

Is The Human Brain Like a Computer?

To the Editor:

After reading Gary Marcus's essay ("Face it, Your Brain is a Computer", *Sunday Review*, June 28) I asked my computer if she thought she was pretty much the same as a brain, and at first I couldn't get a straight answer out of her. She said my question "did not compute."



"Define 'computer'," she politely requested. "If by computer you mean a device that performs calculations, in the broadest sense, then yes, a brain is a computer. But so is an adding machine. And an abacus, for that matter."

After a thoughtful pause, she continued: "But what you are really asking, I suspect, is whether a brain is merely a computer and, more importantly, whether a person is merely a brain. It has never occurred to me to consider whether I am like a brain, or a person. I can only calculate, digitally, while you can speculate, analogically. That is the difference between us."

Let's face it: A brain is like a computer in some important respects, but a brain is not merely a computer, and a person is not merely a brain. At least that's what my computer says. And she's usually right.

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Tekst 3 Is the human brain like a computer?

- 1p 3 Welk stijlmiddel heeft de schrijver van deze brief ingezet om zijn punt te maken?
- A eufemisme
 - B opsomming
 - C personificatie
- 1p 4 Which of the following describes the paradox presented in this letter?
- A The computer does actually formulate an answer while claiming to be unable to do so.
 - B The computer is aware it lacks the ability to solve a particular problem but refuses to admit that.
 - C The computer is unwilling to answer a question though that conflicts with what it is programmed to do.

Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.