



Brain Policy: How the New Neuroscience Will Change Our Lives and Our Politics

Robert Blank

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Neural grafting, virtual reality, gene therapy, psychotropic drugs As startling new treatments emerge for disorders of the brain, new concerns are arising along with them. In the first book to examine the implications of the full range of revolutionary interventions now possible in the human brain, Robert H. Blank warns that while these new techniques may promise medical wonders, they also raise profound political questions.

Our rapidly unfolding knowledge about the brain and the accompanying applications have three main policy dimensions: funding research initiatives, controlling individual use, and assessing social consequences. But underlying these aspects, Blank argues, are more disturbing issues that pose fundamental challenges to our conceptions of equality, autonomy, freedom, responsibility, and human nature itself.

Brain Policy makes the key facts from the technical literature readily accessible to social scientists and general readers and points out the implications for our society. Blank first explains the structure and function of the nervous system and current theories of brain operation; he then assesses the uses and potential abuses of various intervention techniques. He identifies the public policy issues raised by discoveries in the neurosciences and calls for intensified scrutiny of the advantages and disadvantages of new technologies.

Warning that the risks and dangers of the dramatic developments in neuroscience are potentially large, Blank offers a means of understanding these scientific advances and the philosophical and political issues they entail. This book will be of interest to social scientists, policy analysts, policy makers, bioethicists, scientists who want to see the bigger picture, and the informed reader with an interest in the implications of neuroscience for themselves and society.

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