which the computer can follow to play the game extremely well.

We could do this by a method somewhat similar to the 'matchbox tic-tac-toe computer' discussed in the section on the program TIC-TAC. That is, we could examine every possible move, of every possible game, and analyse them in depth. After all, we have tireless computers at our disposal, and they could do the donkey work.

Think about it a little. You know (because the computer told you so a few pages back) that it had seven moves it could make at the start of the game. So our tree, with A at the top, starts with branches B, C, D, E, F, G and H, at the

very first level. The human player similarly has seven moves from which to choose at the start of the game. Each of our initial branches now needs seven sub-branches (or 'nodes' as the branching points are called). After each player has had one move, and even before the program starts to look at possible responses to the human's first move, we have stacked up forty-nine divergent streams to follow.

The position gets worse. Now that one piece has moved out of the front row of each player's rank, two possible moves (one in some cases, if the initial move was at either end) are now available, plus another six (the first move has possibly blocked a move by a piece which is still on the front row). That means we have another 49 times 8 branches to consider, even before the human has had a second move.

A similar search tree for checkers would contain around 10 raised to the 40th power nodes. Considered at the rate of three million nodes per second (which would take a pretty nifty computer), this tree would take around 10 raised to the 21st power years to consider.

We suggested earlier that one way of pruning the tree would be to abandon unprofitable branches (such as any that imagines the opponent would deliberately move into danger needlessly), to leave time and effort to examine more worthwhile branches. It was also suggested that the computer could check a certain distance into a branch, take note of what it had concluded, then swap to another branch, then another and another, with the option of abandoning branches which were becoming weaker, and concentrating on the more promising ones.

To do this, we have to be able to assign a value to the position found. This can be a number (based on something like the one for Samuel's checkers program — discussed in the TIC-TAC section of the book) or can be based on an hierarchical scheme to order moves chosen, and decide not to follow the majority of move branches which could be generated. As you'll see shortly, this is how we do it in the SNICKERS program.

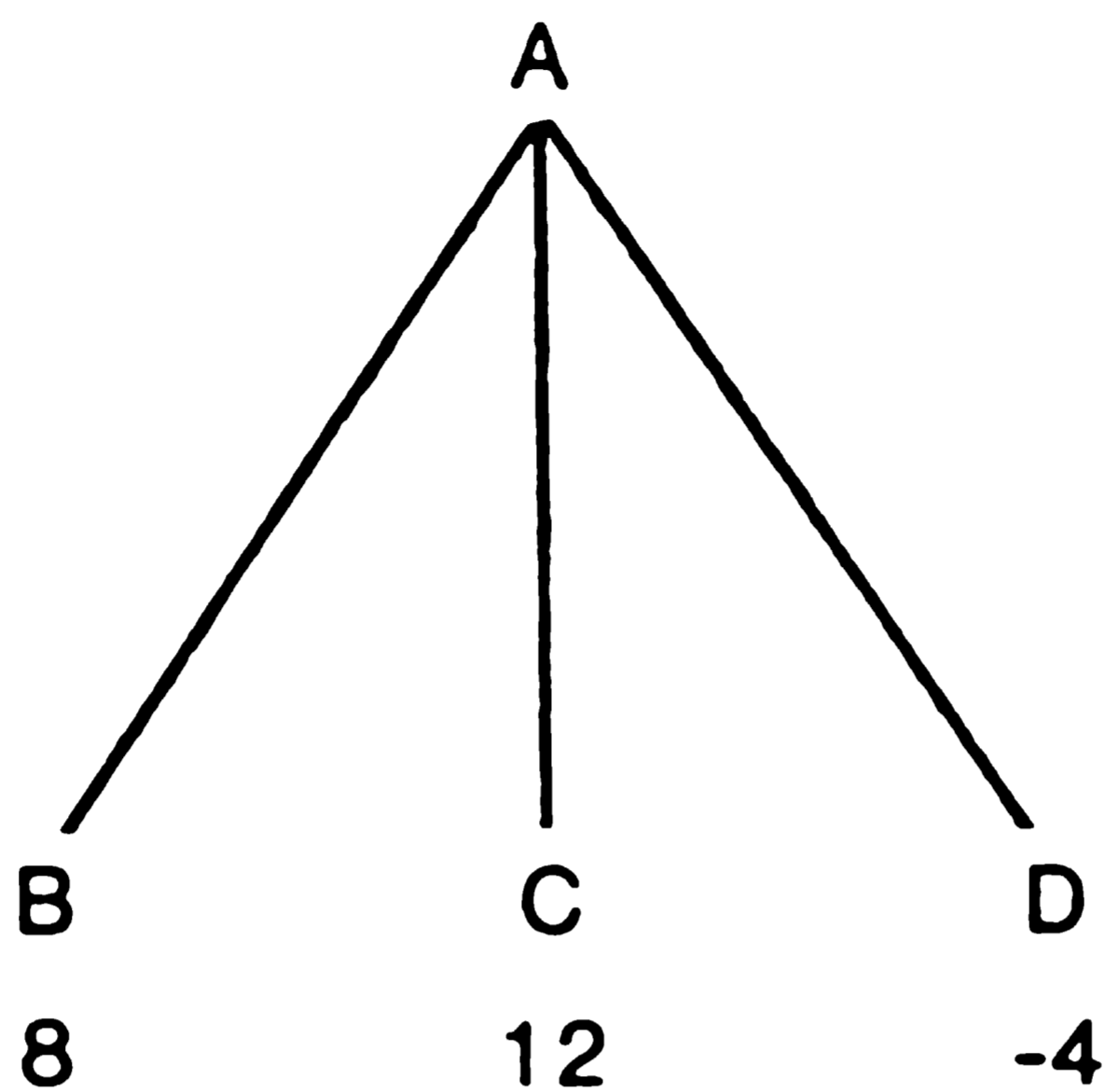
## **MINI-MAXING**

However, we must first look a little further into search trees, in our quest for the perfect game-playing computer. SNICKERS uses a crude form of the technique known as 'mini-maxing' with which we can prune our relentlessly multiplying branches.

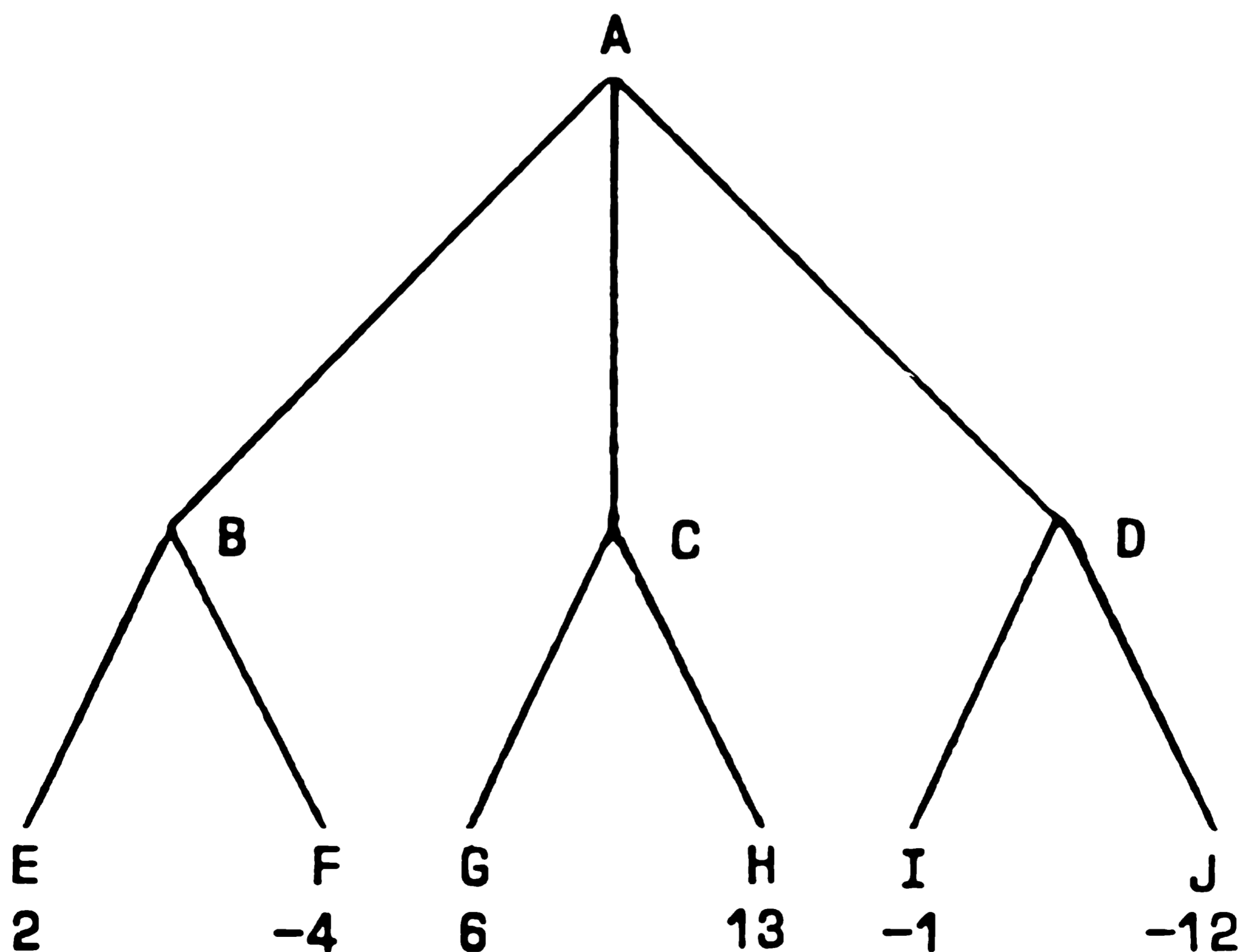
To use this, however, the computer should be able to assign numerical values to the positions it discovers.

Imagine that it has three options it is considering, and each option consists of a move by a different piece. The value given to the move could consist, in part, of how close to the center the piece will be after the move, if it threatens (immediately, or could do so after another move) an enemy piece, if the square it is considering moving to is under threat, if the move actually makes a capture, or achieves some other goal (such as reaching the opposite back row).

Here is our tree, with moves B, C and D at the ends of the first three branches, with their scores next to them:



You can see that C has the highest value, so this node would seem the obvious choice. Remember, this little tree is based on the situation after the computer has moved. However, if the machine looks at the next series of branches, when the possible responses by the human player are considered and evaluated, it could see this:





The values given here for nodes E to J are assessed in terms of the **player's** evaluation of the board positions. The best move to be made by the computer could be the one which gives the human, choices that will leave him or her in the weakest possible position. The choice then must be the one which gives the computer the maximum possible score while leaving the human, choices which minimise his or her strength. This is where the term **mini-maxing** comes from.

Assuming the computer was not going to look further, to assess its own position after each of the moves which the player could make (and possibly assess player responses to that response), it may well be advised to choose move B. This leaves it in a fairly strong position (rating 8) although it does not leave it in the same position as move C would have done (rating 12).

The computer assumes the player will make the best move it can in the circumstances. Had the computer played C, to get a maximum rating immediately after the move, it would have left the human to play H, ending up with a rating of 13. Instead, by playing move B, the human can — at best — respond for a rating of 2, from node E.

I said earlier that SNICKERS works by assigning a value to each possible move, in a hierarchy. It chooses its moves in reference to this hierarchy, which puts a value on the possible moves in the following order. It will always make a move which is higher up the tree if it can.

A degree of mini-maxing is present. The program thinks solely in terms of material advantage, that is, it seeks at all times to minimise the number of pieces the opponent has, and to preserve its own lives.

For example, the program may see two possible captures, one of which will subsequently expose it to capture and one which will not. Naturally enough, it will make the move which leaves it in the strongest position after the move (with the piece which has done the capturing still on the board) and ignore the move which enables the opponent to strengthen his or her position (by scoring a capture in return).

The hierarchy of moves used by SNICKERS to prune the 'possible moves' tree, and to save searching down branches which represent moves it is most unlikely to make, is as follows. Any moves found that fit the description are stored:

- **Safe captures which further threaten human pieces, and do not expose another piece to capture.**
- **Captures which leave the pieces making the capture in complete safety.**
- **Other captures.**
- **Moves to protect pieces under threat.**
- **Random rejection of above moves, if the making of the move will expose a subsequent piece to capture.**
- **Non-capture moves onto the back row.**
- **Non-capture moves which do not expose the computer to danger.**
- **Any legal move.**

If it finds any capture moves, it will not bother looking further down the tree. In effect, it automatically prunes branches with 'lower' nodes, by not even considering them. This may seem rash, and certainly means the program is unable to play with any kind of overall strategy, but it works surprisingly well (aided, of course, by the simple nature of the game) in practice, and manages to play with an appearance of skill.

So you can appreciate, I hope, that this hierarchical ordering of moves, minimises the number of possibilities which must be explored. When examining the program, you'll see it first sweeps the board, square by square, looking for captures, which are subsequently stored as 'good, safe', 'safe' or 'captures'.

If the storage areas (dedicated areas) are empty at the end of this sweep, the computer sweeps the board again, looking to see if any of its pieces are under threat by human pieces.

If this search fails to find a move, our computer looks to see if it has any pieces on the second back row which could be moved onto the back row, adding to its score. It has a predetermined order for doing this, ensuring that if two pieces are on the back row and can be moved, the one closest to the center will be moved first, on the assumption that it is more likely to be under threat than a piece at the end. This is a rough-and-ready assumption which ensures the computer does not simply move the first piece it finds onto the back row.

If a move has not yet been made, the board is swept yet again, and any safe moves (that is, moves which do not expose the piece moved to capture) discovered are stored. If any have been found, the computer chooses at random from these.

If this search has failed to find a move, the computer picks locations on the board at random, looking for any legal move. If no move has been found in the 200 stabs it allows for finding one, the computer will concede the game. We will go through the main parts of the listing shortly, and identify the subroutines which carry out each of the tasks specified.

Incidentally, you may feel the multiple sweeps of the board are somewhat wasteful. Could the program not do all of its looking in a single sweep? The answer, of course, is 'yes', except it would mean a considerable waste of effort in many cases, when it would be looking for, and storing moves, which it had no intention of even considering. You may well, however, like to modify the program, or write one of your own, to do all the checks in a single sweep, and see what effect this has on its reaction time.

It is pretty obvious that the hierarchical system for determining the relative value of moves could be combined, for greater flexibility, with an evaluation function. This could bring in things like Samuel did, such as the number of pieces on the board held by one player as opposed to the other, the number of pieces under direct threat and 'control of the center', however that may be defined.

One alternative to using an evaluation function would be for the computer to store all the possible board positions, and have each of these assigned a predetermined value. But this 'solution', like the idea of making complete trees covering all the possible outcomes of the game, runs up against the barrier of astronomically large numbers. There are around  $10^{40}$  possible board positions with checkers, and those of SNICKERS would approach the same order of magnitude.

There are no simple rules to apply when developing your own evaluation functions for board game programs you write. 'Informed guesswork' should guide your initial function, and then trying out the function in practice should allow you to modify it so that it performs well in practice. The advantage of a simple game, like noughts and crosses, is that the program can be set up to play repeatedly against an opponent playing randomly, or an intelligent one. The results of the games can be used to automatically modify the evaluation function, or a large number of games can be played with one version of the function, and compared with a similar number of challenges with modified functions. It is not so simple to program an opponent to play repeatedly against a program in a more complex game such as chess, checkers or even SNICKERS.

## **WEIGHTED ELEMENTS**

The task is made a little easier by the fact that the elements which make up an evaluation function are generally weighted with some factors within the function being multiplied by a higher value than others. Modification of the evaluation function may well then be a matter of modifying the weighting factors, rather than having to add or discard whole new elements.

I'll try to explain that last paragraph with a concrete example. Experience has shown chess players that the relative value of pieces can be expressed, in a rough and ready manner, as follows:

PAWN	— 1
BISHOP	— 3
KNIGHT	— 3.5
ROOK	— 5
QUEEN	— 9
KING	— 128 ('infinite')

You could create your first evaluation simply by adding up the pieces you have, and subtracting the pieces your opponent has, to give a measure of your relative 'strength' as follows:

$$\text{Strength} = n^{\#}wP + 3^{\#}n^{\#}wB + 3.5^{\#}n^{\#}wK + 5^{\#}n^{\#}wR + 9^{\#}n^{\#}wQ - (N^{\#}bP + 3^{\#}N^{\#}bB + 3.5^{\#}N^{\#}bK + 5^{\#}N^{\#}bR + 9^{\#}N^{\#}bQ)$$

With this as a starting evaluation, you could possibly write a rough chess program, which was willing to consider sacrificing pieces, or trading them, when your 'strength' was positive, and which would be most conservative in this regard when the 'strength' was negative. Playing against this program, and using this function in order to help decide which branches should be searched (using mini-maxing) could indicate that — in fact — the value of the rook has been underestimated, leading to unnecessary errors of judgement. You could then increase the value of a rook to say 6.5 or 7.

The worth of your evaluation function could be increased if mobility (possibly expressed as the number of moves each piece has) could be incorporated. The value of the rook, for example, could be expressed (with  $rm$  equal to the moves it could make) as  $5^{\#}n^{\#}wr + 3^{\#}rm$ . The function could be further elaborated by adding a number to the value of the piece which reflected the 'value' of the square it was occupying

(with the central four squares worth, say, 8 each, the squares surrounding the central four worth 6.5 and the next set worth 4). And so on. Thinking about the problems inherent in creating an evaluation function for a game as complex as chess indicates clearly that such a task is not a trivial one.

If you are interested in developing evaluation functions, you might like to start with one for SNICKERS, and use it to modify the way moves are chosen. You should find that even a crude function — if you can get the computer to apply it in practice — should improve the computer's play to a noticeable extent.

It would be possible, given nearly infinite time and computing power, to search each branch of the tree until the end of the game was reached. This would mean investigating an enormous number of possibilities, as you shall see in a moment. A more sensible approach, perhaps, would be to limit the depth of search. Let's assume, for now, that we have deliberately decided to follow the tree for just two steps, one move and the opponent's possible answers to that move.

A search of this kind is called '2-ply' because we are looking to a depth of one move and the immediate response to that move. In a rough way, SNICKERS uses a kind of 2-ply search (but without overall mini-maxing) trying for the move which gives it the best material advantage, assuming the opponent plays his or her best move in material terms in response (that is, the opponent captures if this is possible). Assuming your evaluation function is realistic, the deeper the ply, the better the results your program should achieve.

However, astronomical numbers come into play again as we increase the depth of search. If we assume, in noughts and crosses, that there are three possible moves at the start of a game (that is, a move in one corner is equal to a move in any corner, as the first board can be transformed into the others by rotation), there are twelve positions at the 2-ply level, and a number approaching  $12 \times 7$  ('approaching', because not all these games would be played out to completion, as a draw or win would be evident before all nine positions were filled) at the next level.

In other games, the possibilities increase even more dramatically. An average 4-ply search in chess, for example, has to cope with around a million possibilities.

## **THE ALPHA-BETA ALGORITHM**

How can we possibly cope with all these numbers, in an attempt to write a program which plays reasonably well, but which does not take 10 raised to the 40th power years to make a move? It is time now to introduce the alpha-beta algorithm, a very useful aid in trimming branches in our search tree.

The alpha-beta idea is simple, but powerful. It says that — if you can choose from a set of possible moves — once you have found one move which suits your needs (and your needs could well be expressed in terms of improving the score produced by your evaluation function), there is no need to look for another move in that set.

The alpha-beta algorithm is so named because it operates simply by keeping track of two values, called alpha and beta. Our program is searching through a tree, looking for a



good move. Alpha is the value of the best move it has so far discovered. As the search continues, the program finds a move which produces a lower value than alpha. It knows immediately it is not worth following that branch, because it would lead to a worse result than the best one found so far. This means the computer is free to continue searching, on a new branch.

Meanwhile, the program is also working out the possible responses to its moves. If it finds a response which is bad from the opponent's point of view — so the opponent would be unlikely to make it — there is no point in following the situations which could arise from that response. Beta is the value which the opponent has when making his or her best response to a computer move. The search is discontinued if the branch leads to an opponent move which would diminish the value of beta, seen from the player's point of view.

The search cut-off caused by discovering the path being investigated, that lowers the computer's score is called an 'alpha-cutoff'. The other search terminator is called, naturally enough, a 'beta-cutoff'.

We can see a crude form of the alpha side of this algorithm in action in the following sequence of events:

- Measure the value of the current board.
- Find the first move.
- Measure the value of the board after that move.
- Find the best opponent response, and work out what the board would be worth after that move.

- Record both values.
- Find the next move, and follow the process.
- If the new move gives a better mini-max result, discard the first move, but store the second.
- Continue testing moves in this way, keeping a record only of the move found which gives the best mini-max so far.

Doing this would mean you would end up with a single move which — given the limited look ahead — would be the ‘best’ one to make.

Note that the alpha-beta algorithm can be applied in many decision-making areas, other than in board games. Many intelligent programs, faced with a choice between a number of options, follow an alpha-beta line in determining which is the best choice of action.

Let us now return to the SNICKERS game. You may recall that we looked at the opening board position, and the computer generated a list of the moves it was considering. The opening moves given by it were:

71 to 62  
73 to 64  
73 to 62  
75 to 66  
75 to 64  
77 to 68  
77 to 66

All of these moves are determined by it to be ‘safe, non-capture’ moves, and of equal worth. Therefore, it chooses

at random from among them, and makes the move 71 to 62 as you can see:

COMPUTER: 0      HUMAN: 0

```
      12345678
      -----
8     C  C  C  C  8
7     .  C  C  C  7
6     C  .  .  .  6
5     .  .  .  .  5
4     .  .  .  .  4
3     .  .  .  .  3
2     H  H  H  H  2
1     H  H  H  H  1
      -----
      12345678
```

In fact, the moves may not all be of equal worth, as there is value in developing the center of the field whenever possible, but the program has been given no information upon which to make this assessment, so it believes (and acts on the belief) that all the moves are equal.

The human response is then entered, using the number down the side and across the bottom of the 'from' square (entered as a single number) and then, when prompted, entering the 'to' square in the same way:

```
MOVE FROM? 24
           T0? 35
```

The board is reprinted, and the computer reveals the moves it is considering:

COMPUTER: 0      HUMAN: 0

```
      12345678
      -----
8     C C C C 8
7     . C C C 7
6     C . . . 6
5     . . . . 5
4     . . . . 4
3     . . H . 3
2     H . H H 2
1     H H H H 1
      -----
      12345678
```

```
I AM CONSIDERING 73 TO 64
I AM CONSIDERING 75 TO 66
I AM CONSIDERING 75 TO 64
I AM CONSIDERING 77 TO 68
I AM CONSIDERING 77 TO 66
I AM CONSIDERING 62 TO 53
I AM CONSIDERING 62 TO 51
```

A few moves later, the board looks like this (not all the possible computer moves are shown in this printout):

```

      12345678
      -----
  8   C  C  .  C  8
  7   .  .  C  .  7
  6   .  C  C  C  6
  5   C  .  .  .  5
  4   .  .  .  .  4
  3   H  H  H  H  3
  2   H  .  .  H  2
  1   .  .  H  H  1
      -----
      12345678

```

```

I AM CONSIDERING 82 TO 73
I AM CONSIDERING 82 TO 71
I AM CONSIDERING 64 TO 55
I AM CONSIDERING 64 TO 53

```

There are no captures the computer can make, and all the possible moves can be classed as 'good, safe'. The computer is still playing by choosing at random from among the equally-good (in its own eyes) moves it has discovered and stored:

COMPUTER: 0      HUMAN: 0

```
      12345678
      -----
8     C  C  .  C  8
7     .  .  C  .  7
6     .  .  C  C  6
5     C  .  C  .  5
4     .  .  .  .  4
3     H  H  H  H  3
2     H  .  .  H  2
1     .  .  H  H  1
      -----
      12345678
```

MOVE FROM? 37  
          TO? 48

COMPUTER: 0      HUMAN: 0

```
      12345678
      -----
8     .  C  .  C  8
7     .  C  C  .  7
6     .  .  C  C  6
5     C  .  C  .  5
4     .  .  .  H  4
3     H  H  H  .  3
2     H  H  .  H  2
1     .  .  .  H  1
      -----
      12345678
```

The position now becomes a little more complex. The opponents' pieces are getting close to each other on the board, so the possibility of moving into danger now exists. For example, if the computer were to move 66 to 57, the human would probably respond by capturing the piece on 57, using the piece currently on 48. The program's search mechanism reveals this. Remember, it is at all times trying to ensure that its score after the move is as good as possible, and the human is not given the chance to increase his or her score. A move from 66 to 57 would work against both these aims, so it would be a poor program which proceeded — given all the alternative moves which currently exist — and made the 66 to 57 move.

Fortunately, SNICKERS can see such elementary dangers, and moves from 73 to 62 which is a move classed as 'good, safe'.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
		-----								
8		.		C	.		C			8
7		.	.		C	.				7
6			C	.		C		C		6
5		C	.		C	.				5
4		.	.	.				H		4
3		H	H	H	.					3
2			H	H	.			H		2
1		.	.	.				H		1
		-----								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

MOVE FROM? 17  
TO? 26

COMPUTER: 0      HUMAN: 0

```
      12345678
      -----
8     . C . C 8
7     . . C . 7
6     . . C C 6
5     C C C . 5
4     . . . H 4
3     H H H . 3
2     H H H H 2
1     . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678
```

MOVE FROM? 28  
          TO? 37

And so the game develops:

COMPUTER: 0      HUMAN: 0

```
      12345678
      -----
8     . C . C 8
7     . . . . 7
6     . C C C 6
5     C C C . 5
4     . . H H 4
3     H H . H 3
2     H H H . 2
1     . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678
```



COMPUTER: 0      HUMAN: 0

```
      12345678
      -----
8     . . . C 8
7     . . C . 7
6     . C C C 6
5     C C C . 5
4     . . H H 4
3     H H . H 3
2     H H H . 2
1     . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678
```

MOVE FROM? 24  
TO? 35

There are now very few easy ('good, safe') moves available to the program, and it makes a move which appears to be its first blunder, moving from 55 into danger (from 33) into 44. The human responds by making the capture, and the program offers congratulations.

```
      6 . C C C 6
      5 C C . . 5
      4 . C H H 4
      3 H H H H 3
      2 H . H . 2
      1 . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678
```

MOVE FROM? 33  
TO? 55  
WELL DONE

Of course, the human has now moved into danger, a fact which SNICKERS is quick to appreciate. It reports the move it has found, and is about to make:

COMPUTER: 0      HUMAN: 1

```

      12345678
      -----
  8   . . . C 8
  7   . . C . 7
  6   . C C C 6
  5  C C H . 5
  4   . . H H 4
  3  H . H H 3
  2   H . H . 2
  1   . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678
  
```

66 TO 44 CAPTURING ON 55

>> CAPTURE FOUND

The score is now one all. Remember, you gain points by capturing an opponent piece, and also by getting one of your own pieces onto the opposing back row. We will see that second method of gaining points in action shortly.

Fortunately, the capture by the program has not placed it in a position to be captured in turn:

COMPUTER: 1      HUMAN: 1

```
      12345678
      -----
8     . . . C 8
7     . . C . 7
6     . C . C 6
5    C C . . 5
4     . C H H 4
3    H . H H 3
2     H . H . 2
1     . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678
```

MOVE FROM? 48  
TO? 57

The program knows that it can move right up next to an enemy piece, provided that it has backup which prevents the human from capturing it, so it moves from 51 to 42:

```
      12345678
      -----
8     . . . C 8
7     . . C . 7
6     . C . C 6
5     . C . H 5
4    C C H . 4
3    H . H H 3
2     H . H . 2
1     . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678
```

MOVE FROM? 37      TO? 48

A few moments later, a wealth of choices is facing the program:

COMPUTER: 1      HUMAN: 1

```
      12345678
      -----
8     . . . C 8
7     . . C . 7
6     . C . C 6
5     . C . H 5
4     . C H H 4
3     H C H H 3
2     H . . . 2
1     . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678
```

```
44 TO 26 CAPTURING ON 35
I AM CONSIDERING 44 TO 53
33 TO 11 CAPTURING ON 22
```

```
>> CAPTURE FOUND
I CAPTURED AND LANDED ON 11
ON BACK ROW
```

SNICKERS has chosen the best move possible on the board, capturing an enemy piece and ending up on the back row (on 11), thus gaining two points (and vanishing from the board).

The choices facing the human player are not very palatable. The piece on 35 is under threat from 44 and there seems no way to avoid that danger. 44 cannot be captured, and 35 cannot be moved. The human ignores the threat as nothing can be done about it, and works towards getting a piece closer to the opposing back row (and imposing a weak threat — because the human piece is unprotected — on the computer piece on 75):

COMPUTER: 3      HUMAN: 1

```

      12345678
      -----
  8   . . . C 8
  7   . . C . 7
  6   . C . C 6
  5   . C . H 5
  4   . C H H 4
  3  H . H H 3
  2   . . . . 2
  1   . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678

```

MOVE FROM? 57  
           TO? 66

SNICKERS decides not to capture the new piece on 66, but instead goes for the one on 35, jumping over it into 26. The human then tells the computer that the capture of the piece on 75 will be made, so the computer offers congratulations:

COMPUTER: 4      HUMAN: 1

```
      12345678
      -----
8     . . . C 8
7     . . C . 7
6     . C H C 6
5     . C . . 5
4     . . H H 4
3     H . . H 3
2     . . C . 2
1     . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678
```

MOVE FROM? 66  
          TO? 84

WELL DONE

The human, of course, has gained two points by this jump, ending up on the back row. The computer now has four points (one less than that needed for victory) and the human has three:

COMPUTER: 4      HUMAN: 3

```
      12345678
      -----
8     . . . C 8
7     . . . . 7
6     . C . C 6
5     . C . . 5
4     . . H H 4
3     H . . H 3
2     . . C . 2
1     . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678
```

One of the priorities within SNICKERS' hierarchy of moves is that of moving onto the back row if possible. It is now possible, so SNICKERS makes that move.

I'M MOVING ONTO BACK ROW FROM 26

This, of course, gives the game to the program:

COMPUTER: 5      HUMAN: 3

```
      12345678
      -----
8     . . . C 8
7     . . . . 7
6     . C . C 6
5     . C . . 5
4     . . H H 4
3     H . . H 3
2     . . . . 2
1     . . . . 1
      -----
      12345678
```

THE GAME IS OVER

I'M THE WINNER

# HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Like the other programs in this book, SNICKERS is built around a major loop, which is recycled over and over again until a particular condition is satisfied. Within that loop is a number of sub-routine calls.

```
10 REM SNICKERS
15 POKE 23658,200: BRIGHT 0: F
LASH 0: INK 7: PAPER 1: BORDER 1
20 GO SUB 2070: REM INITIALIZE
30 GO SUB 1760: REM PRINT BOAR
D
40 REM ** MAIN CYCLE STARTS **
50 GO SUB 190: REM COMPUTER MO
VES
60 GO SUB 1760: REM PRINT BOAR
D
70 IF CS>4 THEN GO TO 120
80 GO SUB 1950: REM ACCEPT HUM
AN MOVE
90 GO SUB 1760: REM PRINT BOAR
D
100 IF HS<5 THEN GO TO 50
110 REM *****
```

As you can see from looking at the major loop for SNICKERS this makes it very simple to understand the program's construction. As well, it makes it easy to track down errors. If, for example, the program was not printing the board correctly, it would make sense to look first in the subroutine beginning at line 1760, the routine called PRINT BOARD.



The action first goes to the INITIALISE routine, from line 2070:

```
2070 REM *** INITIALIZE ***
2080 REM ****
2090 CLS
2100 RANDOMIZE
2110 DIM A(110): REM BOARD AND B
LANK SPACES AROUND AND BEYOND IT
2120 DIM G(3): REM GOOD SAFE CAP
TURE STORE
2130 DIM S(3): REM SAFE CAPTURE
STORE
2140 DIM T(18): REM OTHER CAPTUR
E STORE ALSO USED FOR SAFE NON C
APTURE MOVES
2150 LET E=CODE " ": REM EMPTY
"WHITE" SQUARE
2160 LET B=CODE ".": REM EMPTY
"BLACK" SQUARE
2170 LET C=CODE "C": REM COMPUTE
R PIECE
2180 LET H=CODE "H": REM HUMAN P
IECE
2190 LET HS=0: REM HUMAN SCORE
2200 LET CS=0: REM COMPUTER SCOR
E
2210 RESTORE 2290: REM SET UP ST
ARTING BOARD
2220 FOR J=10 TO 80 STEP 10
2230 FOR K=1 TO 8
2240 READ X: LET A(J+K)=X
2250 NEXT K
2260 NEXT J
2270 RETURN
```

```

2280 REM *****
2290 DATA 72,32,72,32,72,32,72,3
2
2300 DATA 32,72,32,72,32,72,32,7
2
2310 DATA 46,32,46,32,46,32,46,3
2
2320 DATA 32,46,32,46,32,46,32,4
6
2330 DATA 46,32,46,32,46,32,46,3
2
2340 DATA 32,46,32,46,32,46,32,4
6
2350 DATA 67,32,67,32,67,32,67,3
2
2360 DATA 32,67,32,67,32,67,32,6
7

```

Here, several arrays are dimensioned. These are as follows:

**A** — to hold the board and the ‘off the board’ squares surrounding it.

**G** — to act as store for ‘good, safe capture’ moves found during a sweep.

**S** — as G, except the captures stored here are less desirable, being defined as ‘safe’.

**T** — this holds captures which are not classed by the program as either ‘good, safe’ nor ‘safe’.

The REM statements identify the variables that are assigned here, with E representing an empty white square, B the empty black square (shown on the display as a dot), C the computer piece and H the human piece. It makes sense to use variable names which will remind you of what the variable stands for, as we have in this case. HS holds the human score, and CS the computer score.

Lines 2210 to 2260 read the initial board configuration into the A array.

Our main cycle gives an indication of how the computer proceeds from this point. We will not look at how the board is printed, nor how human moves are accepted because these are trivial programming problems.

