

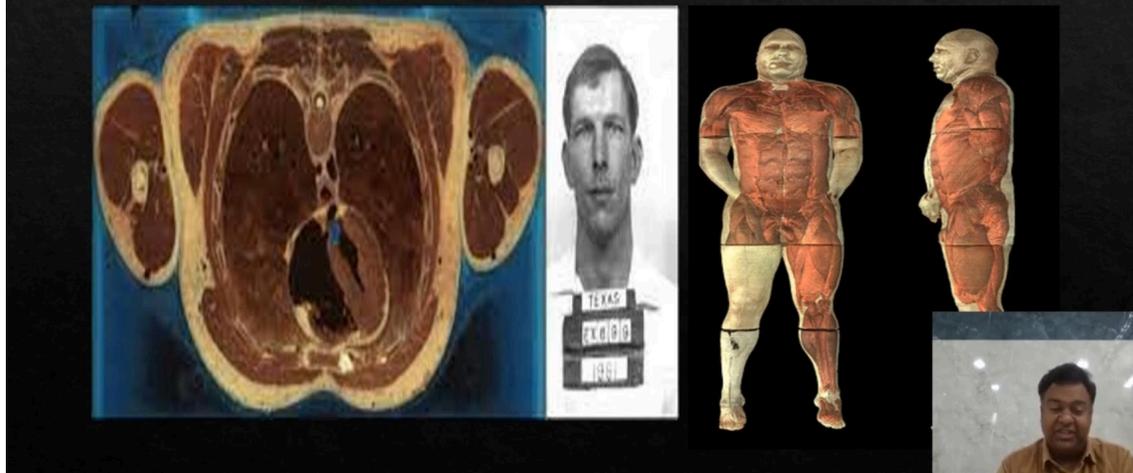
Posthumanism: An Introduction
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Lecture 41
Lec 41 : Moral Enhancement

Hello everyone, this is Osijit from SRM University, Andhra. And our topic of investigation today is Moral Bioenhancement: Problems of the Cyborg Human. We know that human beings are complex species with complicated ways of operating civil societies and an even more convoluted and sophisticated biological system that makes possible the various functions of the living body. And we're also aware of the fact that medical science, since its inception, has been obsessed with defeating disease and death through anatomical experimentation and findings. Let's say adding a mechanical leg or an arm or reanimating dead bodies through cryopreservation fundamentally, with all modes and methods of enhancement.

Of course, the overwhelming questions that we will be covering throughout this lecture are: Where do we draw the line on this fixation with immortality or fixing one's individual and behavioral qualities? When do we say, for example, 'That's enough'? Let's begin with the kind of enhancement that is quite perverse and, in a very strange manner, linked with preservation. So, on your left, you see Joseph Jernigan, a 38-year-old second-degree murderer, who became the first official cadaver a dead body to be sliced open and photographed under the Visible Human Project (VHP) in 1994. So, VHP focuses on efforts to digitally create an extensive database

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The Case of Joseph Jernigan of Visible Human Project



of cross-sectional images of the human body to enable advanced anatomical visualization. In August 1993, Jernigan was executed by injection with a lethal dose of potassium chloride. The body was first frozen and smeared with polyvinyl alcohol, then converted into blocks of no more than 20 inches. On the so-called 'meat table,' the cubes were sliced into one-millimeter pieces and reproduced on a 3D platform.

