

Idea of the Day



Must Reads From the Week in Review Staff

February 17, 2010, 6:31 am | 10 Comments

The Dawn of 'Neurocapitalism'



Today's idea: We're becoming a "neurocapitalist" world, an essay says. The demands of performance-driven, self-enhancing societies will expand markets for neuro-psychotropic drugs beyond those for depression, dementia and attention deficit disorder. And they will cost our health care systems dearly.

Health | Historical forces are converging in favor of the neurosciences, [write](#) Hennric Jokeit and Ewa Hess in an essay translated on Eurozine (originally published last year in the German cultural journal Merkur). The authors, respectively a neuropsychologist and a journalist, both based in Zurich, say the neurosciences today enjoy a status comparable to psychoanalysis in the 20th century.



Science Photo Library

Capitalist tool?

"Psychoanalysis was successful because it wove together medically relevant disciplines like psychiatry and psychology with art, culture, education, economics and politics, allowing it to penetrate important areas of social life," they write. "At the beginning of the 21st century, the neurosciences seem to be in a position to take on a comparable role in the future."

But neuroscience has a leg up on psychoanalysis, the authors say in an article that doesn't skimp on Marxist references:

... The neurosciences are extremely well funded by the state and even more so by private investment from the pharmaceutical industry. Their prominent status can be explained both by the number and significance of the problems they are attempting to solve, as well as the broad public recognition of these problems, and by the respectable profits to be made should they succeed. In other

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About Idea of the Day

"Idea of the Day" is a blog by Tom Kuntz and other editors of the Week in Review highlighting the most interesting writing we've come across lately on the Web. We're generalists, so consider this a thinking person's grazing buffet. Equally important, "Idea of the Day" is a conversation, so please post your comments and e-mail us your suggestions.



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October 11

📧 62

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A note to readers: This post is the last for the Idea of the Day blog, started by the editors of the Week in Review more than two years ago as a place to highlight the most interesting current writing on the Web. The blog's end is a result of limited resources in a medium where any number of worthy projects are possible, and where new priorities continually emerge. Thanks to all our readers and commenters, and regrets.

October 08

📧 4

[Transylvania: Green, Not Blood-Red Friday](#)

Today's idea: From from a mythical place of blood-red terror, Transylvania is a study in centuries-old green living largely unsullied by modernization, an article says. [[Notre Dame Magazine](#)]

October 07

📧 2

[The Almanac as Early iPhone](#)

Thursday | Today's idea: The Old Farmer's Almanac deserves new respect as the "iPhone of early America," a scholar argues. [[Common-Place](#)]