When the computer looks for its move, it follows — as we pointed out earlier — a strict hierarchy of moves. The program sets three variables, which are used each time the program cycles, to zero with lines 220, 230 and 240. The REM statements explain them:

```
180 REM *****
190 REM     COMPUTER MOVE
200 REM *****
210 REM SEARCH FOR CAPTURES
220 LET GSAFE=0: REM TO COUNT GOOD, SAFE CAPTURES WHICH THREATEN HUMAN PIECES
230 LET CSAFE=0: REM TO COUNT SAFE CAPTURES WHICH DO NOT PLACE UNDER THREAT
240 LET CCAPTURE=0: REM TO COUNT OTHER CAPTURES FOUND
```

The 'stores' are emptied:

```
250 FOR J=1 TO 3
260 LET G(J)=0: REM EMPTY GOOD,
SAFE CAPTURE STORE
270 LET S(J)=0: REM EMPTY SAFE
CAPTURE STORE
280 LET T(J)=0: REM EMPTY OTHER
CAPTURE STORE
290 NEXT J
```

Now the computer begins its first sweep of the board, jumping over the evaluation process (see line 320) if the square under consideration does not contain one of its own pieces. It may be worthwhile following the whole of this capture sequence through in detail. The REM statements explain the code fairly thoroughly:

```
300 FOR J=80 TO 30 STEP -10
310 FOR K=1 TO 8
320 IF A(J+K)<>C THEN GO TO 390
: REM SKIP EVALUATION IF NO COMP
UTER PIECE HERE.
330 REM ** CAPTURE TO RIGHT **
340 LET X=J+K-9: LET Y=J+K-18:
LET Z=J+K-27: LET M=-11
350 IF A(X)=H AND A(Y)=B THEN G
O SUB 700: REM CAPTURE FOUND
360 REM ** CAPTURE TO LEFT **
370 LET X=J+K-11: LET Y=J+K-22:
LET Z=J+K-33: LET M=-9
380 IF A(X)=H AND A(Y)=B THEN G
O SUB 700: REM CAPTURE FOUND
390 NEXT K
400 NEXT J
```

```

410 IF GSAFE+CSAFE+CCAPTURE=0 THEN GO TO 980: REM NO CAPTURES FOUND
420 REM * NOW CHOOSE CAPTURE TO MAKE **
430 PRINT : FOR I=1 TO 10: BEEP .3,I: BEEP .2,12: NEXT I: PRINT TAB 8;">> CAPTURE FOUND"
440 PAUSE 600
450 IF GSAFE<>0 THEN GO TO 500
460 IF CSAFE<>0 THEN GO TO 670
470 REM ** CHOOSE FROM GENERAL CAPTURES **
480 LET MOVE=T(INT (RND*CCAPTURE)+1)
490 GO TO 540
500 REM CHOOSE FROM GOOD SAVE
510 REM SELECT FROM STORED MOVES
520 LET MOVE=G(INT (RND*GSAFE)+1)
530 REM ** MAKE MOVE **
540 LET START=INT (MOVE/100)
550 LET ED=MOVE-100*START
560 LET A(START)=B
570 LET A(START-ED)=B
580 LET A(START-2*ED)=C
590 LET CS=CS+1
600 REM * CHECK FOR ADDITIONAL SCORE IF LANDING ON BACK ROW **
610 IF START-2*ED>18 THEN RETURN
620 LET A(START-2*ED)=B
630 LET CS=CS+1
640 PRINT "I CAPTURED AND LANDED ON ";START-2*ED;" ON BACK ROW"

```

```

650 PAUSE 600
660 RETURN
670 REM ** SAFE CAPTURE **
680 LET MOVE=S(INT (RND*CSAFE)+
1)
690>GO TO 540
700 REM ** CHECK PROPOSED CAPTU
RE FOR SAFETY **
710 REM ** CHECK SQUARE BELOW I
N SAME DIRECTION AS INTENDED MOV
E **
720 PRINT J+K;" TO ";Y;" CAPTUR
ING ON ";X
730 PAUSE 400
740 IF A(Z)=H THEN GO TO 920: R
EM STORE AS A NON SAFE CAPTURE
750 REM ** CHECK SQUARE IN OTHE
R DIRECTION FROM INTENDED MOVE *
*
760 IF A(Y+M)=H AND A(Y-M)=B TH
EN GO TO 920
770 REM NOW CHECK TO SEE IF WIL
L LEAVE A PIECE EXPOSED BY BY MA
KING MOVE
780 IF A(J+K+M)=H AND A(J+K+2*M
)=H THEN GO TO 920
790 REM ** IF REACHED THIS POIN
T THEN CAPTURE IS "SAFE" **
800 REM ** STORE THIS MOVE **
810 LET CSAFE=CSAFE+1
820 LET S(CSAFE)=100*(J+K)+20+M
: REM THIS ENCODES ENOUGH INFORM
ATION TO RECREATE THE MOVE
830 REM ** NOW SEE IF THIS DESE
RVES TO BE CALLED A "GOOD SAFE"
MOVE **

```

```

840 LET CHECK=GSAFE
850 IF Y+2*M<1 THEN RETURN
860 IF A(Y+M)=H AND A(Y-(20+M))
<>B AND A(Y+2*M)=B THEN LET GSAFE
E=GSAFE+1
870 IF CHECK=GSAFE THEN RETURN
: REM ** THIS MOVE FOUND NOT TO
BE GOOD SAFE **
880 REM * STORE GOOD SAFE MOVE*
890 PRINT "I AM CONSIDERING ";J
+K;" TO ";M+20+J+K
900 LET G(GSAFE)=100*(J+K)+20+M
910 RETURN
920 REM STORE NON SAFE CAPTURE

930 LET CCAPTURE=CCAPTURE+1
940 PRINT "I AM CONSIDERING ";J
+K;" TO ";M+20+J+K
950 LET T(CCAPTURE)=100*(J+K)+2
0+M
960 RETURN

```

Note how the proposed move is stored in line 820 as a single number. The result of this manipulation is to produce a four-figure number, with the first two digits representing the 'from' square (or START as it is called in several places in the program) and the final two digits representing the 'to' square (called ED in the program; END would have caused a crash on many systems, if it was a reserved BASIC word).

The four-digit number is decoded, and the move made, by the routine from 1510:

```

1510 LET START=INT (MOVE/100)
1520 LET ED=MOVE-100*START

```

```

1530 LET A(START)=B
1540 LET A(ED)=C
1550 RETURN

```

If the program has found a 'good, safe' move (or more than one) it plays this move, and then allows the human to move. If it has not found a 'good, safe' move, but does have a 'safe' one, it plays that. Failing this, a 'capture' move will be played.

If none of these are possible, the program then goes to the next element in its hierarchy, moving to protect a piece which is under threat from the human player.

```

980 REM * MOVE TO PROTECT PIECE
UNDER THREAT **
990 LET MOVE=0
1000 LET J=80
1010 LET K=1
1020 LET Q=J+K
1030 IF A(Q)<>C THEN GO TO 1110:
REM DO NOT CONSIDER THIS SQUARE
,NO COMP PIECE
1040 IF A(Q+9)=B AND A(Q-9)=H AN
D A(Q+18)=C THEN LET MOVE=100*(Q
+18)+Q+9
1050 REM RANDOM EJECTION OF THIS
MOVE IF IT EXPOSES ANOTHER ONE
1060 IF MOVE<>0 AND A(Q-2)=H AND
A(Q+20)=B AND RND>.5 THEN GO TO
1510
1070 IF A(Q+9)=B AND A(Q-9)=H AN
D A(Q+20)=C THEN LET MOVE=100*(Q
+20)+Q+9: GO TO 1510
1080 IF A(Q+11)=B AND A(Q-11)=H
AND A(Q+22)=C THEN LET MOVE=100*

```



```

(Q+22)+Q+11
1090 IF MOVE<>0 AND A(Q+2)=H AND
  A(Q+22)=B AND RND>.5 THEN GO TO
  1510
1110 IF K<8 THEN LET K=K+1: GO T
O 1020
1120 IF J>10 THEN LET J=J-10: GO
  TO 1010

```

If such a move is found by line 1040, the next line will check to see that this move does not expose another piece to danger. If it does, the proposed move will be rejected around 50% of the time. This is hardly a sophisticated mechanism for making a choice but it ensures the computer does not always blindly move to protect a piece (a blindness which could be discovered and exploited by a human player), and also tends to make each game played by the program different from other ones.

Moving a piece onto the back row carries the same reward as capturing a piece, so the next item in the hierarchy is to make a move onto the back row if that is possible. The routine from 1140 looks after this. I explained earlier how the sequence of squares checked in this section means those in the middle squares will move into the back row sanctuary before those at the end:

```

1140 REM ** NO CAP FOUND, SO
LOOK FOR MOVE TO "DISAPPEAR" ON
BACK ROW ****
1150 LET MOVE=0
1160 REM UNDESIRABLE MOVED CHEC
KED FIRST, SO CAN BE OVERWRITTEN
  BY BETTER ONES
1170 IF A(22)=C AND A(11)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=22

```

```

1180 IF A(28)=C AND A(17)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=28
1190 IF A(22)=C AND A(13)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=22
1200 IF A(26)=C AND A(17)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=26
1210 IF A(26)=C AND A(15)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=26
1220 IF A(24)=C AND A(15)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=24
1230 IF A(24)=C AND A(13)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=24
1240 IF MOVE=0 THEN GO TO 1310
1250 PRINT : PRINT INK 4; BRIGHT
  1;"I'M MOVING ONTO BACK ROW FROM ";MOVE
1260 PAUSE 500
1270 LET A(MOVE)=B
1280 LET CS=CS+1
1290 RETURN

```

If this is not possible, the program sweeps to find a legal move which will not place it in danger. The moves are counted by the variable CMOVE, and the actual move to be made is chosen by line 1500:

```

1310 REM SAFE NON CAPTURE MOVES
1320 LET CMOVE=0: REM ** COUNTS
MOVES FOUND **
1330 FOR J=80 TO 30 STEP -10
1340 FOR J=1 TO 8
1350 IF A(J+K)<>C THEN GO TO 146
0
1360 LET X=J+K-9: LET Y=J+K-18:
LET Z=J+K-20
1370 LET Q=J+K+2

```

```

1380 IF A(X)<>B THEN GO TO 1460
1390 IF A(Y)=H OR A(Z)=H AND A(Q
)=B THEN GO TO 1460
1400 GO SUB 1560
1410 LET X=J+K-11: LET Y=J+K-22:
LET Z=J+K-20
1420 LET Q=J+K-2
1430 IF A(X)<>B THEN GO TO 1460
1440 IF A(Y)=H OR A(Z)=H AND A(Q
)=B THEN GO TO 1460
1450 GO SUB 1560
1460 NEXT K
1470 NEXT J
1480 IF CMOVE=0 THEN GO TO 1630
1490 REM ** MAKE MOVE **
1500 LET MOVE=T(INT (RND*CMOVE)+
1)

```

If all these have failed, SNICKERS tries to find a legal move. It chooses up to 200 moves at random (counting them with variable L) and if it cannot find a move in this time, concedes the game with line 1710:

```

1630 REM RANDOM NON CAPTURE MOVE
1640 INK 6: PRINT "LOOKING FOR R
ANDOM LEGAL MOVE"
1650 INK 7: LET L=0
1660 LET L=L+1
1670 LET J=10*INT (RND*8+1)
1680 LET K=INT (RND*8+1)
1690 IF A(J+K)=C THEN GO TO 1720
1700 IF L<200 THEN GO TO 1660
1710 PRINT : FOR I=1 TO 4: BEEP
.5,I: BEEP .2,I+10: BEEP .3,I+5:
NEXT I: PRINT "I CONCEDE THE GA
ME": STOP

```

```

1720 IF A(J+K-9)=B THEN LET MOVE
=100*(J+K)+J+K-9: GO TO 1510
1730 IF A(J+K-11)=B THEN LET MOV
E=100*(J+K)+J+K-11: GO TO 1510
1740 GO TO 1700

```

Here's the complete listing of SNICKERS:

```

10 REM SNICKERS
15 POKE 23658,200: BRIGHT 0: F
LASH 0: INK 7: PAPER 1: BORDER 1
20 GO SUB 2070: REM INITIALIZE
30 GO SUB 1760: REM PRINT BOAR
D
40 REM ** MAIN CYCLE STARTS **
50 GO SUB 190: REM COMPUTER MO
VES
60 GO SUB 1760: REM PRINT BOAR
D
70 IF CS>4 THEN GO TO 120
80 GO SUB 1950: REM ACCEPT HUM
AN MOVE
90 GO SUB 1760: REM PRINT BOAR
D
100 IF HS<5 THEN GO TO 50
110 REM *****
120 REM END OF GAME
130 PRINT : PRINT "THE GAME IS
OVER"
140 PRINT
150 IF HS>CS THEN FOR I=1 TO 22
STEP 2: BEEP .1,I: BEEP .1,I+2:
BEEP .2,4: NEXT I: PRINT FLASH
1; INK 1; PAPER 7;" >> YOU HAVE
WON << "

```

```

160 IF CS>HS THEN FOR I=20 TO 5
STEP -1.5: BEEP .2,I: BEEP .3,I
+2: NEXT I: FOR I=1 TO 4: BEEP .
1,3: BEEP .2,-1: NEXT I: BEEP 2,
20: PRINT FLASH 1; INK 2; PAPER
0;"   *** I'M THE WINNER ***
"
170 STOP
180 REM *****
190 REM     COMPUTER MOVE
200 REM *****
210 REM SEARCH FOR CAPTURES
220 LET GSAFE=0: REM TO COUNT G
OOD, SAFE CAPTURES WHICH THREATE
N HUMAN PIECES
230 LET CSAFE=0: REM TO COUNT S
AFE CAPTURES WHICH DO NOT PLACE
COMP  UNDER THREAT
240 LET CCAPTURE=0: REM TO COUN
T OTHER CAPTURES FOUND
250 FOR J=1 TO 3
260 LET G(J)=0: REM EMPTY GOOD,
SAFE CAPTURE STORE
270 LET S(J)=0: REM EMPTY SAFE
CAPTURE STORE
280 LET T(J)=0: REM EMPTY OTHER
CAPTURE STORE
290 NEXT J
300 FOR J=80 TO 30 STEP -10
310 FOR K=1 TO 8
320 IF A(J+K)<>C THEN GO TO 390
: REM SKIP EVALUATION IF NO COMP
UTER PIECE HERE.
330 REM ** CAPTURE TO RIGHT **

```

```

340>LET X=J+K-9: LET Y=J+K-18:
LET Z=J+K-27: LET M=-11
350 IF A(X)=H AND A(Y)=B THEN G
O SUB 700: REM CAPTURE FOUND
360 REM ** CAPTURE TO LEFT **
370 LET X=J+K-11: LET Y=J+K-22:
LET Z=J+K-33: LET M=-9
380 IF A(X)=H AND A(Y)=B THEN G
O SUB 700: REM CAPTURE FOUND
390 NEXT K
400 NEXT J
410 IF GSAFE+CSAFE+CCAPTURE=0 T
HEN GO TO 980: REM NO CAPTURES F
OUND
420 REM * NOW CHOOSE CAPTURE TO
MAKE **
430 PRINT : FOR I=1 TO 10: BEEP
.3,I: BEEP .2,12: NEXT I: PRINT
TAB 8;">> CAPTURE FOUND"
440 PAUSE 600
450 IF GSAFE<>0 THEN GO TO 500
460 IF CSAFE<>0 THEN GO TO 670
470 REM ** CHOOSE FROM GENERAL
CAPTURES **
480 LET MOVE=T(INT (RND*CCAPTUR
E)+1)
490 GO TO 540
500 REM CHOOSE FROM GOOD SAVE
510 REM SELECT FROM STORED MOVE
S
520 LET MOVE=G(INT (RND*GSAFE)+
1)
530 REM ** MAKE MOVE **
540 LET START=INT (MOVE/100)
550 LET ED=MOVE-100*START
560 LET A(START)=B

```

```

570 LET A(START-ED)=B
580 LET A(START-2*ED)=C
590 LET CS=CS+1
600 REM * CHECK FOR ADDITIONAL
SCORE IF LANDING ON BACK ROW **
610 IF START-2*ED>18 THEN RETURN
N
620 LET A(START-2*ED)=B
630 LET CS=CS+1
640 PRINT "I CAPTURED AND LANDED
D ON ";START-2*ED;" ON BACK ROW"
650 PAUSE 600
660 RETURN
670 REM ** SAFE CAPTURE **
680 LET MOVE=S(INT (RND*CSAFE)+
1)
690 GO TO 540
700 REM ** CHECK PROPOSED CAPTURE
RE FOR SAFETY **
710 REM ** CHECK SQUARE BELOW I
N SAME DIRECTION AS INTENDED MOV
E **
720 PRINT J+K;" TO ";Y;" CAPTUR
ING ON ";X
730 PAUSE 400
740 IF A(Z)=H THEN GO TO 920: R
EM STORE AS A NON SAFE CAPTURE
750 REM ** CHECK SQUARE IN OTHE
R DIRECTION FROM INTENDED MOVE *
*
760 IF A(Y+M)=H AND A(Y-M)=B TH
EN GO TO 920
770 REM NOW CHECK TO SEE IF WIL
L LEAVE A PIECE EXPOSED BY BY MA
KING MOVE

```

```

780 IF A(J+K+M)=H AND A(J+K+2*M
)=H THEN GO TO 920
790 REM ** IF REACHED THIS POIN
T THEN CAPTURE IS "SAFE" **
800 REM ** STORE THIS MOVE **
810 LET CSAFE=CSAFE+1
820 LET S(CSAFE)=100*(J+K)+20+M
: REM THIS ENCODES ENOUGH INFORM
ATION TO RECREATE THE MOVE
830 REM ** NOW SEE IF THIS DESE
RVES TO BE CALLED A "GOOD SAFE"
MOVE **
840 LET CHECK=GSAFE
850 IF Y+2*M<1 THEN RETURN
860 IF A(Y+M)=H AND A(Y-(20+M))
<>B AND A(Y+2*M)=B THEN LET GSAF
E=GSAFE+1
870 IF CHECK=GSAFE THEN RETURN
: REM ** THIS MOVE FOUND NOT TO
BE GOOD SAFE **
880 REM * STORE GOOD SAFE MOVE*
890 PRINT "I AM CONSIDERING ";J
+K;" TO ";M+20+J+K
900 LET G(GSAFE)=100*(J+K)+20+M
910 RETURN
920 REM STORE NON SAFE CAPTURE

930 LET CCAPTURE=CCAPTURE+1
940 PRINT "I AM CONSIDERING ";J
+K;" TO ";M+20+J+K
950 LET T(CCAPTURE)=100*(J+K)+2
0+M
960 RETURN
970 REM *****
980 REM * MOVE TO PROTECT PIECE
UNDER THREAT **

```



```

990 LET MOVE=0
1000 LET J=80
1010 LET K=1
1020 LET Q=J+K
1030 IF A(Q)<>C THEN GO TO 1110:
  REM DO NOT CONSIDER THIS SQUARE
  ,NO COMP PIECE
1040 IF A(Q+9)=B AND A(Q-9)=H AN
D A(Q+18)=C THEN LET MOVE=100*(Q
+18)+Q+9
1050 REM RANDOM EJECTION OF THIS
  MOVE IF IT EXPOSES ANOTHER ONE
1060>IF MOVE<>0 AND A(Q-2)=H AND
  A(Q+20)=B AND RND>.5 THEN GO TO
  1510
1070 IF A(Q+9)=B AND A(Q-9)=H AN
D A(Q+20)=C THEN LET MOVE=100*(Q
+20)+Q+9: GO TO 1510
1080 IF A(Q+11)=B AND A(Q-11)=H
AND A(Q+22)=C THEN LET MOVE=100*
(Q+22)+Q+11
1090 IF MOVE<>0 AND A(Q+2)=H AND
  A(Q+22)=B AND RND>.5 THEN GO TO
  1510
1110 IF K<8 THEN LET K=K+1: GO T
O 1020
1120 IF J>10 THEN LET J=J-10: GO
  TO 1010
1130 REM *****
1140 REM ** NO CAP FOUND, SO
  LOOK FOR MOVE TO "DISAPPEAR" ON
  BACK ROW *****
1150 LET MOVE=0
1160 REM UNDESIRABLE MOVED CHEC
  KED FIRST, SO CAN BE OVERWRITTEN
  BY BETTER ONES

```

```

1170 IF A(22)=C AND A(11)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=22
1180 IF A(28)=C AND A(17)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=28
1190 IF A(22)=C AND A(13)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=22
1200 IF A(26)=C AND A(17)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=26
1210 IF A(26)=C AND A(15)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=26
1220 IF A(24)=C AND A(15)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=24
1230 IF A(24)=C AND A(13)=B THEN
  LET MOVE=24
1240 IF MOVE=0 THEN GO TO 1310
1250 PRINT : PRINT INK 4; BRIGHT
  1;"I'M MOVING ONTO BACK ROW FRO
M ";MOVE
1260 PAUSE 500
1270 LET A(MOVE)=B
1280 LET CS=CS+1
1290 RETURN
1300 REM *****
1310 REM SAFE NON CAPTURE MOVES
1320 LET CMOVE=0: REM ** COUNTS
MOVES FOUND **
1330 FOR J=80 TO 30 STEP -10
1340 FOR J=1 TO 8
1350 IF A(J+K)<>C THEN GO TO 146
0
1360 LET X=J+K-9: LET Y=J+K-18:
LET Z=J+K-20
1370 LET Q=J+K+2
1380 IF A(X)<>B THEN GO TO 1460

```

```

1390 IF A(Y)=H OR A(Z)=H AND A(Q
)=B THEN GO TO 1460
1400 GO SUB 1560
1410 LET X=J+K-11: LET Y=J+K-22:
LET Z=J+K-20
1420 LET Q=J+K-2
1430 IF A(X)<>B THEN GO TO 1460
1440 IF A(Y)=H OR A(Z)=H AND A(Q
)=B THEN GO TO 1460
1450 GO SUB 1560
1460 NEXT K
1470 NEXT J
1480 IF CMOVE=0 THEN GO TO 1630
1490 REM ** MAKE MOVE **
1500 LET MOVE=T(INT (RND*CMOVE)+
1)
1510 LET START=INT (MOVE/100)
1520 LET ED=MOVE-100*START
1530 LET A(START)=B
1540 LET A(ED)=C
1550 RETURN
1560 REM ** STORES MOVES **
1570 LET CMOVE=CMOVE+1
1580 PRINT "I AM CONSIDERING ";J
+K; " TO ";X
1590 PAUSE 400
1600 LET T(CMOVE)=100*(J+K)+X
1610 RETURN
1620 REM *****
1630 REM RANDOM NON CAPTURE MOVE
1640 INK 6: PRINT "LOOKING FOR R
ANDOM LEGAL MOVE"
1650 INK 7: LET L=0
1660 LET L=L+1
1670 LET J=10*INT (RND*8+1)
1680 LET K=INT (RND*8+1)

```

```

1690 IF A(J+K)=C THEN GO TO 1720
1700 IF L<200 THEN GO TO 1660
1710 PRINT : FOR I=1 TO 4: BEEP
.5,I: BEEP .2,I+10: BEEP .3,I+5:
NEXT I: PRINT "I CONCEDE THE GA
ME": STOP
1720 IF A(J+K-9)=B THEN LET MOVE
=100*(J+K)+J+K-9: GO TO 1510
1730 IF A(J+K-11)=B THEN LET MOV
E=100*(J+K)+J+K-11: GO TO 1510
1740 GO TO 1700
1750 REM *****
1760 REM PRINT BOARD
1770 CLS
1780 PRINT
1790 PRINT INK 6; BRIGHT 1;"COMP
UTER "; FLASH 1;CS; FLASH 0;"
HUMAN "; FLASH 1;HS
1800 PRINT
1810 PRINT "          12345678 "
1820 PRINT "          -----"
1830 FOR J=80 TO 10 STEP -10
1840 PRINT "          ";J/10;
1850 FOR K=1 TO 8
1860 INK 4: PRINT PAPER 5; INK 0
;CHR$(A(J+K));
1870 NEXT K
1875 INK 7
1880 PRINT J/10
1890 NEXT J
1900 PRINT "          -----"
1910 PRINT "          12345678 "
1920 PRINT
1930 RETURN
1940 REM *****
1950 REM ** ACCEPT HUMAN MOVE **

```

```

1960 INPUT "MOVE FROM ";START
1970 IF A(START)<H THEN GO TO 19
60
1980 INPUT "TO ";ED
1990 PRINT ' '; BRIGHT 1;"From ";
start; ",to ";ed: IF A(ED)<>B OR
ABS (START-ED)>11 AND A((START+E
D)/2)<>C THEN GO TO 1980
2000 LET A(START)=B
2010 LET A(ED)=H
2020 IF ABS (START-ED)>11 THEN L
ET A((START+ED)/2)=B: LET HS=HS+
1: BEEP .3,7: BEEP .2,6: BEEP 1,
15: PRINT INK 7; BRIGHT 1; PAPER
0; FLASH 1;" WELL DONE "
2030 IF ED>80 THEN LET A(ED)=B:
LET HS=HS+1: PRINT "THATS ONE MO
RE FOR YOU"
2040 PAUSE 100
2050 RETURN
2060 REM *****
2070 REM *** INITIALIZE ***
2080 REM *****
2090 CLS
2100 RANDOMIZE
2110 DIM A(110): REM BOARD AND B
LANK SPACES AROUND AND BEYOND IT
2120 DIM G(3): REM GOOD SAFE CAP
TURE STORE
2130 DIM S(3): REM SAFE CAPTURE
STORE
2140 DIM T(18): REM OTHER CAPTUR
E STORE ALSO USED FOR SAFE NON C
APTURE MOVES
2150 LET E=CODE " ": REM EMPTY
"WHITE" SQUARE

```

```

2160 LET B=CODE ".": REM EMPTY
"BLACK" SQUARE
2170 LET C=CODE "C": REM COMPUTE
R PIECE
2180 LET H=CODE "H": REM HUMAN P
IECE
2190 LET HS=0: REM HUMAN SCORE
2200 LET CS=0: REM COMPUTER SCOR
E
2210 RESTORE 2290: REM SET UP ST
ARTING BOARD
2220 FOR J=10 TO 80 STEP 10
2230 FOR K=1 TO 8
2240 READ X: LET A(J+K)=X
2250 NEXT K
2260 NEXT J
2270 RETURN
2280 REM *****
2290 DATA 72,32,72,32,72,32,72,3
2
2300 DATA 32,72,32,72,32,72,32,7
2
2310 DATA 46,32,46,32,46,32,46,3
2
2320 DATA 32,46,32,46,32,46,32,4
6
2330 DATA 46,32,46,32,46,32,46,3
2
2340 DATA 32,46,32,46,32,46,32,4
6
2350 DATA 67,32,67,32,67,32,67,3
2
2360 DATA 32,67,32,67,32,67,32,6
7

```

# CHAPTER FIVE — THE WIDER VALUE OF GAMES

It was argued, back in the earliest days of AI research, that game-programming was not a worthy pursuit. It was suggested that the effort being put into chess-playing algorithms, for example, could better be spent on devices to prove mathematical theorems or on programs which modelled the way (to the extent it was understood at that time) the human brain operated.

But the means by which a brain arrives at a solution to a complex problem — such as that presented by a chess board in mid-game — has been of continual fascination. Long before computers (as we understand them) existed, men were thinking about how a chess program could be written.

Back in 1949, Claude Shannon (whose work with relays and logic is discussed in the LEARNING AND REASONING section of this book), while working at Bell Telephone Laboratories, presented a very important paper at a New York convention. It was called *Programming a Computer for Playing Chess*. The value of this paper far transcends its historic importance as the first published work on the subject. A significant number of the concepts Shannon discussed in that paper are still used in present-day chess programs.

What was more, Shannon saw that if the problems of programming a computer to play chess could be solved,

the insights gained could be of great value in helping machines develop expertise in other fields where problems of similar complexity existed. He listed some of these: the design of electronic circuits, complicated telephone switching situations, language translation and problems of logical deduction.

Those who sneered at attention being put into making game-playing machines missed the point. Any advance in AI expertise is potentially a source of information which will assist in other areas of AI application. In the LEARNING AND REASONING section of this book we had the program TICTAC. It is not very significant, on its own, to have a program which teaches itself to play better Noughts and Crosses. But the actual **idea** of learning is very important.

## **REAL-WORLD COMPLEXITIES**

There are many situations in the world which are the product of a bewildering array of factors. Far too many factors have led to the present situation to enable it to be easily comprehended by man. And, if the situation is changing (as all real-world situations do) the ability of man to keep up with the present position, in order to make the most reasonable decisions as to what to do, is almost impossible.

Here is where game-playing computers can help. The expertise gained from writing an evaluation function in chess (an evaluation function assesses the overall strength or weakness of one side of the game, in terms of a number of factors, including the number of pieces on the board, their nature and position, the other squares they attack, and so on) could well be applied in producing an evaluation



function to suggest the best steps to overcome problems such as smog, or the disposal of nuclear waste.

Consider the situation when the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor malfunctioned. The number of variables to be considered was beyond the ability of the human operators, as the Malone Committee Report on the accident pointed out:

**... the operator was bombarded with displays, warning lights, print-outs and so on to the point where the detection of any error condition and the assessment of the right action to correct the condition was impossible ...**

A computer expert which could cut through all the input to pinpoint what was important, and suggest a course of action, would have been invaluable in that situation.

It seems probable, then, that the expertise gained from working on such programs as one is to play chess, can produce payoffs in other areas of AI development.

The advances gained in this way are not always as might be predicted. For example, chess programs have been written which (a) try to emulate the way human beings play chess; and (b) simply try to play as well as possible. It has been found that programs which seek to act like human players do not, on the whole, play as well as machines acting in their own best interests.

There are two lessons from this. One is that attempting to model human thinking patterns onto a machine may not be the best routine to follow to elicit the highest possible levels of AI performance. The second is that, from attempting to produce a program which behaves like a human being, we can gain some genuine insights into the way human minds behave.

# OTHER GAMES, OTHER LESSONS

Of course, chess was not the only game in town in the early days of work on artificial intelligence. For example, checkers and tic-tac-toe were other, early candidates for attention.

In the section LEARNING AND REASONING we discussed the work of Arthur Samuel on developing a checkers program which could learn as it played. Samuel had no appreciation of the problems involved in writing a checkers program when he first began. He told Pamela McCorduck (in *Machines Who Think*, San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1979; pp. 148, 149) that his checkers program began in 1946 when — after working for Bell — he went to teach at the University of Illinois.

He decided the university needed a computer, but even the \$110,000 the university's board of trustees came up with was not enough to buy a machine. Samuel concluded that the only way they could get a machine would be to use the money to build one themselves. He thought that, if he could do something spectacular with the first machine they planned to build, a small one, the exposure they got would enable them to attract government funds to add to those provided by the trustees. Samuel says he thought that checkers was a fairly trivial game, which would be easily programmed. Once the program was written, they would use it to defeat the current world checkers champion in a forthcoming championship in Kankakee, a nearby town, and from the publicity that would generate, they could get other funds.

The magnitude of the task soon became apparent. By championship time, not even the computer — much less the checkers program — was complete.

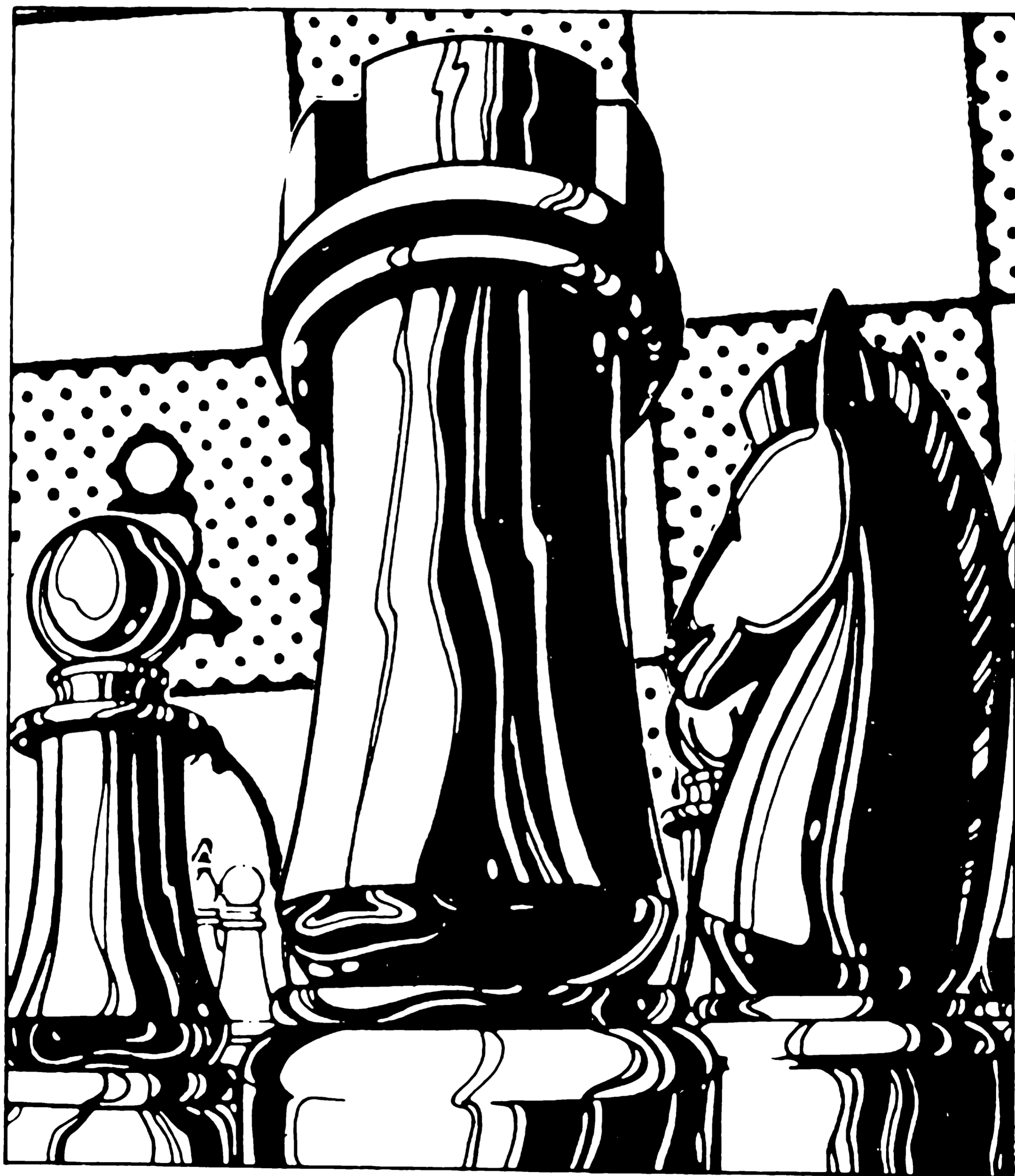
Samuel says he thought of checkers because he knew other groups were working on chess. In comparison with chess, he regarded checkers as a trivial game. But, as you can see from the LEARNING AND REASONING section of this book, even programming a computer to play Noughts and Crosses has its own difficulties.

If Noughts and Crosses is not trivial, think of a game such as Go. Much effort, throughout the history of artificial intelligence, has gone into designing chess programs, but relatively little into Go.

