

Neuroethics: which neuro rationality?

Daniel Pallarés Domínguez (Universitat Jaume I de Castellón)

Social neurosciences have acquired a broad technical and scientific rationality over the last decade (Farah, 2011). After more than fifteen years of the birth of neuroethics, is required an analysis on how the attempts of «fundamental neuroethics» (Evers, 2010; Levy, 2007) and even «neuroscience of ethics» (Roskies, 2002) have been studied theoretically. In many cases, the objectives of fundamental neuroethics have been misinterpreted (Northoff, 2009). Both the attempts to substantiate an ethics in the brain and the attempts to naturalize ethics from evolutionary psychology and biology do not provide, in my opinion, a fruitful framework for a relationship between ethics and neurosciences. The objective of this study is to analyze critically the rationality that exists behind the attempts to establish a fundamental neuroethics. In this way, this study will be divided into three parts.

Firstly, we will try to define the term «neuro rationality», understood as the frames of thought and paradigms of relationship that exist at the intersection between neurosciences and social sciences —and that shape the way of thinking about neuroethics in this case. Secondly, some proposals on the naturalization of ethics will be studied, specifically three: (a) studies of the behavior of animals in response to emotions (Cela-Conde, 2005, Flack & de Wall, 2000); (b) relationships at the neural level -examined by means of neuroimaging techniques- that exist between decision-making and morality (Smedeferi & Damasio, 2000); (c) the application of drugs or hormones to human beings to measure the degree of reciprocity (Kosfeld et al, 2005). Thirdly, we analyse the disadvantages that this rationality presents for a necessarily interdisciplinary and dialogical relationship between neuroscience and ethics (Cortina, 2011).

References

- Cela-Conde, C. (2005). Did Evolution Fix Human Values? En Changeux, J-P., Damasio, A. R., Singer, W., & Christen, Y. (Eds.) *Neurobiology of Human Values* (pp. 11-16). Berlin: Springer Verlag.
- Cortina, A. (2011): *Neuroética y neuropolítica. Sugerencias para la educación moral*. Madrid: Tecnos.
- Evers, K. (2010). *Neuroética. Cuando la materia se despierta* (Víctor Goldstein trad.) Madrid: Katz.
- Farah M. J. (2011). Neuroscience and neuroethics in the 21st century. En Illes, J. & Sahakian, B. J. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Neuroethics* (pp. 761-781). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Flack, J. C., & De Waal, F. (2000). Any animal whatever. *J Consciousness Stud*, 7, 1-29.
- Kosfeld, M., Heinrichs, M., Zak, P., Fishbacher, U., & Fehr, E. (2005). Oxytocin increases trust in humans. *Nature*, 435(7042), 673-676. doi:10.1038/nature03701.
- Levy, N. (2007). *Neuroethics. Challenges for the 21st Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Northoff, G. (2009). What is neuroethics? Empirical and theoretical neuroethics. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 22(6), 565-569. doi: 10.1097/YCO.0b013e32832e088b.
- Roskies, A. (2002). Neuroethics for the New Millenium. *Neuron*, 35, 21-23.
- Smedeferi, K., & Damasio, H. (2000). The brain and its main anatomical subdivisions in living hominoids using magnetic resonance image. *J Human Evol.*, 38, 317-332.