

Martin Davis (“The Myth of Hypercomputation”)

The role of mechanism in human cognition was much discussed in the 17th century, in particular by Descartes, Hobbes, and La Mettrie. The question has been the subject of renewed interest in the context of the possibility of machine intelligence. Of course one is very far from understanding the workings of the human mind, but there is every reason to believe that one of the things our brains do is to execute algorithms. Whether that is all that they do remains unknown although Okham’s razor does suggest that as a parsimonious thesis.