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Special Issue of Biosocieties: Neurosciences beyond the laboratory

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By Michelle Pentecost

Tanja Schneider and Steve Woolgar [introduce](#) us to [Neuroscience beyond the laboratory: Neuro knowledges, technologies and markets](#), in this special issue of [Biosocieties](#).

[Neuromarketing in the making: Enactment and reflexive entanglement in an emerging field](#)

Tanja Schneider and Steve Woolgar

As the neurosciences make their way beyond the laboratory, they become influential in a wide range of domains. How to understand this process? What are the prospects for, and dynamics of, influence, uptake and rejection? This article reports our attempts to track the emergence of neurosciences with particular reference to the emergence of the field of neuromarketing. Our key initial tasks included the identification and definition of the field, the negotiation of access, and establishing relations with participants and informants. These tasks gave rise to what are often construed as familiar ‘methodological difficulties’, such as how to define the field and what to make of the reactions and responses of those involved in neuromarketing. In this article we present some of our experiences of researching the empirical materials of neuromarketing to assess different responses to ‘methodological difficulties’ in studying science and technologies in the making. We draw on analytic resources provided by Science and Technology Studies to address the challenge of studying emerging fields of science, practices and technologies. In particular, we draw on the concepts of multiplicity, performativity and practical ontology to argue that a particular approach to ‘methodological difficulties’ can actually enrich our research objectives. We suggest that reflexivity be understood, not predominantly as a methodological corrective to the problems of detecting an antecedent object of research; but as revealing some of the ways in which neuromarketing is enacted.

[Commercialising neurofutures: Promissory economies, value creation and the making of a new industry](#)

Paul Martin

The contemporary era is characterised by the development of knowledge economies in which scientific research and technical innovation are seen as the motor for growth and competitive advantage. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the biosciences, where the emerging bioeconomy is surrounded by high hopes, but remains an area with few working technologies entering routine use. These developments have focused scholarly attention on the performative role that sociotechnical expectations play in constituting new scientific and technological domains. However, relatively little is known about the role of expectations in the commercial development of new technologies, the commodification of knowledge and the creation of economic value. This article therefore seeks to address these questions by exploring the role of expectations in the creation of a new industrial sector based on the commercial development of neurotechnology in the United States. In particular, it will focus on the role of two types of 'promissory organisation' in the making of the neuroindustry, how different regimes of hope and promise have been constructed around distinct groups of companies, and the complex relationship between these regimes. In conclusion, some reflections will be made about the way in which high-technology industries, sociotechnical futures and new forms of promissory value are co-produced.

[Sex, cash and neuromodels of desire](#)

Isabelle Dussauge

In the twenty-first century's biological culture, pleasure and desire seem to be widely reconceptualized as processes of the brain. The neurosciences of sex and money are two fields of crucial interest in this cerebralization of desire. On the basis of a cross-reading of neuroimaging studies of sexuality and of neuroeconomics, I analyze the specific notions of desire/pleasure at work in the neuroimaging experiments. What is lost, and what is claimed to be

found, in the neurosciences of desire for sex and cash? With particular attention to notions of rewards, I argue that transfers of metaphors from neuroeconomics naturalize economized notions of sexual desire. Moreover, I argue that neuroeconomics and the neuroscience of sex essentialize desire as the drive of our behavior, and that this, in turn, relates to the neurosciences' re-invention of the social in the terms of a late capitalist society.

[Measurement devices and the psychophysiology of consumer behaviour: A posthuman genealogy of neuromarketing](#)

Stefan Schwarzkopf

From the 1890s, psychophysiological measurement devices have played an important, but as yet under-theorized role in marketing and consumer research. Because of the recent advances made in neuromarketing, it is often assumed that these measurement devices ushered in a radically new understanding of the type of subjectivity that underlies consumer behaviour. I argue instead that a posthuman view of the relationship between brain, mind and behaviour underpinned neurophysiological research into consumers from its very beginning in the late nineteenth century. By tracing the biopolitical potentialities of neuromarketing back to the Fin-de-Siècle neurophysiological laboratory, I show that consumers' bodies and later on their brains became reconfigured as part of a dispositif made up of laboratory-based artefacts (measurement devices) and new ways of seeing the human brain and human behaviour. This dispositif, the latest expression of which is neuromarketing, promised to empower marketing researchers and practitioners alike by fulfilling their dream of being able to bypass consumers' verbalized cognition and instead draw upon the 'truth' of their physiological reactions.

[Chinese biotech versus international ethics? Accounting for the China–America CRISPR ethical divide](#)

Lijing Jiang and Hallam Stevens

In March 2015, molecular biologists concerned about the use of the new gene-editing technology called Clustered Regularly

Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR) met in Napa, California to consider ethical issues raised by the new technique. Because the CRISPR-Cas9 system targets DNA at very specific sites with high efficiency, the technique offers a powerful way to cut and paste genes.

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