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UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Enhancement: Cognitive, Moral and Mood; Part II

27-28 April 2020, Belgrade

The Center for the Study of Bioethics

in partnership with

**Wellcome Centre for Ethics and Humanities,
University of Oxford**

The Center for the Study of Bioethics in partnership with the University of Oxford's Wellcome Centre for Ethics and the Humanities (WEH), are jointly organizing the international conference, "Enhancement: Cognitive, Moral and Mood; Part II". The event will take place at the Center for the Study of Bioethics in Belgrade, Serbia, 27-28 April 2020.

In May 2013, the Center for the Study of Bioethics and the Oxford Centre for Neuroethics jointly organized the conference "Enhancement: Cognitive, Moral and Mood." Julian Savulescu, Peter Singer and John Harris were among the presenters.

The 2020 conference will be a follow-up of the 2013 event. It will be a 2-day gathering, with CSB and WEH as partners in the event. The conference theme will be the state of enhancement in 2020. Part of the conference's focus will also be on what has changed in the enhancement debate relative to 2013: April 2020 as compared to May 2013.

The 2020 conference also builds on the Center for the Study of Bioethics' tradition of bringing together top experts in the field of bioethics to discuss novel issues. In October 2015, the Center for the Study of Bioethics and The Hastings Center already carried the 2013 debate one step further with the conference "Enhancing Understanding of Enhancement". The keynote speakers were John Harris and Erik Parens. This event was also organized in Belgrade. In 2017, the Center for the Study of Bioethics partnered with the Division of Medical Ethics in NYU School of Medicine Department of Population Health and The Hastings Center for the conference "Genome Editing: Biomedical and Ethical Perspectives". Arthur Caplan was one of the keynote speakers. Other keynote or invited speakers include Nick Agar, Josephine Johnston, Anders Sandberg and Katrien Devolder.

The conference also coheres with the Wellcome Centre for Ethics and Humanities' mission to support research on pressing challenges presented by advances in neuroscience, big data, genomics, and global connectedness, and by their convergence. Through its research and public engagement activities, WEH aims to lead debate on the ethical requirements for scientific research and technological innovation capable both of improving health and of commanding well-founded public trust and confidence.

Conference Theme and Purpose

Human enhancement is one of the most prominent themes in bioethics. Enhancement is uncontroversial *in principle*; there is nothing contentious about the aspiration to enhance someone's abilities *per se*. However, enhancement becomes controversial when it is achieved via bio-medical means, and when it is assumed that it is morally justifiable to use biomedical interventions for non-medical purposes, that is, with the aim of enhancing normal functioning. Proponents of bio-medical enhancement, however, have also developed differing positions among themselves, particularly with regards to the issue of the relationship between cognitive and *moral* enhancement by bio-medical means.

As the scholars who will attend the 2020 conference are some of the most important global figures in the enhancement debate, and as this debate is one of the most relevant debates in contemporary biomedicine, the April 2020 conference in Belgrade is expected to be a key scientific event of 2020.

Envisioned Conference Results

One envisioned result of the conference dialogue is a further development and clarification of various perspectives on enhancement. It remains to be seen to what extent this result will imply the discovery of new common ground among the proponents of various positions, or whether it will develop the debate in the direction of a multiplication and deepening of existing differences. But no matter whether

some of the differences among the positions will be relaxed or deepened, the enhancement debate itself will acquire additional content. In that sense, this debate will be enhanced itself. Furthermore, by exploring the idea of moral enhancement as a possible companion to other forms of enhancement, the conference will contribute to the search for a moral justification of human enhancement.

The conference will cover various aspects of enhancement and will aim both at searching for enhanced enhancement opportunities, as well as for an enhanced understanding of the concept of enhancement. *Hence, the conference is expected to enhance the enhancement debate itself.*

An outcome of the conference might be the publication of an edited volume or a journal's special issue "*Enhancing Enhancement*". In this publication the conference participants will have the opportunity to publish the papers they presented at the conference or other texts that foster the enhancement debate.

Summary

On 27 and 28 April 2020, The Center for the Study of Bioethics and the Wellcome Centre for Ethics and the Humanities of the University of Oxford are organizing a conference on the issue of enhancement, largely as a follow-up on the May 2013 conference, realized by The Center for the Study of Bioethics in partnership with the Oxford Centre for Neuroethics. The conference shall again be held in Belgrade and with the same or similar themes as 7 years previously.

Invitation

We invite you to participate in the conference with a paper presentation no longer than 20 minutes. Abstracts are due on 1 November 2019. Notification of acceptance will be sent to the authors by 14 November 2019.



Vojin Rakić

Director of CSB



Julian Savulescu

Co-director of WCEH