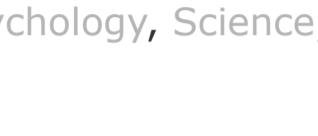
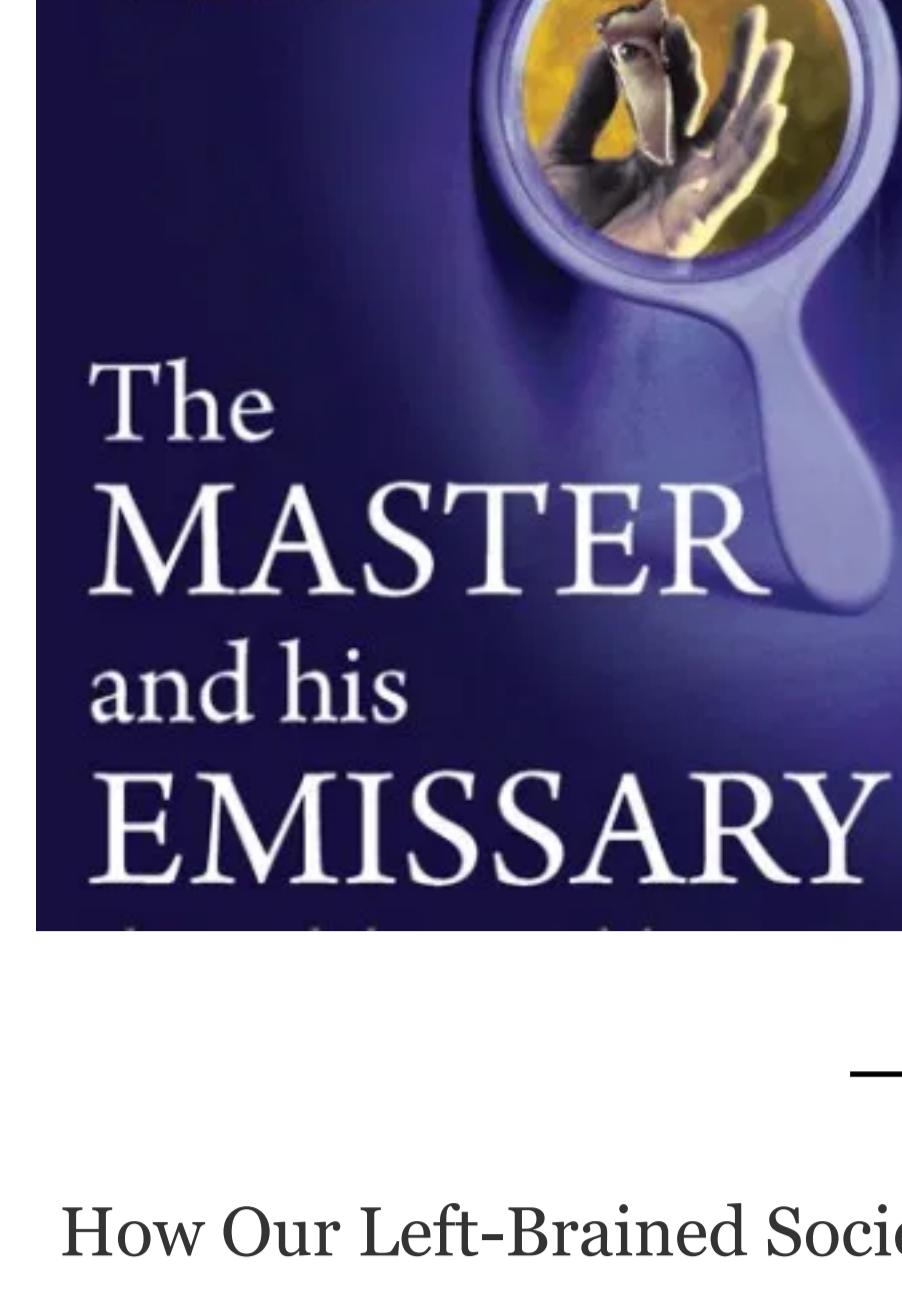


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## How Our Left-Brained Society Might Be Making Us Unhappy

July 18, 2012 | in Psychology, Science, Social Science | 1

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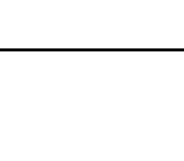
We have a popular notion that the human brain is neatly divided: the right side dealing with emotion, the left side, with reason. In his acclaimed book, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*, Iain McGilchrist suggests that there is a profound difference in what the two sides of our brains do, its just not the difference we imagine. The idea of rational and emotional sides is a myth. However, the left hemisphere provides us with a narrow focus, along with "clarity and power to manipulate things that are known, fixed, static" whereas the right hemisphere gives us a much broader scope, showing us "a world of individual, changing, evolving...beings" that are "never fully graspable."

