

The Algebraic Mind: Integrating Connectionism and Cognitive Science (Learning, Development, and Conceptual Change)

Gary F. Marcus



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In *The Algebraic Mind*, Gary Marcus attempts to integrate two theories about how the mind works, one that says that the mind is a computer-like manipulator of symbols, and another that says that the mind is a large network of neurons working together in parallel. Resisting the conventional wisdom that says that if the mind is a large neural network it cannot simultaneously be a manipulator of symbols, Marcus outlines a variety of ways in which neural systems could be organized so as to manipulate symbols, and he shows why such systems are more likely to provide an adequate substrate for language and cognition than neural systems that are inconsistent with the manipulation of symbols. Concluding with a discussion of how a neurally realized system of symbol-manipulation could have evolved and how such a system could unfold developmentally within the womb, Marcus helps to set the future agenda of cognitive neuroscience.

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