



המחלקה לפילוסופיה והמחלקה למדעי הקוגניציה והמוח

המחלקה לפילוסופיה מתכבדת להזמין אתכם להרצאה במסגרת הסמינר המחלקתי  
המשותף עם המחלקה למדעי הקוגניציה והמוח.

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Neuroscience--from Neurology to 'Humanology': the Case of Consciousness and Free Will.

Neuroscience is a relatively young discipline; during the 1960s, several independent (albeit related) fields of research were incorporated into one intellectual framework, under the name "neuroscience". In a truly astonishing course of action, this new field has gained precedence over traditional practices, giving new kinds of answers to long lasting questions. Here, I will show that this dominance of neuroscience, and its appeal to other disciplines (e.g., psychology, philosophy and economy), rests by and large on a methodological shift of the order of inference in the neuroscientific praxis. An analysis of texts written by the predecessors of neuroscience as well as current day neuroscientists demonstrates how some branches of neuroscience have moved from trying to accommodate the neural findings with what was already known about human thought and behavior, to relying on these findings in order to provide new theories of human thought and behavior themselves. This shift in the order of inference (i.e., from neural findings to psychological and even philosophical claims, rather than the other way around) seems to be at its peak nowadays, when neuroscientists are as interested in explaining the nature of the organism itself (i.e., the human being), and tackling issues once considered as unscientific like consciousness or free will. In other words, neuroscience has shifted from physiology to what I term here as "humanology": know thy brain, in order to know thyself. In this talk, I will present both the promises and the perils of such an approach, in an attempt to critically examine the validity of the new order of inference, and its effect on neuroscience and related disciplines.

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