There are three reasons for this. One is purely cultural. Most of us in the West don't play Go, but nearly all of us have at least a passing acquaintance with chess. The second reason is historical. The earliest workers in the field, such as Turing and Shannon, highlighted chess as an area worth exploring. And the third reason, pointed out forcefully by J. A. Campbell (in 'Go', his contribution to *Computer Game-Playing, Theory and Practice*, edited by M. A. Bramer, Chichester, West Sussex: Ellis Horwood Ltd., 1983; p. 136) is that it has proved extremely difficult to write a program which plays even as well as a raw recruit to the game.

Certainly, if you want a real challenge, you could perhaps tackle at least some aspects of the game. Instead of the traditional 19 by 19 board, you could write a program for, say, a seven by seven board, or limit the possible moves. Just as Othello was created by adding an opening move limitation to Reversi, you could create a kind of 'mini-Go' with a small board, and some sort of restrictions on play.

While games such as Othello — where the relative values of various squares on the board can be fairly easily tabulated — may respond well to brute-force search techniques, it has been suggested that 'Go' will only respond to a less hamfisted approach. Indeed, 'Go' may well take the place of chess as the ultimate test for AI (see David Brown, *Seeing is Believing*, op. cit., p. 177).



# **SECTION THREE — TALKING**

# CHAPTER SIX — UNDERSTANDING NATURAL LANGUAGE

There is little doubt that the ability of computers to understand 'natural language' (that is, the ordinary language we use for human communication) is an ability upon which the intelligence or otherwise of computers can be, and will be, judged.

The inability of a computer to converse in our ordinary, everyday tongue at the very least sets up a barrier between the computer and ourselves. And such a barrier impedes our willingness to grant the computer a degree of intelligence.

There have been a couple of landmark programs in this field, and in this section of the book we will look at programs which will allow you to experience at least some of the excitement created by the original programs. The landmark-programs were SHRDLU (our version is called BLOCKWORLD) and ELIZA (and the implementation in this volume, one of the most complete ever published in BASIC, is called DOCTOR).

In the original SHRDLU, a 'robot' manipulated colored blocks and other shapes, in response to natural language orders. It was able to carry out a superb conversation as to what it was currently doing, and why, and what it did in the past.

ELIZA, an imitation psychiatrist (after the style of Carl

Rogers) was so effective and startling when it was first written that its creator reports receiving anguished telephone calls from people desperate for a little more access to the program to sort themselves out.

As well as BLOCKWORLD and DOCTOR, we'll look at the problems and potential of machine translation. A fairly trivial program (TRANSLATE) is included in this section which generates sentences in 'Franglais' to illustrate the kind of solutions less-than-intelligent computers can reach when trying to handle not one, but two, natural languages.

HANSHAN, the final program in this section on language handling, creates random poems. This is a fairly low-level program compared to the others in this book, and one which — you may argue — hardly gives evidence of the brainpower of the computer which is running it. However, if you had read the preceding line some 30 years ago, with an author making an offhand remark about a low-cost machine being able to write poetry, followed by him or her dismissing this achievement as being fairly insignificant, you would have been amazed. Thirty years ago it may have been an earth-shattering event. Proximity to wonder has blunted our perception and appreciation of it.

However, some of the results produced by the programs in this section should invoke at least an approximation to wonder. Before we get to the point of discussing and running the programs, we need to look a little at some of the problems which impede perfect communication between man and machine in natural language.

# LANGUAGE PARSING

Parsing is the word which describes the breaking up of sentences into elements which a computer can manipulate. The field of computational linguistics had traditionally researched ways of parsing sentences in order to reveal the role of various parts of the sentence in relation to their syntax. This is done, of course, in the hope that the machine doing the parsing can approximate an understanding of the sentence being processed.

However, there is now a growing interest in seeking meaning in terms of the sentence's role within a much wider frame of reference (such as we bring to bear, in terms of prior experience and knowledge of the environment, when attempting to understand a sentence). Of course, while research based on syntactic structure is continuing, the thrust towards 'world view environment' approaches is increasing.

It is pretty obvious why this is so. We want to be able to talk to computers on our own terms, rather than those dictated by metallic language limits. When we talk about a field which interests us, to friends with a similar interest, we can assume a great deal of commonly-shared background knowledge. In a similar way, we would like to be able to talk to computers when we can assume the existence of a particular knowledge base within which to communicate.

Assume you run a mining company. You have a computer program which will assist you in searching out precious minerals (at least one such program, PROSPECTOR, does exist). You would like to be able to talk to it in the words and phrases which are generally used by you when 'talking mining' with your colleagues.



It comes down to an effort to give a computer a 'world view' which will enable it to interpret natural language input, using the knowledge it has as a kind of template against which possible meanings can be checked.

You'll discover, in this section of the book, that the only convincing demonstrations of 'natural language communication' we can give are for extremely restricted 'world views'. In BLOCKWORLD, for example, the world consists of a two-dimensional space, within which your computer manipulates four colored blocks. However, the computer's performance within that limited universe is fairly startling, even if it does not reach the dizzy heights of SHRDLU, the program which inspired it.

SHRDLU, for example could reply to sentences such as FIND A BLOCK THAT IS TALLER THAN THE ONE YOU ARE HOLDING AND PUT IT INTO THE BOX. You'll find BLOCKWORLD, even though it inhabits an even more restrictive universe than that of SHRDLU, unable to match it. However, as you'll see in due course, BLOCKWORLD can do pretty well on your computer.

The program has, as I said four colored blocks to manipulate. It can tell you where they are, by finding a specified block or by describing the whole scene, and can move them around. in the sample run which precedes the program listing, there is a green block on top of the yellow one. I asked the computer to put the red block on top of the yellow one. This meant it first had to clear the top of the green one — in order to expose the yellow one — before locating the red block and putting it on top of the yellow.

Here's the program output (with the computer's speech in upper case):

```
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . G . . .
. R Y B . .
```

Put the red block on the yellow one

```
I UNDERSTAND
NOW I'LL MOVE THE GREEN ONE
```

```
I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 4
I'M NOW MOVING THE RED ONE
ONTO THE YELLOW BLOCK
```

```
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . R G . .
. . Y B . .
```

As you'll discover when you run this program, there is powerful magic in communicating in English (a very limited subset, admittedly, but English nevertheless) with a computer, and having it both follow your instructions, and talk back to you in plain English as well.

In the early days of AI, much time was spent asking whether or not a program **really understood** what was going on. It was felt that even programs such as SHRDLU or Joseph Weizenbaum's ELIZA (which we will be looking at in depth in due course), while they gave convincing impressions of

intelligent behavior, didn't really get us any closer to 'real' intelligence (whatever we assume that actually is).

This concern has lost much of its potency today. We do not spend time asking if a robot spot-welder working on a car assembly line can 'really see' what it is doing, or 'takes satisfaction' in a job well done. It is important that the thing works. If, as we will find to some extent in this section on language handling, the computer can handle language effectively, **as though** it 'really' understood what it was hearing and saying, this is more than enough in many situations.

The 'expert systems' programs (discussed in detail in the section of that name in this book) can make fresh discoveries, and can help human beings solve difficult problems. The pragmatic side of the AI world now tends to take an 'intelligence is as intelligence does' view of things. If it behaves intelligently — even within an extremely limited domain — let's assume the program does understand what is happening. Let's get on with the important questions, such as increasing the apparent intelligence of the beast.

## **PROBLEMS**

There are a number of major problems which AI researchers are grappling with in an attempt to solve the mysteries of natural language processing. The enormous number of words in any human language, and the bewildering array of ways in which those words can be combined, is the major, and most obvious, stumbling block. Many phrases within a sentence are ambiguous. From prior knowledge, we can generally cut through the ambiguity to

get at the meaning. Ambiguity is often inherent in speaking — perhaps more so than in written communication — and the spoken word is often incomplete and almost totally unstructured.

Each additional task a computer is given increases the processing time. A natural language system must not demand so much time that the process becomes useless in human terms. If it takes your computer a week to ‘understand’ a paragraph, you’re not going to spend much time investigating its ability to communicate with you.

## **SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS**

These are the two approaches to the field of language parsing. They are not mutually exclusive. They are used to attack the problems which lie even within ordinary language use. Even working out which person ‘he’ refers to in the following sentence may take you a moment or two:

THE MAN WHO WAS WITH PETER SAID HE WAS TIRED

If this is read in a vacuum, as you have just done, there are no clues as to whom the ‘he’ refers, although I’m inclined to think it is ‘the man’ rather than Peter who is tired.

Any natural language parsing system must be able to deal with problems like this. Margaret Boden (in *Artificial Intelligence and Natural Man*, Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1977; p. 112) gives the delightful name of “The Archbishop’s Problem” to the difficulty of automatically assigning such words. Her source for this name is *Alice in Wonderland*:

"Even Stigand, the patriotic Archbishop of Canterbury, found it advisable -"

"Found what?" said the duck.

"Found it," the mouse replied rather crossly. "Surely you know what 'it' means?"

"I know what 'it' means well enough when I find a thing," said the duck. "It's generally a frog or a worm. The question is, what did the Archbishop find?"

Let's have a look at the sentence now, and see how a parser might split it up, before putting each word through its processor in order to approximate an understanding of the writing analysed. (Then we'll examine the important question of how 'understanding' is defined.)

Here is the sentence:

THE OLD THIN MAN IS UNDER THE OAK TREE

We can look at the sentence syntactically (with each syntactic element of the structure bound within parentheses) as follows:

[[THE [[OLD][[THIN][MAN]]]]]

IS [[UNDER][THE[[OAK][TREE]]]]]

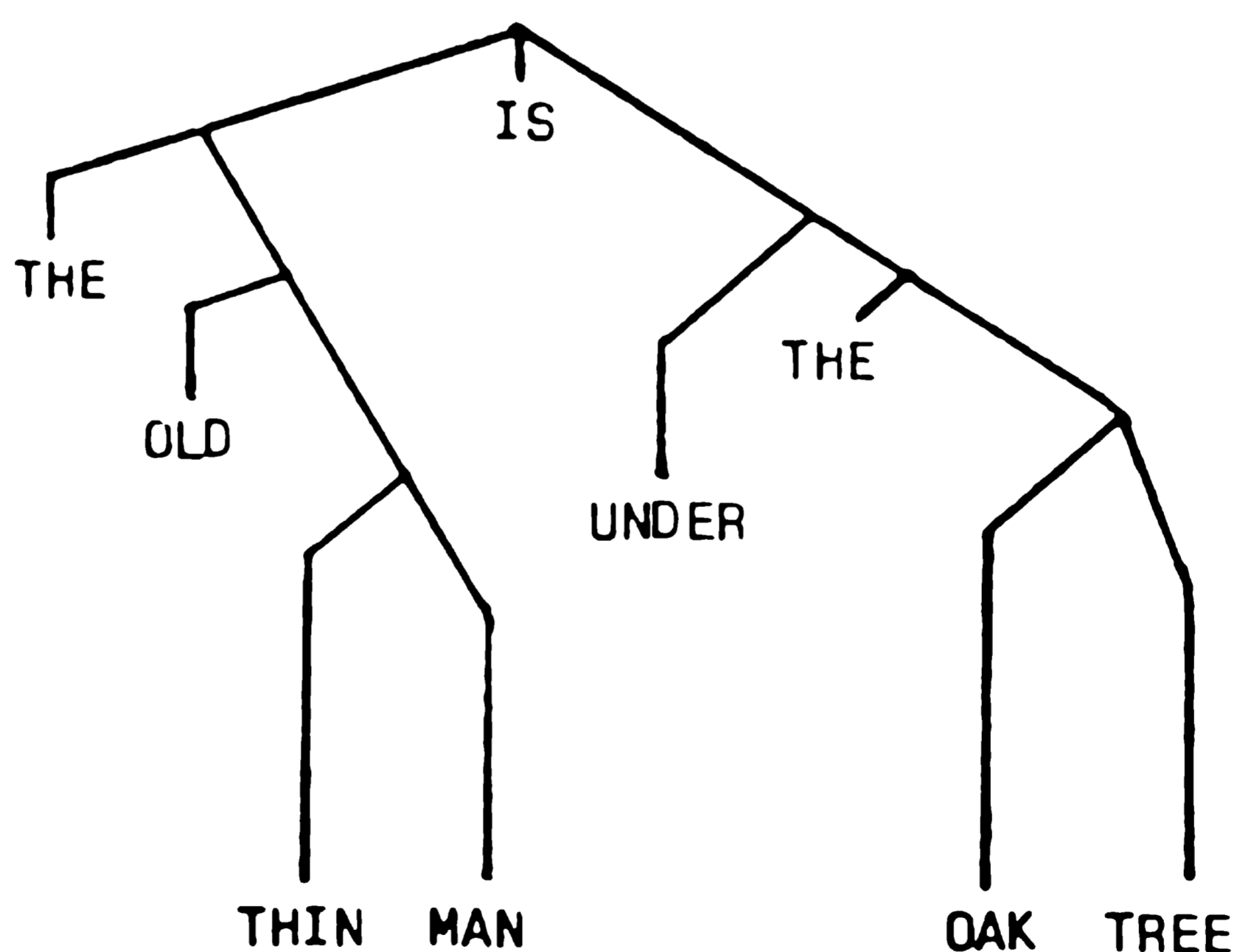
Look at this carefully, following the binding, and you may get a reasonable impression of the various elements which are thus bound together. For example, the words THIN MAN

are individually bound, as [THIN][MAN] and also bound together in a larger group [[THIN][MAN]].

The adjective OLD modifies the noun, as well as THIN does, so it is bound in a similar way as [[OLD][THIN][MAN]], except this binding sees a 'stronger' link between THIN and MAN than between OLD and MAN. There is a further bond around the entire left hand side of the sentence [THE ... MAN]]]] with the linking verb IS only bound by the parentheses which hold the entire sentence.

If we look at the right hand side, we can see that UNDER is held within the same bond as TREE, as a pair of parentheses bind the whole of this side. THE is not bound on both sides as are all the other words, in recognition of the fact that its only purpose is to modify the following noun (and 'the oak tree' is different, fairly obviously, from 'an oak tree').

We can express the syntactic structure of our sentence as a tree as follows:



If we could get a computer to break a sentence down like this, able to recognize the parts of speech on each branch of the tree, and/or within the bonded pairs in our multi-parenthesised sentence, we would be well on the way to getting a degree of understanding.

This brings us back to the question I raised a short while ago. What do we mean, in the machine context, by “understanding”? J. Klir and M. Valach (in *Cybernetic Modelling*, London: Iliffe Books, 1965) suggest that understanding a spoken message is usually regarded to be a three-part thing:

1. A way of ‘hearing’ the message.
2. A means of responding to that message.
3. A method for assessing whether or not the response (2) was such that it could be interpreted as showing understanding had taken place.

There could be several ways of assessing the understanding of written text, claims Geoff Simons (in *Are Computers Alive?*, Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983; p. 129). These include supposing that understanding has taken place if the computer can answer questions correctly on it, or noting whether the machine can make intelligent connections between its own prior knowledge base, and the information it has picked up from its ‘reading’.

# CHAPTER SEVEN — BLOCKWORLD

Sometimes a computer 'conversing' in natural English (or an approximation to it) can produce a most unsettling effect. In BLOCKWORLD, a simplified version of a famous program called SHRDLU (which I'll discuss a little later), your computer manipulates a series of colored toy blocks, following your instructions, and telling you — from time to time — how the blocks are arranged in relation to each other.

The blocks, of course, do not really exist, except as electronic figments of your computer's brain. However, you can see a representation of them on the screen, and this representation changes as the computer moves the blocks around.

As you've certainly gathered by now, it is generally easier to obtain a convincing demonstration of machine intelligence when the computer is operating within a limited domain. The domain of toy blocks is often used in AI experiments because it is clearly limited, yet allows a considerable degree of interaction and manipulation, as you shall see.

There are four blocks in the universe, your computer will be manipulating with this program. The blocks are red (shown as the letter 'R'), green ('G'), yellow ('Y') and blue ('B').



When the program begins, you see this on your screen:

```
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. RYBG .
```

You are looking at the blocks from the 'front'. The BLOCKWORLD is essentially two-dimensional. Although you can move blocks around, and put them on top of each other, you cannot put blocks 'behind' or 'in front of' other blocks. The dots are invisible to the computer. They exist only for your benefit, and show a position which a block can occupy.

Although you have only a limited number of sentences you can use when communicating with the BLOCKWORLD, you'll be pleased to see how convincing that conversation can be. As well, it makes an easy-to-explain (and impressive) demonstration of artificial intelligence in action to show your sceptical friends.

After the blocks have appeared on the screen, you'll see the '?' prompt, indicating that BLOCKWORLD is waiting to hear from you. We can ask the computer to describe its world:

```
? TELL ME WHAT YOU CAN SEE  
STARTING FROM THE RIGHT  
  
...A SPACE THEN  
MY SENSORS REGISTER THE GREEN BLOCK  
IT'S THE BLUE BLOCK  
MY SENSORS REGISTER THE YELLOW BLOCK  
MY SENSORS REGISTER THE RED BLOCK  
FINALLY ...A SPACE
```

Once it has given you an overview in this way (reporting a dot as a 'space'), you can ask it to locate specific blocks within the world:

```
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. RYBG.
```

? WHERE IS THE YELLOW BLOCK

> LET ME SEE NOW <

IT IS IN POSITION 3 FROM THE LEFT  
THE RED BLOCK IS TO  
ITS IMMEDIATE LEFT

I CAN SEE THE BLUE BLOCK  
TO ITS RIGHT, TOUCHING IT

THERE IS NOTHING ABOVE THAT

Of course, straight reporting is not too big a deal, even though — as you can see — the program is responding to natural language questions, and replying in a reasonable version of English. We now get to the meat of the matter, getting the computer to manipulate the elements of its restricted domain:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.RYBG.

? PUT THE GREEN BLOCK ON THE YELLOW ONE

OK

I'M NOW MOVING THE GREEN ONE  
ONTO THE YELLOW BLOCK

.....  
..G..  
.RYB..

? WHERE IS THE YELLOW BLOCK

> LET ME SEE NOW <

IT IS IN POSITION 3 FROM THE LEFT  
THE RED BLOCK IS TO  
ITS IMMEDIATE LEFT

I CAN SEE THE BLUE BLOCK  
TO ITS RIGHT, TOUCHING IT

ABOVE IT IS THE GREEN BLOCK

THERE IS NOTHING ABOVE THAT

It is one thing to put one block (the 'object') on top of another block (the 'target') when the target is clear on top. However, it is another situation entirely, and one which requires a significant quantity of code, when the target must first be cleared. The situation is made even more complicated when there is one block (or more) on top of the object block, which must be cleared before it can be moved. Here the program must clear the target. The object is unobstructed:

```
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . G . . .  
. R Y B . .
```

? PUT THE RED BLOCK ON THE YELLOW ONE

```
I UNDERSTAND  
NOW I'LL MOVE THE GREEN ONE
```

```
I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 4  
I'M NOW MOVING THE RED ONE  
ONTO THE YELLOW BLOCK
```

A little later in the run, the blocks looked like this:

```
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. R . . . .  
. B . . . .  
. G Y . . . .
```

? TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE

```
STARTING FROM THE RIGHT
...A SPACE THEN
...A SPACE THEN
...A SPACE THEN
MY SENSORS REGISTER THE YELLOW BLOCK
IT'S THE RED BLOCK
...AND BELOW IT...
I SEE THE BLUE BLOCK
...AND BELOW IT...
I SEE THE GREEN BLOCK
FINALLY ...A SPACE
```

We now make the strongest demand to date:

```
.....
.....
.R....
.B....
.GY...

? PUT THE BLUE BLOCK ON THE YELLOW

      OK
I MUST MOVE THE RED BLOCK
I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 5
I'M NOW MOVING THE BLUE ONE
      ONTO THE YELLOW BLOCK

>>>> PRESS 'RETURN' TO CONTINUE
?
```

This program behaves in a manner which is almost uncanny. It appears to understand your commands, and acts in accordance with them. It seems to comprehend what it is doing, and can report the result of its actions.

# HOW DOES IT WORK?

How is it doing this? What is the secret of this impressive performance? The entire project boils down to sentence parsing to get the important parts of your commands, manipulation of elements within a two-dimensional array in response to instructions gleaned from the parsed input and, finally, printing out the array in a way which conveys the array contents so that they can be easily perceived.

'Explaining' it in this way does not, of course, really detract from the impression of intelligence this program conveys, although BLOCKWORLD is a primitive creature compared to its progenitor, SHRDLU.

This program, which was finished in 1971 by Terry Winograd, not only manipulated blocks, but showed them on a screen, in color, creating the world as well as interacting with it. Let's listen in as Terry speaks with SHRDLU (the computer output is in upper case letters, preceded by a > sign):

Pick up the big red block.

>OK

Find a block which is taller than the one you are holding, and put it into the box.

>OK

What does the box contain?

>THE BLUE PYRAMID AND THE BLUE BOX

What is the pyramid supported by?

>THE BOX

Is there a large block behind the pyramid?

>YES, THREE OF THEM: A LARGE RED ONE, A LARGE GREEN CUBE, AND THE BLUE ONE

As you can see, this is a remarkable effort and one which has led researchers to regard Winograd's work as one of the high spots in the development of artificial language programs. Our BLOCKWORLD pales somewhat by comparison.

However, BLOCKWORLD is still capable of fairly involved manipulation, even if its output is not as complex as that produced by SHRDLU. We will prove this claim by returning to our program, and asking it to jump through a few difficult hoops.

```
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . B . .
. G Y . R .
```

The yellow block is, as you can see, underneath the blue one. We will now ask the program to reverse the position of those two blocks.

```
? PUT THE YELLOW BLOCK ON THE BLUE
```

```
      I UNDERSTAND
I MUST MOVE THE BLUE BLOCK
I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 4
I'M NOW MOVING THE YELLOW ONE
      ONTO THE BLUE BLOCK
```

```
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . . . .
. . . Y . .
. G . B R .
```

Now we will build a little tower of blocks to see how BLOCKWORLD can handle it:

? PUT THE RED BLOCK ON THE YELLOW ONE

I UNDERSTAND

I'M NOW MOVING THE RED ONE  
ONTO THE YELLOW BLOCK

```
.....  
.....  
...R..  
...Y..  
.G.B..
```

The computer is then told we want to get the bottom block from the tower of three and place it on the block which is currently standing alone. Note here that the program has been written to ensure that if the target is clear, it is not covered while the object is being uncovered:

? PUT THE BLUE BLOCK ON THE GREEN ONE

OK

I MUST MOVE THE RED BLOCK  
I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 6  
I MUST MOVE THE YELLOW BLOCK  
I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 6  
I'M NOW MOVING THE BLUE ONE  
ONTO THE GREEN BLOCK

```
.....  
.....  
.....  
.B...Y  
.G...R
```



There are now two little towers, one with the blue block on top of the green one, and the other with the yellow block on top of the red one. The computer will be asked to manipulate both the blocks which are currently under other blocks. As you can see, we are putting BLOCKWORLD through a series of tests of increasing difficulty:

? PUT THE RED BLOCK ON THE GREEN ONE

OK

I MUST MOVE THE YELLOW BLOCK  
I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 5  
NOW I'LL MOVE THE BLUE ONE

I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 5  
I'M NOW MOVING THE RED ONE  
ONTO THE GREEN BLOCK

. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. R . . B .  
. G . . Y .

It completed that without any problems. Let's use the green as our object (which is currently covered by the red) and the blue as the target to build up — in due course — a tower of all four blocks:

? PUT THE GREEN BLOCK ON THE BLUE ONE

I UNDERSTAND  
I MUST MOVE THE RED BLOCK  
I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 3  
I'M NOW MOVING THE GREEN ONE  
ONTO THE BLUE BLOCK

. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . G.  
. . . . B.  
. . R . Y .

? PUT THE RED BLOCK ON THE BLUE ONE

I UNDERSTAND  
NOW I'LL MOVE THE GREEN ONE

I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 2  
I'M NOW MOVING THE RED ONE  
ONTO THE BLUE BLOCK

. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . R.  
. . . . B.  
. G . . Y .

? PUT THE GREEN BLOCK ON THE RED ONE

I UNDERSTAND

I'M NOW MOVING THE GREEN ONE  
ONTO THE RED BLOCK

. . . . .  
. . . . G.  
. . . . R.  
. . . . B.  
. . . . Y .

Now we come to a very difficult test and one which — frankly — I did not think the program was going to be able to handle. Certainly, I had written a general-purpose target/object manipulation routine into the program, but

was not confident it could handle a situation like the one it is about to tackle. It has to take a block (the blue one) from near the bottom of the tower by first moving the blocks from above it, then put this blue block on top of one of those (the red one) which it has taken from the initial stack:

? PUT THE BLUE BLOCK ON THE RED ONE

OK

I MUST MOVE THE GREEN BLOCK

I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 6

I MUST MOVE THE RED BLOCK

I'M MOVING IT TO ROW 4

I'M NOW MOVING THE BLUE ONE

ONTO THE RED BLOCK

.....

.....

.....

...B..

...RYG

? TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE

STARTING FROM THE RIGHT

IT'S THE GREEN BLOCK

MY SENSORS REGISTER THE YELLOW BLOCK

IT'S THE BLUE BLOCK

...AND BELOW IT...

I SEE THE RED BLOCK

...A SPACE THEN

...A SPACE THEN

FINALLY ...A SPACE

I was extremely pleased when BLOCKWORLD passed this test. I had not thought of testing in this difficult way. But when I tried it with a stack of four, and asked it to put the bottom block on top of the one which was currently on top of the stack of four, it bombed badly. It took me more than a week to work out how to solve it. At first I attempted a 'klutz' approach, with a separate routine for stacks of four. Then I realised that adding just seven characters to line 1790 (TASK = 3:) enabled it to handle the situation.

BLOCKWORLD has been working hard, so I thought I should give it a little R & R:

```
.....  
.....  
.....  
...B..  
...RYG
```

? SHUFFLE THE BLOCKS AROUND A BIT

IT'S GOOD TO BE GIVEN A CHANCE  
TO DO WHAT I WANT

```
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
GY..BR
```

We'll now look at the important elements of the program.

# MODULES OF THE PROGRAM

As with other programs in this book, BLOCKWORLD starts off with a call to a subroutine at the end of the program which initialises the variables used:

```
2470 REM INITIALIZE
2480 CLS
2490 RANDOMIZE
2500 DIM A(5,6)
2510 FOR X=1 TO 5
2520 FOR Y=1 TO 6
2530 LET A(X,Y)=46
2540 NEXT Y
2550 NEXT X
2560 LET A(1,2)=CODE "R": REM RED
    BLOCK
2570 LET A(1,3)=CODE "Y": REM YELLOW
    BLOCK
2580 LET A(1,4)=CODE "B": REM BLUE
    BLOCK
2590 LET A(1,5)=CODE "G": REM GREEN
    BLOCK
2600 RETURN
```

As you can see (line 2500) a five by six array is used to hold the 'world'. It is initially filled (lines 2510 through to 2550) with 46, the ASCII code of the dot which is used to indicate a blank space in the world. The starting position of the blocks is given by lines 2560 through to 2590. You can see here that the program assigns the initial letter of the color ('R' for red, and so on) to the block of that color. There is nothing very complicated in this first subroutine.

Although the initialisation subroutine is called just once per program, another subroutine, COLOR NAME, is called every time the computer wishes to refer to a block.

```
2400 REM ** COLOR NAME **
2410 IF Q=CODE "R" THEN PRINT "R
ED ";
2420 IF Q=CODE "Y" THEN PRINT "Y
ELLOW ";
2430 IF Q=CODE "B" THEN PRINT "B
LUE ";
2440 IF Q=CODE "G" THEN PRINT "G
REEN ";
2450 RETURN
```

This subroutine changes the initial letter into the full name of the relevant color. Both these subroutines are at the very end of the listing.

Back at the start of the program, we find a short section of code which prints out the view of the blocks. This could well have been a subroutine, but as it is needed everytime the program cycles through the main loop, it seemed sensible to have it here.

```
30 REM ** PRINT OUT VIEW **
40 INK 4: CLS : PRINT : PRINT
50 FOR X=5 TO 1 STEP -1
60 PRINT TAB 8;
70 FOR Y=1 TO 6
80 PRINT INK 0; PAPER 3;CHR$(
A(X,Y));
90 NEXT Y
100 PRINT
110 NEXT X
120 INK 7: PRINT : PRINT
```

Line 50 shows that the view is printed 'upside down' with the '5 row' printed before the '4 row' and so on, with the '1 row' at the bottom of the scene. This was done to make it easier for the program to manipulate the blocks. It knows that it needs to look to a higher number to see if there is a block on top of the one it is considering.

There would have been no real difficulty in doing it the other way (the lower the number, the higher the position of the block) but this seemed an unnecessary complication.

The next section of code accepts the user's input, and from it determines which subroutine should be called to act upon the input.

```
130 INPUT A$: LET A%=A%+"
      "
135 BEEP .1,2: BEEP .2,10: BEEP
     .2,3
140 PRINT A$: PRINT
150 IF LEN A%=16 THEN STOP : RE
M   TERMINATING RUN BY JUST PRES
SING RETURN
160 IF A%( TO 8)="WHERE IS" THE
N GO SUB 240
170 IF A%( TO 12)="TELL ME WHAT
" THEN GO SUB 1050
180 IF A%( TO 7)="SHUFFLE" THEN
GO SUB 1280
190 IF A%( TO 7)="PUT THE" THEN
GO SUB 1500
200 PRINT : PRINT : PRINT ">> P
RESS A KEY TO CONTINUE <<": PAUS
E 3E4
210 GO TO 40
```

Constructing an AI program leads one very quickly to appreciate the complexities of intelligence in operation. BLOCKWORLD operates in a very restricted domain, and reacts only to those situations which have been specifically allowed for (although, as we saw in the sample run, it managed to grapple with a situation for which I did not realise I had prepared it). Despite the limitations of domain and performance, BLOCKWORLD demands a lot of code, with a section to carry out each investigation, and to follow each command.

