

James Beauregard

Philosophical Neuroethics

A Personalist Approach - Volume 1. Foundations

PHILOSOPHY OF PERSONALISM

About the author

James Beauregard

PhD is a clinical neuropsychologist specializing in geriatric neuropsychology. He works as a clinician in a geropsychiatry practice and also teaches at graduate level in the areas of Biological Bases of Behavior, Ethics, Aging and Educational Neuroscience. He is a member of the International Neuroethics Society and the International Conference on Persons.

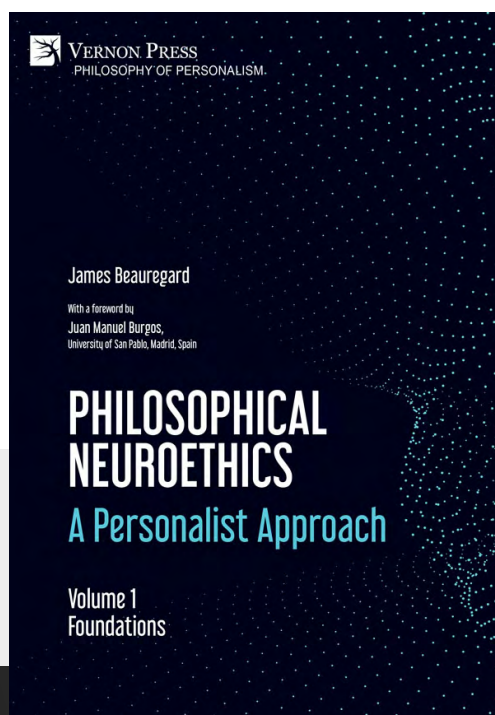
“Philosophical Neuroethics: A Personalist Approach’ is an essential and interesting book. It deals with a topic that is in the center of attention of the contemporary scientific community but at the same time raises many questions in humanities. James Beauregard presenting neuroethics in the light of philosophy helps us to understand that this theme concerns the whole human being and not only part of it (i.e., brain, neurons, and neural systems). He points out that neuroethics is about the human person and an adequate grasp of the latter may lead us to understand the proper role of the former. In the book, the author tries to reconcile sciences and humanities, at least to a limited extent. By doing that he saves from a continually expanding gap between what sciences informs us about and what we know about ourselves from thinking and deliberation. Looking from the other side, Beauregard’s book makes us realize that the philosophy of the human person is very promising and may offer us new perspectives when it is conducted in a close relationship with exact sciences. ‘Philosophical Neuroethics: A Personalist Approach’ broadens our perception of who we are, and hence I highly recommend it.”

Grzegorz Holub

Professor of Philosophy, The Pontifical University of John Paul II, Cracow, Poland

Summary

Neuroethics is a theoretical and practical discipline that considers the many ethical issues that arise in neuroscience. From its inception, the field has sought to develop an ethical vision from within the confines of science, a task that is both misguided and, in the end, impossible. Providing a solid theoretical foundation for neuroethics means looking to other sources, most specifically to philosophy. In this groundbreaking work, the author examines the current underpinnings of neuroethical thinking and finds them inadequate to the task of neuroethics – to think ethically about persons, technology and society. Grounded in the physicalist and deterministic presuppositions of contemporary science, and drawing on utilitarian thought, neuroethics as currently conceived lacks the ability to develop a robust and adequate notion of persons and of ethics. Philosophical Neuroethics examines the historical reasons for this state of affairs, for the purpose of proposing a more viable alternative – drawing on the tradition of personalism for a more adequate metaphysical, epistemological, anthropological and ethical vision of the human person and of ethics that can serve as a solid foundation for the theory and practice of neuroethical decision making as it touches on the neurologic and psychiatric care of individuals, our philosophy of technology and the social implications of neuroscience that touch on public policy, neurotechnology, the justice system and the military. Drawing on the personalist philosophical tradition that emerged in the twentieth century in the works of Mounier, Maritain, Guardini, Wojtyla, and the Modern Ontological Personalism of Juan Manuel Burgos, Philosophical Neuroethics brings to light the limitations of contemporary neuroethical thinking and sets forth a comprehensive vision of the human person capable of interacting with the contemporary questions raised by neuroscience and technology.



May 2019 | Hardback 236x160mm | 226 Pages | ISBN: 978-1-62273-532-7

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