

Language Police Running Amok: A Reply to Slaney and Maraun

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Abstract

In this article I critique Kathleen Slaney and Michael Maraun's (2005) addition to the ongoing philosophical charge that neuroscientific writing often transgresses the bounds of sense. While they sometimes suggest a minimal, cautious thesis— that certain usage can generate confusion and in some cases has— they also bandy about charges of meaninglessness, conceptual confusion, and nonsense freely. These charges rest on the premise that terms have specific correct usages that correspond with Slaney and Maraun's sense of everyday linguistic practice. I challenge this premise. I argue that they have not shown that there are such specific correct usages; and, further, that even if they had, they fail to justify that their definitions are the correct ones.

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