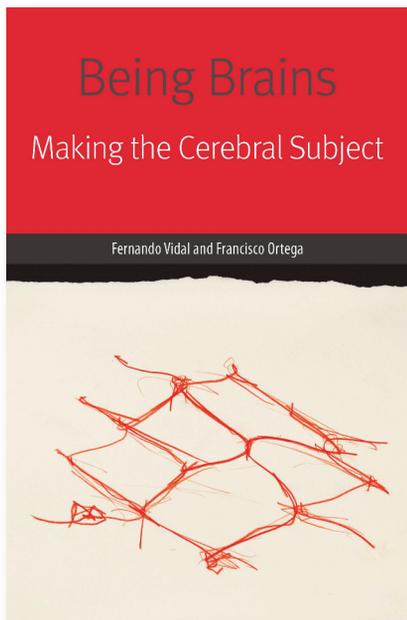


Being Brains

Making the Cerebral Subject

FERNANDO VIDAL & FRANCISCO ORTEGA



"*Being Brains* offers a terrifically thoughtful and thorough examination of the 'neuro-' turn in various disciplines. On the basis of solid research and subtle analysis, Vidal and Ortega give readers conceptual and critical tools to make sense of widespread claims that studying the 'neural correlates' of various activities—art and religion, for instance—will transform or even replace other ways of making sense of what humans do. The book will be a major touchstone in cross-disciplinary discussions about the implications of our contemporary fascination with brains."



John Tresch, University of Pennsylvania

Being Brains offers a critical exploration of one of the most influential and pervasive contemporary beliefs: "We are our brains." Starting in the "Decade of the Brain" of the 1990s, "neurocentrism" became widespread in most Western and many non-Western societies. Formidable advances, especially in neuroimaging, have bolstered this "neurocentrism" in the eyes of the public and political authorities, helping to justify increased funding for the brain sciences.

The human sciences have also taken the "neural turn," and subspecialties in fields such as anthropology, aesthetics, education, history, law, sociology, and theology have grown and professionalized at record speed. At the same time, the development of dubious but successful commercial enterprises such as "neuromarketing" and "neurobics" have emerged to take advantage of the heightened sensitivity to all things neuro. Skeptics have only recently begun to react to the hype, invoking warnings of neuromythology, neurotrash, neuromania, and neuromadness.

While this neurocentric view of human subjectivity is neither hegemonic nor monolithic, it embodies a powerful ideology that is at the heart of some of today's most important philosophical, ethical, scientific, and political debates. *Being Brains* critically explores the internal logic of such ideology, its genealogy, and its main contemporary incarnations.

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