



Neurologisms

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Judy Illes, Editor, American Journal of Bioethics–Neuroscience

With this editorial, it is my pleasure to announce the second generation of *American Journal of Bioethics–Neuroscience* (*AJOB–Neuroscience*), the official journal of the Neuroethics Society, and the incoming leadership of Professor Paul Root Wolpe as Editor-in-Chief. Effective January 1, 2010, *AJOB–Neuroscience* will be a self-standing journal within the growing family of *AJOB* journals, and published four times a year. Even at this increased publication rate, *AJOB–Neuroscience* will retain the target article/opinion peer commentary format. It has been a successful and powerful force in enabling and encouraging dialogue among the many and multidisciplinary readers of this journal—a privilege to serve as founding Editor of this journal. I am delighted to continue as Senior Editorial Advisor henceforth.

The editors of *AJOB*, including Paul, launched *AJOB–Neuroscience* in 2006 as a pilot journal focussed on neuroethics content. We were not the only ones with this idea, and we all intuited, but could hardly have predicted, the substantive demand for a home for this material. Over the past three years, we have witnessed the growth of the field and membership to the new Society, now more than 450 people, institutional sponsorships, involvement of 11 countries, and new subscriptions to the journal particularly from neuroscientists and others who have not traditionally made ethics reading a priority in their busy lives.

We have seen no fewer than a dozen new terms spawned by the field, appearing on the pages of *AJOB–Neuroscience* and elsewhere. Take, for example, neurologisms such as *neurrodeterminism*, *neuroexceptionalism*, *neuropolicy*, *neurorealism*, *neurosurrealism*, *neurotalk*, *neurotime* and *neuroage*, *not to mention* *neurolaw*, *neuroeconomics*, *neuromarketing*, and *neuroeducation*. Each has provided a new frame to an older concept or an identity to newly observed phenomena from innovations in neuroscience. One can only imagine that William Safire of the Dana Foundation, a true linguaphile himself and unflinching supporter of the Neuroethics Society, is pleased with our *lingua-prolifera* exuberance.

We have also staked out territory for ourselves. Within the framework of the still solid foundations of neuroethics mapped for the field in 2002—the self and mental states, social policy, clinical practice, and education and engagement—we have seen the emergence of neuroethics subspecialties that draw both upon older arenas of bioethics

and upon others that are new. Examples are: *theoretical and reflective neuroethics*, *public health neuroethics*, *global health neuroethics*, *global mental health neuroethics*, *clinical neuroethics*, *palliative neuroethics*, *pragmatic neuroethics*, *pluralistic neuroethics*, *research neuroethics*, *empirical neuroethics*, *public neuroethics*, and *women's neuroethics*. I am sure there are others, but even just these signify the different approaches to and philosophies about neuroethics, all while embracing the uniqueness of the brain for our ethical reflection.

It is time, in fact, to put to bed once and for all debates about whether neurologisms and neurosubspecialties should exist—clearly, they already do—and move on to more practical matters that will drive the issues forward and benefit society as a whole. There is much work to be done. Neuroscience plays an expanding role in human life by giving us powerful new tools for achieving our goals and prompting new understandings of ourselves as cognitive, social, moral, and spiritual beings (<http://www.neuroethicssociety.org>). For neuroscience to be applied for maximum knowledge gain and public good, it is critical that we identify the interactions of science and society at their earliest stages, pursue a common understanding about innovations for brain health and brain diseases among stakeholders, and inform policy as neuroscience unfolds. What it is that we call the scholarly ethics, legal, social and policy pursuits that we couple with neuroscience today hardly rises to the same level of importance as investigation itself. We just need to do it.

What should some of our priorities be for incoming generations? For the field, beyond funding for sustainability that is a given: capacity-building and identifying career trajectories for those we train. I predict we will see regular neuroethics faculty appointments in neuroscience programs and departments within the next 3–5 years. If these are tenure track, all the better. For the journal: globalization. We are moving steadily in this direction but the energies of the international community have not yet been fully expressed or harnessed.

There is a true *neuroreality* for neuroethics. It brings with it the continued need for introspection, scholarly interaction and debate, diversity of thought, and a commitment to brain health and well-being. The pages of *AJOB–Neuroscience* are a critical outlet and resource for this reality.

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