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Braintrust: What Neuroscience Tells Us about Morality

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by social structures and cultural traditions in the formation of human beings.

Roberts suggests that Hesse equated the East with home, pointing out that in the book the words of the poet Novalis, who was an important influence on Hesse's work, are quoted directly: "Where are we really going?" asks Novalis; 'Always home!' The East, in Roberts' reading of Hesse, is thus a universal human destination influenced by Hesse finding himself at odds with the German reality in the years following the First World War, which signaled the decline of the West and an emerging age of catastrophes and nihilism. For Roberts, Hesse appears to have been looking backwards to pre-modern periods in human history often referencing thinkers from antiquity to the Middle Ages in *The Journey to the East*. As for *The Glass Bead Game*, Hesse situated the origins of the Game itself deep within human history, attempting to recover the most noble in the culture of the past. Roberts suggests that Hesse admired Dostoevsky and Nietzsche as in their works he could see "the foreshadowing of what he regarded as a frightening future" (13), while also valorizing the realm of Platonic ideas, with the East being "for H. H. and for Hesse himself ... an *idea* toward which seekers travel in their own distinctive ways" (14).

Roberts compares and contrasts H. H. in *The Journey to the East* with Knecht in *The Glass Bead Game* with regard to the problematic of the growth of character, especially in terms of "Knecht's willingness to question" (21) and his developing a critical consciousness. Paradoxically, this means a return to Western cultural roots, while reconsidering "some of the elitist and egocentric assumptions" (21) that may have influenced H. H.'s journey to the East. Roberts makes clear that there are certain lessons to be learned from *The Glass Bead Game*, such as the intertwining of self and society, the need for self-reflection, and the importance of dialoging—all comprising a lifelong process of informal education. In summary, Roberts presents Herman Hesse through the literal and symbolic journeys undertaken by his protagonists, H. H. and Knecht, as a man striving to understand both himself and his society. He remarks that Thomas Mann, Hesse's countryman and fellow Nobel laureate, described *The Glass Bead Game* as the

great novel of education. *From West to East and Back Again* partakes of the novel educational theory that acknowledges life-transforming experiences and affirms the role of dialogue in the formation of human and societal structures.

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Braintrust: What Neuroscience Tells Us about Morality. By Patricia S. Churchland (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press; 2011), ix + 273 pp. \$24.95/£16.95 cloth.

Patricia Churchland opens a can of contemporary ethical conundrums with deftly explained and richly annotated neuro-physiological evidence. *Braintrust* is a welcome addition to the interdisciplinary literature bridging the chasm said to exist between "is and ought," epitomized by the Natural Fallacy.

In her introduction, Churchland adopts a pragmatic view of moral dilemmas: "practical and social problems are constraint satisfaction problems, and our brains often make good decision in figuring out some solution. . . . Not necessarily the best solution, but a suitable solution" (7). She outlines her neuroscientific point of view in Chapter 2: "In all animals, neural circuitry grounds self-caring and well-being" (13), while she cautions in Chapter 3 that "a causal relation between genes and behavior . . . cannot be achieved merely by telling a fetching story" (22). Instead, in Chapter 4, she mobilizes experimental data supporting her "main hypothesis . . . that morality originates in the neurobiology of attachment and bonding, . . . [and] the oxytocin-vasopressin network in mammals can be modified to allow care to be extended to others beyond one's litter of juveniles, and that, given that network as a backdrop, learning and problem-solving are recruited to managing one's social life" (71).

In Chapters 5 and 6, Churchland dissects the relationship of neural circuitry and mirror neurons, imitation, and empathy, reminding the reader that "universality is consistent with the existence of an innate module, but it does

not *imply* the existence of an innate module” (108), and “it is anything but obvious how, in neural terms, I can be aware of what I intend or believe or desire or feel” (142). Finally, in Chapters 7 and 8, Churchland returns to philosophy for turning a “platform” into a “framework” and finding a “motherboard of trust . . . [in the] family” (202).

Regrettably, Churchland relies on shortcuts, such as resorting to teleology in lieu of explanation: the mother rat’s newborn cubs “must be fed, cleaned, and kept warm, as well as protected from the assorted dangers” (30), and on sweeping generalizations that lack precision: “the nervous system is highly conserved across species” (45). Churchland does not avoid the anthropomorphism she affects to despise (e.g., 69); her advocacy of neuro-chemical controls leads her to prejudge experimental results (e.g., 80); she takes the edge off objectivity by smoothing data (e.g., 121); she supports her argument with anecdotal evidence, typically from her own experience, where data are required (e.g., 129); and she raises bogus issues with confounded language: “Perhaps it would be salutary at this stage to loose the skeptical hounds on the whole claim that empathy depends on simulation” (151).

Rather than escaping from the morass of the Natural Fallacy, Churchland’s argument degenerates into clichés: “from a biological point of view, basic emotions are Mother Nature’s way of orienting us to do what we prudentially ought” (175). Still, one can only agree with her that “science can teach us, and has already taught us, a great deal about what we ought to do . . . [without implying] that science can solve all moral dilemmas” (190).

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Islamization of Turkey under the AKP Rule. Edited by Birol Yeşilada and Barry Rubin (London: Routledge, 2011), viii + 128 pp. \$125.00/£85.00 cloth.

With the approach of the general elections of 12 June 2011, the ruling Justice and Develop-

ment Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) was expected to win the elections according to the opinion polls. It continued to enjoy significant public support and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared that he would resign if the AKP came second in the elections. Considering the volatile, unstable, and fragmented nature of Turkish political life since the 1990s, it goes without saying that winning the elections for the fourth time in a row was nothing but a spectacular triumph. But what is the secret of this success? What are the underlying factors of this victory? What explains the irrepressible rise of the AKP? And how come that “a conservative-democratic” party that came to power thanks to its untainted record has in recent years shown signs of its authoritarian inclinations?

Islamization of Turkey under the AKP Rule, previously published as a special issue of *Turkish Studies*, sets out to examine the AKP’s political position through its ideology and discourse, political decisions, choices and actions, alongside its social and economic basis. Edited by Birol Yeşilada and Barry Rubin, this book takes a close look at the rule of the AKP and provides an overview of the party’s political journey. In concentrating on central themes, such as religiosity, tolerance, Islamism and secularism, the book strikes a fine balance between the historical roots of the rise of the AKP and the current sociopolitical issues that shed light on its role in Turkish political life. The book also presents a lucid analysis of the theoretical and empirical aspects of the political process shaped by the AKP. Whether *Islamization* is the most fitting term to define the AKP’s political profile or not is disputable, yet each contribution in the book demonstrates the authoritarian tendencies embedded in its fundamentally conservative outlook. At one level, from Yeşilada and Peter Noordijk’s comparative analysis of the impact of traditional-religious values on voters to Ersin Kalaycıoğlu’s study of the determinants of party preferences of voters, the essays attempt to portray the cognitive universe of Turkish voters. At a second level, the book opens the way to rethinking the discursive practices of the AKP. In this regard Mustafa Şen’s valuable contribution is worth pondering over. While Şen sheds light on the “interwoven processes” of the changing nature of the