PHIL 226
Biomedical Ethics
Week 8

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

Essay Questions

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<th>Option</th>
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<td>Pro &amp; con</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>Overall</td>
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Cerebral Cortex

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?
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.

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

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.
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.

The Self in Social Psychology

- SELF-PHENOMENA
  - SELF-REPRESENTING
  - SELF-EFFECTING
  - SELF-CHANGING
  - E.G. SELF-CONCEPTS, SELF-IDENTITY
  - E.G. SELF-HELP, SELF-REGULATION
  - E.G. SELF-IMPROVEMENT, SELF-DESTRUCTION

Multilevel Systems

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

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.