Look, for example, at the routine which determines the location of a specific block. First the program must check that you are asking for a block which is within its known universe. It does this by extracting — with line 260 — the initial letter of the block you are seeking, and checks — line 270 — that this is one of the four it recognizes:

```
240 REM "WHERE IS THE"  
250 LET P=0  
260 LET B$=A$(14)  
270 IF B$="Y" OR B$="R" OR B$=""  
B" OR B$="G" THEN GO TO 330
```

If you have asked it, for example, about a 'pink block', it uses the next routine (280 to 310) to randomly choose a reply, before returning to the main program:

```
280 IF RND>.7 THEN GO TO 300  
290 PRINT "SORRY, I HAVE NO INFO  
RMATION ON THAT": GO TO 310  
300 PRINT "I HAVE NO DATA WITH  
WHICH TO ANSWER YOU"  
310 RETURN
```



If it bypasses that, it starts searching for the block. We do not use FOR/NEXT loops for this search, as we want the program to be able to exit the search at any point. A program which arbitrarily exits FOR/NEXT loops is not one which has been well constructed (and many computers hang up fairly quickly if too many NEXT addresses accumulate on the stack). This part of the program gives it the first part of its required information regarding the block's location:

```

330 LET M=CODE B$
340 PRINT TAB 8;"> LET ME SEE N
OW <"
350 LET X=5
360 LET Y=1
370 IF A(X,Y)=M THEN GO TO 410
380 IF Y<6 THEN LET Y=Y+1: GO T
O 370
390 IF X>1 THEN LET X=X-1: GO T
O 360
400 GO TO 280
410 IF X>1 THEN GO TO 910: REM
ON TOP OF ANOTHER
420 IF Y>1 THEN GO TO 530: REM
NOT ON LEFT

```

The REM statements in the rest of this section explain what each one does:

```

440 REM *** ON LEFT ***
450 PRINT "IS IT ON THE LEFT"
460 IF A(1,2)=46 THEN PRINT "TH
ERE IS NOTHING TO ITS          IM
MEDIATE RIGHT": GO TO 790
470 LET Q=A(1,2)
480 PRINT

```

```

490 PRINT "BESIDE IT I CAN SEE
THE"
500 GO TO 2400
510 PRINT "BLOCK"
520 GO TO 790
530 IF Y<6 THEN GO TO 650
540 REM *****
550 REM *** ON RIGHT ***
560 PRINT
570 PRINT "IT IS ON THE RIGHT H
AND SIDE"
580 IF A(1,5)=46 THEN PRINT "TH
ERE IS NOTHING TO THE IM
MEDIATE LEFT": GO TO 790
590 PRINT "TO ITS LEFT I CAN SE
E ";
600 LET Q=A(1,5)
610 GO SUB 2400
620 PRINT "ONE"
630 GO TO 790
640 REM *****
650 REM *** MIDDLE ***
660 PRINT
670 PRINT "IT IS IN POSITION ";
Y;" FROM THE LEFT"
680 IF A(X,Y-1)=46 THEN PRINT "
THERE IS NOTHING TO THE IMMEDIAT
E LEFT": GO TO 730
690 LET Q=A(X,Y-1)
700 PRINT "THE ";
710 GO SUB 2400
720 PRINT "BLOCK IS TO": PRINT
"ITS IMMEDIATE LEFT"
730 IF A(X,Y-1)=46 THEN PRINT "
THERE IS NOTHING TO THE IMMEDIAT
E LEFT": GO TO 790

```

```

740 LET Q=A(X,Y+1)
750 PRINT : PRINT "I CAN SEE TH
E ";
760 GO SUB 2400
770 PRINT "BLOCK": PRINT " TO I
TS RIGHT TOUCHING IT"
780 REM *****
790 REM *** ANYTHING ABOVE? ***
800 PRINT
810 LET P=X
820 IF X=5 THEN GO TO 910
830 IF A(X+1,Y)=46 THEN PRINT "
THERE IS NOTHING ABOVE THAT": GO
TO 310
840 PRINT : PRINT "ABOVE IT IS
THE ";
850 LET Q=A(X+1,Y)
860 GO SUB 2400
870 PRINT "BLOCK"
880 LET X=X+1
890 GO TO 820
900 REM *****
910 REM * ON TOP OF ANOTHER? *
920 IF P<>0 THEN LET X=P
930 PRINT
940 IF X=1 THEN GO TO 310
950 PRINT "IT IS ";
960 PRINT "ON TOP OF THE ";
970 LET Q=A(X-1,Y)
980 GO SUB 2400
990 PRINT "BLOCK"
1000 LET X=X-1
1010 IF X<2 THEN GO TO 310
1020 GO TO 960
1030 RETURN

```

The next subroutine is called if you ask the program to TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE. This is a much simpler routine than the one which locates a specific block:

```
1040 REM *****
1050 REM "TELL ME WHAT"
1060 PRINT "STARTING FROM THE RI
GHT"
1070 LET Y=6
1080 LET X=5
1090 IF A(X,Y)<>46 THEN GO TO 11
50
1100 IF Y=1 AND X=1 THEN PRINT "
FINALLY ";
1110 IF X=1 AND A(X,Y)=46 THEN P
RINT "...A SPACE ";; IF Y>1 THEN
PRINT "THEN"
1120 IF X>1 THEN LET X=X-1: GO T
O 1090
1130 IF Y>1 THEN LET Y=Y-1: GO T
O 1080
1140 RETURN
1150 LET L=INT (RND*2)
1160 IF L=0 THEN PRINT "ITS THE
";: GO TO 1190
1170 IF L=1 THEN PRINT "MY SENSO
RS REGISTER THE ";: GO TO 1190
1180 PRINT "I SEE THE ";
1190 LET Q=A(X,Y)
1200 GO SUB 2400
1210 PRINT "BLOCK"
1220 IF X=1 THEN GO TO 1130
1230 LET X=X-1
1240 PRINT "...AND BELOW IT..."
1250 GO TO 1180
1260>RETURN
```

The SHUFFLE BLOCKS routine is also relatively simple:

```
1270 REM *****
1280 REM  SHUFFLE THE BLOCKS
1290 PRINT
1300 IF RND>.5 THEN INK 3: PRINT
    TAB 7;"ITS ABOUT TIME, TOO": GO
    TO 1320
1310 INK 5: PRINT "ITS GOOD TO B
E GIVEN A CHANCE ": PRINT TAB 4;
"TO DO WHAT I WANT!!!"
1320 INK 7: FOR X=1 TO 5
1330 FOR Y=1 TO 6
1340 LET A(X,Y)=46
1350 NEXT Y
1360 NEXT X
1370 LET Y1=INT (RND*6)+1
1380 LET Y2=INT (RND*6)+1
1390 IF Y2=Y1 THEN GO TO 1380
1400 LET Y3=INT (RND*6+1)
1410 IF Y3=Y1 OR Y2=Y3 THEN GO T
O 1380
1420 LET Y4=INT (RND*6+1)
1430 IF Y3=Y4 OR Y4=Y1 OR Y2=Y4
THEN GO TO 1380
1440 LET A(1,Y1)=82
1450 LET A(1,Y2)=89
1460 LET A(1,Y3)=66
1470 LET A(1,Y4)=71
1480 RETURN
```

Finally, we come to the routine which produces the most impressive results, the 'PUT THE object on THE target' routine. As in the first major routine we examined in BLOCKWORLD, the REM statements explain what each section does:

```

1500 REM "PUT THE ... BLOCK ON
THE ... ONE"
1510 IF RND>.5 THEN PRINT TAB 5;
"I UNDERSTAND": GO TO 1530
1520 PRINT TAB 8;"> OK"
1530 LET B#=A$(9): REM OBJECT BL
OCK
1540 IF B#="R" THEN LET L=26
1550 IF B#="B" THEN LET L=27
1560 IF B#="G" THEN LET L=28
1570 IF B#="Y" THEN LET L=29
1580 LET C#=A$(L)
1590 LET B=CODE B#
1600 LET C=CODE C#
1610 LET FLAG=C
1620 REM ** FIND B# BLOCK **
1630 LET X=5
1640 LET Y=1
1650 IF A(X,Y)=B THEN GO TO 1740
1660 IF Y<6 THEN LET Y=Y+1: GO T
O 1650
1670 IF X>1 THEN LET X=X-1: GO T
O 1640
1680 PRINT "I CAN'T FIND THE ";
1690 LET Q=B
1700 GO SUB 2400
1710 PRINT "ONE..."
1720 FOR T=1 TO 200: NEXT T
1730 RETURN
1740 LET R=X: LET S=Y
1750 REM OBJECT BLOCK IS AT R,S
1760 REM IS TARGET BLOCK CLEAR?
1770 IF A(R+1,S)=46 THEN GO TO 1
920: REM "YES"
1780 IF A(R+2,S)=46 THEN LET TAS
K=1: GO TO 1800

```

```

1790 LET TASK=3: IF A(R+3,S)=46
THEN LET TASK=2
1800 FOR W=TASK TO 1 STEP -1
1810 PRINT "I MUST MOVE THE ";
1820 LET Q=A(R+W,S)
1830 GO SUB 2400
1840 PRINT "BLOCK"
1850 LET DE=INT (RND*6)+1
1860 IF DE=S OR A(1,DE)=C OR A(2
,DE)=C OR A(3,DE)=C THEN GO TO 1
850
1870 PRINT "I'M MOVING IT TO ROW
";DE
1880 LET L=1
1890 IF A(L,DE)=46 THEN LET A(L,
DE)=A(R+W,S): LET A(R+W,S)=46: G
O TO 1910
1900 LET L=L+1: GO TO 1890
1910 NEXT W
1920 REM TARGET BLOCK AT R,S NOW
CLEAR
1930 REM IS THE OBJECT BLOCK
CLEAR
1940 REM FIND OBJECT BLOCK
1950 LET X=5
1960 LET Y=1
1970 IF A(X,Y)=C THEN GO TO 2070
1980 IF Y<6 THEN LET Y=Y+1: GO T
O 1970
1990 IF X>1 THEN LET X=X-1: GO T
O 1960
2000 PRINT "I CANT FIND THE ";
2010 LET Q=C
2020 GO SUB 2400
2030 PRINT "BLOCK"

```

```

2040 FOR J=1 TO 200: NEXT J
2050 RETURN
2060 REM ** C HAS BEEN FOUND **
2070 LET T=X: LET U=Y: REM
LOCATION OF C
2080 IF A(T+1,U)=46 THEN GO TO 2
260
2090 IF A(T+2,U)=46 THEN LET TASK
K=1: GO TO 2110
2100 IF A(T+3,U)=46 THEN LET TASK
K=2
2110 LET DE=INT (RND*6)+1
2120 IF DE=U OR DE=S THEN GO TO
2110
2130 FOR W=TASK TO 1 STEP -1
2140 PRINT "NOW I'LL MOVE THE ";
2150 LET Q=A(T+W,U)
2160 GO SUB 2400
2170 PRINT "ONE"
2180 PRINT
2190 PRINT "I'M MOVING IT TO ROW
";DE
2200 LET L=1
2210 IF A(L,DE)=46 THEN LET A(L,
DE)=A(T+W,U): LET A(T+W,U)=46: G
O TO 2230
2220 LET L=L+1: GO TO 2210
2230 NEXT W
2240 REM OBJECT BLOCK NOW CLEAR
2250 REM **** MAKE THE MOVE ****
2260 PRINT "I'M NOW MOVING THE "
;
2270 LET Q=A(R,S): LET Z=A(R,S)
2280 GO SUB 2400
2290 PRINT "ONE"

```



```

2300 PRINT " ONTO THE ";
2310 IF A(T,U)=46 THEN LET A(T,U
)=FLAG
2320 LET Q=A(T,U)
2330 GO SUB 2400
2340 PRINT "BLOCK"
2350 LET A(R,S)=46
2360 LET A(T+1,U)=Z
2370 FOR J=1 TO 200: NEXT J
2380 RETURN

```

Naturally enough, the program has to cater for each situation it is required to manage. After the complete program listing, we have a little more of Winograd's conversation with SHRDLU, to give you some ideas on how you can expand BLOCKWORLD. By keeping the program structured in a way similar to the present one, you'll find you can add complexity without getting lost in a maze of coding.

The only additional information you need is the input format demanded by the program. There are four questions you can ask, as follows (and this program expects them in upper case, although you can modify that to suit yourself):

WHERE IS THE color BLOCK (or ONE or CUBE or whatever you like)?

TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE (or CAN SEE).

SHUFFLE THE BLOCKS.

PUT THE color BLOCK ON THE color ONE.

You can quite the program at any time (as indicated by line 150) by simply pressing RETURN, when you are prompted for a question/command.

Here, now, is the complete listing of BLOCKWORLD:

```
10 REM BLOCKWORD
15 FLASH 0: PAPER 1: BORDER 1:
INK 7: BRIGHT 1
20 GO SUB 2470: REM INITIALIZE
30 REM ** PRINT OUT VIEW **
40 INK 4: CLS : PRINT : PRINT
50 FOR X=5 TO 1 STEP -1
60 PRINT TAB 8;
70 FOR Y=1 TO 6
80 PRINT INK 0; PAPER 3;CHR$ (
A(X,Y));
90 NEXT Y
100 PRINT
110 NEXT X
120 INK 7: PRINT : PRINT
125 BEEP 1,15: FOR I=1 TO 5: BE
EP .1,I: NEXT I
130 INPUT A$: LET A#=A$+"
"
135 BEEP .1,2: BEEP .2,10: BEEP
.2,3
140 PRINT A$: PRINT
150 IF LEN A#=16 THEN STOP : RE
M TERMINATING RUN BY JUST PRES
SING RETURN
160 IF A$( TO 8)="WHERE IS" THE
N GO SUB 240
170 IF A$( TO 12)="TELL ME WHAT
" THEN GO SUB 1050
180 IF A$( TO 7)="SHUFFLE" THEN
GO SUB 1280
190 IF A$( TO 7)="PUT THE" THEN
GO SUB 1500
```

```

200 PRINT : PRINT : PRINT ">> P
RESS A KEY TO CONTINUE <<": PAUS
E 3E4
210 GO TO 40
220 STOP
230 REM *****
240 REM "WHERE IS THE"
250 LET P=0
260 LET B$=A$(14)
270 IF B$="Y" OR B$="R" OR B$="
B" OR B$="G" THEN GO TO 330
280 IF RND>.7 THEN GO TO 300
290 PRINT "SORRY,I HAVE NO INFO
RMATION      ON THAT": GO TO 310
300 PRINT "I HAVE NO DATA WITH
WHICH TO ANSWER YOU"
310 RETURN
320 REM *****
330 LET M=CODE B$
340 PRINT TAB 8;"> LET ME SEE N
OW <"
350 LET X=5
360 LET Y=1
370 IF A(X,Y)=M THEN GO TO 410
380 IF Y<6 THEN LET Y=Y+1: GO T
O 370
390 IF X>1 THEN LET X=X-1: GO T
O 360
400 GO TO 280
410 IF X>1 THEN GO TO 910: REM
ON TOP OF ANOTHER
420 IF Y>1 THEN GO TO 530: REM
NOT ON LEFT
430 REM *****
440 REM *** ON LEFT ***
450 PRINT "IS IT ON THE LEFT"

```

```

460 IF A(1,2)=46 THEN PRINT "TH
ERE IS NOTHING TO ITS           IM
MEDIATE RIGHT": GO TO 790
470 LET Q=A(1,2)
480 PRINT
490 PRINT "BESIDE IT I CAN SEE
THE"
500 GO TO 2400
510 PRINT "BLOCK"
520 GO TO 790
530 IF Y<6 THEN GO TO 650
540 REM *****
550 REM *** ON RIGHT ***
560 PRINT
570 PRINT "IT IS ON THE RIGHT H
AND SIDE"
580 IF A(1,5)=46 THEN PRINT "TH
ERE IS NOTHING TO THE           IM
MEDIATE LEFT": GO TO 790
590 PRINT "TO ITS LEFT I CAN SE
E ";
600 LET Q=A(1,5)
610 GO SUB 2400
620 PRINT "ONE"
630 GO TO 790
640 REM *****
650 REM *** MIDDLE ***
660 PRINT
670 PRINT "IT IS IN POSITION ";
Y;" FROM THE LEFT"
680 IF A(X,Y-1)=46 THEN PRINT "
THERE IS NOTHING TO THE IMMEDIAT
E LEFT": GO TO 730
690 LET Q=A(X,Y-1)
700 PRINT "THE ";

```

```

710 GO SUB 2400
720 PRINT "BLOCK IS TO": PRINT
"ITS IMMEDIATE LEFT"
730 IF A(X,Y-1)=46 THEN PRINT "
THERE IS NOTHING TO THE IMMEDIAT
E LEFT": GO TO 790
740 LET Q=A(X,Y+1)
750 PRINT : PRINT "I CAN SEE TH
E ";
760 GO SUB 2400
770 PRINT "BLOCK": PRINT " TO I
TS RIGHT TOUCHING IT"
780 REM *****
790 REM *** ANYTHING ABOVE? ***
800 PRINT
810 LET P=X
820 IF X=5 THEN GO TO 910
830 IF A(X+1,Y)=46 THEN PRINT "
THERE IS NOTHING ABOVE THAT": GO
TO 310
840 PRINT : PRINT "ABOVE IT IS
THE ";
850 LET Q=A(X+1,Y)
860 GO SUB 2400
870 PRINT "BLOCK"
880 LET X=X+1
890 GO TO 820
900 REM *****
910 REM * ON TOP OF ANOTHER? *
920 IF P<>0 THEN LET X=P
930 PRINT
940 IF X=1 THEN GO TO 310
950 PRINT "IT IS ";
960 PRINT "ON TOP OF THE ";
970 LET Q=A(X-1,Y)
980 GO SUB 2400

```

```

990 PRINT "BLOCK"
1000 LET X=X-1
1010 IF X<2 THEN GO TO 310
1020 GO TO 960
1030 RETURN
1040 REM *****
1050 REM "TELL ME WHAT"
1060 PRINT "STARTING FROM THE RI
GHT"
1070 LET Y=6
1080 LET X=5
1090 IF A(X,Y)<>46 THEN GO TO 11
50
1100 IF Y=1 AND X=1 THEN PRINT "
FINALLY ";
1110 IF X=1 AND A(X,Y)=46 THEN .P
RINT "...A SPACE ";: IF Y>1 THEN
PRINT "THEN"
1120 IF X>1 THEN LET X=X-1: GO T
O 1090
1130 IF Y>1 THEN LET Y=Y-1: GO T
O 1080
1140 RETURN
1150 LET L=INT (RND*2)
1160 IF L=0 THEN PRINT "ITS THE
";: GO TO 1190
1170 IF L=1 THEN PRINT "MY SENSO
RS REGISTER THE ";: GO TO 1190
1180 PRINT "I SEE THE ";
1190 LET Q=A(X,Y)
1200 GO SUB 2400
1210 PRINT "BLOCK"
1220 IF X=1 THEN GO TO 1130
1230 LET X=X-1
1240>PRINT "...AND BELOW I
T..."

```

```

1250 GO TO 1180
1260 RETURN
1270 REM *****
1280 REM SHUFFLE THE BLOCKS
1290 PRINT
1300 IF RND>.5 THEN INK 3: PRINT
    TAB 7;"ITS ABOUT TIME, TOO": GO
    TO 1320
1310 INK 5: PRINT "ITS GOOD TO B
E GIVEN A CHANCE ": PRINT TAB 4;
"TO DO WHAT I WANT!!!"
1320 INK 7: FOR X=1 TO 5
1330 FOR Y=1 TO 6
1340 LET A(X,Y)=46
1350 NEXT Y
1360 NEXT X
1370 LET Y1=INT (RND*6)+1
1380 LET Y2=INT (RND*6)+1
1390 IF Y2=Y1 THEN GO TO 1380
1400 LET Y3=INT (RND*6+1)
1410 IF Y3=Y1 OR Y2=Y3 THEN GO T
O 1380
1420 LET Y4=INT (RND*6+1)
1430 IF Y3=Y4 OR Y4=Y1 OR Y2=Y4
THEN GO TO 1380
1440 LET A(1,Y1)=82
1450 LET A(1,Y2)=89
1460 LET A(1,Y3)=66
1470 LET A(1,Y4)=71
1480 RETURN
1490 REM *****
1500 REM "PUT THE ... BLOCK ON
THE ... ONE"
1510 IF RND>.5 THEN PRINT TAB 5;
"I UNDERSTAND": GO TO 1530

```

```

1520 PRINT TAB 8; "> OK"
1530 LET B$=A$(9): REM OBJECT BL
OCK
1540 IF B$="R" THEN LET L=26
1550 IF B$="B" THEN LET L=27
1560 IF B$="G" THEN LET L=28
1570 IF B$="Y" THEN LET L=29
1580 LET C$=A$(L)
1590 LET B=CODE B$
1600 LET C=CODE C$
1610 LET FLAG=C
1620 REM ** FIND B$ BLOCK **
1630 LET X=5
1640 LET Y=1
1650 IF A(X,Y)=B THEN GO TO 1740
1660 IF Y<6 THEN LET Y=Y+1: GO T
O 1650
1670 IF X>1 THEN LET X=X-1: GO T
O 1640
1680 PRINT "I CAN'T FIND THE ";
1690 LET Q=B
1700 GO SUB 2400
1710 PRINT "ONE..."
1720 FOR T=1 TO 200: NEXT T
1730 RETURN
1740 LET R=X: LET S=Y
1750 REM OBJECT BLOCK IS AT R,S
1760 REM IS TARGET BLOCK CLEAR?
1770 IF A(R+1,S)=46 THEN GO TO 1
920: REM "YES"
1780 IF A(R+2,S)=46 THEN LET TAS
K=1: GO TO 1800
1790 LET TASK=3: IF A(R+3,S)=46
THEN LET TASK=2
1800 FOR W=TASK TO 1 STEP -1
1810 PRINT "I MUST MOVE THE ";

```



```

1820 LET Q=A(R+W,S)
1830 GO SUB 2400
1840 PRINT "BLOCK"
1850 LET DE=INT (RND*6)+1
1860 IF DE=S OR A(1,DE)=C OR A(2
,DE)=C OR A(3,DE)=C THEN GO TO 1
850
1870 PRINT "I'M MOVING IT TO ROW
";DE
1880 LET L=1
1890 IF A(L,DE)=46 THEN LET A(L,
DE)=A(R+W,S): LET A(R+W,S)=46: G
O TO 1910
1900 LET L=L+1: GO TO 1890
1910 NEXT W
1920 REM TARGET BLOCK AT R,S NOW
CLEAR
1930 REM IS THE OBJECT BLOCK
CLEAR
1940 REM FIND OBJECT BLOCK
1950 LET X=5
1960 LET Y=1
1970 IF A(X,Y)=C THEN GO TO 2070
1980 IF Y<6 THEN LET Y=Y+1: GO T
O 1970
1990 IF X>1 THEN LET X=X-1: GO T
O 1960
2000 PRINT "I CANT FIND THE ";
2010 LET Q=C
2020 GO SUB 2400
2030 PRINT "BLOCK"
2040 FOR J=1 TO 200: NEXT J
2050 RETURN
2060 REM ** C HAS BEEN FOUND **
2070 LET T=X: LET U=Y: REM
LOCATION OF C

```

```

2080 IF A(T+1,U)=46 THEN GO TO 2
260
2090 IF A(T+2,U)=46 THEN LET TAS
K=1: GO TO 2110
2100 IF A(T+3,U)=46 THEN LET TAS
K=2
2110 LET DE=INT (RND*6)+1
2120 IF DE=U OR DE=S THEN GO TO
2110
2130 FOR W=TASK TO 1 STEP -1
2140 PRINT "NOW I'LL MOVE THE ";
2150 LET Q=A(T+W,U)
2160 GO SUB 2400
2170 PRINT "ONE"
2180 PRINT
2190 PRINT "I'M MOVING IT TO ROW
";DE
2200 LET L=1
2210 IF A(L,DE)=46 THEN LET A(L,
DE)=A(T+W,U): LET A(T+W,U)=46: G
O TO 2230
2220 LET L=L+1: GO TO 2210
2230 NEXT W
2240 REM OBJECT BLOCK NOW CLEAR
2250 REM **** MAKE THE MOVE ****
2260 PRINT "I'M NOW MOVING THE "
;
2270 LET Q=A(R,S): LET Z=A(R,S)
2280 GO SUB 2400
2290 PRINT "ONE"
2300 PRINT " ONTO THE ";
2310 IF A(T,U)=46 THEN LET A(T,U
)=FLAG
2320 LET Q=A(T,U)
2330 GO SUB 2400

```

```

2340 PRINT "BLOCK"
2350 LET A(R,S)=46
2360 LET A(T+1,U)=Z
2370 FOR J=1 TO 200: NEXT J
2380 RETURN
2390 REM *****
2400 REM ** COLOR NAME **
2410 IF Q=CODE "R" THEN PRINT "R
ED ";
2420 IF Q=CODE "Y" THEN PRINT "Y
ELLOW ";
2430 IF Q=CODE "B" THEN PRINT "B
LUE ";
2440 IF Q=CODE "G" THEN PRINT "G
REEN ";
2450 RETURN
2460 REM *****
2470 REM INITIALIZE
2480 CLS
2490 RANDOMIZE
2500 DIM A(5,6)
2510 FOR X=1 TO 5
2520 FOR Y=1 TO 6
2530 LET A(X,Y)=46
2540 NEXT Y
2550 NEXT X
2560 LET A(1,2)=CODE "R": REM RE
D BLOCK
2570 LET A(1,3)=CODE "Y": REM YE
LLOW BLOCK
2580 LET A(1,4)=CODE "B": REM BL
UE BLOCK
2590 LET A(1,5)=CODE "G": REM GR
EEN BLOCK
2600 RETURN

```

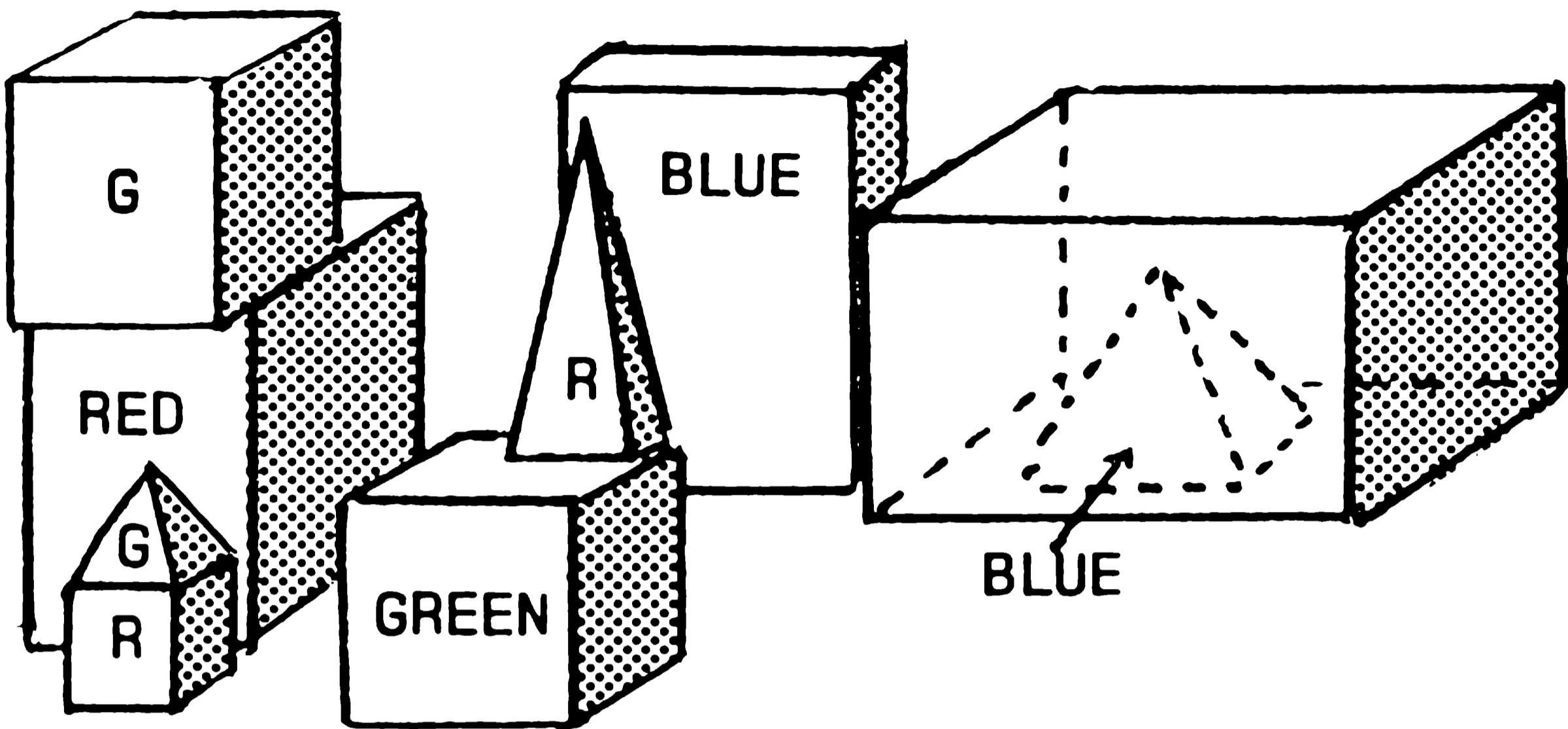
# IMPROVING THE PROGRAM

Although BLOCKWORLD performs quite creditably in its present form, there is much that can be done to it to develop it. As you have seen, it has a simple modular structure, with a single subroutine to cope with each kind of command given to it. Therefore, to increase BLOCKWORLD's abilities, you can add to the simple vocabulary recognition section at the start of the program, and use this to send action to new subroutines.

You could start, perhaps, by giving BLOCKWORLD the ability to move a block to the right, or to the left, rather than just 'on top of' another block. Once you've managed to do this (and made sure it has a means of rejecting 'impossible' demands, such as trying to put a block to the right of one which is already at the very right-hand end of the frame), you could try adding a fifth block, or perhaps a shape — or more than one — which is not a block at all. Finally, you could create your own BLOCKWORLD program from scratch, in which the blocks and other elements can be moved in three dimensions, so 'in front of' and 'behind' are valid commands.

To give you some ideas of what can be done, we'll look at some more conversation with that landmark program, SHRDLU, written by Terry Winograd. The brief portion of conversation given earlier in this section was extracted from the longer conversation which follows. First of all,

here's a sketch showing the situation under discussion:



Let the conversation continue:

Pick up the big red block.

>OK

Grasp the pyramid.

>I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHICH PYRAMID YOU MEAN

Find the block which is taller than the one you are holding and put it into the box.

>BY "IT", I ASSUME YOU MEAN THE BLOCK WHICH IS TALLER THAN THE ONE I HAVE

>OK

What does the box contain?

>THE BLUE PYRAMID AND THE BLUE BLOCK

What is the pyramid supported by?

>THE BOX

How many blocks are not in the box?

>FOUR OF THEM

Is at least one of them narrower than the one which I told you to pick up?

>YES, THE RED CUBE  
Is it supported?  
>YES, BY THE TABLE  
Can the table pick up blocks?  
>NO  
Can a pyramid be supported by a block?  
>YES  
Can a pyramid support a pyramid?  
>I DON'T KNOW  
Stack up two pyramids.  
>I CAN'T  
The blue pyramid is mine.  
>I UNDERSTAND

Impressive as this is, it fades almost into insignificance when compared with the following exchange, which includes logic manipulation which even human beings would find difficult to follow. This next segment followed on directly from the one above:

I own all the blocks which are not red,  
but I don't own anything which  
supports a pyramid.  
>I UNDERSTAND  
Do I own the box?  
>NO  
Do I own anything in the box?  
>YES, TWO THINGS: THE BLUE BLOCK AND  
THE BLUE PYRAMID  
Will you please stack up both of the red  
blocks and either a green cube or a  
pyramid?  
>OK  
Which cube is sitting on the table?  
>THE LARGE GREEN ONE WHICH SUPPORTS THE  
RED PYRAMID

Is there a large block behind the pyramid?

>YES, THREE OF THEM: A LARGE RED ONE, A LARGE GREEN CUBE AND THE BLUE ONE

Put the small one onto the green cube which supports a pyramid.

>OK

Put the littlest pyramid on top of it.

>OK

How many things are on top of green cubes?

>I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU MEAN BY "ON TOP OF" IN THE PHRASE "ON TOP OF GREEN CUBES"

>DO YOU MEAN:

1 - DIRECTLY ON THE SURFACE

2 - ANYWHERE ON TOP OF?

2

Had you touched any pyramid before you put the green one on the little cube?

>YES, THE GREEN ONE

When did you pick it up?

>WHEN I WAS STACKING UP THE RED CUBE, A LARGE RED BLOCK AND A LARGE GREEN CUBE

Why?

>TO GET RID OF IT

Why did you do that?

>TO CLEAR OFF THE RED CUBE

Why did you clear off that cube?

>TO PUT IT ON A LARGE GREEN CUBE

Why did you do that?

>TO STACK UP THE RED CUBE, A LARGE RED BLOCK AND A LARGE GREEN CUBE

Why did you do that?

>BECAUSE YOU ASKED ME TO

What could we add to that? Now that you've seen what SHRDLU and BLOCKWORLD can do, go and do likewise.



# CHAPTER EIGHT — THE DOCTOR IS IN

No study of 'natural language processing' would be complete with a discussion of ELIZA, the most famous program of this type (and, at one stage, the most famous computer program of all).

Joseph Weizenbaum, Professor of Computer Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, created ELIZA in 1964-66. The program was designed to take on the role of a Rogerian psychotherapist (Weizenbaum insists it was intended to parody such a practitioner). A psychotherapist of Carl Rogers' school, works by refusing to lead the conversation with a patient, preferring instead to reflect the patient's remarks back on themselves, so the conversation direction is constantly dependent upon the patient.

The reaction to the program — once it was made public — at first startled, and then seriously worried Weizenbaum. As a result of the train of thought engendered by the shock of its reception (which we'll discuss in a moment), Weizenbaum left MIT for two years to ponder the wider implications of the ELIZA experience, and during that time wrote the very important work *Computer Power and Human Reason* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1976). There is quite a bit of material in this book that I don't agree with, but this in no way diminishes the importance of the work. Regardless of my views, it is a work I urge you to read if you are seriously interested in artificial intelligence, and in the relationships and dependencies which we see developing between man and machine.

You use Weizenbaum's program by typing in your side of a 'conversation', to which the program replies, using its inner stock of answers. Here is part of a typical exchange with the ELIZA implementation given in this book:

>? I AM AFRAID OF SPEAKING IN PUBLIC

DO YOU THINK IT'S ABSOLUTELY NORMAL  
TO BE AFRAID OF SPEAKING IN PUBLIC

---

>? I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE

DO YOU REALLY THINK SO?

---

>? YES I DO

YOU SEEM VERY CERTAIN ABOUT IT

---

>? TALKING TO A COMPUTER IS RATHER ODD

ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT ME IN PARTICULAR

Weizenbaum chose the name ELIZA for his program because he said, like the Eliza in Pygmalion, it could be taught to speak increasingly well. The original ELIZA program was written in two parts. The first part analysed the user input, and the second part was a 'script'. Different scripts were designed for different topics, and DOCTOR was one of the scripts. (Other scripts could well have held discussions on ancient ships, real estate, currency exchange rates or whatever.)

The DOCTOR (Rogerian) script was the first one Weizenbaum tried out. The program became well known around MIT because it was a very effective way to demonstrate the power of a computer (remember, this was all a long, long time ago, in a galaxy far away, when people could not buy computers off the shelf at their local store).

Weizenbaum reported his work on ELIZA to the computer press in due course ("ELIZA — A Computer Program for the Study of Natural Language Communication Between Man and Machine", *Communications of the Association for Computing Machinery*, vol. 9, no. 1 [January 1965], pp. 36-45) and soon a number of versions of it — based on his description — were running at other institutions in the United States.

Weizenbaum reports that there were three distinct events which "shocked" him, as ELIZA's use became widespread. Firstly, he was horrified (and I find it hard to appreciate why he was as alarmed as he reports) to discover that people quickly became involved with the program.

He reports that even his secretary, who had worked with him on the program's development for many months, and therefore should have been one of those best situated to know it was only a program, started to relate to it emotionally. On one classic occasion, his secretary started using the program and after only a few sentences of dialogue had been exchanged became embarrassed and secretive. She asked if he would leave the room while she continued the 'conversation'.

Weizenbaum suggested, on another occasion, that he should rig up a printer to get a transcript of the talks people were having with ELIZA. This idea was greeted with horror as it would mean he would be prying into very private conversations.

He was bothered by how strongly people identified with the program, given it a personality, and sharing their most intimate thoughts with it. he said he had not realised the “powerful delusional thinking” a fairly simple program could create in normal people.

## **THE RUSSIAN CONNECTION**

Pamela McCorduck, in her splendid book *Machines Who Think* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1979) confirms the effect the program can have. She reports that the first time she saw ELIZA up and talking was at the Stanford Computation Center where an internationally respected computer scientist from the Soviet Union was being shown around.

He sat down at a computer connected to a version of the program written by one of Weizenbaum’s colleagues, Kenneth Colby (who we’ll be meeting again, shortly) and started typing. McCurduck reports watching in embarrassment as — triggered by a phrase such as TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FAMILY — the scientist proceeded to discuss some personal worries in some depth, becoming oblivious to those around him.

Weizenbaum found that some accesses to the program, via time-sharing terminals scattered around the university, often went on for an hour or more, late into the night. He received telephone calls from people who desperately wanted access to the program for a short time, in order to sort out their problems.

Colby, who we mentioned a short time ago, had met Weizenbaum some time earlier, at Stanford. Colby —

Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA — was interested in artificial intelligence. He thought its findings might possibly lead to new views on human thinking (and Colby hoped to gain new insights into neurotic behavior through his studies). Before Weizenbaum's original paper on ELIZA appeared, a short note on it was published by Colby in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*.

The two men split shortly after this, primarily because Weizenbaum strongly disagreed with Colby's claims that the program could have genuine therapeutic applications, but also because it seemed that Colby did not properly credit Weizenbaum for the original work on ELIZA.

Colby and two colleagues suggested that an improved version of DOCTOR would have genuine therapeutic use. Colby thought it could be made available to mental hospitals which were short of staff, so patients could access the program (via time-sharing systems) on demand. Weizenbaum was horrified. He says he thought it was vital that there be, as a starting point from which one person could assist another in coping with problems, an emphatic, 'fellow-human' recognition of those problems.

## **SHORT, SHARP SHOCKS**

Weizenbaum was shocked that even a single practicing psychiatrist could advance the view that the healing process could be replaced purely by mechanical technique. Such a thought had never crossed his mind. Furthermore, even if it could be done, it **should not** be done. There are some areas where machines should never be allowed to stray, claimed Weizenbaum, even if they have the ability to do so.

Colby was not chastened by Weizenbaum's response. He was, it seems, perfectly happy to consider the possibility of pure technique proving efficacious. Further he defended his view, saying that only laymen confused psychotherapy with marriage. A professional working relationship between therapist and patient was what mattered he said.

More to the point, Colby attacked Weizenbaum for the claim that there were areas in which the computer should never be employed. Why not, asked Colby. Just because Weizenbaum says so? Does Weizenbaum believe that helping people by computer is somehow worse than letting them suffer? And should not a therapist explore every possible tool which is available, just in case one of them proves to be genuinely effective?

