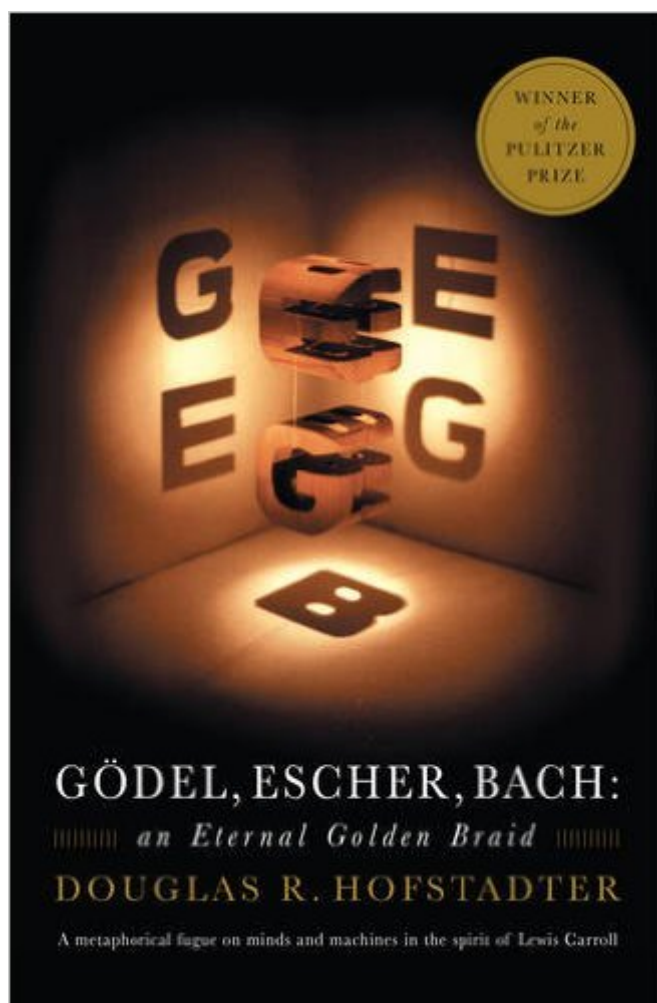The book was found

Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid

Synopsis

Douglas Hofstadterâ ™s book is concerned directly with the nature of “mapsâ • or links between formal systems. However, according to Hofstadter, the formal system that underlies all mental activity transcends the system that supports it. If life can grow out of the formal chemical substrate of the cell, if consciousness can emerge out of a formal system of firing neurons, then so too will computers attain human intelligence. GÃ¶del, Escher, Bach is a wonderful exploration of fascinating ideas at the heart of cognitive science: meaning, reduction, recursion, and much more.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #3,330 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)   #1 inÂ Books > Computers & Technology > Computer Science > AI & Machine Learning > Intelligence & Semantics   #3 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Modern   #3 inÂ Books > Science & Math > Mathematics > Pure Mathematics > Logic

Customer Reviews

GÃ¶del, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid debates, beautifully, the question of consciousness and the possibility of artificial intelligence. It is a book that attempts to discover the true meaning of "self."As the book introduces the reader to cognitive science, the author draws heavily from the world of art to illustrate the finer points of mathematics. The works of M.C. Escher and J.S. Bach are discussed as well as other works in the world of art and music. Topics presented range from mathematics and meta-mathematics to programming, recursion, formal systems, multilevel systems, self-reference, self-representation and others.Lest you think GÃ¶del, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid, to be a dry and boring book on a dry and boring topic, think again. Before each of the book's twenty chapters, Hofstadter has included a witty dialogue, in which Achilles, the Tortoise, and friends discuss various aspects that will later be examined by Hofstadter in the chapter to follow.In writing these wonderful dialogues, Hofstadter created and entirely new form of art in which

concepts are presented on two different levels simultaneously: form and content. The more obvious level of content presents each idea directly through the views of Achilles, Tortoise and company. Their views are sometimes right, often wrong, but always hilariously funny. The true beauty of this book, however, lies in the way Hofstadter interweaves these very ideas into the physical form of the dialogue. The form deals with the same mathematical concepts discussed by the characters, and is more than vaguely reminiscent of the musical pieces of Bach and printed works of Escher that the characters mention directly in their always-witty and sometimes hilarious, discussions.

I received this book as a graduation present a decade ago and just recently got around to reading it. Letâ ™s just say it was not what I expected. Iâ ™ll start with what I liked about GEB and then move on to the much longer list of things I didnâ ™t like.I liked Hofstadterâ ™s search for the seat of consciousness, in humans, ant colonies, and (as he attempts to claim) self-referential formal systems. The discussion of this application to computer science and artificial intelligence was tremendously interesting, though a bit outdated. This subject was, I felt, the core aim of the book, though the route there was extremely, unnecessarily, circuitous.The last few chapters delved deeply, VERY deeply, into these extremely important topics. Up until that point, however, I was confused as to where Hofstadter was leading me and then when I finally finished the book, I was confused as to why the preceding 500+ pages were necessary to arrive there.My biggest qualm with this book is its length. There is no reason this book needed to be over 700 pages long. I should have viewed the 23-page-long preface to the 20th anniversary edition as a warning of Hofstadterâ ™s unnecessarily verbose, pompous style. I can sum up the preface in one sentence: â œNobody understands what this book is about, but rather than try to clarify Iâ ™ll just painstakingly detail how the book came to be.â • Cutting out the unnecessary dialogues (discussed further below) would have significantly reduced this volume without any substantive difference in content. It still wouldnâ ™t be enough though.

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