

The perils of neurocentrism

The following is an edited excerpt from a review of Brainwashed by Sally Satel and Scott O. Lilienfeld.

By measuring and analyzing the bits of color seen in brain scans (functional magnetic resonance imaging, fMRI) and making inferences, scientists can learn that one part of your brain lights up when you wrestle with a decision; that another is exercised when you shop online; or that a third part makes you fall in love. (One branding expert used fMRI data to claim that Apple users literally adore their devices.)

The issue with fMRI and other neuroscience techniques, argue psychiatrist Sally Satel and clinical psychologist Scott Lilienfeld, is “neurocentrism,” or “the view that human experience and behavior can be best explained from the predominant or even exclusive perspective of the brain.” In their concise and well-researched book, they offer a reasonable and eloquent critique of this fashionable delusion, chiding the premature or unnecessary application of brain science to commerce, psychiatry, the law and ethics.

Read the full review here: [Lite-Brite Phrenology](#)