



The Logic of Mind (Synthese Library)

R.J. Nelson

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This book presents a mechanist philosophy of mind. I hold that the human mind is a system of computational or recursive rules that are embodied in the nervous system; that the material presence of these rules accounts for perception, conception, speech, belief, desire, intentional acts, and other forms of intelligence. In this edition I have retained the whole of the first edition except for discussion of issues which no longer are relevant in philosophy of mind and cognitive psychology. Earlier reference to disputes of the 1960's and 70's between hard-line empiricists and neorationalists over the psychological status of grammars and language acquisition, for instance, has simply been dropped. In place of such material I have entered some timely or new topics and a few changes. There are brief references to the question of computer versus distributed processing (connectionist) theories. Many of these questions dissolve if one distinguishes as I now do in Chapter II between free and embodied algorithms. I have also added to my comments on artificial intelligence some reflections on Searle's Chinese Translator. The irreducibility of machine functionalist psychology in my version or any other has been exaggerated. Input, output, and state entities are taken identical to physical or biological things of some sort, while a machine system as a collection of recursive rules is type identical to representatives of equivalence classes. This null technicality emerges in Chapter XI. It entails that so-called "anomalous monism" is right in one sense and wrong in another.

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