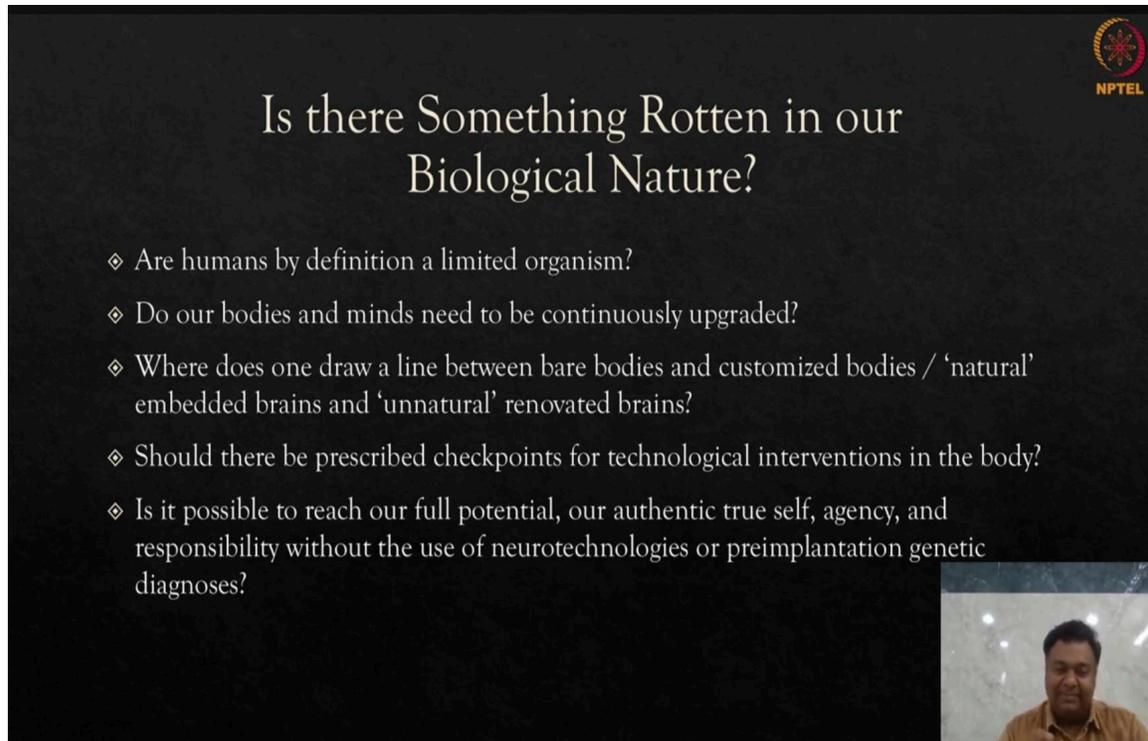
And then his flesh was layered, segmented, grinded by a mechanical razor and multiple shots were taken of the minute alterations that are you know, submerged in these traces. So Jernigan's body was divided or let's say photographed into 1878 pieces or images and transmuted into 15 GB of storable data. Now, The VHP not only dilutes the distinction between living and non-living bodies, but the project is in turn, it metamorphoses human substance into biographics.

So under the humanist schema, let's say, the criminal's body, it must be transformed into a raw material, into raw material to generate use value or bio value. So this is based on morality, let's say, since he is a criminal. And it must be given to the society, back to the society. So, in a way, the sacrifice of the lesser human in biomedicine is connected to redemption and a spectacle of punishment. Do you understand this?

So it's because he took a lie, because he snatched something from society. It is as if the holy duty of civil society to exact the same amount of flesh as if. from the same person, from Joseph Jernigan, especially because he's a criminal, especially because by committing crime, he as if loses some inalienable rights that should have belonged to him as a human being. So it is a different kind of enhancement, if you ask me, where enhancement for the other for the normal law-abiding citizen is done, is projected via the body of the criminal, who is, of course, a lesser human.

So I began with this very crude example, so to say, of enhancement, which has to do with the death of the other in order to build society. Now, if we directly go to our understanding of what enhancement means for example, because interventions by means of enhancement, neurotechnologies have the potential to affect different dimensions of a person's identity, such as the nature of the true self. Agency, responsibility, etc. But what is the ideal prototype that we have to ask? What is the ideal prototype of the enhanced human that we can agree upon?

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The slide features a dark background with white text. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo with a red and yellow design and the text 'NPTEL' below it. The main title is centered and reads 'Is there Something Rotten in our Biological Nature?'. Below the title are five bullet points, each starting with a diamond symbol. In the bottom right corner, there is a small rectangular video inset showing a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a brown shirt, speaking.

Is there Something Rotten in our Biological Nature?

