

The Postcognitivist Era in Cognitive Psychology

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Abstract : During the cognitivist era in cognitive psychology, a theory of internal rules and symbolic representations was posited as an account of human cognition. This type of cognitive architecture had its heyday during the 1970s and 80s, but it has now been largely abandoned in favour of subsymbolic architectures (e.g. connectionism), non-representational frameworks (e.g. dynamical systems theory), and statistical approaches such as Bayesian theory. In this presentation I describe this changing landscape of research, and comment on the increasing influence of neuroscience on cognitive psychology. I then briefly review a few recent developments in connectionism, and neurocomputation relevant to cognitive psychology, and critically discuss the assumption made by some researchers in these frameworks that higher-level aspects of human cognition are simply emergent properties of massively large distributed neural networks

Keywords : connectionism, emergentism, postcognitivist, representations, subsymbolic architecture

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