These two orientations offer us two radically different perspectives on our surroundings and, consequently, on our own lives. In his new Kindle-released essay, *The Divided Brain and the Search for Meaning: Why We Are So Unhappy*, McGilchrist draws on the neurological concepts in his book to consider why, in an era of increasing material well-being, people seem to be growing less and less content. In particular, he suggests that many aspects of modern society conspire with the left hemisphere's obsessive reduction of everything it sees to the level of minute, mechanistic detail, robbing us of the right brain's ability to absorb and appreciate deeper human values and relationships.

As McGilchrist notes in the [RSA Animate video](#) illustrating his work, when we prioritize the left brain, "We prioritize the virtual over the real; the technical becomes important, bureaucracy flourishes. The picture, however, is fragmented. There's a lot of uniqueness; the *how* becomes subsumed in the *what*, and the need for control leads to a paranoia in society."

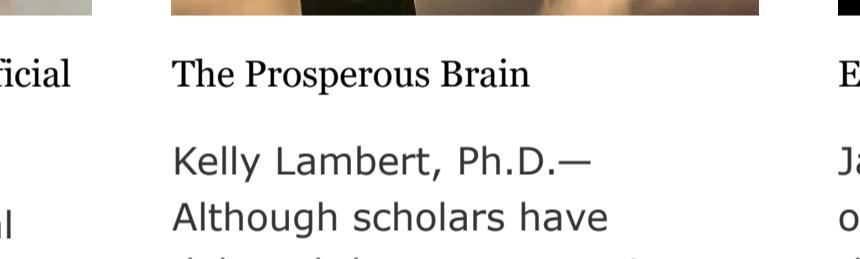
Seem a bit familiar?

### RSA ANIMATE: The Divided Brain



Tags: iain mcgilchrist, Kindle books, neuroscience, popular psychology, right brain left brain, Royal Society of Arts, RSA animate, the master and his emissary