- ◆ Are humans by definition a limited organism?
- ◆ Do our bodies and minds need to be continuously upgraded?
- ◆ Where does one draw a line between bare bodies and customized bodies / 'natural' embedded brains and 'unnatural' renovated brains?
- ◆ Should there be prescribed checkpoints for technological interventions in the body?
- ◆ Is it possible to reach our full potential, our authentic true self, agency, and responsibility without the use of neurotechnologies or preimplantation genetic diagnoses?

Should it be male, female, or something else? So that's how I probably have also named or titled this: is there something rotten in our biological nature? Of course, I borrowed it from Hamlet. But, you know, look at the questions that trouble me. That should also trouble anyone dealing with enhancement, perhaps.

So, are humans by definition a limited organism? That's perhaps the first question that we need to ask. Why do we need enhancement in the first place? Why do we need an addition to what we have already been given? A religious person would say that we have been blessed by.

Right. Let's say the second question is: Do our bodies and minds need to be continuously upgraded? You know, I mean, why do we need knowledge, for example? There is a kind of tradition that is required for our existing set of beliefs, our knowledge system. The entire branch of belief systems, say, for example or are we talking only in terms of biology?

Right. Do we need, you know, to walk faster, let's say, to think faster, to eat faster, right, to grow faster? Things like that. Do we need to be continuously upgraded? So where does one draw the line between bare bodies and customized bodies, right?

Bodies that we are born with, sometimes bodies that we are forced to live in, and customized bodies that are made, remade, reordered, paid for in hospitals, let's say, right? Bodies that go through additions. Sometimes also subtractions, right? Between natural, embedded brains that we are born with again and unnatural, renovated brains you know, of course, that is probably, I don't know how many of us would go into that. I mean, do we favor the brain over the body or the body over the brain?

Because, you know, techno-obsessed scientists or individuals often fall into that Cartesian trap. The mind-body dualism, thinking that the brain exists separately from the body, as if it were a completely separate entity, unaffected by the body. And, of course, we know by now how wrong that is. So the next question is: Should there be prescribed checkpoints for technological interventions in the body? How much is allowed is perhaps the question we need to keep asking ourselves.

How much is enough? If you ask me, even taking medicines for your high blood pressure, your diabetes, or even a common flu is some kind of enhancement. But the point is, of course, it is enhancing. I mean, again, how do we understand enhancement becomes a problem? It becomes a fundamental question because you are enhancing the body with an external agent you're taking in, swallowing the pill in order to cure yourself

of something, of a disease, let's say. But at the same time, you're also, I think, accelerating your body's natural mechanism to cure itself. Would a body left by itself to its own devices cure automatically? Yes, perhaps. At the same time, do we have that kind of time to suffer the pain that could be reduced with the help of a pill or any medicine?

Is that an enhancement? Well, how much enhancement is good enhancement? Where does one really recognize a boundary between too much enhancement and the fundamental need for enhancement? Through medicine, for example. So, is it possible to reach our full potential, our authentic, true self-agency and responsibility without the use of neurotechnological or pre-implantation genetic diagnosis?

I mean, you know, if you can really structure an infant's brain, structure a baby's brain before it's born, when it's in the embryonic stage, for example, you know. And really mold it, modify it into what the parents want or what society wants. Is it the ideal self then? You know, this is, again, these are the fundamental structures. These are the fundamental questions that we have to concern ourselves with, to think about what is authentic to begin with.

What is the true self, you know? Is there one definition of truth? Is there one definition of agency? Is there one definition of self? Is there one definition of reaching our full capacity as a human being? What is that? What are those limitations or what are those unlimited potentials that hide within us that technology can, might, might not renovate, restructure, reconstruct, accelerate, and all these. These are probably the fundamental questions that we must begin with. If you go to the next slide, and again, the basic

question troubling us is, again, who, you know, does the future belong to Frankenstein's monsters, you know? And I've used Frankenstein's monster here, neither as a positive figure nor as a negative figure, though, if you do read Shelley's Frankenstein, there is, of course, a kind of sympathetic outlook toward the monster.

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Does the Future belong to Frankenstein's Monsters? *or* Why Enhancement?

