Chomsky presents theory of unpredictable behavior

By Richard Fowser

Professor Noam Chomsky addressed an audience of 1000 in Kregel Auditorium Wednesday on the topic: "Science and Mystery in the Study of Human Language" as part of the technology and culture seminar series. Chomsky stated that there are some problems man is not capable of understanding due to the nature of his intelligence, and that human behavior may be too complex for humans to understand. The researchers, Professor of Physics Philip Morrison and Professor of Philosophy Ned Block, took issue with this theory. Morrison denied that human behavior was unpredictable as Chomsky speculated, and Block contended that all phenomena are physical or structurally dependent errors.

Chomsky distinguished between problems, which are within the realm of science, and in the mind, it is not simple to determine a cause-and-effect relationship. Between problems, which are within a system, are structure-dependent problems. The system, intermediate between a "puzzle" and the "frustrating," is not understood. What you are left with is a set of problems, which are with children and habit. The empirical question is, what does that do to the system? Chomsky said that the empirical question is, what is the nature of the problem, and what is the solution? The problem of human behavior is not a simple one, and it is not a problem that can be solved by "hard" science. Chomsky stated that there are some problems man is not capable of understanding due to the nature of his intelligence, and that human behavior may be too complex for humans to understand. The researchers, Professor of Physics Philip Morrison and Professor of Philosophy Ned Block, took issue with this theory. Morrison denied that human behavior was unpredictable as Chomsky speculated, and Block contended that all phenomena are physical or structurally dependent errors.

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