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2009 : November 2009 - Fast Moving Fronts : Judy Illes & Eric Racine Discuss Neuroethics

## FAST MOVING FRONTS - 2009

November 2009



**Judy Illes & Eric Racine talk with *ScienceWatch.com* and answer a few questions about this month's Fast Moving Front in the field of Psychiatry/Psychology.**



**Article: Imaging or imagining? A neuroethics challenge informed by genetics**

Authors: Illes, J; Racine, E

Journal: AM J BIOETH, 5 (2): 5-18 MAR-APR 2005

Addresses: Stanford Univ, Stanford, CA 94305 USA.

Stanford Univ, Stanford, CA 94305 USA.

### SW: Why do you think your paper is highly cited?

Our article was one of the first papers in neuroethics that bridged research on the ethics of genomics and genetics with new challenges brought about by functional neuroimaging. The paper highlighted that both scientific and sociocultural factors are important in interpreting neuroimaging data.

### SW: Does it describe a new discovery, methodology, or synthesis of knowledge?

This paper described a new perspective on the challenges created by advances in neuroscience, in particular, social neuroscience and functional neuroimaging studies that probe complex human behaviors.

### SW: Would you summarize the significance of your paper in layman's terms?

The significance of the paper lies in its analysis of the interaction between epistemology (what we think we know with functional neuroimaging tools) and ethics (how and when we should use this knowledge). The paper highlighted how constraints on the epistemology inform ethical choices.



Coauthor  
Eric Racine

### SW: How did you become involved in this research and were any particular problems encountered along the way?

This research paved the way for a longstanding and highly productive collaboration in neuroethics between the authors.

### SW: Where do you see your research leading in the future?

The authors' research is aligned more than ever toward understanding how neuroscientists can tackle

effectively the societal implications of their research.

**SW: Do you foresee any social or political implications for your research?**

The paper dealt with social and ethical implications of neuroimaging research. The conversation on the use of neuroimaging is still ongoing. The field is maturing with interdisciplinary dialogue and meaningful engagement of ethics from inception to dissemination and uptake.

**Judy Illes, Ph.D.**

**Canada Research Chair in Neuroethics**

**Professor of Neurology, Faculty of Medicine**

**National Core for Neuroethics**

**The University of British Columbia**

**Vancouver, BC, Canada**

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**Eric Racine, Ph.D.**

**Director, Neuroethics Research Unit**

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KEYWORDS: GLUCOSE-METABOLISM; BRAIN; AMYGDALA; FEAR; NEUROSCIENCE; INFORMATION; CORTEX;  
FACES; RACE; MIND.



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