- ◆ We might vote for physical enhancement to...
 1. Slow the ageing process
 2. Increase the height of children or accelerate their immunity to infectious diseases
 3. Repair congenital malformations
 4. Design future generations to be stronger, healthier, and smarter with the aid of CRISPR-Cas9
 5. Live indefinitely without finite time frames
 6. Transform and ameliorate cognitive capacities
 7. Reach a supermind that will be one billion times more powerful than human intelligence today (brain-machine interfaces)



But I think we are right now at a stage where to decide on the good and the evil would be, I think, a misstep. It would probably be a step taken too fast, but we have to wait and watch, we have to consider these questions, and that's why I'm probably throwing these in. So, do they belong to Frankenstein's monsters? Because, you know, why do we need enhancement to begin with, right? Do we imagine doctors reanimating their bodies? You know, that's exactly what was done in Shelley's Frankenstein. Do we, do we, do we imagine, you know, biomedicine creating these strange kinds of species which fall right at that very tricky, very slippery platform between human and machine. Are we in a position to imagine such a species?

So we might vote for physical enhancement to slow the aging process. And I'm sure I'm certain—everyone would want that, if not for themselves right now, for their parents, perhaps for their grandparents. Right. To slow down the aging process, increase the height of children, or accelerate their immunity to infectious diseases. Repair congenital malformations or design future generations to be stronger, healthier, and smarter with the age of CRISPR-Cas9, live indefinitely without finite time frames, transform and ameliorate cognitive capacities, or

perhaps reach a super mind that would be one billion times more powerful than human intelligence today. And we are right now looking at, let's say, brain-machine interfaces.

Right. So do we enhance to cure diseases, to increase our thinking abilities, to achieve superhuman tasks? I mean, again, why do we need it?

Do we need it is interesting. the question or if at all we vote for enhancement if at all we vote for enhancement do we do that to somehow defeat death? Because that has been the fundamental, I think, criterion for any scientist, or has always been perhaps, for the medicine, for any medicinal sciences, for doctors since age immemorial, it has been to defeat death and disease. So is it also to defeat what you're born with, to alter, to change what you're born with?

That is, again, something to think about. If you go directly to the topic of moral bioenhancement and the need for a stable society, then the question directly is, why do we need moral enhancement? What does moral enhancement really dream of? Because it dreams of this kind of moral progress by claiming control, aggressive behavior, and reducing deviant sexual urges. For example, if I am a doctor and I'm able to, you know, create a kind of society where, you know, with the help of some drug,

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Moral Bioenhancement and The Need for a Stable Society

◇ Moral Enhancement dreams of Moral Progress by claiming to...

1. Control aggressive behaviour
2. Reduce deviant sexual urges
3. Increase responsibility towards current environmental, geopolitical, and social challenges
4. Eliminate vulnerability and dependency
5. Prevent catastrophic climate change and the 'ultimate harm'
6. Motivate to act on the desire for justice, respect for authority, ingroup loyalty, spiritual purity
7. Achieve greater happiness with the use of psychopharmaceuticals and brain chips
8. Create morally superior Postpersons who would in turn preserve their morally inferior



some medicine, some electrotherapy, some neurosurgery, I create this world where rape doesn't happen, for example, or murder doesn't happen. Is it even possible? We'll get to know in a while why it seems perhaps doable, perhaps agreeable, perhaps possible in theory. But when you think about the arguments against this, when you think about the lucid nature, the fluid nature of morality itself, it's all, I think it just uh you know scatters it just the entire edifice of enhancement just falls i think so okay so what other things it can increase responsibility towards current environment uh geopolitical and social

challenges uh eliminate vulnerability and dependency again uh i think i think a very controversial point you know can we imagine human beings without these two uh

Massively human qualities. One is vulnerability. One is dependence. That one needs to be vulnerable. That one needs to be dependent on the other.

Therefore, why have relationships anyway? Or let's say this vulnerability and dependency are the starting points of care. And care is, again, something that makes us so attached to the animal world. And I think that's exactly the fundamental thing we share with the animal world, the human and the non-human others. We share care, I think.

