Clarion Review

Psychology

Between Our Ears: A Layman's Guide to His Mind
Terry Radford
AuthorHouse
978-1-4520-7190-9
Three Stars (out of Five)

Curious about the workings of your brain but can't deal with neuro-terminology—dendrites, axons, synapses, and such? Terry Radford's *Between Our Ears* compares the structure of the mind to a computer software system, using a minimum of easily understood psycho babble. While comparing the brain to a computer is not a novel concept, Radford extends his premise beyond mere comparison to ask if "man created computers in his own image?"

Radford believes it is possible that humans produced computers capable of "aping man's functionality" by copying the structure of the human mind. "Has our mind's structure been unconsciously replicated by man using programming techniques?" he wonders.

In a nutshell, Radford likens our instincts to firmware contained in our "kernel," which also includes character traits and keeps our bodily functions operating. The kernel interfaces with four "operating systems"—the subconscious mind, the conscious mind, memory, and senses. The operating systems, in turn, interface with a series of "windows," through which we input and export information.

The discussion of memory in computer terms is easy to understand, and his lists of personality and character traits may provide personal insight[1] into this subject. Still, readers should note: these are Radford's personal explanations, wrapped with his opinions, anecdotes, and a few wandering asides. Introverts may not be happy to discover, for example, that Radford paints [2] their shy traits as "uncommunicative, withdrawn, and repressed…and incapable of loving expression." We also are informed of his views on rape, religion, and the marriage relationship, which, while interesting, could warrant a book of their own.

Between Our Ears is more of a personal exploration of ideas than a structured argument; Radford makes no attempt to persuade, but lets his explanations speak for themselves. He leaves any conclusions as to the origin of the computer's structure to the reader.

He also makes it clear that this is a work entirely from his head; he did no research, wanting to arrive at his own conclusions without influence from other sources. Readers looking for strict focus on the premise, which gets a bit lost in the book's personal detail, may feel cheated.

At times his admittedly dominant salesman's personality shines brighter than the computer/mind relationship. However, Radford does what he sets out to do: to "…give Mr. Average an insight into his mind's structure …[and] give the reader an insight into how my mind is populated, and, of necessity, stray into the area of my personal philosophy." Radford capitalizes on his own personality traits and carries this off with confidence and dry humor.

Ruth Douillette