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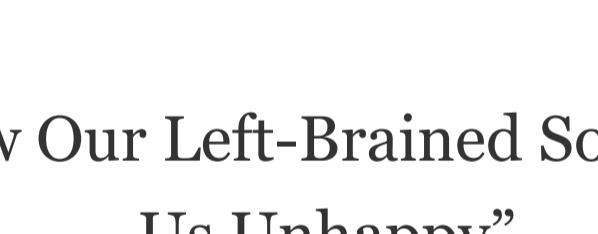
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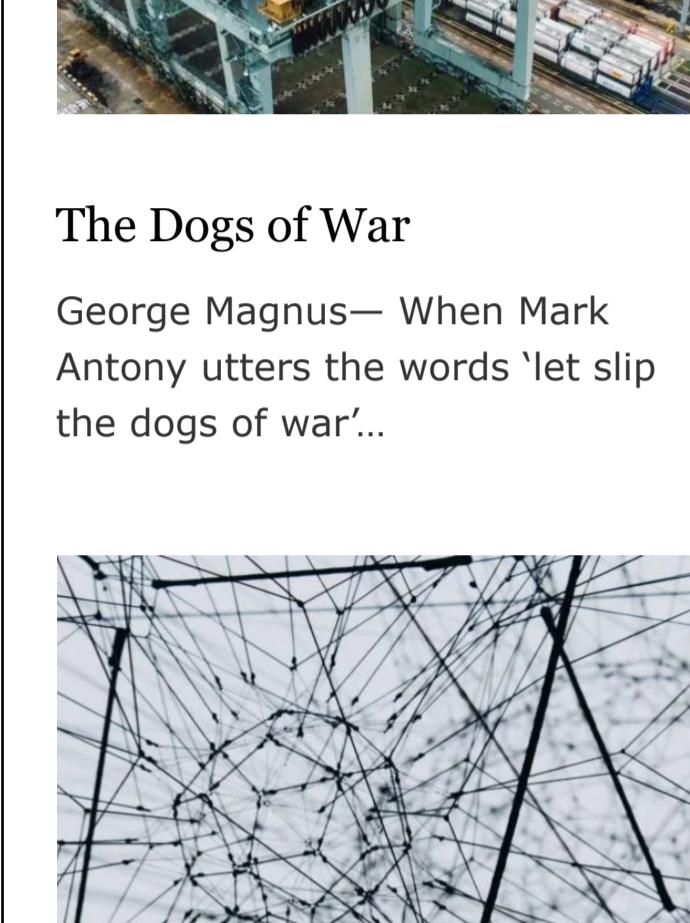
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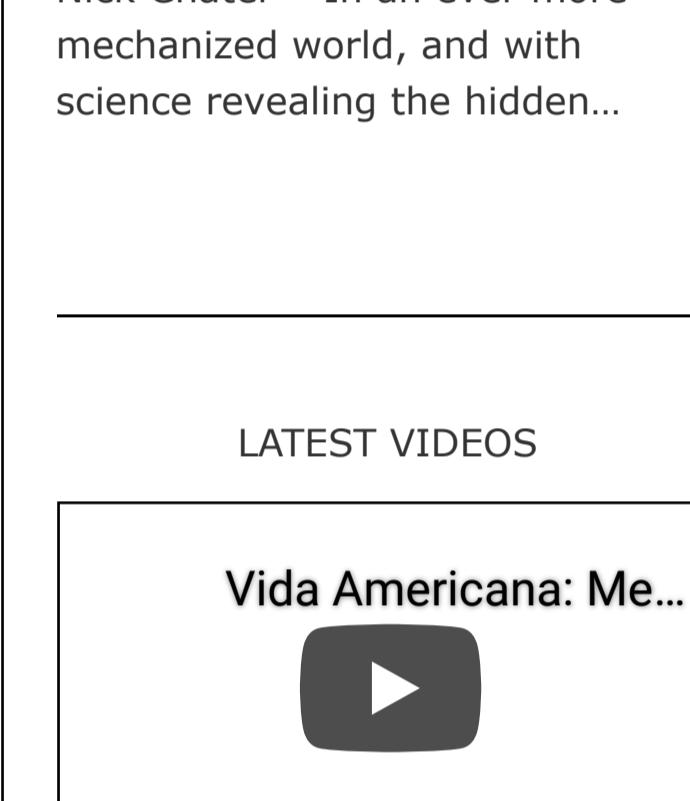
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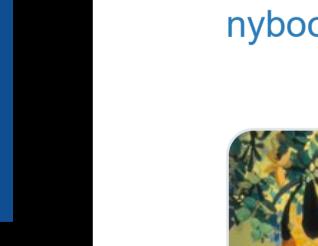
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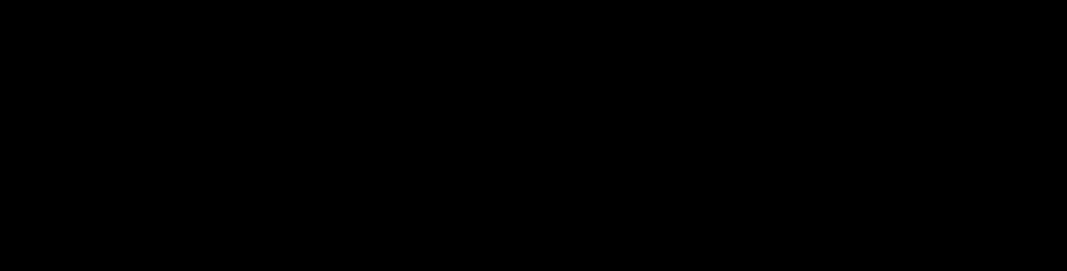
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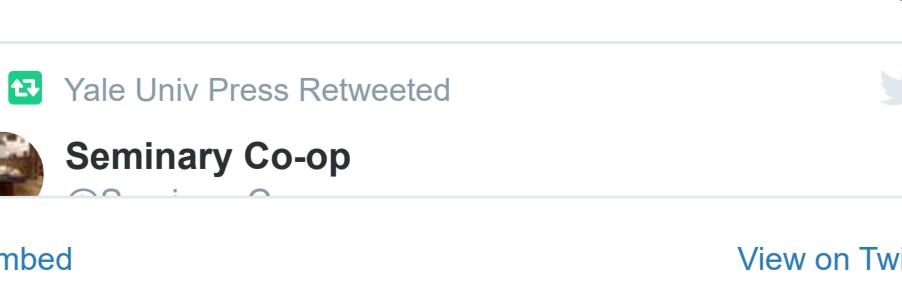
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