We share the aspects of care, vulnerability, and dependency. So if you take it away from humankind, do we remain human? Does science and technology want us to remain human again? That is, again, something to investigate. Okay, what else can it do?

It can prevent catastrophic climate change and the ultimate harm. Ultimate harm is probably, you know, it's a kind of reference to the apocalypse. It's a kind of reference to us killing each other. Maybe the third world war. Who knows?

Maybe, you know, a disease which just ends the entire human race. Can you create, you know, for example, I think the pandemic would serve a great example in a very perverse fashion, that too, I think. But, I mean, how... How helpless were we in the absence of a medicine to cure us of the COVID virus, right? I mean, that is, again, if you're talking about immortality, if you're talking about controlling behavior, are we not also to talk about the controlling of disease, an unknown disease?

You know, how much can be prohibited, let's say? How much can we get? How far is protection possible? Or are the vulnerable aspects of life or are those, you know, variable aspects of life, the contingency of life itself, the accidents of life, the unseen events of life, are those things that make life livable? That also we have to think.

Or do we live inside these insulated chambers where everything is safe, where no one is vulnerable, where everything is independent? Right. That's also something we have to think about. Right. OK, what else?

It can motivate us to act on the bizarre for justice, respect for authority. Well, you know, think of fascism. Think of Hitler. Exactly. He would want that.

Right. Respect for authority. In-group loyalty, spiritual purity, right? I mean, this is, you know, all these points could be the birth of fascism, right? Could lead us to immense and endless regression, right?

It could help us achieve greater happiness with the use of psychopharmaceuticals and brain chips, right? Implantations. Again, The greater question is, what is happiness? What counts as happiness?

That is, again, a very tricky question. For some, memory could be a curse. For others, having this massive elephant-time memory could save them on so many occasions, make

them into stalwarts, or even bring them a Nobel Prize. I don't know. But for many, memory could be a curse for those hit by tragedy, for those hit by trauma.

I don't know if memory is repeated reminders of situations. I don't know how helpful that could be. Now, the last point is very interesting, I think. It could create morally superior post-persons who would, in turn, preserve their morally inferior others, right? And this post-person is very interesting, right?

A very close link to the post-human also, but very different from all of them. At the same time, I think most people would be someone morally superior, someone who has truly achieved that kind of scientific dream. At the same time, that person would preserve the others who do not have that enhancement, so to say, or cannot even afford it because, you know, money or how much capitalism has to do with getting enhanced. Of course, we all know about it.

And how many of us would be able to afford this kind of enhancement remains a question to be investigated. If you come to this minimal mode of moral enhancement, you can see what they are looking at. They're looking at interpersonal strengths, fairness, forgiveness, kindness, emotional strengths, humor, social skills, creativity, bravery, prudence, and that's what they want the ideal human to have. Intellectual pursuits, love of learning, beauty, curiosity, restraint, judgment, perseverance, perspective, honesty, and a future orientation toward positivity, future-mindedness, self-regulation, spirituality, and no negative outlook.

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Minimal Model of Moral Enhancement

- ◆ *Interpersonal strengths:* fairness, forgiveness, kindness, receptivity, teamwork, modesty, and love
- ◆ *Emotional strengths:* humor, social skills, creativity, bravery, and prudence
- ◆ *Intellectual pursuits:* love of learning, beauty, and curiosity
- ◆ *Restraint:* judgment, perseverance, perspective, and honesty
- ◆ *Future orientation:* positivity, future-mindedness, self-regulation, and spirituality
- ◆ *Self-control:* *sophrosyne*, restraint, conscientiousness, and temperance
- ◆ *Niceness:* agreeableness, extraversion, empathy, and fairness
- ◆ *Intelligence:* *phronesis*, open-mindedness, curiosity, love of learning, and prudence
- ◆ *Positivity:* (lack of) neuroticism, emotional self-regulation, positivity, bravery, and hu



