

Book Reviews

Donald Michie, *Machine Intelligence and Related Topics: An Information Scientist's Weekend Book* (Gordon and Breach, New York, 1982); 328 pages, \$57.75.

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The complete title of this book accurately reveals the broad themes unifying this collection of twenty seven papers by the author. First, many of them are about artificial intelligence. Second, in his nonscholarly hours, Michie indulges his urges to write about the enterprise of science, itself, for other weekenders with time on their hands.

Michie's treatment of artificial intelligence ranges from rather technical discussions of chess playing (on standard and infinite size boards) and heuristic search to more speculative discussions on the social aspects of artificial intelligence (including issues such as lying to intelligent machines lest they act too autonomously). Considerable attention is paid, too, to expert systems.

Concerning science itself, Michie's essays impart broad advice from how to succeed as a scientist (No committees. . . . No editing. No book reviews. . . .), how to deal with unjust refereeing or reviews, as well as more serious urgings of the need for research in artificial intelligence and its continued funding in Britain.

The book is very much a work suitable for weekend reading. Its tone is at times bitingly sarcastic ("the academic's greatest freedom is the freedom to act as trivially as we like"), while maintaining a sense of reverence for creative science, and respect for the capacities of the human mind. The book contains ample references culled from both Europe and the United States, though many of the articles are quite dated (some nearly twenty years old). Though the book might be more compelling had its various papers been edited into a single work, this certainly would have diminished its variety. For those interested in a sampling of the "weekend thought" of one of the AI's early and still influential players, the book is recommended reading.

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