

History of Psych W2 essay

Explain the significance of Babbage's calculating engine and the role of Ada Lovelace.

Babbage's calculating machine that he called "the difference engine" became the first mechanism that was able to imitate human mental actions other than previous automata that imitated human physical actions. His machine was not only able to tabulate the values of mathematical functions but also play chess, checkers, and other games. Mental activity of a human brain could be substituted by the work of the machine. Babbage's calculator became first created prototype for today's sophisticated computers. Snyder stated that "the age of artificial intelligence could be said to begun with the Difference Engine" (Snyder, 2011, p. 88). It's hard to underestimate Babbage's invention using the computer to do the homework nowadays.

A daughter of Lord Biron, math genius and a loyal Babbage's supporter Ada Lovelace further developed the idea of Babbage's analytical engine that he never finished building due to the lack of fundings. She gave an explanation of how it was supposed to function and how it could be potentially used. Ada Lovelace was the first to recognize the limitations of a "thinking machine" that compared to a human mind was not able to create anything new. The machine was only able to operate according to the instructions or program that were built in it.