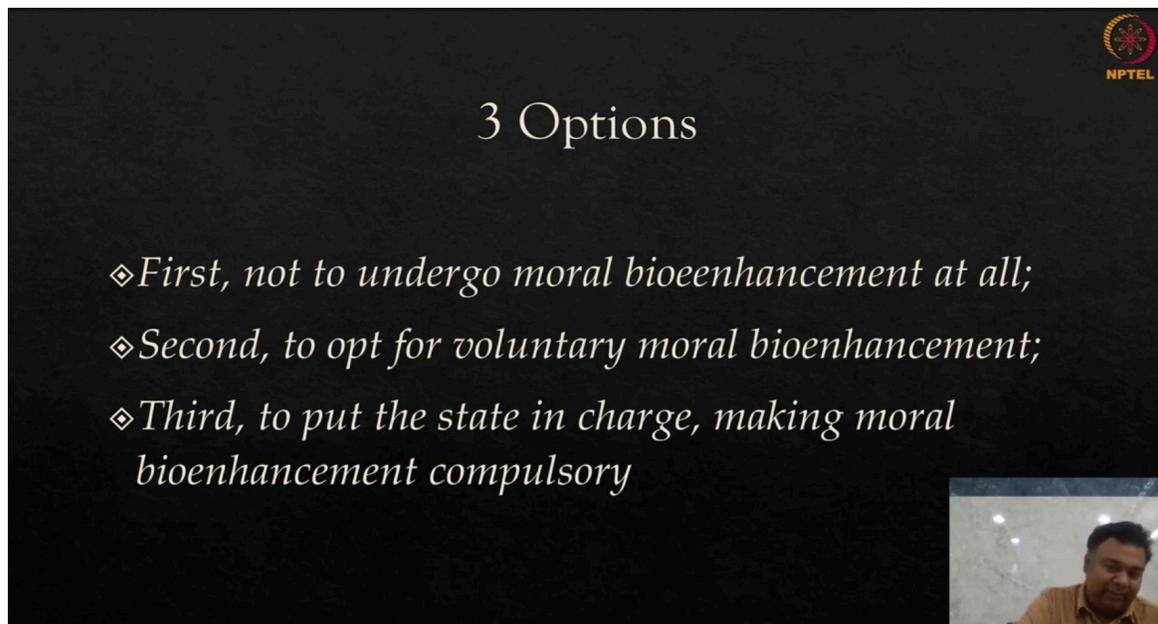
And self-control, restraint, temperance, niceness, intelligence, open-mindedness, curiosity, love of learning, and, of course, positivity everyone wants to be positive these

days, and anything negative is to be cured. But we often forget that the birth of philosophy has to do with balancing these two out. Philosophy cannot exist without negativity, without some amount, a healthy dose of stoicism. You cannot live your life without balancing the two simultaneously. in your day-to-day affairs. You cannot just live your life based on this kind of self-regulation, bravery, and positivity.

And that's exactly where vulnerability and things like dependency come in, because you are constantly failing, because we are subjects of trauma. We are plastic characters. We continuously undergo these kinds of horrors of everyday life. Right. That's exactly where we need other humans to come in and help us.

If you bring in Levinas, it would be the call for the other, the call of the other, the invitation of the other space. The other space is a helpless space. It invites you into a kind of attachment, into a kind of a moral behavior into a kind of loving nurturing a caring attitude towards the other right um now if you so therefore we are faced with three options first not to undergo more violence at all we stay away from it the second is to opt for voluntary violence right, where you desire and you pay for it and you go to a doctor and you say that you need these qualities inside you, that pill and that brain surgery and

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The slide features a dark background with the title "3 Options" in a light-colored serif font. In the top right corner, there is a small circular logo with the text "NPTEL" below it. The three options are listed as bullet points, each preceded by a diamond symbol. The text is in a light-colored serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is a small video inset showing a man speaking.

