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Writing on DUMPIT, JL:7 0[0]
0,22-APR-76 17:55:38,22-APR-76 17:55:38,16-NOV-1958 16:00:00
22-APR-76 08:41:22-PST,4518,000000000000
Mail from MIT=MC rcvd at 22-APR-76 0841-PST
Date: 22 APR 1976 1134-EST
From: JOSEPH at MIT=MC
To: Lederberg at SUMEX-AIM

Dear Joshua:

I am aware that neither of us have the time to engage in an extended debate over the network. I hope therefore that this will be my last message to you having to do with your N.Y.T. review - although I do hope that we will have other occasions to write to one another.

Your last message came to me as I was about to leave on a short trip. All I had time for then was to respond with the cryptic note that you must have gotten by now. Let me now fill that out a little.

Let me say first that I do not consider myself a Journalist who is commenting on some field outside his normal working community - nor did I think I was writing a book that was to serve as a sort of consensus document for computer science or the AI branch of CS. If there is anything clear about the book, it must be that it is highly idiosyncratic (to a fault), that it presents not how things are but how Joseph Weizenbaum perceives them. Nevertheless, I tried to be careful to get my facts straight. Part of my caretaking was to place the manuscript of the entire book on the MIT AI machine and to let everyone know that it was there. I did all the editing in that mode. I did in fact get lots of comments from Stanford and certainly from MIT many of which prompted me to rewrite entire chapters. I gave Marvin Minsky a copy of the MS a full year before publication and pressed him for comments and criticisms. (Many copies of the Ms. were circulated among the MIT AI faculty and graduate students at the same time and were widely commented on - with effect, I might add.) Marvin suggested precisely one change which I promptly made. I asked for permission to quote for virtually all the quotes that appear in the book. No author wrote to me saying he no longer stands behind what I was quoting. I wrote to Ken Colby especially but got no response from him.

McCarthy in his scathing criticisms of the book (which I cheerfully receive and to which I have and will respond) never asserts that I misrepresent anyone's position. He does say that he cannot find the quote I attribute to him and that it asserts what he did not believe in 1973 or now. Well, I have the notes I took when twice viewing the tape from which the quote was taken. I challenged him with his statement at the Stanford AI meeting in 1973 and he defended it then. He again defended it (Winograd and many others were present) on March 9th, 1976 at M.I.T. I read the Colby quotes at the Stanford AI meeting with Ken in the audience. He commented from the floor - but never to say he no longer believed what I quoted him as having written. Newell was there also (I

have the tape) and in a lengthy comment on what I had said (I quoted the Simon remark on the "whole man") he criticized me only on the ground that I could not prove what the limits of the computer were - i.e. that it could not simulate or account for the whole man. He did not say that Simon no longer held to what he published in 1969.

I believe (perhaps naively) that publishing something entails a

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commitment that cannot be undone by private communications. I find no recantations of the quotes I have used in the public literature. To the contrary, the most recent lectures by Simon and Minsky (April 2nd and January 15th at MIT respectively) reflect and assert the very positions I describe in the book.

Just by the way, I wish you would ask Paul Armer about the calm, unemotional, thoroughly professional and sustained part I played in the ABM debate.

Finally, Joshua, I did not and do not "demand" anything from you. Nor do I consider your "20 year" remark a criticism of my work that I cannot "take". I consider it a statistical error that, once it has been called to your attention, you would want to repair.

As ever
Joe