Colby's view is more or less supported by Carl Sagan who is quite at peace with the idea of an ELIZA-like program being available — for a few dollars a session — in specially constructed areas, somewhat like telephone booths (*Broca's Brain*, London: Coronet Books, 1980, p. 300).

And this is where Weizenbaum's third 'shock' came in. Remember, he had been startled by the identification with and the unequivocal anthropomorphization of the program. Then he was very alarmed at the suggestions that somehow ELIZA could take the place of, or assist, human therapists. His third 'shock' came from his observation that many people came to believe that somehow the program was important in demonstrating that a real solution to the problems of a machine understanding human language was at hand. he dismissed this idea out of hand. Indeed, in the original paper on the program, Weizenbaum had been at pains to point out that it was impossible to find a general solution to this problem.

I said earlier that I did not agree with all in Weizenbaum's book *Computer Power and Human Reason*. One of the points upon which I disagree is the 'there are some things which should never be done by machines'. John McCarthy (1976, "An Unreasonable Book", in *Three Reviews of J. Weizenbaum's Computer Power and Human Reason*, Memo AIM-291, Stanford AI Laboratory, November), advances the view that if there are functions which a computer should not be taught to carry out, these should not be done at all, by a person or a machine.

Others agree. In the book *Artificial Reality* (1983: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Reading, MA; p. 168), Myron W. Krueger suggests that even if Weizenbaum's horror at the thought of using his program — or a development of it — for genuine therapy was real, such fear was groundless and misplaced.

However, regardless of my views (or others') of Weizenbaum's thesis, and of the value of the book (I've already said I think you should read it, if only to give your own mental mill grist regarding the debate), there is no doubt that ELIZA, as DOCTOR, has proved an extremely entertaining companion. You will soon prove this assertion for yourself.

As well as enjoying the program, you'll also be in a position to judge whether or not it actually suggests that intelligence resides in the machine which is running it. Adrian Berry (in *The Super-Intelligent Machine*, London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1983; p. 63) concludes that ELIZA (and PARRY, a program which is designed to mimic a paranoid patient) is a pretty poor advocate for the possibilities of true artificial intelligence.

You'll find that your own views will sway back and forth as you use the program. When the DOCTOR produces a particularly inspired or appropriate remark, you'll feel this is sure evidence of intelligence, on at least some level. At other times, you'll discover the DOCTOR is great simply for entertainment. Nobody, you claim, could manage to ask such absurd questions (DID YOU COME TO ME BECAUSE I WAS DEAD? one implementation asked Berry, he reports in the book mentioned above) or innocently create superb nonsequiturs as the following exchange which comes from the sample run produced by the program in this book (the DOCTOR is speaking in upper case):

I feel you're evading my questions  
DO YOU OFTEN FEEL I AM EVADING YOUR  
QUESTIONS

I do when I talk to a computer  
THINGS HAVE A HABIT OF HAPPENING AT  
MORE OR LESS THE RIGHT TIME

What can one do in response to a statement like that except raise a toast to Joseph W., progenitor of ELIZA and its offspring, and hope for more? I think it's time we turned back to the computer.

## **THE PROGRAM**

Now that we've heard about how ELIZA was written, and the reactions to it operating in the DOCTOR mode, let's see how our own version of the program works. Here's one run with the program. The human input is preceded by > ? and a line of dashes cuts off each statement by the human and



the response to it from the DOCTOR:

THE DOCTOR IS IN...PLEASE STAND BY

WELCOME TO ANOTHER SESSION  
WITH THE DOCTOR.....

HELLO...

---

>? HI THERE DOC

HI TO YOU...RELAX NOW, AND LET'S TALK  
ABOUT YOUR SITUATION

---

>? I HAVE A SERIOUS PROBLEM

HOW CAN I HELP YOU WITH A SERIOUS  
PROBLEM

---

>? IT IS TO DO WITH MY MAD TEACHER  
ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT IT'S TO DO WITH  
YOUR MAD TEACHER

---

>? YES I AM VERY CERTAIN

YOU'RE PRETTY POSITIVE

---

>? IT COMES FROM WRESTLING WITH IT DAY  
AND NIGHT

EARLIER YOU MENTIONED YOUR MAD TEACHER  
TELL ME A BIT MORE ABOUT THAT

---

>? IT STARTED WHEN I WAS TEN YEARS OLD  
THAT'S VERY INTERESTING

---

>? I AM AFRAID TO GO TO SCHOOL NOW  
DID YOU COME TO ME BECAUSE YOU  
ARE AFRAID TO GO TO SCHOOL NOW

---

>? I THINK THAT IS TRUE  
BUT YOU ARE NOT SURE THAT IS TRUE

---

>? PERHAPS THERE ARE OTHER REASONS  
THAT'S VERY INTERESTING

---

>? I ALSO HAVE PROBLEMS WITH  
MY CRAZY BROTHER

PLEASE ELABORATE ON THAT

---

>? I THINK HE HATES ME

DO YOU DOUBT HE HATES YOU

---

>? I FEEL YOU'RE EVADING MY QUESTIONS

DO YOU OFTEN FEEL I AM EVADING YOUR  
QUESTIONS

---

>? I DO WHEN I TALK TO A COMPUTER

THINGS HAVE A HABIT OF HAPPENING AT  
MORE OR LESS THE RIGHT TIME

---

>? THAT'S A DUMB ANSWER FROM A COMPUTER

WHAT ASPECT OF COMPUTERS INTERESTS  
YOU THE MOST?

---

>? HELPING ME WITH MY PROBLEMS

PLEASE ELABORATE ON THAT

---

>? I WANT TO BEAT UP MY BROTHER

WHAT WOULD IT ADD TO YOUR LIFE IF  
YOU GOT TO BEAT UP YOUR BROTHER

---

>? IT WOULD MAKE ME FEEL GREAT

LET'S EXPLORE THAT STATEMENT A BIT

---

>? I FEEL INFERIOR WHEN HE PUTS ME DOWN

DO YOU ENJOY FEELING INFERIOR WHEN HE  
PUTS YOU DOWN

---

>? OF COURSE I DON'T ENJOY IT

DOES ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THAT AND  
YOUR BROTHER SUGGEST ITSELF?

---

>? THE LINK IS OBVIOUS TO ANYONE

PLEASE ELABORATE ON THAT

---

>? I WANT SOME ASSISTANCE WITH MY FEARS

WHAT WOULD IT MEAN TO YOU IF YOU  
GOT SOME ASSISTANCE WITH YOUR FEARS

---

>? I THINK IT WOULD MAKE ME BRAVER

DO YOU DOUBT IT WOULD MAKE YOU BRAVER

---

>? I ALWAYS WANT TO RUN AWAY

ISN'T 'ALWAYS' A LITTLE STRONG?

---

>? I GUESS IT MIGHT BE

WHY DON'T WE GO BACK AND DISCUSS  
YOUR FEARS A LITTLE MORE?

---

The sample run is fairly impressive, and once you've used the program a few times, you're certain to discover the kind of phrases and words which it responds to best. As well, as I pointed out earlier, it makes a good demonstration to run for those who are not used to computers. (But be careful in case some of that 'powerful delusional thinking' comes into play, and you find one of your friends confiding his or her darkest thoughts to your machine).

## HOW IT WORKS

The program is, in essence, simple. The computer accepts an input string from the user, then scans through this, looking first for 'trigger phrases' (such as I THINK or WHY CAN'T I) for which it has a stock reply. If it fails to find any of these, it will look for 'trigger words' (such as COMPUTER), and similarly choose one of three pre-programmed replies to that trigger.

If it doesn't find a trigger, it will look to see if it has stored a phrase of yours from an earlier input (such as ATTITUDE or MAD TEACHER) and, if so, create a question around that. If all these fail, it will choose from a set of random replies (I'M

NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND THAT FULLY or the like)  
designed to keep the conversation moving.

EARLIER YOU MENTIONED YOUR ATTITUDE  
TELL ME A BIT MORE ABOUT THAT

-----

>? IT IS A WORRY TO ME

WHAT DEGREE OF CERTAINTY WOULD YOU  
PLACE ON IT BEING A WORRY TO YOU

-----

>? A LOT BECAUSE THAT IS THE WAY IT IS

WHAT OTHER REASONS COME TO MIND?

## **THE REPLY DATABASE**

The most important part of the program, and the one which you can have the most fun modifying, and adding to, is the huge set of DATA statements at the end of the program. (You'll see the very last DATA statement is a series of asterisks. This is to terminate the READING, and to allow you to add extra bits of DATA without then having to count right through to see how many there are. The DIM statements for the string arrays to hold this DATA are larger than they need to be, so that you can add extra words if you want to.)

You'll see that the first set of DATA statements cover 'conjugations':

```
1410 REM * DATA *
1420 REM ** CONJUGATIONS **
1430 DATA "AM", "ARE", "WAS", "WERE", "I", "YOU", "MY", "YOUR"
1440 DATA "YOU'VE", "I'VE", "YOUR", "MY", "ARE", "AM"
1450 DATA "YOU'RE", "I AM", "YOURS", "MINE", "YOU", "ME", "ME", "YOU", "*" , "*" "
```

The computer uses these in exactly the same way it handled English in TRANSLATE, swapping one for its pair. This means that if you say, for example, I AM GETTING YOUR MESSAGE the computer could simply change the words around and say back in reply YOU ARE GETTING MY MESSAGE. In fact, this is the form this DOCTOR program originally took, and even this limited kind of exchange can be significantly interesting.

After this come the major DATA statements, which look after most of the phrase swapping. They are of two types. The first type uses either a word or a short phrase (which was used as the start of the user input) and then chooses the entire reply from the database, without taking any words directly from the user input. In these examples, the first DATA statement of each four is the 'trigger' from the user input and the next three are those from which the computer chooses its reply:

```
1830 DATA "HOW"
1840 DATA "HOW WOULD YOU SOLVE THAT?"
```

1850 DATA "IT WOULD BE BEST TO A  
 NSWER THAT FOR YOURSELF"  
 1860 DATA "WHAT IS IT YOU'RE REA  
 LLY ASKING?"  
 2030 DATA "BECAUSE"  
 2040 DATA "IS THAT THE REAL REAS  
 ON?"  
 2050 DATA "WHAT OTHER REASONS CO  
 ME TO MIND?"  
 2060 DATA "WHAT ELSE DOES THAT E  
 XPLAIN?"

Of greater interest are the phrases which are triggered to  
 be used as the start of the computer's reply, with the  
 balance of the answer coming from the original user input  
 (after any needed conjugation changes have been made):

1460 REM \* TRIGGER WORDS/REPLY P  
 HRASES \*  
 1470 DATA "I NEED"  
 1480 DATA "WHY DO YOU NEED\*"  
 1490 DATA "WOULD IT REALLY BE HE  
 LPFUL IF YOU GOT\*"  
 1500 DATA "ARE YOU SURE YOU NEED  
 \*"  
 1670 DATA "I AM"  
 1680 DATA "DID YOU COME TO ME BE  
 CAUSE YOU ARE\*"  
 1690 DATA "HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEE  
 N\*"  
 1700 DATA "DO YOU THINK IT'S ABS  
 OLUTELY NORMAL TO BE\*"  
 2510 DATA "IS IT"  
 2520 DATA "DO YOU THINK IT IS\*"  
 2530 DATA "IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES  
 WOULD IT\*"



```
2540 DATA "IT COULD WELL BE THAT  
*"
```

You'll see that each of the phrases which form part of the reply end with '\*', which the computer uses as a flag to indicate that part of the original input must be modified to complete sentence.

Let's see how it works in practice. Suppose the user input was as follows:

```
I WANT TO SHOW YOU THE TRUTH
```

The DOCTOR scans through the contents of string array C\$ and finds the element which contains 'I WANT'. The equivalent elements of arrays D\$, E\$ and F\$ contain the opening portions of suitable replies, as you can see:

```
1750 DATA "I WANT"  
1760 DATA "WHAT WOULD IT MEAN TO  
YOU IF YOU GOT*"  
1770 DATA "WHY DO YOU WANT*"  
1780 DATA "WHAT WOULD IT ADD TO  
YOUR LIFE IF YOU GOT*"
```

The DOCTOR generates a random number between one and three and prints the D\$ element if it is one, the E\$ if two and the F\$ if three (having previously checked to see if it ends in an asterisk, and if it does, notes this, then strips the asterisk off before printing). Assume the computer has chosen the D\$ reply. Its answer so far, then, is:

```
WHY DO YOU WANT
```

Then, it goes through the balance of the user input (the material following I WANT), treating it in exactly the same way (using the same code, in fact) as the TRANSLATE program changed English words to French ones, swapping such things as YOU for I and ARE for AM (so I AM becomes YOU ARE). It prints up each word as it processes it, leaving the user-input word unchanged if there is nothing which needs swapping in the conjugation section.

The original phrase . . .

I WANT TO SHOW YOU THE TRUTH

. . . has then been transformed to . . .

WHY DO YOU WANT TO SHOW ME THE TRUTH

This is 'all' the program does, but as you'll soon be proving for yourself, it creates a remarkable effect.

If it cannot find a trigger phrase to combine with part of the user input, the DOCTOR looks for a trigger word, anywhere in the input (rather than just at the beginning, where it looks for phrases). Trigger words include COMPUTER and FRIENDS, producing results like these:

WHY DO YOU BRING UP THE SUBJECT OF FRIENDS?

PLEASE TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR FRIENDSHIP

. . . and . . .

WHAT ASPECTS OF COMPUTERS INTERESTS YOU THE MOST

ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT ME IN PARTICULAR?

# THE PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The program begins, like the others in this book, with a call to an initialisation routine (this one starting at 1140). After that, the program prints a blank line, then the dashed line ruling off one exchange from the other, followed by another blank line.

```
10 REM DOCTOR
15 BRIGHT 1: FLASH 0: PAPER 1:
INK 7: BRIGHT 0: BORDER 1: INVE
RSE 0: CLS
20 GO SUB 1140: REM INITIALISE
30 PRINT : PRINT INK 6; BRIGHT
1; "-----"
----"
40 POKE 23658,200: PRINT ">";:
INPUT X$: PRINT X$'
50 IF X$="" THEN STOP : REM QU
IT BY PRESSING ENTER
60 PRINT
70 IF X$=Z$ THEN PRINT "PLEASE
DON'T REPEAT YOURSELF": GO TO 3
0
80 LET Z$=X$: LET X$=X$+"
"
90 IF X$( TO 7)="GOODBYE" THEN
PRINT "OK. SEE YOU AGAIN SOMETI
ME.": STOP
```

Line 40 prints the ">" prompt, then accepts the user input. If the input is the empty string (that is, the user has just pressed RETURN rather than entering a phrase) the program terminates.

Line 60 prints a blank line, and line 70 compares this input (X\$) with the one given the previous time (Z\$) and if it finds they are the same says PLEASE DON'T REPEAT YOURSELF and then returns to 30 for new input. Line 80 sets the new input equal to Z\$, for checking the next time around. If the first seven letters of the input spell out GOODBYE the computer replies with OK, SEE YOU AGAIN SOMETIME and terminates the program.

Having survived this series of hurdles, the work begins in earnest:

```

100 REM ** LOOK FOR TRIGGER PHR
ASES AT START OF INPUT **
110 LET L=0
120 LET L=L+1
130 LET LN=CODE C$(L,1)-40
140 IF X$( TO LN-1)=C$(L,2 TO L
N) THEN GO TO 360: REM TRIGGER F
OUND
150 IF L<K THEN GO TO 120

```

It scans, using the elements of the C\$ array, the first portion of the input, looking for a match. If it finds one, action moves to line 360 where the job of matching the input phrase with the rest of the player input is carried out:

```

360 REM ** TRIGGER PHRASE FOUND
AT START OF INPUT **
370 LET T=INT (RND*3)+1
380 IF T=1 THEN LET G$=D$(L)
390 IF T=2 THEN LET G$=E$(L)
400 IF T=3 THEN LET G$=F$(L)
410 REM ** CHECK TO SEE IF ENDS
WITH ASTERISK, IF SO NEEDS PART
OF INPUT ADDED **

```

```

420 LET FLAG=0
425 FOR R=65 TO 1 STEP -1: IF G
$(R)=" " THEN NEXT R
430 IF G$(R)="*" THEN LET FLAG=
1: LET G$=G$( TO R-1)
440 PRINT G$; " ";
450 IF FLAG=0 THEN GO TO 30: RE
M NO FURTHER MATERIAL NEEDED
460 REM ** NOW USE BALANCE OF I
NPUT **
465 FOR R=LEN X$ TO 1 STEP -1:
IF X$(R)=" " THEN NEXT R
466 LET X$=X$( TO R)
470 LET X$=" "+X$(LN+1 TO LEN X
$)+" "
480 REM *****
490 REM ** CONJUGATION CHANGES
**
500 REM * ALSO LOOK FOR "MY" TO
TRIGGER "MYFLAG" (K$) *
510 LET LN=LEN X$
520 LET M=0
530 LET M=M+1
540 IF M=LN THEN GO TO 30
550 IF X$(M)=" " THEN GO TO 570
560 GO TO 530
570 LET X=M+1
580 LET Y=0
590 LET Y=Y+1
595 IF LEN X$<X+Y THEN LET X$=X
$+" "
600 IF X$(X+Y)=" " THEN LET Q$=
X$(X TO X+Y-1): GO TO 630
610 IF X+Y>250 THEN GO TO 530
620 GO TO 590
630 LET MN=0

```

```

640 LET MN=MN+1
650 IF Q$="MY" AND K$="" THEN L
ET K$=X$(X+3 TO LEN X$-4)
660 IF Q$=A$(MN,2 TO CODE A$(MN
,1)-40) THEN PRINT B$(MN,2 TO CO
DE B$(MN,1)-40); " ";: GO TO 530
670 IF MN<KK THEN GO TO 640
680>PRINT Q$; " ";
690 GO TO 530

```

The section from lines 370 through to 400 chooses one of the three reply openings, from D\$(n), E\$(n) and F\$(n). Line 420 sets a flag (called FLAG) to zero, and then uses line 430 to see if the chosen phrase ends with an asterisk (telling it, you'll recall, that this is only a partial reply, with additional material needed from the user input).

If it finds that there is an asterisk at the end, the flag is set to one and the final part of line 430 strips the flag off.

Line 440 prints the chosen phrase. If FLAG still equals zero (line 450) the program goes back to line 30 for the next input. If not, the DOCTOR must scan through the balance of the user input, making the conjugation changes (using, as I pointed out earlier, the same code as TRANSLATE employed) needed.

As well, as the REM statement in line 500 points out, the program is looking for the word MY to trigger K\$, the 'myflag'. If it finds the word MY in the input (such as in the sentence IT IS TO DO WITH MY MAD TEACHER) and the 'myflag' (K\$) has not been assigned, it will take the balance of the user input from the word MY and assign that to K\$, so — in this case — it would be set to MAD TEACHER. Later, if the DOCTOR cannot find a trigger in a user input, it can use

K\$ with other phrases (such as EARLIER YOU MENTIONED YOUR MAD TEACHER. TELL ME A BIT MORE ABOUT THAT) to keep the conversation going. The effect on users of this tiny piece of trickery can be quite extraordinary.

If no trigger phrase has been found, the computer looks for a trigger word, using this section of code:

```
160 REM ** PROGRAM GETS HERE IF
ON TRIGGER PHRASE FOUND **
170 REM ** NOW LOOK FOR TRIGGER
WORDS WITHIN INPUT **
180 LET X$=" "+X$+" "
190 LET M=LEN X$
200 LET L=0
210 LET L=L+1
220 IF L=M-1 THEN GO TO 800: RE
M NO TRIGGER FOUND
230 IF X$(L)=" " THEN GO TO 250
240 GO TO 210
250 LET X=L+1
260 LET Y=0
270 LET Y=Y+1
280 IF X$(X+Y)=" " THEN LET Q$=
X$(X TO X+Y): GO TO 300
290 GO TO 270
300 LET N=0
310 LET N=N+1
320 IF Q$( TO LEN Q$)=C$(N,2 TO
CODE C$(N,1)-40) THEN GO TO 710
: REM TRIGGER WORD FOUND
330 IF N<K THEN GO TO 310
340 GO TO 210
```

# USING THE MYFLAG

If it fails in this search, the computer must fall back on the myflag (if it exists) or a random phrase (if myflag is an unassigned string):

```
800 REM ** RANDOM REPLIES **
      **** NO TRIGGER ****
820 LET T=INT (RND*8)+1
850 IF T=1 THEN PRINT "WHAT DOES THAT SUGGEST TO YOU?": GO TO 30
870 IF T=2 THEN PRINT "I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND FULLY?": GO TO 30
890 IF T=3 THEN PRINT "PLEASE ELABORATE ON THAT?": GO TO 30
910 IF T=4 THEN PRINT "THAT'S VERY INTERESTING?": GO TO 30
930 IF T=5 THEN PRINT "WELL... PLEASE CONTINUE .....": GO TO 30
950 IF T=6 THEN PRINT "WHY?": GO TO 30
970 IF T=7 THEN PRINT "AND THEN?": GO TO 30
990 IF T=8 THEN PRINT "I SEE .. PLEASE TELL ME MORE ON THAT.": GO TO 30
1010 REM *** USE "MYFLAG" ***
1020 LET T=INT (RND*8)+1
1030 IF T=1 THEN PRINT "TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR ";K$
1040 IF T=2 THEN PRINT "EARLIER YOU MENTIONED YOUR ";K$;" TELL ME A BIT MORE ABOUT THAT."
```



```

1050 IF T=3 THEN PRINT "DOES THA
T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOUR
";K$;"?"
1060 IF T=4 THEN PRINT "IS THERE
A LINK THERE WITH YOUR";K$;"?"
1070 IF T=5 THEN PRINT "WHY DON'
T WE GO BACK AND DISCUSS
YOUR ";K$;" A LITTLE MORE?"
1080 IF T=6 THEN PRINT "DOES ANY
CONNECTION BETWEEN THAT AND
YOUR ";K$;" SUGGEST ITSELF?"
1090 IF T=7 THEN PRINT "WOULD YO
U PREFER TO TALK ABOUT YOUR ";K
$
1100 IF T=8 THEN PRINT "I THINK
PERHAPS WORRIES ABOUT YOUR ";K
$;" ARE BOTHERING YOU..."
1110 IF RND>.7 THEN LET K$=""
1120 GO TO 30

```

Line 810 checks to see what the string variable, K\$, has been assigned to. If it finds that K\$ is not empty, the action goes to the section from 1020 to 1110 and one of eight replies which can use the myflag is printed up (such as TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR ... or WHY DON'T WE GO BACK AND DISCUSS YOUR ... A LITTLE MORE?)

At the end of this section (line 1110), K\$ is reset to the empty string around 30% of the time, thus allowing it to be reset if another MY is found in later input.

If K\$ is unassigned, the DOCTOR chooses from the eight random replies (in lines 850 through to 1000). These are designed to keep the conversation flowing.

Now that you know how it works, it is time to hang up your computer's shingle, and go into practice.

```
10 REM DOCTOR
15 BRIGHT 1: FLASH 0: PAPER 1:
INK 7: BRIGHT 0: BORDER 1: INVE
RSE 0: CLS
20 GO SUB 1140: REM INITIALISE
30 PRINT : PRINT INK 6; BRIGHT
1; "-----
----"
40 POKE 23658,200: PRINT ">";:
INPUT X$: PRINT X$'
50 IF X$="" THEN STOP : REM QU
IT BY PRESSING ENTER
60 PRINT
70 IF X$=Z$ THEN PRINT "PLEASE
DON'T REPEAT YOURSELF": GO TO 3
0
80 LET Z$=X$: LET X$=X$+ "
"
90 IF X$( TO 7)="GOODBYE" THEN
PRINT "OK. SEE YOU AGAIN SOMETI
ME.": STOP
100 REM ** LOOK FOR TRIGGER PHR
ASES AT START OF INPUT **
110 LET L=0
120 LET L=L+1
130 LET LN=CODE C$(L,1)-40
140 IF X$( TO LN-1)=C$(L,2 TO L
N) THEN GO TO 360: REM TRIGGER F
OUND
150 IF L<K THEN GO TO 120
160 REM ** PROGRAM GETS HERE IF
ON TRIGGER PHRASE FOUND **
```

```

170 REM ** NOW LOOK FOR TRIGGER
WORDS WITHIN INPUT **
180 LET X$=" "+X$+" "
190 LET M=LEN X$
200 LET L=0
210 LET L=L+1
220 IF L=M-1 THEN GO TO 800: RE
M NO TRIGGER FOUND
230 IF X$(L)=" " THEN GO TO 250
240 GO TO 210
250 LET X=L+1
260 LET Y=0
270 LET Y=Y+1
280 IF X$(X+Y)=" " THEN LET Q$=
X$(X TO X+Y): GO TO 300
290 GO TO 270
300 LET N=0
310 LET N=N+1
320 IF Q$( TO LEN Q$)=C$(N,2 TO
CODE C$(N,1)-40) THEN GO TO 710
: REM TRIGGER WORD FOUND
330 IF N<K THEN GO TO 310
340 GO TO 210
350 REM *****
360 REM ** TRIGGER PHRASE FOUND
AT START OF INPUT **
370 LET T=INT (RND*3)+1
380 IF T=1 THEN LET G$=D$(L)
390 IF T=2 THEN LET G$=E$(L)
400 IF T=3 THEN LET G$=F$(L)
410 REM ** CHECK TO SEE IF ENDS
WITH ASTERISK, IF SO NEEDS PART
OF INPUT ADDED **
420 LET FLAG=0
425 FOR R=65 TO 1 STEP -1: IF G
$(R)=" " THEN NEXT R

```

```

430 IF G$(R)="*" THEN LET FLAG=
1: LET G$=G$( TO R-1)
440 PRINT G$; " ";
450 IF FLAG=0 THEN GO TO 30: RE
M NO FURTHER MATERIAL NEEDED
460 REM ** NOW USE BALANCE OF I
NPUT **
465 FOR R=LEN X$ TO 1 STEP -1:
IF X$(R)=" " THEN NEXT R
466 LET X$=X$( TO R)
470 LET X$=" "+X$(LN+1 TO LEN X
$)+" "
480 REM *****
490 REM ** CONJUGATION CHANGES
**
500 REM * ALSO LOOK FOR "MY" TO
TRIGGER "MYFLAG" (K$) *
510 LET LN=LEN X$
520 LET M=0
530 LET M=M+1
540 IF M=LN THEN GO TO 30
550 IF X$(M)=" " THEN GO TO 570
560 GO TO 530
570 LET X=M+1
580 LET Y=0
590 LET Y=Y+1
595 IF LEN X$<X+Y THEN LET X$=X
$+" "
600 IF X$(X+Y)=" " THEN LET Q$=
X$(X TO X+Y-1): GO TO 630
610 IF X+Y>250 THEN GO TO 530
620 GO TO 590
630 LET MN=0
640 LET MN=MN+1
650 IF Q$="MY" AND K$="" THEN L
ET K$=X$(X+3 TO LEN X$-4)

```

```

660 IF Q$=A$(MN,2 TO CODE A$(MN
,1)-40) THEN PRINT B$(MN,2 TO CO
DE B$(MN,1)-40); " ";: GO TO 530
670 IF MN<KK THEN GO TO 640
680 PRINT Q$; " ";
690 GO TO 530
700 REM *****
710 REM * TRIGGER WORD FOUND *
720 LET T=INT (RND*3)+1
730 LET Q$=""
740 IF T=1 THEN LET Q$=D$(N)
750>IF T=2 THEN LET Q$=E$(N)
760 IF T=3 THEN LET Q$=F$(N)
770 IF Q$(LEN Q$)="*" THEN PRIN
T Q$: GO TO 30
780 REM ** FALLS THROUGH TO
NEXT SECTION IF TRIGGER WORD
JUDGED UNSUITABLE **
790 REM *****
800 REM ** RANDOM REPLIES **
      *** NO TRIGGER ***
820 LET T=INT (RND*8)+1
850 IF T=1 THEN PRINT "WHAT DOE
S THAT SUGGEST TO YOU?": GO TO 3
0
870 IF T=2 THEN PRINT "I'M NOT
SURE I UNDERSTAND FULLY?": GO TO
30
890 IF T=3 THEN PRINT "PLEASE E
LABORATE ON THAT?": GO TO 30
910 IF T=4 THEN PRINT "THAT'S V
ERY INTERESTING?": GO TO 30
930 IF T=5 THEN PRINT "WELL...
PLEASE CONTINUE .....": GO TO 3
0

```

```

950 IF T=6 THEN PRINT "WHY?": G
O TO 30
970 IF T=7 THEN PRINT "AND THEN
?": GO TO 30
990 IF T=8 THEN PRINT "I SEE ..
PLEASE TELL ME MORE ON THAT.":
GO TO 30
1010 REM *** USE "MYFLAG" ***
1020 LET T=INT (RND*8)+1
1030 IF T=1 THEN PRINT "TELL ME
MORE ABOUT YOUR ";K$
1040 IF T=2 THEN PRINT "EARLIER
YOU MENTIONED YOUR ";K$;" TELL M
E A BIT MORE ABOUT THAT."
1050 IF T=3 THEN PRINT "DOES THA
T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOUR
";K$;"?"
1060 IF T=4 THEN PRINT "IS THERE
A LINK THERE WITH YOUR";K$;"?"
1070 IF T=5 THEN PRINT "WHY DON'
T WE GO BACK AND DISCUSS
YOUR ";K$;" A LITTLE MORE?"
1080 IF T=6 THEN PRINT "DOES ANY
CONNECTION BETWEEN THAT AND
YOUR ";K$;" SUGGEST ITSELF?"
1090 IF T=7 THEN PRINT "WOULD YO
U PREFER TO TALK ABOUT YOUR ";K
$
1100 IF T=8 THEN PRINT "I THINK
PERHAPS WORRIES ABOUT YOUR ";K
$;" ARE BOTHERING YOU..."
1110 IF RND>.7 THEN LET K$=""
1120 GO TO 30
1130 REM *****
1140 REM ** INITIALIZATION **
1150 RANDOMIZE

```

```

1160 CLS
1180 DIM A$(14,20): DIM B$(14,20)
): REM CONJUGATIONS
1190 DIM C$(46,15): DIM D$(46,65)
): DIM E$(46,65): DIM F$(46,65):
  REM TRIGGER  WORDS AND REPLIES
1200 LET Z$="": REM TO STOP
REPETITIONS
1210 LET K$="": REM "MYFLAG"
1220 PRINT : PRINT
1230 PRINT FLASH 1; PAPER 1; INK
  5;"THE DOCTOR IS IN PLEASE STAN
D BY"
1240 LET KK=0
1250 LET KK=KK+1
1260 READ A$(KK),B$(KK)
1261 FOR R=14 TO 1 STEP -1: IF A
$(KK,R)=" " THEN NEXT R
1262 LET A$(KK)=CHR$(R+41)+A$(K
K, TO 19)
1263 FOR R=14 TO 1 STEP -1: IF B
$(KK,R)=" " THEN NEXT R
1264 LET B$(KK)=CHR$(R+41)+B$(K
K, TO 19)
1270 IF B$(KK,2)="*" THEN GO TO
1290
1280 GO TO 1250
1290 LET K=0
1300 LET K=K+1
1310 READ C$(K),D$(K),E$(K),F$(K
)
1311 FOR R=10 TO 1 STEP -1: IF C
$(K,R)=" " THEN NEXT R
1313 LET C$(K)=CHR$(R+41)+C$(K,
TO 14)

```

```

1320 IF F$(K,1)="*" THEN GO TO 1
340
1330 GO TO 1300
1340 CLS
1350 PRINT "WELCOME TO ANOTHER S
SESSION"
1360 PRINT "WITH THE DOCTOR..."
1380 PRINT "HELLO..."
1390 RETURN
1400 REM *****
1410 REM * DATA *
1420 REM ** CONJUGATIONS **
1430 DATA "AM", "ARE", "WAS", "WERE
", "I", "YOU", "MY", "YOUR"
1440 DATA "YOU'VE", "I'VE", "YOUR"
, "MY", "ARE", "AM"
1450 DATA "YOU'RE", "I AM", "YOURS
", "MINE", "YOU", "ME", "ME", "YOU", "
*", "*"
1460 REM * TRIGGER WORDS/REPLY P
HRASES *
1470 DATA "I NEED"
1480 DATA "WHY DO YOU NEED*"
1490 DATA "WOULD IT REALLY BE HE
LPFUL IF YOU GOT*"
1500 DATA "ARE YOU SURE YOU NEED
*"
1510 DATA "WHY DON'T YOU"
1520 DATA "DO YOU REALLY THINK I
DON'T*"
1530 DATA "PERHAPS EVENTUALLY I
WILL*"
1540 DATA "DO YOU REALLY WANT ME
TO*"
1550 DATA "WHY CAN'T I"

```



1560 DATA "DO YOU THINK YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO\*"  
1570 DATA "WHY CAN'T YOU\*"  
1580 DATA "PERHAPS YOU HAVEN'T TRIED HARD ENOUGH?"  
1590 DATA "ARE YOU"  
1600 DATA "WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WHETHER I AM OR NOT\*"  
1610 DATA "WOULD YOU PREFER IT IF I WERE NOT \*"  
1620 DATA "PERHAPS YOU SOMETIMES DREAM I AM\*"  
1630 DATA "I CAN'T"  
1640 DATA "HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T\*"  
1650 DATA "HAVE YOU TRIED?"  
1660 DATA "PERHAPS, NOW, YOU CAN\*"  
1670 DATA "I AM"  
1680 DATA "DID YOU COME TO ME BECAUSE YOU ARE\*"  
1690 DATA "HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN\*"  
1700 DATA "DO YOU THINK IT'S ABSOLUTELY NORMAL TO BE\*"  
1710 DATA "I'M"  
1720 DATA "DO YOU ENJOY BEING\*"  
1730 DATA "WHY TELL ME YOU'RE\*"  
1740 DATA "WHY ARE YOU\*"  
1750 DATA "I WANT"  
1760 DATA "WHAT WOULD IT MEAN TO YOU IF YOU GOT\*"  
1770 DATA "WHY DO YOU WANT\*"  
1780 DATA "WHAT WOULD IT ADD TO YOUR LIFE IF YOU GOT\*"  
1790 DATA "WHAT"  
1800 DATA "WHY DO YOU ASK?"