3 Options

- ◇ *First, not to undergo moral bioenhancement at all;*
- ◇ *Second, to opt for voluntary moral bioenhancement;*
- ◇ *Third, to put the state in charge, making moral bioenhancement compulsory*

all that and you pay for it and you get it that's voluntary and third is to put the state in charge making moral bio enhancements compulsory and that's the most dangerous part if the state is in charge right the state will do everything to make us into uh let's say puppets of the state into into followers blind followers right uh and uh there will be no other option than to undergo these operations, these medications, just to become the ideal subjects of a fascist state, let's say. Therefore, we do know why at all are we talking about more environment and why is the dream at all there there right because it is a world plagued by human trafficking and constitution camps and organized crime and torture and bloodshed and bigotry and hatred corruption such as narcissistic and anti-social

personality disorders sadistic pleasures moral cynicism defective empathy xenophobia and a general unwillingness to confront problematic aspects of the status quo and as Araujo Fabiano would say it if it helps us prevent nuclear war then it's worth it I mean and then the question comes back to us again will it at all help is it the be all and end all where you do a brain surgery and then you're cured or

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A Spectre Haunts Our Civilization

- ◆ *A world plagued by human trafficking, concentration camps, organized crime, torture, bloodshed, bigotry, hatred, corruption, such as narcissistic and antisocial personality disorders, sadistic pleasures, moral cynicism, defective empathy, xenophobia, and a general unwillingness to confront problematic aspects of the status quo.*

Therefore...

- ◆ *"...if it helps us prevent nuclear war, then it's worth it" - Araujo Fabiano (2018).*



do we as humans fall back to the same trap again and again and again, right? Because one aspect of being human is, of course, free will. And is there a medicine, is there a brain surgery that can really stop that, right? So this is, again, why do we, so do we need voluntary or do we need compulsory moral bio-enhancement? The question is if we need it at all.

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Voluntary vs. Compulsory MBH

- ◆ Free will
- ◆ Freedom linked to human identity and morality
- ◆ “God Machine”
- ◆ State invasions and the rise of a controversial moral perfectionism
- ◆ The myth of the moral brain
- ◆ Impossible to create moral scaffolding
- ◆ No real solution to the existence of evil
- ◆ The pluralistic nature of things, for example: *honour, compassion, trust, empathy*
- ◆ Benefits from the state for those undergoing moral enhancement therapies



And the second question is if we do, is it going to be voluntary or is it going to be compulsory by the state? So, of course, what if it's voluntary? The question of free will comes in that I want it out of my own volition. Right. I don't give the state the power.

So it's freedom linked to human identity and morality, because without freedom, there is no identity. There is no morality. Right. So you cannot make it compulsory, definitely. And of course, the God machine, you know, God machine is a situation where human beings will not be provided alternatives, where human beings by default will choose the morally superior option.

However, without options, can free will exist? Without situations to choose from, can there be morality? That becomes, again, a fundamental question, right? So state innovations and the rise of controversial moral perfectionism. The state will decide if it's compulsory if this person is morally perfect or so immoral that they're corrupt, and we need to fix that person.

What is this tendency to fix things, right? If you give it to the state, the state will be in an endless endeavor to go on and on and on, fixing things that are harmful, that are detrimental to its own ruling, right? To its own existence. Every government, therefore, will be a corrupt government because power will be in their hands, right?

And that's so anti-democracy, of course, a little bit. So, of course, we are continuously falling prey to the myth of the moral brain that such a brain is possible, which would be so morally enhanced that it could not even imagine something immoral. Of course, it's impossible to create a moral scaffolding on which morality stands. What is morality, basically? Who can defend it?

It's so lucid, it's so contextual, it so depends on societies that it's impossible to create something, a kind of structure based on which we can decide that, oh, this is immoral and that is immoral, right? Or this person needs to undergo therapy because he or she is immoral. Corrupt based on this caloning, based on this principle, based on these regulations. Of course, there is no real solution to the existence of evil. What evil is, itself, is a convoluted question.

Right. Or where evil springs from. How do we perceive evil? Right. Otherwise, there wouldn't have been courts, any judgments, and no police.

At the same time, there wouldn't be a law book, a book of law. Right. The penal codes, which show that in a particular society, this is evil and that is not evil. Right. Or to a particular person.

There is a difference between crimes of passion and premeditated crimes. That's exactly why there is a difference, because evil might not be inherent. Evil might be circumstantial. Evil might be something you are forced to do under given circumstances. Right.

