CALL FOR PAPERS

Topoi: An International Review of Philosophy

MORAL ENHANCEMENT

Deadline for submission: September 30, 2016

Guest editors:

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Overview and topics
Moral enhancement is one of the most relevant areas of discussion in recent bioethics and neuroethics. Human bio-enhancements, that is, the project of using biomedical interventions and technological devices in order to increase human capacities in cognitive tasks, such as memory, intelligence or decision making, or in shaping human mood, have been extensively discussed in recent years. Also lively has been the discussion concerning the enhancement of physical performances and the increase in human life-span – all issue that were covered by the famous report by the President’s Commission for Bioethics Beyond Therapy.

Moral enhancement has emerged as a new topic, partly different from other forms of enhancement because in this case the capacity that should be modified by biotechnologies is central to the definition of humanity and of the individual personality. According to some, at least, it seems that intervening on our capacity to be moral (in general terms) is much more directly intervening on our very identity than in cases that have to do with physical or intellectual capacities. And moral enhancement involves much more directly the perspective of transhumanism, and the hypothesis of being “more than human”.

Since 2008, Julian Savulescu and Ingmar Persson, from the Centre for the Future of Humanity at Oxford University, have been among the most important advocates of moral enhancement in the international discussion; they jointly authored what is perhaps the first book-length defence of moral enhancement, Unfit for the Future. But other scholars, like John Harris, has extensively written against the specific project of moral enhancement.

In accordance to “Gray Matters”, the report of the United States Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues, it is important to stress the role of integrating ethics and neuroscience early and throughout the research endeavor. In particular, the Commission declared that as “we anticipate personal and societal implications of using such technologies, ethical considerations must be further deliberated. Executed well, ethics integration is an iterative and reflective process that enhances both scientific and ethical rigor”. And the moral enhancement technologies are at the forefront of ethics and neuroscience.

Invited contributors:
Jan Christoph Bublitz (Hamburg University) - Norbert Paulo (Salzburg University)
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John Harris (Manchester University)
Fabrice Jotterand (Regis University) - Susan Levin (Smith College)
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Submission process:
Contributions must be original and not submitted elsewhere. Papers should not exceed 9,000 words (references and footnotes included). Each submission should also include a separate title page containing contact details, a brief abstract and list of five keywords. All papers will be subject to double-blind peer-review. Manuscripts should be submitted through the Online Manuscript Submission System (Editorial Manager), accessible at http://www.editorialmanager.com/topol/. Please select the appropriate article type for your submission by choosing “S.I.: Moral Enhancement (Lavazza/Reichlin)”. For further details on how to prepare the manuscripts, please follow the author guidelines available on the journal’s website: http://www.springer.com/philosophy/journal/11245.

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