1810 DATA "HOW WOULD AN ANSWER T  
O THAT HELP YOU?"  
1820 DATA "WHAT DO YOU THINK?"  
1830 DATA "HOW"  
1840 DATA "HOW WOULD YOU SOLVE T  
HAT?"  
1850 DATA "IT WOULD BE BEST TO A  
NSWER THAT FOR YOURSELF"  
1860 DATA "WHAT IS IT YOU'RE REA  
LLY ASKING?"  
1870 DATA "WHO"  
1880 DATA "DO YOU OFTEN THINK AB  
OUT SUCH QUESTIONS?"  
1890 DATA "WHAT ANSWER WOULD PUT  
YOUR MIND AT REST?"  
1900 DATA "WHO DO YOU THINK\*"  
1910 DATA "WHERE"  
1920 DATA "THAT'S A PRETTY SILLY  
QUESTION"  
1930 DATA "DO YOU REALLY NEED TO  
KNOW WHERE\*"  
1940 DATA "WHAT WOULD IT MEAN TO  
YOU IF I TOLD TOU WHERE\*"  
1950 DATA "WHEN"  
1960 DATA "HOW SHOULD I KNOW WHE  
N\*"  
1970 DATA "THE TIME SHOULD NOT B  
E DISCUSSED HERE"  
1980 DATA "THINGS HAPPENING AT M  
ORE .OR LESSTHE RIGHT TIME"  
1990 DATA "WHY"  
2000 DATA "WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME  
THE REASON WHY\*"  
2010 DATA "WHAT HAVE YOU SAID TO  
ALLOW ME TO TELL YOU WHY\*"

2020 DATA "DO YOU REALLY NEED TO  
KNOW WHY\*"  
2030 DATA "BECAUSE"  
2040 DATA "IS THAT THE REAL REAS  
ON?"  
2050 DATA "WHAT OTHER REASONS CO  
ME TO MIND?"  
2060 DATA "WHAT ELSE DOES THAT E  
XPLAIN?"  
2070 DATA "SORRY"  
2080 DATA "IN WHAT OTHER CIRCUMS  
TANCES DO YOU APOLOGISE?"  
2090 DATA "THERE ARE MANY TIMES  
WHEN NO APOLOGY IS NEEDED"  
2100 DATA "WHAT FEELINGS DO YOU  
HAVE WHEN YOU APOLOGIZE?"  
2110 DATA "HELLO"  
2120 DATA "HELLO ...IT'S GOOD TO  
SEE YOU"  
2130 DATA "HELLO TO YOU...I'M GL  
AD YOU COULD DROP BY TODAY"  
2140 DATA "HI...I'M LOOKING FORW  
ARD TO ANOTHER CHAT WITH YOU."  
2150 DATA "HI"  
2160 DATA "HI THERE...I'M GLAD T  
O SEE YOU HERE TODAY"  
2170 DATA "HI. I'M GLAD YOU'VE D  
ROPPED BY."  
2180 DATA "HI TO YOU...RELAX NOW  
,AND LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR SITUA  
TION"  
2190 DATA "MAYBE"  
2200 DATA "YOU SEEM A LITTLE HES  
ITANT"  
2210 DATA "THAT'S PRETTY INDECIS  
IVE"

2220 DATA "IN WHAT OTHER SITUATIONS DO YOU SHOW SUCH A TENTATIVE APPROACH?"

2230 DATA "NO"

2240 DATA "WHY ARE YOU BEING SO NEGATIVE ABOUT IT?"

2250 DATA "ARE YOU SAYING THAT I LIST TO BE NEGATIVE"

2260 DATA "THAT'S PRETTY FORCEFUL. WHAT DOES IT SUGGEST TO YOU?"

2270 DATA "ALWAYS"

2280 DATA "PLEASE GIVE ME A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE"

2290 DATA "ISN'T 'ALWAYS' A LITTLE STRONG?"

2300 DATA "WHEN?"

2310 DATA "I THINK"

2320 DATA "DO YOU DOUBT\*"

2330 DATA "DO YOU REALLY THINK SO?"

2340 DATA "BUT YOU ARE NOT SURE\*"

2350 DATA "FRIEND"

2360 DATA "WHY DO YOU BRING UP THE SUBJECT OF FRIENDS?"

2370 DATA "WHAT IS YOUR BEST MEMORY OF A FRIEND?"

2380 DATA "PLEASE TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR FRIENDSHIP..."

2390 DATA "FRIENDS"

2400 DATA "IN WHAT WAY DO YOUR FRIENDS' REACTIONS BOTHER YOU?"

2410 DATA "WHAT MADE YOU START TO TALK ABOUT FRIENDS JUST NOW?"

2420 DATA "IN WHAT WAY DO YOUR F  
RIENDS IMPOSE ON YOU?"  
2430 DATA "YES"  
2440 DATA "WHAT LIES BEHIND YOUR  
CERTAINTY?"  
2450 DATA "YOU'RE PRETTY POSITIV  
E"  
2460 DATA "YOU SEEM VERY CERTAIN  
ABOUT IT"  
2470 DATA "COMPUTER"  
2480 DATA "WHAT FEELINGS DO YOU  
GET TALKING TO ME LIKE TH  
IS?"  
2490 DATA "ARE YOU THINKING ABOU  
T ME IN PARTICULAR?"  
2500 DATA "WHAT ASPECT OF COMPUT  
ERS INTERESTS YOU THE MOS  
T?"  
2510 DATA "IS IT"  
2520 DATA "DO YOU THINK IT IS\*"  
2530 DATA "IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES  
WOULD IT\*"  
2540 DATA "IT COULD WELL BE THAT  
\*"  
2550 DATA "IT IS"  
2560 DATA "WHAT DEGREE OF CERTAI  
NTY WOULD YOU PLACE ON IT BEING\*  
"  
2570 DATA "ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT  
IT'S\*"  
2580 DATA "HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF  
I TOLD YOU THAT IT PROBABLY ISN'  
T\*"  
2590 DATA "CAN YOU"  
2600 DATA "WHAT MAKES YOU THINK  
I CAN'T\*"

2610 DATA "DON'T YOU THINK THAT  
I CAN\*"  
2620 DATA "PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIK  
E TO BE ABLE TO\*"  
2630 DATA "CAN I"  
2640 DATA "PERHAPS YOU DON'T WAN  
T TO\*"  
2650 DATA "DO YOU WANT TO BE ABL  
E TO\*"  
2660 DATA "I DOUBT IT"  
2670 DATA "YOU ARE"  
2680 DATA "WHY DO YOU THINK I AM  
\*"  
2690 DATA "DOES IT PLEASE YOU TO  
BELIEVE I AM\*"  
2700 DATA "PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIK  
E TO BE\*"  
2710 DATA "YOU'RE"  
2720 DATA "WHY DON'T YOU THINK I  
AM\*"  
2730 DATA "DOES IT PLEASE YOU TO  
BELIEVE I AM\*"  
2740 DATA "WHY DO YOU SAY I AM\*"  
2750 DATA "I DON'T"  
2760 DATA "DON'T YOU REALLY"  
2770 DATA "WHY DON'T YOU\*"  
2780 DATA "DO YOU WANT TO BE ABL  
E TO\*"  
2790 DATA "I FEEL"  
2800 DATA "TELL ME MORE ABOUT SU  
CH FEELINGS"  
2810 DATA "DO YOU OFTEN FEEL\*"  
2820 DATA "DO YOU ENJOY FEELING\*  
"  
2830 DATA "FEEL"

2840>DATA "LET'S EXPLORE THAT STATEMENT A BIT?"  
2850 DATA "DO YOU OFTEN FEEL LIKE THAT?"  
2860 DATA "WHAT EMOTIONS DO SUCH FEELINGS STIR UP IN YOU"  
2870 DATA "I HAVE"  
2880 DATA "WHY TELL ME THAT YOU HAVE\*"  
2890 DATA "IT'S OBVIOUS TO ME THAT YOU HAVE\*"  
2900 DATA "HOW CAN I HELP YOU WITH\*"  
2910 DATA "I WOULD"  
2920 DATA "COULD YOU EXPLAIN WHY YOU WOULD\*"  
2930 DATA "WHO ELSE HAVE YOU TOLD YOU WOULD\*"  
2940 DATA "HOW SURE ARE YOU THAT YOU WOULD\*"  
2950 DATA "IS THERE"  
2960 DATA "OF COURSE THERE IS\*"  
2970 DATA "IT'S LIKELY THERE IS\*"  
"  
2980 DATA "WOULD YOU LIKE THERE TO BE\*"  
2990 DATA "MY"  
3000 DATA "YOUR\*"  
3010 DATA "I SEE , YOUR\*"  
3020 DATA "WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU THAT YOUR\*"  
3030 DATA "YOU"  
3040 DATA "THIS SESSION IS TO HELP YOU; NOT TO DISCUSS ME!!"  
3050 DATA "WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO SAY THAT ABOUT ME?"

3060 DATA "I'M TAKING NOTES ON A  
LL THIS TO SOLVE YOUR SITUATION"  
3070 DATA "I HATE"  
3080 DATA "WHY DO YOU HATE\*"  
3090 DATA "HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAT  
ED\*"  
3095 DATA "DO ALL YOUR FRIENDS H  
ATE\*"  
3100 DATA "\*", "\*", "\*", "\*"



# **CHAPTER NINE — MACHINE TRANSLATION**

It would seem — when thinking about some of the possibilities that arise from machines being able to understand and process natural language — that computers could be of great value in helping us translate from one human language to another. Such a hope has been with us since the early fifties, and a great deal of progress has been made in the field.

There are now more than 20 machine translation (MT) systems in use around the world. But, contrary to popular opinion, these systems do not work on a **SHOVE IN THE DOCUMENT IN ENGLISH IN ONE SLOT and GET THE FRENCH VERSION OUT OF ANOTHER** basis. MT is more subtle, and more involved. In fact, there are several subfields within the overall domain of MT.

## **STILL A USE FOR PEOPLE**

Although, in the early days of building MT systems, it was accepted (probably without too much thought) that human translators would eventually prove redundant as machines became more skilled, researchers have now confirmed that at present (and for the immediate future) the role of human translators is vital. Specialists in the field now talk about 'machine pre-translation', with the documents produced by MT systems being seen as simply rough working drafts of the final, translated works.

There are several different approaches to MT which are in use at present. These include systems which have been built with the idea of translating documents written in a kind of 'stripped-down', limited version of natural language, or documents which have been edited to make them easier for the machine to handle before they are fed to it. Xerox have a system of this type, called SYSTRAN. We'll be looking at some output produced by SYSTRAN (working on documents for the EEC) in due course.

Another approach is one where the user can modify the system to his or her own needs, giving it a vocabulary to suit the speciality in which the MT will take place. Such a system, called CULT, is currently in use in Hong Kong where it translates Chinese mathematical journals. The direct printout of the machine is bound and sold to libraries around the world.

When you and I, as laymen, have thought about MT, it is likely that we have envisaged machines which will perform in a STICK ENGLISH IN THE INPUT, GET FRENCH FROM THE OUTPUT mode, and this is the eventual goal of those developing MT. It is far from being realised at present. However, the SYSTRAM system — mentioned two paragraphs ago as working with documents written in 'sub-English', or ones which had been pre-edited — can be used in a 'freelance' mode, in which it will tackle any document which is fed into it. The success achieved has varied from document to document.

Many documents go through a pre-editing stage before being offered to a machine for translation. In this stage, an attempt is made to weed out potential ambiguities, and other aspects of the text which could trip up a machine. Many documents (most, in fact) need to have be post-edited. In this stage, a check is made for genuine errors by the machine, and syntax is cleaned up.

Some documents do not need to be post-edited. For certain purposes, the rough output direct from the MT system may be enough.

MT may also be carried out with the assistance of a human translator, intervening in the work while the translation is underway.

As you can see from the above, the role of the human is still vital in the translation process. And there is no indication that this will change in the near future. Machines can do the rough and ready pedestrian work of translation, but human polishing and correction is still needed.

Let's look at a genuine example of machine translation. This comes from an EEC document, translated from French to English by the SYSTRAN system in 1981.

Here is the start of the document in French:

Application de la micrologique au controle des operations de production.

But de la recherche:

Perfectionner les appareillages existants de sorte que les preposes soient debarasses des taches dans lesquelles leur jugement n'intervient pas.

Application au central de telesurveillance d'engins sur pneus.

The machine responded with this translation:

Application of micrological to the control of the production operations.

Aim of the research:

To improve existing equipments so that the officials debarasses tasks in which their judgement does not intervene.

Application to the exchange of telesurveillance of equipment on tyres.

Although this is pretty rough, a fair amount of the meaning comes through. The 'debarasses' which survives in the English translation is, in fact, due to a spelling error in the French original (it should have been 'debarrasses' which, presumably, the machine would have understood).

After the human post-editing, the document read as follows:

Application of micrology to the monitoring of production operations.

Aim of the research:

To perfect existing apparatus so that staff can be relieved of tasks where no judgement is required.

Application to the remote monitoring station for trackless vehicles.

I find it fascinating to follow through the way the document has evolved. Apart from the final line, the final version of the English text is not wildly different from SYSTRAN original output.

Not all of the document was as successfully translated. The human post-editor took a savage pen to one line further down the text, reducing the MT output to a shadow of its former self.

Here's what the machine printed out:

It publishes station and day reports indicating the duration and the importance relative of the periods devoted by each instrument supervised to the various possible activities: evacuation of the products, transport of equipment, maintenance, station service . . . as well as the number of evacuated coal cups.

This is the kind of text which is a dead giveaway of MT, with such phrases as 'the importance' relative of the periods' showing clearly their birth in French.

After post-editing, the text was reduced to the following:

It publishes shift and day reports indicating the duration and the relative portion of time spent by each vehicle recorded on the various possible tasks: coal clearance, materials transport, maintenance, refuelling points . . . as well as the number of coal buckets carried.

Finally, before we get on to creating our own 'translation' program, it is interesting to note that the vast majority of documents using MT at present are non-literary. The translation of literary works is another field entirely, and in so far as MT is concerned, is barely in its infancy.

# FRANGLAIS

This program, using a vocabulary devised by Jeremy Ruston and based on an idea from him, accepts English input, and gives out a strange polyglot mixture of French and English, where the easiest and most obvious words are translated into French, and the difficult ones are left in English (this technique could produce, for example, JE SUIS UN TRES EXASPERATED HOMME for I AM A VERY EXASPERATED MAN). The magazine Punch has a regular feature called “Let’s Talk Franglais” which shows how delightful such a curious mixture of languages can be.

The program given here is not designed to be a serious one. It does, however, indicate some of the problems inherent in MT. More seriously, with a greatly extended vocabulary, it could be used to produce a very rough document in a kind of French from English text (or from French to English, simply by swapping two variables) which could then be extensively post-edited. If the program was used in a field with a specialist vocabulary, it could do quite a serviceable job, although it would not be able to make any judgements to ensure that the various parts of a sentence (such as gender demands in French) were correct.

You may think the claim that this program could be used seriously, with an extended vocabulary, is unrealistic when you read some of the output of the program. However, if you think about it, you’ll see that its potential is by no means even approached in the current form.

Here's some of the output of TRANSLATE:

? Hello my good friends  
—>BONJOUR MON BON AMIS

? I am very pleased to see you here  
—>JE SUIS TRES PLEASÉ A VU VOUS ICI

? Could I have some steak for my evening  
meal  
—>COULD JE AI DES ENTRECOTE POUR MON  
EVENING MEAL

? Everybody thinks the trendy policeman  
is a super detective  
—>TOUT LE MONDE THINKS LE AVANT-GARDE  
GENDARME EST UNE FANTASTIQUE CLUESO

? If you turn left at Plains in Georgia  
you will end up in Paris  
—>IF VOUS TURN GAUCHE AT PARIS DANS  
GEORGIA VOUS WILL END UP DANS PLAINS

As you can see, I've deliberately fed in English that triggers  
the program's extremely limited vocabulary:

? I want some cigarettes to put behind  
the door in my house  
—>JE WANT DES GAULOISES A PUT DERRIERE  
LE PORTE DANS MON MAISON

? Pass the medicine for my mother which she must have when she is cold

—>PASS LE VIN POUR MON MERE WHICH SHE MUST AI QUAND SHE EST FROID

? When you play music I want to sing a song and wave my arm in the sun

—>QUAND VOUS PLAY MUSIQUE JE WANT A SING UNE CHANSON ET WAVE MON BRA DANS LE SOLIEL

? Fish and chips are for those who stand in the eye of the public

—>POISSON ET CHIPS EST POUR THOSE WHO STAND DANS LE ORIEL DE LE PUBLIC

? I am feeling right inside my head when i make music behind the little cat

—>JE SUIS FEELING DROITE INSIDE MON TETE QUAND JE MAKE MUSIQUE DERRIERE LE PETITE CHAT

## **PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

The program is simple to follow. It starts with (as usual) a call to a subroutine at the end of the program which initialises the variables.



```

10 REM *** TRANSLATE ***
15 POKE 23658,200
20 GO SUB 9000: REM INITIALISE

9000 REM ** INITIALISE **
9005 CLS
9010 DIM E$(100,15): REM
    ENGLISH WORDS
9020 DIM F$(100,20)

9100 LET COUNT=0
9105 LET COUNT=COUNT+1
9110 READ E$(COUNT),F$(COUNT)
9120 IF F$(COUNT,1)<>"*" THEN GO
    TO 9105
9490 RETURN
9500 REM ** DATA **
9510>DATA "THE","LE","ME","MOI",
    "I","JE","HERE","ICI","AM","SUIS
    ","ARE","EST","NOT","NE","IN","D
    ANS"
9515 DATA "WHEN","QUAND","YOU","
    VOUS","IS","EST","IT","IL","DAY"
    ,"JOUR","AND","ET","SOME","DES",
    "OF","DE"
9520 DATA "HAVE","AI","A","UNE",
    "MY","MON","YOUR","VOTRE","OF",
    "DE","TO","A","SEE","VU","VERY",
    "TRES"
9530 DATA "ROOM","CHAMBRE","STEA
    K","ENTRECOTE","FRIES","POMME FR
    IES","BIG","GRAND","FOR","POUR"
9540 DATA "MATCH","ALLUMETTE","S
    UPER","FANTASTIQUE","DEAD","MORT
    ","WITH","AVEC"

```

? Pass the medicine for my mother which she must have when she is cold

—>PASS LE VIN POUR MON MERE WHICH SHE MUST AI QUAND SHE EST FROID

? When you play music I want to sing a song and wave my arm in the sun

—>QUAND VOUS PLAY MUSIQUE JE WANT A SING UNE CHANSON ET WAVE MON BRA DANS LE SOLIEL

? Fish and chips are for those who stand in the eye of the public

—>POISSON ET CHIPS EST POUR THOSE WHO STAND DANS LE ORIEL DE LE PUBLIC

? I am feeling right inside my head when i make music behind the little cat

—>JE SUIS FEELING DROITE INSIDE MON TETE QUAND JE MAKE MUSIQUE DERRIERE LE PETITE CHAT

## **PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

The program is simple to follow. It starts with (as usual) a call to a subroutine at the end of the program which initialises the variables.

```

10 REM *** TRANSLATE ***
15 POKE 23658,200
20 GO SUB 9000: REM INITIALISE

9000 REM ** INITIALISE **
9005 CLS
9010 DIM E$(100,15): REM
    ENGLISH WORDS
9020 DIM F$(100,20)

9100 LET COUNT=0
9105 LET COUNT=COUNT+1
9110 READ E$(COUNT),F$(COUNT)
9120 IF F$(COUNT,1)<>"*" THEN GO
    TO 9105
9490 RETURN
9500 REM ** DATA **
9510>DATA "THE","LE","ME","MOI",
    "I","JE","HERE","ICI","AM","SUIS
    ","ARE","EST","NOT","NE","IN","D
    ANS"
9515 DATA "WHEN","QUAND","YOU","
    VOUS","IS","EST","IT","IL","DAY"
    ,"JOUR","AND","ET","SOME","DES",
    "OF","DE"
9520 DATA "HAVE","AI","A","UNE",
    "MY","MON","YOUR","VOTRE","OF",
    "DE","TO","A","SEE","VU","VERY",
    "TRES"
9530 DATA "ROOM","CHAMBRE","STEA
    K","ENTRECOTE","FRIES","POMME FR
    IES","BIG","GRAND","FOR","POUR"
9540 DATA "MATCH","ALLUMETTE","S
    UPER","FANTASTIQUE","DEAD","MORT
    ","WITH","AVEC"

```

Here you can see the 'translating engine' mechanism. The work actually begins when your Spectrum prints a little arrow at the start of the line, to indicate the start of the translated lines.

```
1000 REM ** TRANSLATE **
1002 PRINT TAB 2; "-->";
1005 LET L=LEN A$: LET K=0
1010 LET K=K+1
1015 IF K=L THEN PRINT : PRINT :
      RETURN
1020 LET B$=" "+A$+" ": IF B$(K)
=" " THEN GO TO 1200
1030 GO TO 1010
1200 LET X=K+1
1210 LET Y=0
1220 LET Y=Y+1
1230 IF B$(X+Y)=" " THEN LET Q$=
B$(X TO X+Y): GO TO 1240
1235 GO TO 1220
1240 LET M=0
1250 LET M=M+1
1260 IF Q$<>E$(M, TO LEN Q$) THE
N GO TO 1265
1261 FOR G=15 TO 1 STEP -1: IF F
$(M,G)=" " THEN NEXT G
1262 PRINT F$(M,1 TO G); " ";: GO
TO 1280
1265 IF M<COUNT THEN GO TO 1250
1270 LET Q$=Q$( TO LEN Q$-1): PR
INT FLASH 1;Q$;: PRINT " ";
1280 GO TO 1010
```

The program goes through the text, looking for the space which indicates the start of a new word (the word, of course, starts after the space, which is why — in line 1020 — we added a space to each end of the input, so the program would not ignore the first and final words). Once it finds one (line 1020) it goes to the routine from 1200 which continues to search for the next space, so it can isolate the whole word. Then it simply runs through the vocabulary until it finds a match.

```
? My mother went to see the sea with a
very blue dog and a hot chicken supper
—>MON MERE WENT A VU LE MER AVEC UNE
TRES BLEU CHIEN ET UNE CHAUD POULET
SUPPER
```

If it does find such a match, the French word is printed in place of the English one, and the program returns to 1010 to continue the search. Note that once a match has been found, the program immediately reverts to this point. It does not waste time searching through the rest of the vocabulary. This means that words near the top of the list will be translated more quickly than those at the end. This is why the commonly-used words (such as THE, ME and AM) are at the top of the list.

Time now for you to experience a little MT of your own with TRANSLATE:

```
10 REM *** TRANSLATE ***
15 POKE 23658,200
20 GO SUB 9000: REM INITIALISE
25 FLASH 0: BRIGHT 1: PAPER 1:
INK 7: BRIGHT 0: BORDER 1: CLS
```

```

30 INPUT A$: REM ACCEPT USER I
NPUT
35 BEEP .2,1
40 IF A$="" THEN STOP
45 PRINT "?";A$
50 INK 5: GO SUB 1000: INK 7:
REM TRANSLATE
60 GO TO 30
240 LET M=1
980 STOP
999 REM *****
1000 REM ** TRANSLATE **
1002 PRINT TAB 2;"-->";
1005 LET L=LEN A$: LET K=0
1010 LET K=K+1
1015 IF K=L THEN PRINT : PRINT :
RETURN
1020 LET B$=" "+A$+" ": IF B$(K)
=" " THEN GO TO 1200
1030 GO TO 1010
1200 LET X=K+1
1210 LET Y=0
1220 LET Y=Y+1
1230 IF B$(X+Y)=" " THEN LET Q$=
B$(X TO X+Y): GO TO 1240
1235 GO TO 1220
1240 LET M=0
1250 LET M=M+1
1260 IF Q$<>E$(M, TO LEN Q$) THE
N GO TO 1265
1261 FOR G=15 TO 1 STEP -1: IF F
$(M,G)=" " THEN NEXT G
1262 PRINT F$(M,1 TO G);" ";: GO
TO 1280
1265 IF M<COUNT THEN GO TO 1250

```

```

1270 LET Q$=Q$( TO LEN Q$-1): PR
INT FLASH 1;Q$;: PRINT " ";
1280 GO TO 1010
8990 REM *****
9000 REM ** INITIALISE **
9005 CLS
9010 DIM E$(100,15): REM TO HOLD
ENGLISH WORDS
9020 DIM F$(100,20): REM TO HOLD
FRENCH WORDS
9100 LET COUNT=0
9105 LET COUNT=COUNT+1
9110 READ E$(COUNT),F$(COUNT)
9120 IF F$(COUNT,1)<>"*" THEN GO
TO 9105
9490 RETURN
9500 REM ** DATA **
9510 DATA "THE", "LE", "ME", "MOI",
"I", "JE", "HERE", "ICI", "AM", "SUIS
", "ARE", "EST", "NOT", "NE", "IN", "D
ANS"
9515 DATA "WHEN", "QUAND", "YOU", "
VOUS", "IS", "EST", "IT", "IL", "DAY"
, "JOUR", "AND", "ET", "SOME", "DES",
"OF", "DE"
9520 DATA "HAVE", "AI", "A", "UNE",
"MY", "MON", "YOUR", "VOTRE", "OF", "
DE", "TO", "A", "SEE", "VU", "VERY", "
TRES"
9530 DATA "ROOM", "CHAMBRE", "STEA
K", "ENTRECOTE", "FRIES", "POMME FR
IES", "BIG", "GRAND", "FOR", "POUR"
9540 DATA "MATCH", "ALLUMETTE", "S
UPER", "FANTASTIQUE", "DEAD", "MORT
", "WITH", "AVEC"

```

9550 DATA "GIN", "VIN", "WHISKEY",  
 "VIN", "WHISKY", "VIN", "BEER", "VIN",  
 "MARTINI", "VIN", "WINE", "VIN"  
 9560 DATA "PARIS", "PLAINS", "PLAI  
 NS", "PARIS", "HAIR", "CHEVAUX", "CI  
 GARETTES", "GAULOISES"  
 9570 DATA "ARM", "BRA", "LEG", "JAM  
 BE", "RIGHT", "DROITE", "LEFT", "GAU  
 CHE"  
 9580 DATA "TRENDY", "AVANT-GARDE  
 ", "MEDICINE", "VIN", "POLICEMAN", "  
 GENDARME"  
 9590 DATA "DETECTIVE", "CLUESO", "  
 DOOR", "PORTE", "HEAD", "TETE", "LOV  
 E", "AMOUR"  
 9600 DATA "HOUSE", "MAISON", "CHAI  
 R", "CHAISE", "EYE", "ORIEL", "SUN",  
 "SOLIEL"  
 9610 DATA "SONG", "CHANSON", "FRIE  
 NDS", "AMIS", "BEHIND", "DERRIERE",  
 "SEA", "MER", "MOTHER", "MERE"  
 9620 DATA "CAT", "CHAT", "DOG", "CH  
 IEN", "BLUE", "BLEU", "LITTLE", "PET  
 ITE"  
 9630 DATA "MUSIC", "MUSIQUE", "PLE  
 ASE", "S'IL VOUS PLAIT", "BOY", "GA  
 RSON", "GIRL", "FILLE"  
 9640 DATA "FISH", "POISSON", "CHIC  
 KEN", "POULET", "DUCK", "CANARD", "M  
 USTARD", "MOUTARDE"  
 9650 DATA "HOT", "CHAUD", "COLD", "  
 FROID", "EVERYBODY", "TOUT LE MOND  
 E"  
 9660 DATA "HELLO", "BONJOUR", "GOO  
 D", "BON"  
 9999 DATA "\*", "\*"



# CHAPTER TEN — HANSHAN

Our final program in this section on language handling creates random poems. This is a pretty trivial program, and one which — you may argue — hardly gives evidence of the presence of artificial intelligence.

However, imagine you were reading a book like this 30 years ago. The author makes a casual remark about a lowcost device writing poetry automatically, and then dismisses this as a minor matter. Thirty years ago it would have been extraordinary. And, really, when you think about it, it still is. We have become so accustomed to the miraculous we tend to be blind to it.

So, with that thought in mind, we turn to HANSHAN to create a few poems. The program is named after the Chinese poet HAN-SHAN, who lived in the 8th and 9th centuries. After falling out with his farming family, he wandered for many years, then settled as a recluse on the Cold Mountain (Han-Shan) after which he is now known.

All the phrases used in this program's DATA store come from the book *Chinese Poems* (Arthur Waley, Unwin Paperbacks, London, 1982):

```
370 REM * SINGLE WORDS *
380 DATA "SCURRYING", "TREADING"
, "GRAZING", "WITHERED", "CHISELLED"
"
390 DATA "MUFFLED", "FLANKED", "W
RITHED", "BENDING", "TWISTING"
```

```

400 DATA "HAMMERED", "HANGING", "
      , "WINDING", "CLEAREST"
410 DATA "EARTHWARD", "CATARACT"
, "SACRIFICIAL", "SLIPPERY", "ASUND
ER"
420 REM * SHORT PHRASES *
430 DATA "IN THE COOL STREAM"
440 DATA "NODDED IN CLUSTERED G
RACE"
450 DATA "WAVES OF COOLNESS"
460 DATA "OUT FROM THE DEEPEST"
470 DATA "SULLEN, SULLEN"
480 DATA "IN THE BLACK DARKNESS
"
490 DATA "I TAKE YOUR POEMS"
500 DATA "I PUT OUT THE LAMP"
510 DATA "MY SHORT SPAN RUNS OU
T"
520 DATA "THOSE THAT ARE LEFT"
530 DATA "MEN OF LEARNING"
540 DATA "MEN AF ACTION"
550 DATA "I HURRY FORWARD"
560 DATA "WHY SHOULD YOU WASTE"
570 DATA "WHEN SHALL WE MEET"
580 DATA "LITTLE SLEEPING"
590 DATA "AND MUCH GRIEVING"
600 DATA "FOR THESE FEW STEPS"
610 DATA "NOW AT DUSK"
620 DATA "I HAVE DONE WITH PROF
IT"

```

The program selects from one of three patterns, within which it creates poems which are Haiku-like (the Haiku is, of course, a Japanese form, but the program does not mind any conflict between Chinese phrases and the form into which they are placed by the program):

```

30 REM CHOOSE PATTERN
40 LET R=INT (RND*3)+1
50 GO SUB R*50+40
60 LET KK=RND: IF KK>.65 THEN
LET DD=RND*20-5: FOR G=DD TO DD+
5: BEEP .1,3: BEEP .1,7: BEEP .1
,-4: BEEP .1,G/2: NEXT G
65 IF KK<.4 THEN FOR G=1 TO 5:
BEEP .1,-7: BEEP .1,G*3: BEEP .
2,-2: BEEP .5,3: NEXT G
68 IF RND<.7 THEN FOR G=-5 TO
5: BEEP .1,G: NEXT G
70 PRINT ''
80 GO TO 40
90 REM ** PATTERN ONE **
100 PRINT W$(INT (RND*20)+1); ".
..";W$(INT (RND*20)+1)
110 PRINT TAB 5;"...";W$(INT (
RND*20)+1)
120 PRINT TAB 8;S$(INT (RND*20)
+1)
130 RETURN
140 REM ** PATTERN TWO **
150 PRINT S$(INT (RND*20)+1)
160 PRINT TAB 3;S$(INT (RND*20)
+1);"..."
170 PRINT TAB 6;S$(INT (RND*20)
+1)
180 RETURN
190 REM ** PATTERN THREE **
200 PRINT TAB 3;W$(INT (RND*20)
+1)
210 PRINT S$(INT (RND*20)+1)
220 PRINT TAB 3;W$(INT (RND*20)
+1);", ";S$(INT (RND*20)+1)
230 RETURN

```

Some of the poems produced by HANSHAN have a surprising degree of merit:

SULLEN, SULLEN  
I TAKE YOUR POEMS...  
MEN OF LEARNING

WHEN SHALL WE MEET  
FOR THESE FEW STEPS...  
IN THE BLACK DARKNESS

HANGING...TWISTING  
....WRITHED  
THOSE THAT ARE LEFT

WHY SHOULD YOU WASTE  
WAVES OF COOLNESS...  
NOW AT DUSK

MEN OF LEARNING  
MEN OF ACTION...  
AND MUCH GRIEVING

WEARY  
IN THE BLACK DARKNESS  
SCURRYING, SULLEN, SULLEN

Here is the HANSHAN listing to enable you to create a nearly infinite sequence of poems. By all means modify the DATA statements to make the program (and its output) your own:

```

10 REM HANSHAN
15 CLS : CLEAR : BRIGHT 1: FLA
SH 0: INK 7: PAPER 1: BRIGHT 0:
BORDER 1
20 GO SUB 250: REM INITIALISE
30 REM CHOOSE PATTERN
40 LET R=INT (RND*3)+1
50 GO SUB R*50+40
60 LET KK=RND: IF KK>.65 THEN
LET DD=RND*20-5: FOR G=DD TO DD+
5: BEEP .1,3: BEEP .1,7: BEEP .1
,-4: BEEP .1,G/2: NEXT G
65 IF KK<.4 THEN FOR G=1 TO 5:
BEEP .1,-7: BEEP .1,G*3: BEEP .
2,-2: BEEP .5,3: NEXT G
68 IF RND<.7 THEN FOR G=-5 TO
5: BEEP .1,G: NEXT G
70 PRINT ''
80 GO TO 40
90 REM ** PATTERN ONE **
100 PRINT W$(INT (RND*20)+1); ".
..";W$(INT (RND*20)+1)
110 PRINT TAB 5;"....";W$(INT (
RND*20)+1)
120 PRINT TAB 8;S$(INT (RND*20)
+1)
130 RETURN
140 REM ** PATTERN TWO **
150 PRINT S$(INT (RND*20)+1)
160 PRINT TAB 3;S$(INT (RND*20)
+1); "..."

