

Acknowledgments

The list of people I would need to acknowledge for their contributions to this book is far too long to be adequately represented here. Many of the ideas discussed here owe their existence to serendipitous conversations, some of them long forgotten, with family members, teachers, mentors, colleagues, friends, and lovers. But the following partial list gives the flavor of intellectual and emotional interdependence which this book tries to encourage.

Among numerous colleagues who have influenced the book, Sam Leven particularly stands out. Sam and I have worked and played together over a period of twelve years, starting with his being a doctoral student in Arlington and proceeding through many joint articles and another book. While our academic backgrounds differed — economics, urban studies, and social psychology for Sam, mathematics and neuroscience for me — we were intuitively *simpatico* from the opening bell. Our conversations often have the flavor of this book: a typical one might, for example, segue from neural network theory to social customs to current politics to movie images to joking about sex. The tradition I developed with Sam continued with several other students and junior colleagues. Paul Prueitt has brought his dedication to shaking up educational and scientific establishments, and building a future in which the pursuit of knowledge genuinely flourishes. His influence is felt in many of the book's basic philosophical points, and he exhaustively read and commented on most of an earlier version. Wesley Elsberry has brought considerable skills on software combined with a sardonic and yet playfully affirming attitude to life. Raju Bapi has brought intellectual versatility, gentle patience, and combination of scientific ideas with those from Hindu philosophy. Vince Brown has brought his skill as a bridge builder between disciplines. All five of these people have been active with me in a Dallas-Fort Worth area professional group called the Metroplex Institute for Neural Dynamics (MIND). MIND has held six international conferences and monthly meetings on various aspects of neural networks, but more importantly has developed a unique ethos that has helped nurture all of our productivity. It is an ethos that combines professional standards with informality and delight, easily bridging distinctions of discipline, rank, and job type (academic versus business).

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