



The Science Delusion: Asking the Big Questions in a Culture of Easy Answers

Curtis White

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One of our most brilliant social critics—and the author of the bestselling *The Middle Mind*—presents a scathing critique of the “delusions” of science alongside a rousing defense of the role of art and philosophy in our culture

The so-called new atheists, most famously Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, made a splash in the new millennium. They told the evangelical and the liberal believer that they must give up religion and submit to science.

More recently, neuroscientists and their fans in the media have delivered a variation on this message: the mapping of the human brain will soon be completed, and we will know what we are and how we should act. Their faith is that the scientific method provides the best understanding not only of the physical world but also of art, culture, economics, and anything left over. The message is nearly the same as that of the new atheists: submit to science.

In short, the rich philosophical debates of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been nearly totally abandoned, argues Curtis White. An atheist himself, White fears what this new turn toward “scientism” will do to our culture if allowed to flourish without challenge. After all, is creativity really just chemicals in the brain? Is it wrong to ponder “Why is there something instead of nothing?” or “What is our purpose on Earth?” These were some of the original concerns of the Romantic movement, which pushed back against the dogmas of science in a nearly forgotten era.

In this brilliant multipart critique, White aims at a TED talk by a distinguished neuroscientist in which we are told that human thought is merely the product of our “connectome”—neural connections in the brain that are yet to be fully understood . . . He examines the ideas of a widely respected physicist who argues that a new understanding of the origins of the universe trumps all religious and philosophical inquiry . . . and ends with an eloquent defense of the poetry and philosophy of Romanticism, which White believes our technology and science-obsessed world desperately needs to rediscover.

It’s the only way, he argues, that we can see our world clearly . . . and change it.

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