```

```

170 PRINT TAB 6;S$(INT (RND*20)
+1)
180 RETURN
190 REM ** PATTERN THREE **
200 PRINT TAB 3;W$(INT (RND*20)
+1)
210 PRINT S$(INT (RND*20)+1)
220 PRINT TAB 3;W$(INT (RND*20)
+1);", ";S$(INT (RND*20)+1)
230 RETURN
240 REM *****
250 REM * INITIALISATION*
260 CLS
270 RANDOMIZE
280 DIM W$(20,12): DIM S$(20,26
)
290 FOR J=1 TO 20
300 READ W$(J)
310 NEXT J
320 FOR J=1 TO 20
330 READ S$(J)
340 NEXT J
350 RETURN
360 REM ***** DATA *****
370 REM * SINGLE WORDS *
380 DATA "SCURRYING", "TREADING"
, "GRAZING", "WITHERED", "CHISELLED
"
390 DATA "MUFFLED", "FLANKED", "W
RITHED", "BENDING", "TWISTING"
400 DATA "HAMMERED", "HANGING", "
WINDING", "WINDING", "CLEAREST"
410 DATA "EARTHWARD", "CATARACT"
, "SACRIFICIAL", "SLIPPERY", "ASUND
ER"

```

420 REM \* SHORT PHRASES \*  
 430 DATA "IN THE COOL STREAM"  
 440 DATA "NODDED IN CLUSTERED G  
 RACE"  
 450 DATA "WAVES OF COOLNESS"  
 460 DATA "OUT FROM THE DEEPEST"  
 470 DATA "SULLEN, SULLEN"  
 480 DATA "IN THE BLACK DARKNESS  
 "  
 490 DATA "I TAKE YOUR POEMS"  
 500 DATA "I PUT OUT THE LAMP"  
 510 DATA "MY SHORT SPAN RUNS OU  
 T"  
 520 DATA "THOSE THAT ARE LEFT"  
 530 DATA "MEN OF LEARNING"  
 540 DATA "MEN AF ACTION"  
 550 DATA "I HURRY FORWARD"  
 560 DATA "WHY SHOULD YOU WASTE"  
 570 DATA "WHEN SHALL WE MEET"  
 580 DATA "LITTLE SLEEPING"  
 590 DATA "AND MUCH GRIEVING"  
 600 DATA "FOR THESE FEW STEPS"  
 610 DATA "NOW AT DUSK"  
 620 DATA "I HAVE DONE WITH PROF  
 IT"

I HURRY FORWARD  
 I TAKE YOUR POEMS...  
 SULLEN, SULLEN

# **SECTION FOUR — HELPING**



# CHAPTER ELEVEN — EXPERT SYSTEMS

There is a limited number of experts in the world on any one subject. It doesn't matter what field you're talking about — mending cars, mining for uranium, diagnosing human illness, sorting edible mushrooms from poisonous ones — there is a limit to the number of experts we have available.

Now while the world is not exactly crying out for more mushroom-sorting experts, there are areas of the world (most of it in fact) where there are not enough doctors. One idea of an expert system is to 'capture' the expertise of one of our experts on a computer, in such a way that a non-expert can tap the information.

Expert systems is the one area of AI research where significant strides have been made. It is the area where such systems are already making genuine, economically viable contributions. And is the one area of AI which is not at all bothered by questions of whether or not the machine displaying the expertise is 'thinking'.

In its simplest form, an expert system is a series of IF/THEN statements. A diagnostic system could be as simple as this:

IF the patient is coughing  
AND he has recently been soaked to the skin  
AND then stood in a freezing wind for an hour  
THEN the patient has a cold or pneumonia.

of course, one would hardly need an expert system to make a diagnosis like this (and note that I am not suggesting the

diagnosis of my IF/THEN chain is necessarily correct). An expert system comes into its own when either of the following conditions exist:

- the expert is not present but his or her expertise is;
- even the ‘expert’ doesn’t know with 100% certainty the casual links between the observations and the results. This could happen if a medical researcher was aware that patients contracting disease X have tended to have had contact with foods A and B and have blood group C . . . although no way of linking A, B and C — apart from the fact that they appear together — had been discovered. In this case, a properly programmed expert system could make predictions about the likelihood of individual D contracting the disease, even when the percentage contribution that factors A, B and C made were unknown. By studying enough cases, the expert system could not only devise its own rules for predicting whether a particular individual would, or would not, contract the disease, but could then explain its reasoning to a human physician.

In the section of the book on learning and reasoning we talked about ‘logic circuits’ and discussed the way these made decisions, according to the rules of Boolean Algebra.

The ‘mathematics of reasoning’ are very important in the construction of expert systems. Often a person ‘drawing out’ the expertise of a human being in order for it to be encoded into an expert system database (and we’ll look a little later at some of the systems which are at work around the world at present) discovers the expert does not know how he or she actually reaches decisions.

It can be as much of a revelation to the expert as to the person creating the knowledge base for the computer program. In *The Fifth Generation — Artificial Intelligence and Japan's Computer Challenge to the World* (Reading, Massachusetts: Feigenbaum, Edward A. and McCorduck, Pamela, 1983; pp. 85, 86) we read the very sad story of an expert who willingly explained his methods to a 'knowledge engineer' (the name given to those who draw out others' expertise and then modify it for the computer program). The expert was highly regarded (and well paid) for his expertise, and was at first disbelieving when the knowledge engineer discovered the expertise could be reduced to a few hundred 'working rules of thumb'. From disbelief, the expert's view changed to one of depression, and finally he quit his field, a broken man.

Machines make decisions based on their internal rules. These are — as we saw in the discussion leading up to the learning and reasoning programs — relatively simple. Elementary logical reasoning comes down to a relatively few, easily expressed, rules.

We saw that syllogisms could be expressed, and solved, by machine, because they took the following form:

A is a C  
C is a B  
Therefore, A is a B

The hope of reducing reasoning to a mechanical process has been with us a long time. Back in 1677, in the preface to the work *The General Sciences*, Gottfried Leibniz wrote:

*If one could find characteristics or signs appropriate for expressing all our thoughts as clearly and exactly as arithmetic expresses numbers or analytic geometry expresses lines, we could in all subjects, in so far as they are amendable to reasoning, accomplish what is done in arithmetic and geometry . . .*

*Moreover we should be able to convince the world of what we had found or concluded since it would be easy to verify the calculation . . . if someone doubted the results I should say to him: 'Let us calculate Sir,' and taking pen and ink we should soon settle the question.*

Rather than taking pen and ink, we can now take silicon, and find answers to at least some questions which are beyond most of us to discover (such as the ability to predict the chemical structure of a not-yet-developed compound, as one expert system can do) and indicate the solutions to problems which nobody alive can solve.

## **LIMITATIONS**

Unless they are specifically programmed to alert an operator to it, expert systems can be pretty stupid when they come across something which does not fit within their preprogrammed repertoire. It is like someone who is brilliant at chess, but unable to master the steps needed to knot a necktie. An idiot savant status is a characteristic of many low-level expert systems which are based solely on interpreting rules of the IF/THEN type, such as I discussed earlier.

Such systems have no ability to extend their knowledge base while operating, and can only think in a straight line from point A to B, then of B to C and so on. Such a system may have no way of knowing when its laboriously programmed knowledge was inappropriate, no way of recognizing the exception to the rule.

The system we will develop comes within the idiot **savant** description. But despite this limitation, which applies to the majority of expert systems in use in the world today, you'll find the systems you develop are fascinating artefacts. Our final system, as you'll see, does have the ability to learn. In fact, you simply tell it — as it tries to distinguish between any number of things you have programmed into it — whether its guess was right or wrong, and eventually it will have taught itself to distinguish between the objects, without you explicitly telling it how to make the distinction between them.

## **CHEMICAL STRUCTURE AND DENDRAL**

Before we get to our own expert systems, we will have a look at some of the systems in use at present, and see what we can learn from examining them.

The first program we will look at, and possibly the world's first real, working expert system, is called DENDRAL. Work on this system — which is able to work out facts about molecular structures from raw chemical data — began at Stanford University in 1965. Bringing together expertise from a number of disciplines (with those which provided DENDRAL with its working knowledge base of physical

chemistry), DENDRAL's creators eventually produced a system which now performs better than anyone in the world in its field (including the men who built it). DENDRAL is in use around the world.

Stanford was also the breeding ground for MYCIN, a system which diagnoses blood and meningitis infections, then gives treatment suggestions. MYCIN bases its conclusions on physical data entered by a physician, and can — if requested — explain how it came to reach the diagnosis it did. The system contains some 450 rules.

The knowledge base in MYCIN is so valuable that a companion program — GUIDON — has been developed to enable the computer to act as a teacher, thus acting as a bridge from one human expert (or, a set of them in this case) to another, newly-minted human expert.

That is still not the end of the MYCIN's value. Much of the program consists of ways of **manipulating** the rules it has been given, and **drawing conclusions** from them. The mechanisms of manipulation and inference are — to a large extent — independent from the knowledge base. This suggests that the information relating to blood infections could be removed, and new information be added. This has been done, and the expert system PUFF now dispenses similar assistance to that given by MYCIN, but in relation to lung disorders.

So effective was this process (and in one trial of 150 patients, PUFF produced the same diagnosis as did human specialists) that another version of MYCIN, simply called EMYCIN (for Empty MYCIN) has been developed, into which other knowledge bases can be entered.

The expert system MOLGEN (for MOLEcular GENetics) assists biologists working on DNA and with genetic engineering. It is widely used.

The most interesting thing — in terms of examining the directions AI researching is taking — is that expert systems actually work extremely well, and it makes sense economically to use them. This ensures that they are being used, and that more are being developed. The 'pure research' line, does naturally enough produce results, but the results tend to come along more quickly when there are immediate practical needs for that which is being developed, and big bucks are available for the developers.

Think of a system which gave advice on where to drill for oil. A single find, and the cost of developing the system, even if that ran into the millions, could be earned back relatively quickly, perhaps even in a matter of days.

Feigenbaum and McCorduck (in *The Fifth Generation*, mentioned earlier, pp. 72, 73) give a graphic example of the 'earning-back' power of major expert systems. They cite the case of a major American company which has recently bought an expert system designed to diagnose failures in particular types of electricity generating plants. Testing an early, and largely incomplete, version of the program against the real data that led to one of the company's plants being shut down in 1981, it was found the system discovered the cause of the problem that led to the shutdown in a matter of seconds. It had taken the human experts working at that plant days to come to the same conclusion. In the meantime, the plant had been shut down for four days, a closure that cost the company around \$1.2 million.

There are many other systems in use or under development around the world. These include:

— PROGRAMMER'S APPRENTICE: A system for helping, as its name suggests, with the writing of software.

— EURISKO: An expert system which is able to learn as it works, which creates three-dimensional microelectric circuits.

— TAXMAN: Under development at Rutgers University, this system is intended to examine changing tax rules, and from them give advice to companies on how to best operate within those rules.

— GENESIS: An exciting-sounding one. This system, which is on the market now, allows scientists to plan and simulate gene-splicing experiments.

I'm afraid we won't be getting into gene-splicing just yet although we will be finding some interesting applications for our expert systems (such as differentiating between a man, a horse and a sparrow!). Let's have a look at the first of our systems now.



# CHAPTER TWELVE — THE LITTLE SPURT

Our first expert system is SPURT. This program has the ability to tell, without error, the difference between three living creatures — a man, a horse and a sparrow. Although this a pretty silly situation, and one which probably does not arise very often in your experience, it can teach us a great deal about how some kinds of expert systems are developed.

Imagine a 'medical diagnosis' expert system. We'll call our imaginary system MEDICI. MEDICI and SPURT are close cousins, as you'll see, and studying SPURT will give you a base upon which you can build up a useful degree of knowledge of MEDICI and other, more wide-ranging, expert systems.

You are about to have a session with MEDICI. The system asks you a large number of questions which you answer with a YES or a NO, as follows:

ARE YOU MALE?  
ARE YOU MORE THAN 40 YEARS OLD?  
DO YOU SMOKE?  
HAVE YOU HAD A CHECKUP IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?  
DO YOU WORRY FREQUENTLY?  
WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS A TENSE PERSON?

And so on. After a string of these questions, MEDICI pauses for a nanosecond or two, then prints the following message on the screen:

THANK YOU. YOUR LIFE EXPECTANCY IS 79 YEARS, THUS EXCEEDING 11% OF THE POPULATION. TO INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF REACHING, OR EXCEEDING THIS, I SUGGEST YOU - TRY TO STOP SMOKING  
- GET REGULAR MEDICAL CHECKUPS  
- INCREASE YOUR EXERCISE EACH WEEK

THANK YOU FOR CONSULTING MEDICI

What did MEDICI do? How did it turn your YES/NO answers into a life expectancy prediction? Actually, as I'm sure you've already decided, this is not a very sophisticated program, and would not demand a very high level of expertise. However, it shows how a real medical diagnosis program might begin, if the expert system was interacting directly with a patient, rather than with a physician as is generally the case at present.

Pleased that you're going to live longer than 11% of the population, you settle down to make the acquaintance of another expert, young SPURT. Here's what you see on your screen:

I WANT YOU TO THINK OF A MAN, A HORSE  
OR A SPARROW

DOES IT HAVE TWO LEGS  
Y OR N? Y

CAN IT WALK  
Y OR N? Y

CAN IT FLY  
Y OR N? N

YOU WERE THINKING OF A MAN

---

PRESS 'RETURN' FOR ANOTHER ONE, OR  
ANY KEY AND THEN 'RETURN' TO QUIT  
?

Of course, SPURT is right. It was not very hard to determine from your answers that you were thinking of a man. Very impressed, you press the 'RETURN' key, and have another run:

I WANT YOU TO THINK OF A MAN, A HORSE  
OR A SPARROW

DOES IT HAVE TWO LEGS  
Y OR N? Y

CAN IT WALK  
Y OR N? Y

CAN IT FLY  
Y OR N? Y

YOU WERE THINKING OF A SPARROW

Surely it couldn't do it again, you think, and try for the third alternative:

I WANT YOU TO THINK OF A MAN, A HORSE  
OR A SPARROW

DOES IT HAVE TWO LEGS  
Y OR N? N

CAN IT WALK  
Y OR N? Y

CAN IT FLY  
Y OR N? N

YOU WERE THINKING OF A HORSE

This time you decide to quit. How does SPURT record the answers to your questions so it can determine that if you said the creature you were thinking of had two legs and could walk, but could not fly, was a man? How, for that matter, could MEDICI tally your answers and tell you that you'd live till you were 79?

It is very simple, at least in the case of SPURT (and MEDICI worked the same general way, only with a considerable degree of refinement). SPURT counted each time you gave the answer 'Y' to a question. If you gave only one 'Y' answer, you must have been thinking of a horse (as the WALK question was the only one to which you could reply 'Y' if you were thinking of a horse). Two 'Y' answers, and it was a man you had in mind. Three, and SPURT knew it was the sparrow you were thinking of.

MEDICI not only counted your answers, but noted which question they referred to. A 'Y' to DO YOU SMOKE? clocked three years off your expectancy, while a 'Y' answer to DO YOU TAKE VIGOROUS EXERCISE REGULARLY? added five years to your expected span.

The SPURT listing starts as follows:

```
10 REM SPURT
15 PAPER 1: INK 7: BRIGHT 0: F
LASH 0: BORDER 1
20 POKE 2358,200: CLS
30 PRINT "I WANT YOU TO THINK
OF A MAN      A HORSE OR A SPARROW
"
50 PAUSE 400
60 PRINT ' '
70 GO SUB 170: REM ASK QUESTIO
NS
```

After setting the scene, the real business of determining which creature you're thinking about begins:

```
170 REM ** ASK QUESTIONS **
180 LET COUNT=0
190 PRINT INK 5;"DOES IT HAVE T
WO LEGS"
200 GO SUB 310
210 PRINT INK 5;"CAN IT WALK"
220 GO SUB 310
230 PRINT INK 5;"CAN IT FLY"
240 GO SUB 310
300 REM *****
310 REM ** PROCESS ANSWER **
320 INPUT "      Y OR N?      ";Z$
330 IF Z$<>"N" AND Z$<>"Y" THEN
GO TO 320
340 IF Z$="Y" THEN LET COUNT=CO
UNT+1
350 PRINT
360 RETURN
```

You'll see that the variable COUNT is set to zero at the start of the run, and incremented by one each time a 'Y' answer is given. Using this information, SPURT has no trouble deciding which creature you're thinking about:

```
250 PRINT "YOU WERE THINKING OF
A ";
260 IF COUNT=1 THEN PRINT FLASH
1; INK 4; "HORSE"
270 IF COUNT=2 THEN PRINT FLASH
1; INK 4; "MAN"
280 IF COUNT=3 THEN PRINT FLASH
1; INK 4; "SPARROW"
290 RETURN
```

As you can see, it is a pretty simple program, but one which lays a foundation upon which expert systems could be built. Here's the complete listing:

```
10 REM SPURT
15 PAPER 1: INK 7: BRIGHT 0: F
LASH 0: BORDER 1
20 POKE 2358,200: CLS
30 PRINT "I WANT YOU TO THINK
OF A MAN      A HORSE OR A SPARROW
"
50 PAUSE 400
60 PRINT ""
70 GO SUB 170: REM ASK QUESTIO
NS
80 PRINT ' ; INK 2; "-----
-----"
100 PRINT '"PRESS ""RETURN"" FO
R ANOTHER ONE  OR ANY KEY AND TH
EN ""RETURN"" TO QUIT."'
110 INPUT Q$
```

```

120 IF Q$<>" " THEN STOP
140 CLS
150 GO TO 30
160 REM *****
170 REM ** ASK QUESTIONS **
180 LET COUNT=0
190 PRINT INK 5;"DOES IT HAVE T
WO LEGS"
200 GO SUB 310
210 PRINT INK 5;"CAN IT WALK"
220 GO SUB 310
230 PRINT INK 5;"CAN IT FLY"
240 GO SUB 310
250 PRINT "YOU WERE THINKING OF
A ";
260 IF COUNT=1 THEN PRINT FLASH
1; INK 4;"HORSE"
270 IF COUNT=2 THEN PRINT FLASH
1; INK 4;"MAN"
280 IF COUNT=3 THEN PRINT FLASH
1; INK 4;"SPARROW"
290 RETURN
300 REM *****
310 REM ** PROCESS ANSWER **
320 INPUT " Y OR N? ";Z$
330 IF Z$<>"N" AND Z$<>"Y" THEN
GO TO 320
340 IF Z$="Y" THEN LET COUNT=CO
UNT+1
350 PRINT
360 RETURN

```

# THE LITTLE X-SPURT

X-SPURT is SPURT's big brother. Although this new program bears a definite family relationship to the one we first looked at, it is considerably more sophisticated.

You can see this increased sophistication by looking at a sample run from it. Firstly, we will get it to perform much as SPURT did. However, you can tell from the opening frame that this is a rather different program. It is largely 'soft', that is the expertise is not hardwired as in the case of SPURT but can be entered differently for each run.

NAME OF SYSTEM? CREATURES

NUMBER OF OUTCOMES? 3

NUMBER OF FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED? 3

You tell the program its subject matter (CREATURES in this case), and then the number of OUTCOMES (that is, results) and the number of FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED. These are the variables (such as CAN IT FLY) which must be considered. Having given it the framework, X-SPURT now asks you to fill in the outlines:

CREATURES

WHAT IS OUTCOME 1 ? MAN

WHAT IS OUTCOME 2 ? HORSE

WHAT IS OUTCOME 3 ? SPARROW



Having told it the outcomes, it asks you to enter the questions which relate to the factors which determine which outcome you are seeking:

PLEASE ENTER QUESTION 1  
? DOES IT FLY UNAIDED

PLEASE ENTER QUESTION 2  
? DOES IT HAVE TWO LEGS

PLEASE ENTER QUESTION 3  
? DOES IT WALK

This may seem like a lot of trouble we're going to, just to emulate SPURT, but — as you'll see shortly — it will be worthwhile. This simple exercise is showing you how X-SPURT can be trained to become an expert on just about anything.

X-SPURT now goes through each of the outcomes you have entered, and says "If I asked the following question, in respect of this outcome, would you answer 'yes' or 'no'. From this information, X-SPURT can assemble an equivalent knowledge base to the one which was hardwired into SPURT. Of course, X-SPURT could be building up a knowledge base on just about anything.

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION  
FOR AN OUTCOME OF > MAN <

ENTER 'Y' FOR 'YES' ANSWER  
OR 'N' FOR A 'NO' REPLY

> DOES IT FLY UNAIDED? N

> DOES IT HAVE TWO LEGS? Y

> DOES IT WALK? Y

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION  
FOR AN OUTCOME OF > HORSE <

ENTER 'Y' FOR 'YES' ANSWER  
OR 'N' FOR A 'NO' REPLY

> DOES IT FLY UNAIDED? N

> DOES IT HAVE TWO LEGS? N

> DOES IT WALK? Y

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION  
FOR AN OUTCOME OF > SPARROW <

ENTER 'Y' FOR 'YES' ANSWER  
OR 'N' FOR A 'NO' REPLY

> DOES IT FLY UNAIDED? Y

> DOES IT HAVE TWO LEGS? Y

> DOES IT WALK? Y

Once you've been through each of the possible outcomes, and told it what your answers would be for the questions, X-SPURT creates a 'knowledge base', which in this case is little more than adding up the total 'Y' replies. X-SPURT reports its findings to you:

THIS IS MY EXPERT BASE:

MAN — 6

HORSE — 4

SPARROW — 7

But where did it get those numbers? You could not have given four 'Y' answers for horse, or 7 for sparrow, because there are only three questions. X-SPURT does not add a single one for each 'Y' answer, but instead gives a number

which changes for each answer. If there was just one awarded for each 'Y', and you answered 'Y' to, say, questions one and three for one thing, and to questions two and three for another thing, it would have the same total for both objects.

To get round this, to ensure that the actual **order** in which the 'Y' answers are given is important, we proceed as follows:

A 'Y' answer to question 1	is worth	1
A 'Y' answer to question 2	is worth	2
A 'Y' answer to question 3	is worth	4
A 'Y' answer to question 4	is worth	8
..... 5	...	16
..... 6	...	32
..... 7	...	64

...and so on...

This makes sure that, even if the same number of 'Y' answers are given for two different things, a different identifying number will be given to our expert by which to make judgements.

Does it work? Of course it does, and here is X-SPURT showing itself in action:

PLEASE ENTER 'Y' OR 'N'...

DOES IT FLY UNAIDED  
? N

DOES IT HAVE TWO LEGS  
? Y

DOES IT WALK  
? Y

> MY RESULT WAS 6

> YOU WERE THINKING  
OF MAN

I said before that X-SPURT was capable of doing a great deal more than SPURT, and now I will show the truth of that claim. We are going to train our expert system in another field, one in which I have no expertise whatsoever. The knowledge base fed into X-SPURT came from a book, written by an expert called Oliver Chambers (*The Observer's Book of Rocks and Minerals*, New York: Frederick Warne, 1979). With the help of Mr. Chambers' expertise, X-SPURT is about to acquire the skills to identify five different types of minerals, using four factors.

This is something I could not do without X-SPURT's help. This is true for most people using expert systems today. An expert system encodes, as it were, an absent expert's expertise, so non-experts can make use of that knowledge base at will.

Let's pass some of Mr. Chambers' knowledge onto our system (starting with a new run, so that minerals do not become confused with horses and sparrows):

We tell it the subject matter:

NAME OF SYSTEM? MINERAL IDENTIFICATION

NUMBER OF OUTCOMES? 5

NUMBER OF FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED? 4

Then we give it the five minerals it will be trying to identify:

WHAT IS OUTCOME 1 ? PLEONASTE

WHAT IS OUTCOME 2 ? LIMONITE

WHAT IS OUTCOME 3 ? IODYRITE

WHAT IS OUTCOME 4 ? IRIDOSMINE

WHAT IS OUTCOME 5 ? SYLVANITE

Next, X-SPURT learns some questions which will assist it in discriminating between the minerals:

PLEASE ENTER QUESTION 1  
? IS IT HARD

PLEASE ENTER QUESTION 2  
? DOES IT CONTAIN STREAKS OF A DIFFERENT  
COLOR FROM THE MAIN COLOR

PLEASE ENTER QUESTION 3  
? IS ITS SPECIFIC GRAVITY ABOVE 5

PLEASE ENTER QUESTION 4  
? IS IT FUSIBLE

Now it takes the user through the long process of encoding the expertise:

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION  
FOR AN OUTCOME OF > PLEONASTE <

ENTER 'Y' FOR 'YES' ANSWER  
OR 'N' FOR A 'NO' REPLY

> IS IT HARD? Y

>  
DOES IT CONTAIN STREAKS OF A DIFFERENT  
COLOR FROM THE MAIN COLOR? N

> IS ITS SPECIFIC GRAVITY ABOVE 5? N

> IS IT FUSIBLE? N

It does this for the rest of the minerals, limonite, sylvanite and all. Finally, it reports its findings:

THIS IS MY EXPERT BASE:

PLEONASTE --- 1

LIMONITE --- 8

IODYRITE --- 12

IRIDOSMINE --- 7

SYLVANITE --- 13

Let's put it into action and see how well it does:

PLEASE THINK OF ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

PLEONASTE

LIMONITE

IODYRITE

IRIDOSMINE

OR SYLVANITE

PLEASE ENTER 'Y' OR 'N'...

IS IT HARD

? N

DOES IT CONTAIN STREAKS OF A DIFFERENT  
COLOR FROM THE MAIN COLOR

? N



IS ITS SPECIFIC GRAVITY ABOVE 5  
? N

IS IT FUSIBLE  
? Y

> MY RESULT WAS 8

> YOU WERE THINKING  
OF LIMONITE

In a matter of minutes, X-SPURT has acquired knowledge which allows me, as a total non-expert in that field, to make use of expert judgement in a practical situation.

We will now look at the construction of the program, to see how a 'soft-wired' SPURT has been created.

The program is controlled by a loop of subroutine calls:

```
10 REM X-SPURT
15 POKE 23658,200: INVERSE 0:
FLASH 0: BRIGHT 1: PAPER 1: INK
7: BRIGHT 0: BORDER 1: CLS
20 GO SUB 940: REM INITIALISE
30 GO SUB 450: REM "GAIN EXPER
TISE"
40 GO SUB 120: REM DEMONSTRATE
EXPERTISE
50 GO SUB 1060
60 PRINT "PRESS ""ENTER"" FOR
ANOTHER TURN OR ANY KEY THEN ""
ENTER"" TO QUIT."
80 INPUT Q$
90 IF Q$="" THEN GO TO 40
100 STOP
```

In the initialisation subroutine, X-SPURT acquires a name for the system (useful if you wish to save the entire expertise as a file) as well as the number of outcomes and factors. Arrays are dimensioned to hold the names and totals of the outcomes, as well as the questions relating to the factors.

```
940 REM ** INITIALISATION **
950 CLS
960 INPUT "Name of system? ";N$
970 GO SUB 1060
980 INPUT "Number of outcomes?
";OUTCOMES
990 GO SUB 1060
1000 INPUT "Number of factors to
be considered? ";FACTOR
S
1010 DIM A$(OUTCOMES,15): DIM B$(
FACTORS,30)
1020 DIM D(OUTCOMES)
1030 CLS
1040 RETURN
```

The next section of code the program visits gets the names of the outcomes:

```
450 REM *** FILL ARRAYS ***
460 PRINT TAB (20-LEN N$/2);N$
470 GO SUB 1060
480 REM * GET OUTCOME NAMES *
490 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
500 GO SUB 1060
510 PRINT "What is outcome ";J;
" ";
520 INPUT A$(J): PRINT INK 4;A$(
J)
530 NEXT J
```

And then X-SPURT asks for the factors, the questions to be asked:

```
550 REM ** GET QUESTION TO BE
ASKED **
560 FOR J=1 TO FACTORS
570 GO SUB 1060
580 PRINT "Please enter question ";J
590 INPUT B$(J)
600 NEXT J
```

All this is just preparation. Now, X-SPURT wants to get some hard information, so it runs through the outcomes (using the J loop, from 630 through to 810) and within that the factors (with the K loop, 720 through to 800):

```
620 REM ** ACQUIRE EXPERTISE **
630 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
640 CLS
650 GO SUB 1060
660 PRINT "Please answer the following question" "For an outcome of >" ;A$(J) ; "<"
680 GO SUB 1060
690 PRINT "Enter ""Y"" for a ""Yes"" answer"" or ""N"" for a ""No"" reply"
700 LET X=.5
720 FOR K=1 TO FACTORS
730 LET X=X+X
740 GO SUB 1060
750 PRINT TAB 4; "> ";B$(K);
760 LET MULTI=0
770 INPUT Y$
780 IF Y$="N" THEN LET MULTI=1
```

```

790 LET D(J)=D(J)+X*MULTI: REM
COMPILE EXPERT BASE
800 NEXT K
810 NEXT J

```

Having done this, X-SPURT shows you what it has managed to learn:

```

830 PRINT "This is my expert ba
se:"
840 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
850 GO SUB 1060
860 PRINT A$(J); " ---";D(J)
870 NEXT J
880 GO SUB 1060
890 PRINT TAB 8;"Press "ENTER"
"
900 INPUT Q$
910 CLS
920 RETURN

```

With this information safely under its belt, X-SPURT is ready and able to perform in much the same way SPURT did, asking questions, adding up numbers, and from the total, making a decision:

```

120 REM *DEMONSTRATE EXPERTISE*
130 CLS
140 GO SUB 1060
150 PRINT INK 6; INVERSE 1;" P
lease think of one of the f
ollowing- "
160 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
170 PRINT TAB J+2;
180 IF J=OUTCOMES THEN PRINT "O
r ";
190 PRINT A$(J)

```

```

200 NEXT J
210 GO SUB 1060
220 LET RESULT=0
230 LET X=.5
240 PRINT "Please enter ""Y"" o
r ""N"" ..."
250 FOR J=1 TO FACTORS
260 LET X=X+X
270 GO SUB 1060
280 PRINT B$(J)
290 INPUT E$
300 IF E$="N" THEN LET RESULT=R
ESULT+X
310 NEXT J
320 PRINT TAB 3; INK 3; "> My re
sult was ";RESULT
330 GO SUB 1060
340 LET M=0
350 LET M=M+1
360 IF D(M)=RESULT THEN GO TO 4
00
370 IF M<OUTCOMES THEN GO TO 35
0
380 PRINT TAB 2; FLASH 1; INK 5
;">> I cannot identify it <<"; F
LASH 0: FOR R=5 TO 10: BEEP .2,-
4: BEEP .1,10-R: BEEP .1,-5: BEE
P .1,-2: NEXT R
390 RETURN
400 PRINT TAB 5;"> You were thi
nking"
405 FOR R=5 TO 10: BEEP .1,3: B
EEP .3,-3: BEEP .1,R+5: NEXT R:
BEEP .3,20
410>PRINT TAB 6;" of a ";A$(M)

```

```
420 GO TO 390
430 RETURN
```

As you can see, X-SPURT allows itself a little bit of fallibility, with I CANNOT IDENTIFY IT if the total it has reached does not tally with any of your input (line 380).

You can see that it tells you its tally after each run, so you can keep track of what it is doing. If you wish to impress people with your expert system, you'll probably enhance the impression it creates if the 'works' are not so publicly displayed.

Here's the complete listing of X-SPURT:

```
10 REM X-SPURT
15 POKE 23658,200: INVERSE 0:
FLASH 0: BRIGHT 1: PAPER 1: INK
7: BRIGHT 0: BORDER 1: CLS
20 GO SUB 940: REM INITIALISE
30 GO SUB 450: REM "GAIN EXPERTISE"
40 GO SUB 120: REM DEMONSTRATE
EXPERTISE
50 GO SUB 1060
60 PRINT "PRESS ""ENTER"" FOR
ANOTHER TURN OR ANY KEY THEN ""
ENTER"" TO QUIT."
80 INPUT Q$
90 IF Q$="" THEN GO TO 40
100 STOP
110 REM *****
120 REM *DEMONSTRATE EXPERTISE*
130 CLS
140 GO SUB 1060
```

```

150 PRINT INK 6; INVERSE 1;" P
lease think of one of the f
following- "
160 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
170 PRINT TAB J+2;
180 IF J=OUTCOMES THEN PRINT "O
r ";
190 PRINT A$(J)
200 NEXT J
210 GO SUB 1060
220 LET RESULT=0
230 LET X=.5
240 PRINT "Please enter ""Y"" o
r ""N"" ..."
250 FOR J=1 TO FACTORS
260 LET X=X+X
270 GO SUB 1060
280 PRINT B$(J)
290 INPUT E$
300 IF E$="N" THEN LET RESULT=R
ESULT+X
310 NEXT J
320 PRINT TAB 3; INK 3;"> My re
sult was ";RESULT
330 GO SUB 1060
340 LET M=0
350 LET M=M+1
360 IF D(M)=RESULT THEN GO TO 4
00
370 IF M<OUTCOMES THEN GO TO 35
0
380 PRINT TAB 2; FLASH 1; INK 5
;">> I cannot identify it <<"; F
LASH 0: FOR R=5 TO 10: BEEP .2,-
4: BEEP .1,10-R: BEEP .1,-5: BEE
P .1,-2: NEXT R

```

```

390 RETURN
400 PRINT TAB 5;"> You were thi
nking"
405 FOR R=5 TO 10: BEEP .1,3: B
EEP .3,-3: BEEP .1,R+5: NEXT R:
BEEP .3,20
410>PRINT TAB 6;" of a ";A$(M)
420 GO TO 390
430 RETURN
440 REM *****
450 REM *** FILL ARRAYS ***
460 PRINT TAB (20-LEN N$/2);N$
470 GO SUB 1060
480 REM * GET OUTCOME NAMES *
490 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
500 GO SUB 1060
510 PRINT "What is outcome ";J;
" ";
520 INPUT A$(J): PRINT INK 4;A$
(J)
530 NEXT J
540 CLS
550 REM ** GET QUESTION TO BE
ASKED **
560 FOR J=1 TO FACTORS
570 GO SUB 1060
580 PRINT "Please enter questio
n ";J
590 INPUT B$(J)
600 NEXT J
610 CLS
620 REM ** ACQUIRE EXPERTISE **
630 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
640 CLS
650 GO SUB 1060

```



```

660 PRINT "Please answer the fo
llowing      question" "For an ou
tcome of >"A$(J);"<"
680 GO SUB 1060
690 PRINT "Enter ""Y"" for a ""
Yes"" answer"" or ""N"" for a
""No"" reply"
700 LET X=.5
720 FOR K=1 TO FACTORS
730 LET X=X+X
740 GO SUB 1060
750 PRINT TAB 4;"> ";B$(K);
760 LET MULTI=0
770 INPUT Y$
780 IF Y$="N" THEN LET MULTI=1
790 LET D(J)=D(J)+X*MULTI: REM
COMPILE EXPERT BASE
800 NEXT K
810 NEXT J
820 CLS
830 PRINT "This is my expert ba
se:"
840 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
850 GO SUB 1060
860 PRINT A$(J);" ---";D(J)
870 NEXT J
880 GO SUB 1060
890 PRINT TAB 8;"Press ""ENTER"
""
900 INPUT Q$
910 CLS
920 RETURN
930 REM *****
940 REM ** INITIALISATION **
950 CLS

```

```

960 INPUT "Name of system? ";N$
970 GO SUB 1060
980 INPUT "Number of outcomes?
";OUTCOMES
990 GO SUB 1060
1000 INPUT "Number of factors to
be considered? ";FACTOR
S
1010 DIM A$(OUTCOMES,15): DIM B$
(FACTORS,30)
1020 DIM D(OUTCOMES)
1030 CLS
1040 RETURN
1050 REM *****
1060 PRINT : PRINT
1070 RETURN

```

## CHOOSING A CHIP

It would be very inconvenient if we had to educate our expert, as we did X-SPURT, every time we wanted to make use of the expertise. It is unlikely, in a real situation, a totally 'soft' expert would be needed. This next program shows an expert body of knowledge — the ability to distinguish between several chips (of the silicon variety) — encoded in DATA statements.

