


PHIL 226
Biomedical Ethics
Week 8

Exam 2: Nov. 1.
Guest lecture: Nov. 6.
Today: Personhood and the brain.



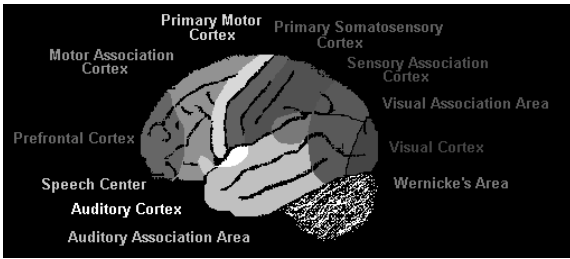
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Essay Questions

	Consequences	Rights & duties	
Option A	Pro & con	Pro & con	
Option B	Pro & con	Pro & con	
	Overall	Overall	Overall

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Cerebral Cortex



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Personhood Issues

- Technology can keep bodies alive unnaturally.
- There is a need for organs to transplant.
- Issues about abortion depend on whether the fetus is a person.
- Is a mother responsible for the health of a fetus?



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When is a Person Dead?

1. When the soul leaves the body.
2. When the organs stop working.
But: machines can keep a body going indefinitely, and transplants would be ruled out.
3. When the whole brain stops working.
But: brain stem alone is useless.
4. When the neocortex stops working.
But: may be hard to tell.

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When does the brain begin?

- Conception
- 5-8 weeks: Cerebral developments, EEG (brain waves).
- 22-24 weeks: EEG waves in neocortex.
- 32-36 weeks: EEG waves suggest consciousness.
- Birth

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Discussion question

- Joe suffered massive brain damage in a motorcycle accident. There is no neural activity in his neocortex, but his brain stem is still active.
- Is it ethical to remove his organs for donation?

The Transcendental Self

- The self is a supernatural entity (soul).
- Plato, Aquinas, Kant.
- 50% of Canadians, 80% of Americans.
- Problem: lack of evidence.



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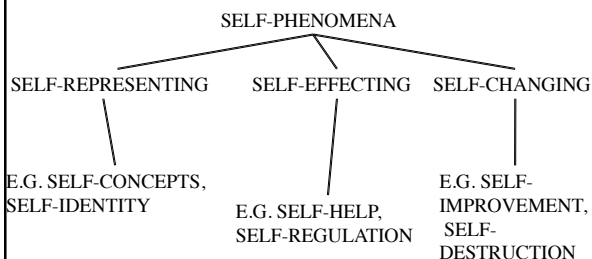
The Deflationary Self

- David Hume: The self is just a bundle of perceptions.
- Daniel Dennett: The self is a "center of narrative gravity".
- Thomas Metzinger: The self is a myth.
- Problem: The self is an important psychological concept.



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The Self in Social Psychology



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Multilevel Systems

- A system (mechanism) consists of:
 - Environment
 - Parts
 - Interconnections
 - Changes
- A multilevel system has mechanisms at several levels:
 - $\langle E_1, P_1, I_1, C_1 \rangle$
 - $\langle E_2, P_2, I_2, C_2 \rangle$, etc.



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The Multilevel Self

- Social self: Parts are people.
- Psychological self: Parts are mental representations.
- Neural self: Parts are neurons.
- Molecular self: Parts are chemicals.
- Note: these are not four selves, but all components of one complex system.

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