

A 231 Word Refutation of Churchland's "Vision"

Laurie Calhoun

P. Churchland has claimed that the human mind exhibits a sort of plasticity which makes it possible for us radically to refigure our conceptual frameworks. However, the manifesto to the effect that we should refigure our concepts in terms of the constructs of neuroscience is undermined by Churchland's claiming (incoherently) both that our current world view is radically false and misguided and that we should adopt the framework of neuroscience. Obviously if it is true that our current world view is false and misguided, then our normative theories, there subsumed, are too.

The blunder is irreparable, since even if we believed that, among our entire set of theories, only one (viz. the normative theory according to which we should switch our conceptual framework to that of neuroscience) was not false, that very belief would still be undermined by the first claim. Either every newly appended belief, purportedly true, would be undermined similarly, or a substantive set of our original beliefs would be recovered through the process of securing the needed vindication of our normative theory. So the manifesto, assuming its motivating premise, can be no more than an article of faith, *à la tertullienne*. And without that premise (that our current world view is radically false and misguided) the proposed course of action would be irrational, enjoining us to abandon a more or less correct theory.