Here's the program in action:

THIS IS MY EXPERT BASE:

TMS 9940 (NMOS) --- 44

68000 (NMOS) --- 12

9940 (I3L) --- 56

MN1610 (NMOS) --- 46

8086 --- 60

Z8001 --- 28

I CAN IDENTIFY FROM THE FOLLOWING:

TMS 9940 (NMOS)

68000 (NMOS)

9940 (I3L)

MN1610 (NMOS)

8086

OR Z8001

After telling you what it can do, the program asks you to answer a number of questions in relation to the chip you are trying to identify. It will then tell you the name of the chip:

PLEASE ENTER 'Y' OR 'N'...

IS THE WORD SIZE 32 BITS

? N

DOES IT ADDRESS 64K  
? N

IS THE CLOCK RATE 5MHz OR LESS  
? Y

IS SHORTEST OBEY 3 MICROSECONDS OR LESS  
? Y

DOES INSTRUCTION SET CONTAIN MORE THAN  
71 INSTRUCTIONS  
? N

IS THE PACKAGE 40 PIN DIP  
? N

> MY RESULT WAS 12

> THE ONE YOU HAVE  
IS 68000 (NMOS)

The expert base came from another expert, Ken Ozanne, whose expertise was once again encoded in a book (*The Interface Computer Encyclopedia*, London: Interface Publications, 1983). Once the information is locked into the DATA statements in the program, it is ready for use at any time.

Here's the crucial part of the program, where the knowledge is stored:

```

580 REM ** INITIALISATION **
590 CLS
600 RESTORE
610 LET OUTCOMES=6
620 LET FACTORS=6
630 DIM A$(OUTCOMES,17): DIM B$
(FACTORS,60): DIM D(OUTCOMES)
640 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
650 READ A$(J),D(J)
660 NEXT J
670 FOR J=1 TO FACTORS
680 READ B$(J)
690 NEXT J
700 RETURN
710 REM *****
720 PRINT : PRINT
730 RETURN
740 REM *****
750 REM *** OUTCOMES ***
755 REM ** CHIP TITLES **
760 DATA "TMS 9940 (NMOS)",44,"
68000 (NMOS)",12
770 DATA "9940 (I3L)",56,"MN161
0 (NMOS)",46
780 DATA "8086",60,"Z8001",28
790 REM ** QUESTIONS **
800 DATA "Is the word size 32 b
it."
810 DATA "Does it address 64K."
820 DATA "Is the clock rate 5MH
z or less"
830 DATA "Is the shortest obey
3 micro seconds or less"
840 DATA "Does the instruction
set contain more than 71 instruct
ions"

```

850 DATA "Is the package 40 pin  
dip"

Even if you have no desire whatsoever to identify chips, you can still make use of the expert system encoded in this program. As you can see, the variables OUTCOMES and FACTORS are assigned in lines 610 and 620, and these are used to dimension the arrays in line 630. Change the variables to the outcomes and factors you have, modify the DATA statements, and you have your very own expert system, ready to help you. The crucial number which the system uses to identify the chip (or to isolate whichever outcome you want) is held in the DATA statements immediately following the name of the chip.

To work out the numbers, I set up a chart like the following. It is simple to do the same for your subject:

OUTCOME	FACTOR						TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
TMS 9940	0	0	1	1	0	1	44
68000	0	0	1	1	0	0	12
994013L	0	0	0	1	1	1	56
MN1610	0	1	1	1	0	1	46
8086	0	0	1	1	1	1	60
Z8001	0	0	1	1	1	0	28

Here's the complete program now, so you can create the expert of your choice.

```
10 REM CHIP-CHOICE
15 POKE 23658,200: FLASH 0: BR
IGHT 1: INK 7: PAPER 1: BRIGHT 0
: BORDER 1: CLS
20 GO SUB 580: REM INITIALISE
30 GO SUB 450: REM SHOW BASE C
ONTENTS
40 GO SUB 120: REM IDENTIFY CH
IP
50 GO SUB 720
60 PRINT "Press ""ENTER"" for
another chip or any key then ""
ENTER"" to quit."
80 INPUT Q$
90 IF Q$="" THEN GO TO 40
100 STOP
110 REM *****
120 REM ** IDENTIFY CHIP **
130 CLS
140 GO SUB 720
150 PRINT BRIGHT 1;"I can ident
ify from the""following"
160 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
170 PRINT TAB J+2;
180 IF J=OUTCOMES THEN PRINT "O
r ";
190 PRINT INK 4;A$(J)
200 NEXT J
210 GO SUB 720
220 LET RESULT=0
230 LET X=.5
240 PRINT "Please enter ""Y"" o
r ""N"" ..."
```

```

250 FOR J=1 TO FACTORS
260 LET X=X+X
280 PRINT 'B$(J)
290 INPUT E$
295 IF E$<>"Y" AND E$<>"N" THEN
GO TO 290
300 IF E$<>"N" THEN LET RESULT=
RESULT+X
310 NEXT J
320 PRINT TAB 3; INK 3;"My resu
lt was ";RESULT
330 GO SUB 720
340 LET M=0
350 LET M=M+1
360 IF D(M)=RESULT THEN GO TO 4
00
370 IF M<OUTCOMES THEN GO TO 35
0
380 FOR R=1 TO 5: BEEP .1,R: BE
EP .2,R+10: NEXT R: PRINT TAB 3;
INK 5; FLASH 1;"> I cannot iden
tify it"; FLASH 0
390 RETURN

400>BEEP 1,-10: FOR R=1 TO 3: B
EEP .2,6: BEEP .1,3: BEEP .1,1:
NEXT R: BEEP .5,-7: PRINT TAB 5;
"The one you have" TAB 8;"is ";A
$(M)
420 GO TO 390
430 RETURN
440 REM *****
450 REM *SHOW CONTENTS OF BASE*
460 CLS
470 PRINT "This is my expert ba
se:"

```



```

480 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
490 GO SUB 720
500 PRINT A$(J); " --- "; D(J)
510 NEXT J
520 GO SUB 720
530 PRINT TAB 8; "Press " "RETURN
" " "
540 INPUT Q$
550 CLS
560 RETURN
570 REM *****
580 REM ** INITIALISATION **
590 CLS
600 RESTORE
610 LET OUTCOMES=6
620 LET FACTORS=6
630 DIM A$(OUTCOMES,17): DIM B$
(FACTORS,60): DIM D(OUTCOMES)
640 FOR J=1 TO OUTCOMES
650 READ A$(J),D(J)
660 NEXT J
670 FOR J=1 TO FACTORS
680 READ B$(J)
690 NEXT J
700 RETURN
710 REM *****
720 PRINT : PRINT
730 RETURN
740 REM *****
750 REM *** ***
755 REM ** CHIP TITLES **
760 DATA "TMS 9940 (NMOS)",44,"
68000 (NMOS)",12
770 DATA "9940 (I3L)",56,"MN161
0 (NMOS)",46

```

```
780 DATA "8086",60,"Z8001",28
790 REM ** QUESTIONS **
800 DATA "Is the word size 32 b
it."
810 DATA "Does it address 64K."
820 DATA "Is the clock rate 5MH
z or less"
830 DATA "Is the shortest obey
3 micro seconds or less"
840 DATA "Does the instruction
set contain more than 71 instruct
ions"
850 DATA "Is the package 40 pin
dip"
```

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN — SELF-LEARNING SYSTEMS

You'll recall, in the second system we looked at in this section, that the program X-SPURT allowed you to enter expertise on any subject. Once you'd fed it in, the program was ready to be your expert on the subject you had chosen.

However, it had one disadvantage. It demanded that you run through each of the factors, for each of the outcomes, in order to acquire a knowledge base from which it could work.

Our next program, SELFLEARN, does not require the same kind of spoonfeeding which was needed with X-SPURT. here it is in action:

HOW MANY FACTORS? 3

ENTER FACTOR 1  
? WINGS

ENTER FACTOR 2  
? PAIR OF EYES

ENTER FACTOR 3  
? EATS WORMS

ENTER OUTCOME 1  
? SPARROW

ENTER OUTCOME 2  
? HUMAN

Once you have this information in place, you can run the program, and it will proceed to teach itself how to tell the difference between various outcomes:

NOW I WILL DEMONSTRATE MY EXPERTISE...

THINK OF ONE OF THE OUTCOMES

IS WINGS TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')

? N

> 0

IS PAIR OF EYES TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')

? Y

> 1

IS EATS WORMS TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')

? N

> 0

>BRAYN= 0

OUTCOME IS SPARROW

IS THIS CORRECT? ('Y' OR 'N')

? N

NOW I WILL DEMONSTRATE MY EXPERTISE...

THINK OF ONE OF THE OUTCOMES

IS WINGS TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')

? Y

> 1  
IS PAIR OF EYES TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')  
? Y

> 1  
IS EATS WORMS TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')  
? Y

> 1  
>BRAYN=-1  
OUTCOME IS HUMAN  
IS THIS CORRECT? ('Y' OR 'N')  
? N

For a while it will get things wrong, as you see above, but then will start getting some correct guesses:

NOW I WILL DEMONSTRATE MY EXPERTISE...  
THINK OF ONE OF THE OUTCOMES  
IS WINGS TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')  
? Y

> 1  
IS PAIR OF EYES TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')  
? Y

> 1  
IS EATS WORMS TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')  
? Y

> 1  
>BRAYN= 2  
OUTCOME IS SPARROW  
IS THIS CORRECT? ('Y' OR 'N')  
? Y

NOW I WILL DEMONSTRATE MY EXPERTISE...  
 THINK OF ONE OF THE OUTCOMES  
 IS WINGS TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')  
 ? N  
 > 0  
 IS PAIR OF EYES TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')  
 ? Y  
 > 1  
 IS EATS WORMS TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')  
 ? N  
 > 0  
 >BRAYN=-1  
 OUTCOME IS HUMAN  
 IS THIS CORRECT? ('Y' OR 'N')  
 ? Y

In due course it will become infallible:

NOW I WILL DEMONSTRATE MY EXPERTISE...  
 THINK OF ONE OF THE OUTCOMES  
 IS WINGS TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')  
 ? Y  
 > 1  
 IS PAIR OF EYES TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')  
 ? Y  
 > 1  
 IS EATS WORMS TRUE? ('Y' OR 'N')  
 ? Y  
 > 1  
 >BRAYN= 1  
 OUTCOME IS SPARROW  
 IS THIS CORRECT? ('Y' OR 'N')  
 ? Y

# HOW IT WORKS

The important thing (and the major limitation) of this program is that it can only distinguish between two outcomes (such as SPARROW and MAN in our example). The program starts with the assumption that its total (the variable BRAYN) will be either greater than or equal to zero, or less than zero. The actual value BRAYN achieves does not matter.

When you first run it, the program asks for the raw information it will need:

```
400 REM ** INITIALISATION **
410 CLS
420 LET OTCO=2: REM NUMBER OF
OUTCOMES
430 PRINT : PRINT
440 INPUT "How many factors ";F
ACT
450 DIM A$(OTCO,30): REM NAMES
OF OUTCOMES
460 DIM B$(FACT,30): REM NAMES
OF FACTORS
470 DIM C(FACT): DIM D(FACT)
480 CLS
490 FOR J=1 TO FACT
510 PRINT "Enter factor ";J;"
";
520 INPUT B$(J): PRINT INK 4;B$(
J)
530 NEXT J
550 CLS
560 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
```

```

580 PRINT "Enter outcome ";J;"
";
590 INPUT A$(J): PRINT INK 5;A$(
(J)
600 NEXT J
610 RETURN

```

Each time through the loop, SELFLEARN begins by filling each element of the C array (there is one element for each FACT) with zero:

```

30 REM * MAJOR LEARNING LOOP *
40 CLS
50 FOR J=1 TO FACT
60 LET C(J)=0
70 NEXT J
80 PRINT
90 GO SUB 130
100 GO TO 40

```

It then proceeds to print up the factors, one by one, asking you to comment 'Y' or 'N' on whether they refer to the outcome you have thought of:

```

120 REM * DEMONSTRATION TIME *
130 PRINT INK 5;"Now I will dem
onstrate my          expertise..."
140 PRINT "Think of one of the
outcomes"
145 PRINT
150 FOR J=1 TO FACT
170 PRINT INK 5;"Is ";B$(J); IN
K 7; BRIGHT 1;" True?( "Y" or
"N" )"
180 INPUT z$

```



```

190 IF Z$<>"Y" AND Z$<>"N" THEN
GO TO 180
200 IF Z$="Y" THEN LET C(J)=1
210 PRINT TAB 29; INK 4;C(J)
220 NEXT J

```

If you say 'Y' then that element of the C array is set to one. Once you've been through this loop, BRAYN works out a total for that outcome, with the code from 230 to 270:

```

230 LET BRAYN=0
240 FOR J=1 TO FACT
250 LET BRAYN=BRAYN+C(J)*D(J)
260 NEXT J
270 PRINT TAB 20; "> BRAYN=";BRA
YN

```

If you look at the listing carefully, you'll see that the very first time this loop is run, BRAYN will equal zero (because all of those C(J)'s have been multiplied by D(J)'s, and every D(J) starts out equalling zero).

This means, the very first time you run the program, it will give you option one (that is A\$(1), the first outcome you entered), as BRAYN will be equal to zero:

```

280 IF BRAYN>=0 THEN PRINT "Out
come is ";A$(1): LET EX=-1
290 IF BRAYN<0 THEN PRINT "Outc
ome is ";A$(2): LET EX=1

```

SELFLEARN then asks if that was correct. If you tell it that it is correct, it does not modify its information, because — in its present condition — it will give the same answer next time the same information is presented. If, however, you tell it that it was wrong, it will go through the next loop, modify-

ing the values of D(J) using both the C(J) values you gave, and by use of the variable EX. If you look back to lines 280 and 290, you'll see EX is set to -1 if the outcome it thought of was A\$(1), and to 1 if it thought of A\$(2).

D(J) is the vital component of the loop 240 to 260 helps determine the value of BRAYN, so this must be modified if the program gave the wrong result:

```
300 PRINT "Is this correct? (" "
Y" " or " "N" " ) "
310 INPUT z$
320 IF z$ <> "Y" AND z$ <> "N" THEN
GO TO 310
330 PRINT
340 IF z$ = "Y" THEN FOR R=1 TO 5
: BEEP .1,R: NEXT R: GO TO 380
345 FOR R=-1 TO -5 STEP -1: BEE
P .1,R: NEXT R
350 FOR J=1 TO FACT
360 LET D(J)=D(J)+EX*C(J)
370 NEXT J
380 RETURN
```

Once it has made its changes to D(J), using both the values of the elements of the C array (which can, you'll see from lines 60 and 200, only have values of one or zero), the program returns for another try. As you'll see, it soon becomes infallible.

Here is the complete listing:

```
10 REM SELFLEARN
15 BRIGHT 1: FLASH 0: INK 7: B
ORDER 1: BRIGHT 0: PAPER 1: CLS
20 GO SUB 400: REM INITIALISE
30 REM * MAJOR LEARNING LOOP *
40 CLS
50 FOR J=1 TO FACT
60 LET C(J)=0
70 NEXT J
80 PRINT
90 GO SUB 130
100 GO TO 40
110 REM *****
120 REM * DEMONSTRATION TIME *
130 PRINT INK 5;"Now I will dem
onstrate my          expertise..."
140 PRINT "Think of one of the
outcomes"
145 PRINT
150 FOR J=1 TO FACT
170 PRINT INK 5;"Is ";B$(J); IN
K 7; BRIGHT 1;" True?( ""Y"" or
""N"" )"
180 INPUT Z$
190 IF Z$<>"Y" AND Z$<>"N" THEN
GO TO 180
200 IF Z$="Y" THEN LET C(J)=1
210 PRINT TAB 29; INK 4;C(J)
220 NEXT J
230 LET BRAYN=0
240 FOR J=1 TO FACT
250 LET BRAYN=BRAYN+C(J)*D(J)
260 NEXT J
```

```

270 PRINT TAB 20; "> BRAYN="; BRAYN
YN
280 IF BRAYN>=0 THEN PRINT "Outcome is "; A$(1): LET EX=-1
290 IF BRAYN<0 THEN PRINT "Outcome is "; A$(2): LET EX=1
300 PRINT "Is this correct? ("Y" or "N")"
310 INPUT Z$
320 IF Z$<>"Y" AND Z$<>"N". THEN GO TO 310
330 PRINT
340 IF Z$="Y" THEN FOR R=1 TO 5: BEEP .1,R: NEXT R: GO TO 380
345 FOR R=-1 TO -5 STEP -1: BEEP .1,R: NEXT R
350 FOR J=1 TO FACT
360 LET D(J)=D(J)+EX*C(J)
370 NEXT J
380 RETURN
390 REM *****
400 REM ** INITIALISATION **
410 CLS
420 LET OTCO=2: REM NUMBER OF OUTCOMES
430 PRINT : PRINT
440 INPUT "How many factors "; FACT
450 DIM A$(OTCO,30): REM NAMES OF OUTCOMES
460 DIM B$(FACT,30): REM NAMES OF FACTORS
470 DIM C(FACT): DIM D(FACT)
480 CLS
490 FOR J=1 TO FACT

```

```

510 PRINT "Enter factor ";J;"
";
520 INPUT B$(J): PRINT INK 4;B$(
(J)
530 NEXT J
550 CLS
560 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
580 PRINT "Enter outcome ";J;"
";
590 INPUT A$(J): PRINT INK 5;A$(
(J)
600 NEXT J
610 RETURN

```

## MORE THAN TWO ALTERNATIVES

Although it is fascinating to have an expert system which teaches itself in this way, it is a major drawback to be able to choose from just two alternatives. Our next program, MULTI-SELF-LEARN, is designed to allow for more than two outcomes.

The program starts much as you would, by now, expect:

HOW MANY OUTCOMES? 3

HOW MANY FACTORS? 3

PLEASE ENTER NAME OF OUTCOME 1  
? HUMAN  
PLEASE ENTER NAME OF OUTCOME 2  
? HORSE  
PLEASE ENTER NAME OF OUTCOME 3  
? SPARROW

PLEASE ENTER NAME OF FACTOR 1  
? A SINGLE PAIR OF LEGS  
PLEASE ENTER NAME OF FACTOR 2  
? CAN FLY UNAIDED  
PLEASE ENTER NAME OF FACTOR 3  
? BREATHES OXYGEN

THESE ARE THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES:

HUMAN  
HORSE  
SPARROW

PLEASE THINK OF ONE OF THEM

PRESS RETURN WHEN YOU ARE READY  
?

However, when you run it, you'll see that it asks you questions, then makes a guess as to what you were thinking of. If it was wrong, it asks you what the correct answer should have been:

PLEASE ANSWER 'Y' OR 'N' FOR EACH OF  
THE FOLLOWING IN RESPECT OF  
THE OUTCOME YOU HAVE THOUGHT OF

A SINGLE PAIR OF LEGS

? Y

CAN FLY UNAIDED

? N

BREATHES OXYGEN

? Y

YOU WERE THINKING OF HORSE

ENTER 'Y' IF I'M RIGHT, 'N' IF WRONG

? N

WHAT SHOULD THE ANSWER HAVE BEEN

? HUMAN

Run it long enough (which is not very long with only three outcomes, and three factors) and it gets them right every time:

PLEASE ANSWER 'Y' OR 'N' FOR EACH OF  
THE FOLLOWING IN RESPECT OF  
THE OUTCOME YOU HAVE THOUGHT OF

A SINGLE PAIR OF LEGS

? N

CAN FLY UNAIDED

? N

BREATHES OXYGEN

? Y

YOU WERE THINKING OF HORSE

ENTER 'Y' IF I'M RIGHT, 'N' IF WRONG

? Y

PLEASE ANSWER 'Y' OR 'N' FOR EACH OF  
THE FOLLOWING IN RESPECT OF  
THE OUTCOME YOU HAVE THOUGHT OF

A SINGLE PAIR OF LEGS

? Y

CAN FLY UNAIDED

? Y

BREATHES OXYGEN

? Y

YOU WERE THINKING OF SPARROW

ENTER 'Y' IF I'M RIGHT, 'N' IF WRONG

? Y

The important part of this program lies between lines 150 and 520. The first section of this accepts the 'Y' answers, and increments a variable called COUNT in terms of your answer (adding 1 for the first 'Y', 2 for the next, 4 for the next, then 8, 16, 32 and so on):

```
150 PRINT "Please answer ""Y""  
or ""N"" for      each of the foll  
owing in        respect to the o  
utcome you have thought of."  
180 PRINT  
190 LET COUNT=0  
200 LET X=.5  
210 FOR J=1 TO FACT  
220 LET X=X+X  
230 PRINT F$(J)  
240 INPUT Z$: PRINT "? "; FLASH  
1;Z$'  
250 IF Z$<>"Y" AND Z$<>"N" THEN  
GO TO 240
```



```

260 IF Z$="Y" THEN LET COUNT=CO
LINT+X
270 NEXT J

```

After the program has been running for a while, it will have assigned values to many elements of the B array. B(1) will be the total when A\$(1) is the outcome, B(6) will be the total for an outcome of A\$(6) and so on. A small loop is traversed after the 'Y' answers are given, to see if the total obtained equals any previously-stored B(J) value. If it does, then the variable X is set equal to the relevant J:

```

280 LET X=0
290 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
300 IF COUNT=B(J) THEN LET X=J
310 NEXT J

```

If such a value has been assigned, X is no longer equal to zero, and the system has made a decision:

```

320 IF X<>0 THEN GO TO 410

```

If no definite answer has been obtained here, the computer generates a random number between 1 and the number of outcomes, in order to make a guess. But it is not enough to then say "WERE YOU THINKING OF";A\$ (random number generated). Although your program may not yet have assigned an A\$(n) to the n total you received, it may well have assigned some elements of A\$. Therefore it can, and must, reject some 'guesses' produced by the random number generator:

```

330 LET X=INT (RND*OTCO)+1
340 REM ** REJECTS ANSWERS
      KNOWN TO BE WRONG **

```

```

350 LET FLAG=0
360 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
370 IF B(J)=0 THEN GO TO 390
380 IF X=J AND COUNT<>B(J) THEN
LET FLAG=1
390 NEXT J
400 IF FLAG=1 THEN GO TO 330

```

If the variable FLAG equals anything except zero, then the guess (the element of A\$ represented by the randomly-generated value of X) cannot be used, as the system already knows that answer is wrong. Therefore, using line 400, it goes back to choose a new value for X.

Having done so, the program checks on its guess:

```

410 PRINT "You were thinking of
";A$(X)
420 PRINT
430 PRINT "Enter ""Y"" if I'm r
ight, ""N"" if I'm wrong"
440 INPUT Z$
450 IF Z$<>"Y" AND Z$<>"N" THEN
GO TO 440
460 IF Z$="Y" THEN LET B(X)=COU
NT: FOR R=1 TO 5: BEEP .1,2: BEE
P .1,5: BEEP .1,R: GO TO 30
470 FOR R=1 TO 4: BEEP .1,7: BE
EP .2,8: BEEP .1,R*2: NEXT R: PR
INT "What should the answer have
been"
480 INPUT Z$
490 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
500 IF A$(J, TO LEN Z$)=Z$ THEN
LET B(J)=COUNT
510 NEXT J
520 GO TO 30

```

If the guess was correct, the system uses the loop from 490 to 510 to find out which element of A\$ corresponds to the total generated in that run. This ensures that, when it meets the same total next time, it will be able to identify the relevant element of A\$.

Here's the complete listing, so you can set up a major expert system, which will teach itself:

```
10 REM MULTI-SELF-LEARN
15 INVERSE 0: POKE 23658,200:
BRIGHT 1: FLASH 0: PAPER 1: INK
7: BRIGHT 0: BORDER 1: CLS
20 GO SUB 550: REM INITIALISE
30 CLS
40 PRINT "These are the possible
outcomes:"
50 PRINT
60 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
70 PRINT TAB J;A$(J)
80 NEXT J
90 PRINT
100 PRINT "Please think of one
of them"
110 PRINT
120 PRINT "Press "; FLASH 1;"ENTER";
FLASH 0;" when you are ready"
130 INPUT z$
140 CLS
150 PRINT "Please answer ""Y""
or ""N"" for each of the following
in respect to the outcome you
have thought of."
180 PRINT
```

```

190 LET COUNT=0
200 LET X=.5
210 FOR J=1 TO FACT
220 LET X=X+X
230 PRINT F$(J)
240 INPUT Z$: PRINT "? "; FLASH
1;Z$'
250 IF Z$<>"Y" AND Z$<>"N" THEN
GO TO 240
260 IF Z$="Y" THEN LET COUNT=CO
UNT+X
270 NEXT J
280 LET X=0
290 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
300 IF COUNT=B(J) THEN LET X=J
310 NEXT J
320 IF X<>0 THEN GO TO 410
330 LET X=INT (RND*OTCO)+1
340 REM ** REJECTS ANSWERS
KNOWN TO BE WRONG **
350 LET FLAG=0
360 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
370 IF B(J)=0 THEN GO TO 390
380 IF X=J AND COUNT<>B(J) THEN
LET FLAG=1
390 NEXT J
400 IF FLAG=1 THEN GO TO 330
410 PRINT "You were thinking of
";A$(X)
420 PRINT
430 PRINT "Enter ""Y"" if I'm r
ight, ""N"" if I'm wrong"
440 INPUT Z$
450 IF Z$<>"Y" AND Z$<>"N" THEN
GO TO 440

```

```

460 IF Z$="Y" THEN LET B(X)=COUNT: FOR R=1 TO 5: BEEP .1,2: BEEP .1,5: BEEP .1,R: GO TO 30
470 FOR R=1 TO 4: BEEP .1,7: BEEP .2,8: BEEP .1,R*2: NEXT R: PRINT "What should the answer have been"
480 INPUT Z$
490 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
500 IF A$(J, TO LEN Z$)=Z$ THEN LET B(J)=COUNT
510 NEXT J
520 GO TO 30
530 STOP
540 REM *****
550 REM INITIALISATION
560 CLS
570 PRINT "How many outcomes? "
;: INPUT OTCO
580 PRINT INK 5;OTCO'
590 PRINT "How many factors? ";
: INPUT FACT
600 PRINT INK 5;FACT'
610 LET X=OTCO+FACT
620 DIM A$(OTCO,30)
630 DIM F$(FACT,30): DIM B(X)
640 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
650 PRINT "Please enter name of outcome ";J
660 INPUT A$(J): PRINT INK 4;"?";A$(J)
670 NEXT J
580 CLS
690 FOR J=1 TO FACT

```

```
700 PRINT "Please enter name of
factor ";J
710 INPUT F$(J): PRINT INK 4;"?
";F$(J)
720 NEXT J
730 RETURN
```

## NO NEED FOR CORRECTION

Our final program in this section is a variation of the one you have just been studying. The only difference between this one, and the preceding one, is that this one does not need to be told what the correct answer should have been if it makes a mistake. The program works out for itself, fairly quickly how to distinguish between the various values.

I have not renumbered this program, so it will be easy to modify MULTI-SELF-LEARN so that it becomes MULTI-SELF-LEARN-2. Here is the program up and running:

```
HOW MANY OUTCOMES? 5
```

```
HOW MANY FACTORS? 5
```

```
PLEASE ENTER NAME OF OUTCOME 1
```

```
? DOG
```

```
PLEASE ENTER NAME OF OUTCOME 2
```

```
? HORSE
```

```
PLEASE ENTER NAME OF OUTCOME 3
```

```
? SHEEP
```

PLEASE ENTER NAME OF OUTCOME 4  
? CROW

PLEASE ENTER NAME OF OUTCOME 5  
? HUMAN

PLEASE ENTER NAME OF FACTOR 1  
? POWER OF SPEECH

PLEASE ENTER NAME OF FACTOR 2  
? BARKS

PLEASE ENTER NAME OF FACTOR 3  
? ABLE TO FLY

PLEASE ENTER NAME OF FACTOR 4  
? FOUR LEGS

PLEASE ENTER NAME OF FACTOR 5  
? PRODUCES WOOL

Once the knowledge base is in place, the program proceeds as follows:

THESE ARE THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES:

DOG

HORSE

SHEEP

CROW

HUMAN

PLEASE THINK OF ONE OF THEM

PRESS RETURN WHEN YOU ARE READY

?

PLEASE ANSWER 'Y' OR 'N' FOR EACH OF  
THE FOLLOWING IN RESPECT OF  
THE OUTCOME YOU HAVE THOUGHT OF

POWER OF SPEECH

? N

BARKS

? Y

ABLE TO FLY

? N

FOUR LEGS

? Y

PRODUCES WOOL

? N

YOU WERE THINKING OF CROW

ENTER 'Y' IF I'M RIGHT, 'N' IF WRONG

? N

While most of its answers will be wrong when the run begins, the correct guesses will become more frequent as time goes on:

PLEASE ANSWER 'Y' OR 'N' FOR EACH OF  
THE FOLLOWING IN RESPECT OF  
THE OUTCOME YOU HAVE THOUGHT OF

POWER OF SPEECH

? N

BARKS

? N

ABLE TO FLY

? Y

FOUR LEGS

? N

PRODUCES WOOL

? N

YOU WERE THINKING OF CROW

ENTER 'Y' IF I'M RIGHT, 'N' IF WRONG

? Y



Eventually, it will not make any mistakes. It works in much the same way as the previous program, assigning values to the elements of the B array. However, this time it has an array called C, which ensures that it will never make the same wrong guess from the same total. This acts to increasingly limit the possible outcomes which could be obtained, so the number of things it can guess from is reduced each time. It does not take it long to build up a 'world view' which ensures it will be right every time. The number of trials it will take to obtain perfection depends, of course, on the number of outcomes.

After the program has managed to teach itself to distinguish between the outcomes without error, it will be holding a knowledge base it refers to for each subsequent trial. This is the base that MULTI-SELF-LEARN-2 built up during that run:

J= 1	B(J)= 10	A\$(J)=DOG
J= 2	B(J)= 8	A\$(J)=HORSE
J= 3	B(J)= 24	A\$(J)=SHEEP
J= 4	B(J)= 4	A\$(J)=CROW
J= 5	B(J)= 1	A\$(J)=HUMAN

And this is the listing:

```
10 REM MULTI-SELF-LEARN 2
15 BRIGHT 1: FLASH 0: PAPER 1:
INK 7: BRIGHT 0: BORDER 1: CLS
20 GO SUB 550: REM INITIALISE
30 CLS
40 PRINT INK 3; "These are the
possible outcomes:"
50 PRINT
60 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
```

```

70 PRINT TAB J; INK 4;A$(J)
80 NEXT J
90 PRINT
100 PRINT "Please think of one
of them"
110 PRINT
120 PRINT "Press "; FLASH 1; IN
K 3;"ENTER"; INK 7; FLASH 0;" wh
en you are ready"
130 INPUT z$
140 CLS
150 PRINT "Please answer ""Y""
or ""N"" for      each of the foll
owing in          respect to the o
utcome you have thought of."
180 PRINT
190 LET COUNT=0
200 LET X=.5
210 FOR J=1 TO FACT
220 LET X=X+X
230 PRINT BRIGHT 1;F$(J)
240 INPUT Z$: PRINT "? "; FLASH
1;Z$' '
250 IF Z$<>"Y" AND Z$<>"N" THEN
GO TO 240
260 IF Z$="Y" THEN LET COUNT=CO
UNT+X
270 NEXT J
280 LET X=0
290 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
300 IF COUNT=B(J) THEN LET X=X
310 NEXT J
320 IF X<>0 THEN GO TO 410
330 LET X=INT (RND*OTCO)+1
340 REM  ** REJECTS ANSWERS
      KNOWN TO BE WRONG **

```

```

350 LET FLAG=0
360 FOR J=1 TO OTCO
370 IF B(J)=0 THEN GO TO 390
380 IF X=J AND COUNT<>B(J) THEN
LET FLAG=1
385 IF C(X)=COUNT OR D(X)=COUNT
THEN LET FLAG=1
390 NEXT J
400 IF FLAG=1 THEN GO TO 330
410 PRINT "You were thinking of
";A$(X)
420 PRINT
430 PRINT "Enter ""Y"" if I'm r
ight, ""N"" if I'm wrong"
440 INPUT Z$
450 IF Z$<>"Y" AND Z$<>"N" THEN
GO TO 440
460 IF Z$="Y" THEN LET B(X)=COU
NT: FOR R=1 TO 5: BEEP .1,2: BEE
P .1,5: BEEP .1,R: GO TO 30
470 IF C(X)=0 THEN LET C(X)=COU
NT: GO TO 30
520 LET D(X)=COUNT: GO TO 30
530 STOP
540 REM *****
550 REM INITIALISATION
560 CLS
570 PRINT "How many outcomes? "
;: INPUT OTCO
580 PRINT INK 5;OTCO''
590 PRINT "How many factor? ";:
INPUT FACT
600 PRINT INK 5;FACT''
610 LET X=OTCO+FACT
620 DIM A$(OTCO,30)

```

```
630 DIM F$(FACT,30): DIM B(X):  
DIM C(X): DIM D(X)  
640 FOR J=1 TO OTCO  
650 PRINT "Please enter name of  
outcome ";J  
660 INPUT A$(J): PRINT INK 4;"?  
";A$(J)  
670 NEXT J  
680 CLS  
690 FOR J=1 TO FACT  
700 PRINT "Please enter name of  
factor ";J  
710 INPUT F$(J): PRINT INK 4;"?  
";F$(J)  
720 NEXT J  
730 RETURN
```

# NOTES

# NOTES

# NOTES

# NOTES



# NOTES

# NOTES



**You can now demonstrate Artificial Intelligence in action on your microcomputer.**

From programs which learn and reason, to those which will talk to you, obey you and advise you, this book will guide you into the fascinating world of AI – where science fact interacts with science fiction.

**Can a machine really think?**

**What is the nature of intelligence, and will a machine ever be built to partake of that nature?**

Answer these questions for yourself, as you explore AI with a host of ready-to-run programs including BLOCKWORLD (communicate in ordinary English with your computer, and watch it follow your orders), DOCTOR (the most complete version of ELIZA ever published in BASIC), X-SPURT (an expert system ready to help you with any subject under the sun), SYLLOGY (a program which reasons) and TICTAC (a noughts and crosses game which learns as it plays, improving its skill from game to game).

*This book is part of the 'Interface Artificial Intelligence Library'.*



**£6.95**

ISBN 0-947695-05-2



9 780947 695057