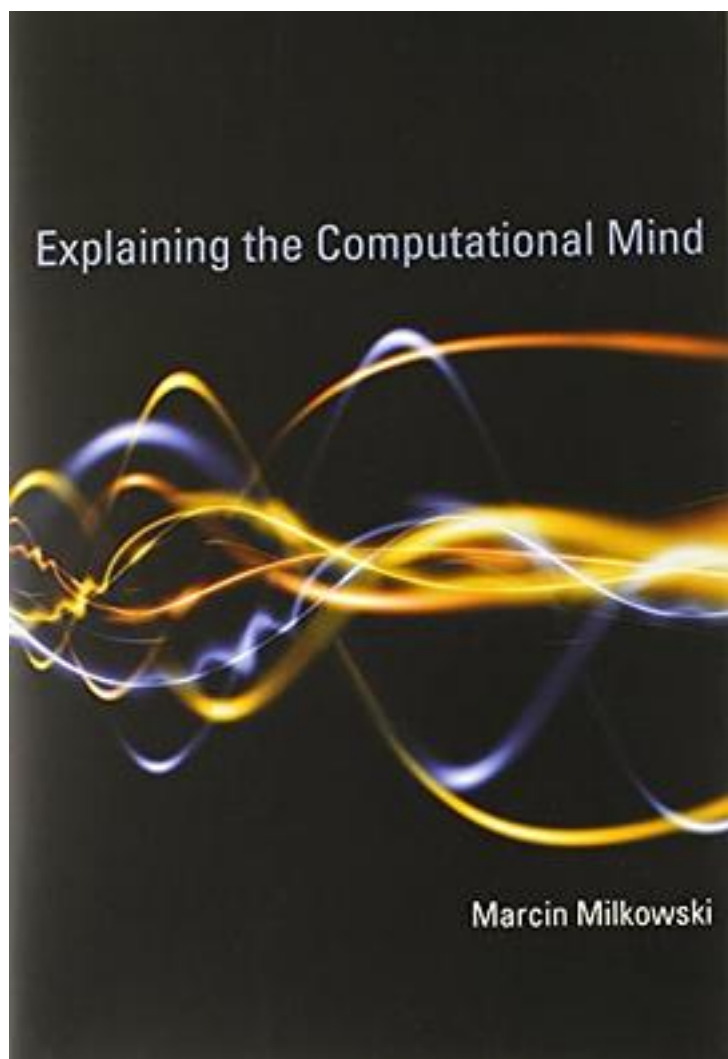


Explaining the Computational Mind



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In this book, Marcin Milkowski argues that the mind can be explained computationally because it is itself computational -- whether it engages in mental arithmetic, parses natural language, or processes the auditory signals that allow us to experience music. Defending the computational explanation against objections to it -- from John Searle and Hilary Putnam in particular -- Milkowski writes that computationalism is here to stay but is not what many have taken it to be. It does not, for example, rely on a Cartesian gulf between software and hardware, or mind and brain. Milkowski's mechanistic construal of computation allows him to show that no purely computational explanation of a physical process will ever be complete. Computationalism is only plausible, he argues, if you also accept explanatory pluralism. Milkowski sketches a mechanistic theory of implementation of computation against a background of extant conceptions, describing four dissimilar computational models of cognition. He reviews other philosophical accounts of implementation and computational explanation and defends a notion of representation that is compatible with his mechanistic account and adequate vis a vis the four models discussed earlier. Instead of arguing that there is no computation without representation, he inverts the slogan and shows that there is no representation without computation -- but explains that representation goes beyond purely computational considerations. Milkowski's arguments succeed in vindicating computational explanation in a novel way by relying on mechanistic theory of science and interventionist theory of causation.

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