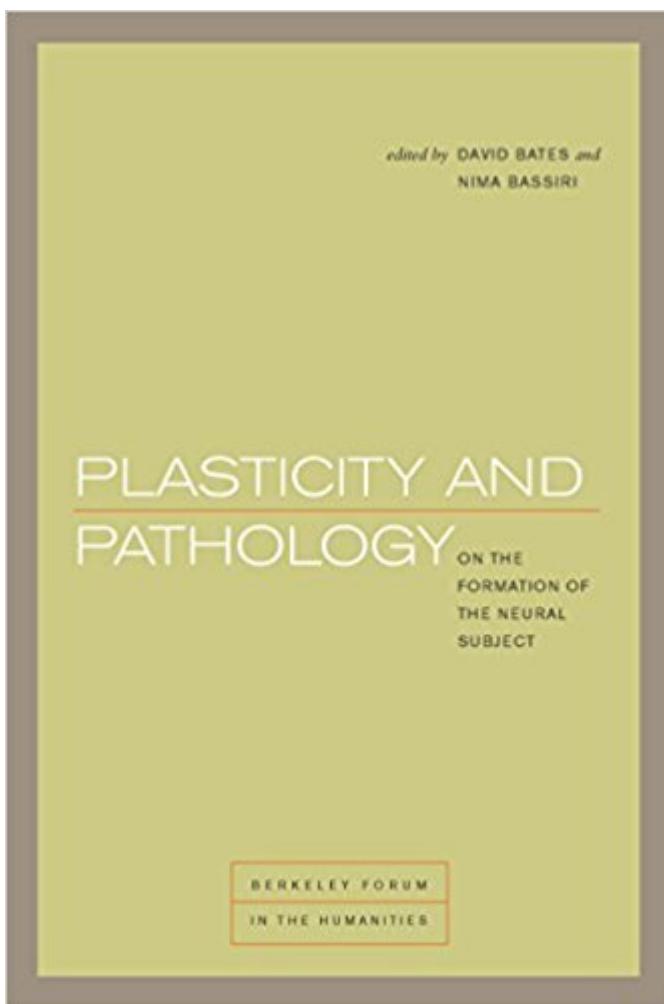


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Plasticity And Pathology: On The Formation Of The Neural Subject (Berkeley Forum In The Humanities)



Synopsis

With the rise of cognitive science and the revolution in neuroscience, it is now commonplace to assume that the study of a human personâ •a thinking, feeling, acting subjectâ •is ultimately the study of the human brain. In both Europe and the United States, massive state-funded research is focused on mapping the brain in all its remarkable complexity. The metaphors employed are largely technological: A wiring diagram of synaptic connectivity will lead to a better understanding of human behavior and perhaps insights into the breakdown of human personhood with diseases of the brain such as Alzheimerâ ™s. Alongside this technologized discourse of the brain as locus of human subjectivity we find another perspective, one that emphasizes its essential plasticityâ •in both the developmental sense and as a response to traumas such as strokes, tumors, or gunshot wounds. This collection of essays brings together a diverse range of scholars to investigate how the â œneural subjectâ • of the twenty-first century came to be. Taking approaches both historical and theoretical, they probe the possibilities and limits of neuroscientific understandings of human experience. Topics include landmark studies in the history of neuroscience, the relationship between neural and technological â œpathologies,â • and analyses of contemporary concepts of plasticity and pathology in cognitive neuroscience. Central to the volume is a critical examination of the relationship between pathology and plasticity. Because pathology is often the occasion for neural reorganization and adaptation, it exists not in opposition to the brainâ ™s â œnormalâ • operation but instead as something intimately connected to our ways of being and understanding.

Book Information

Series: Berkeley Forum in the Humanities

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Fordham University Press; 1 edition (January 15, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0823266141

ISBN-13: 978-0823266142

Product Dimensions: 8.9 x 0.9 x 6 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #863,013 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in Books > Textbooks > Medicine & Health Sciences > Medicine > Special Topics > Essays #632 in Books > Textbooks > Medicine & Health Sciences > Medicine > Basic Sciences > Neuroscience #1264 in Books >

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