

## Part I

# Topic 1: Enhancement

## 1 Lecture

### Objectives of technology

- cure
- prevent
- enhance
  - strengthen what exists
  - introduce new

**Anti-enhancement (conservatifs)** Habermas, Sandel, Fukuyama

**Liberals: anti anti-enhancement**

**Critisizing assumptions**

**Critisizing Arguments**

## **2 The case against perfection: what's wrong with designer children, bionic athletes, genetic engineering**

Michael J. Sandel.

The text is divided in the following subsections

1. Muscles athletes (muscle enhancement)
2. Memory (cognitive enhancement)
3. Height (growth-hormone treatment)
4. Sex selection reproductive technologies (sex and some genetic traits)

## 3 Debate

### 3.1 Question 1

- We have strong evidence, that our biological species-normal state is not 100% fitted to the industrialized modern world. Obesity, higher cancer rates, allergies, ADHD, anxiety and depression statistics shows that **humanity is ill-equipped to the challenges of the current state of the world**. Some companies and actors even using humanities evolutionary instincts against itself. (Market predication, HFCS, Psychological Operation, attention economy)
- To combat the evolutionary unpreparedness to the modern condition can be viewed as cure and not even an enhancement, but nonetheless **it is desirable, and morally acceptable to enhance humanity, and raising the species-normal state, as it would be an effective way to combat the vulnerability of our species against the maleficent manipulation of our biological preparedness**.
- Do you agree with this statement? If not, what are your counterarguments?
  - My response to this statement rests on a holistic approach.
  - The current state of the world is of course a product of human mankind and intellect. It is actually the product of technology. Defeating technology with technology is absurd (if you want, compare with Cold War). Thus, it is not morally acceptable to enhance humanity because of the reason in the statement. The problem in the statement should be solved through reducing the development of the technology that creates this *maleficent manipulation of our biological preparedness*.
  - The sentence *humanity is ill-equipped to the challenges of the current state of the world* is in the wrong direction. It should be **the current state of the world is ill-equipped to the true nature of mankind**.

### 3.2 Question 2

Do you agree with Michael J. Sandel, on that the solidarity of society is greatly depend on the genetic lottery and the uneven, and unpredictable distribution of talent?

- There is indeed a *stochastic* distribution of talent (fitness). One way to see this, is as a gift from God (see question 4). The *genetic lottery* and the *uneven, unpredictable distribution of talent* indeed contribute to solidarity, but are not the only reasons.
- To what extend is the *web* where you are born determined by your genes?
- What are the roots of solidarity?
  - etymology: Latin *solidus* (solid)
  - solidarity is a means to render society more solid
  - Latin *socius*: partner, allied

### 3.3 Question 3

How could genetic enhancement of the kind discussed in the text disrupt what it means to be human?

- Let us first discuss what it means to be human.
  - humanity, from Latin *humanitas* which means (i) human culture, (ii) kindness, courtesey, (iii) culture, civilization
  - We could look at human rights, but one very important thing is freedom.
    - \* All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

\* ...

\* Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

– We have the **what** and the **why** (intention/motivation).

- Assume that genetic enhancement of the kind discussed in the text disrupts what it means to be human. BUT A COUNTERARGUMENT IS THAT ... of course, eventually, all *random* factors are taken away. But then you could say that even that is human, because even genetic enhancement is created by humans.
- Is perfection in contrast to what it means to be human? Prometheus: hubris?

### 3.4 Question 4

Without the assumption of a god and of any religion, on what grounds is the 'giftedness of life' reasoning based?

- BACKGROUND OF THIS QUESTION: for religious persons (persons who have a faith), it is not difficult to understand the reasoning within faith. However, for outsiders, it is not easy for them to understand that because understanding faith requires in fact *a priori* faith (kind of mystic reasoning).
  - For example, how can God accept bad things such as diseases?
    - \* not scientific story:
    - \* Adam and Eve ... They wanted to *be* God, without his grace.
  - see also p. 78
- ABOUT DISCERNMENT BETWEEN CURE AND ENHANCE From theology, the discernment between healing and enhancement is problematic in the same way as it is in general. In some sense, no strict moral objection can be made against genetic enhancement, BUT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE **INTENTION!** In Greece e.g., the practice of **ekonomia** (economy, implying good or prudent handling) (in contrast to *leagism* - strict adherence to the letter of the law of the church).
- If you are not assuming any god... a baby does not choose itself to be born. It *gets* life from its parents/ from nature... BUT the thing is, AFTER A FEW GENERATION OF GENETICALLY ALTERED PARENTS, CAN WE STILL CONSIDER A CHILD AS A GIFT FROM NATURE?
- human organs are not designed by humans. We have them and we can use them. But could we alter them?

## **4 Glossary**

- quandary
- humility

dilemma, lastig parket  
nederigheid

**Part II****Paper**

- eugenics is bad, I agree.
  - but the fact that is enhancement, I disagree.
  - if we want to know that we should study long-term effects

## Part III

# Extra material

In the light of (full) space and time, it makes no sense to take a certain standpoint - because it might always change. In addition, I do not pretend to have answers to any question. We can only make *for the time being* partial answers.

**Iets waar ik niet tegen kan** mensen die tegen een computer praten.

Pas Wittgenstein to op phil of tech

## 5 Woordenlijst

- compliance
- contingent

overeenstemming

voorwaardelijk