Of course, the pluralistic nature of things for example, honor, compassion, trust, empathy. How can you really box them into one? Definite structures and say that you don't have this because you don't tick these boxes or you don't act according to this definition. And of course, there is a suggestion from some pro-voluntary MBH experts that if they undergo voluntary MBH, the state can give them benefits like tax exemptions, free healthcare, and free education things that will make them morally superior. Or help them opt for voluntary MBH, right?

Oh, okay. Are we looking at designer babies and involuntary moral bioenhancement? So, are we looking at genome editing of the unborn, right? Where it will be the desire of the parents to really structure the baby. It can strengthen empathy, attenuate violent aggression, and, of course, improve cognitive capacities including moral reflection so that we can engineer the babies.

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Designer Babies and Involuntary Moral Bioenhancement

◇ Genome editing for the Unborn:

1. *Strengthening of empathy;*
2. *An attenuation of violent aggression;*
3. *An improvement of cognitive capacities, including moral reflection*



I understand when we talk about curing a baby of something, of a disability maybe, but I don't know, I really, again, I don't know if we are voting for a genetically structured infant who is born not just without its own permission to come into the world, so to say. But at the same time, definitely structured in a kind of superhuman way, in a kind of unnatural way also. based on the desire of its parents, right? So that's, again, something a little tricky, I guess, you know, how much control do our parents have over us, or even before we are born?

I mean, it links us to a kind of property and rights, isn't it? If you go to the fantasy of the cure, look at the fantasy of the cure, right? You know, you have omega-3 fish oil tablets, you have MDMA, you have magic mushrooms, you have lithium, you have SRIs, you have transcranial magnetic stimulation, beta blockers, bioengineering, engineered oxytocin receptors, tubing to deliver glucose directly to the brain, positive eugenics for people with MAOA gene variants, which turns you into aggressive individuals.

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The Fantasy of Cure

- ◆ Omega-3 fish oil tablets, MDMA, magic mushrooms, lithium, SSRIs, transcranial magnetic stimulation, beta-blockers, bioengineered oxytocin receptors, tubing to deliver glucose directly to the brain, positive eugenics for people with MAOA gene variants
- ◆ Vitamin supplements, brain surgery, illicit drugs, psychopharmacological treatments for depression, bipolar disorder, and anxiety, opioid inhibitors in the course of addiction treatment, as well as brain tubing, and Nazi-level eugenic proposals
- ◆ Nanotechnology, human-computer interfaces, bionic limbs, automated drones, soldier enhancements, quantum computing, artificial intelligence, news-bots, datafication consuming all human existence, bio-surveillance, predictive neuroscience, professional medicalization



You have vitamin supplements, brain surgery, illicit drugs, psychopharmacological treatments for depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety and opioid inhibitors in the course of addiction treatment as well as brain tubing and Nazi-level eugenic proposals, you know, structured babies, you know. Let's say Aryan babies, if the Nazis had it back in those days, or nanotechnology, human computer interfaces, bionic limbs, automated drones, soldier enhancement, quantum computing, You should read, you know, on bionic limbs, you should definitely read the famous novel by Isaac Asimov, it's called iRobot, where the soldier has this extra, loses a limb and has extra mechanical limb and how that helps him in becoming that kind of mediating factor between humans and machines. And we have datafication consuming all human existence.

We have biosurveillance. And predictive neuroscience and all kinds of medicalization. And that is the fantasy of cure that with the help of medicine, with the help of technology, we will be able to reach this world where there will be no death, where there will be no disease, where human beings will go on living and probably they will be kind of self-dead, a kind of euthanasia without disease. That is perhaps the practice of cure.

Therefore, we have the survival extension debate, which is post-human interkingdoms versus transhuman immortality. And whereas post-human interkingdoms would talk about existence that comes together with the help of the human, the bacteria, the plant, the entire ecosystem you know, animals, insects. And we all imagine a kind of coexistence where we take care of each other, where If you bring Donna Haraway, we protect the to-be-extinct species.

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The Survival-Extinction Debate

Posthuman Interkingdoms

vs.

Transhuman Immortalities



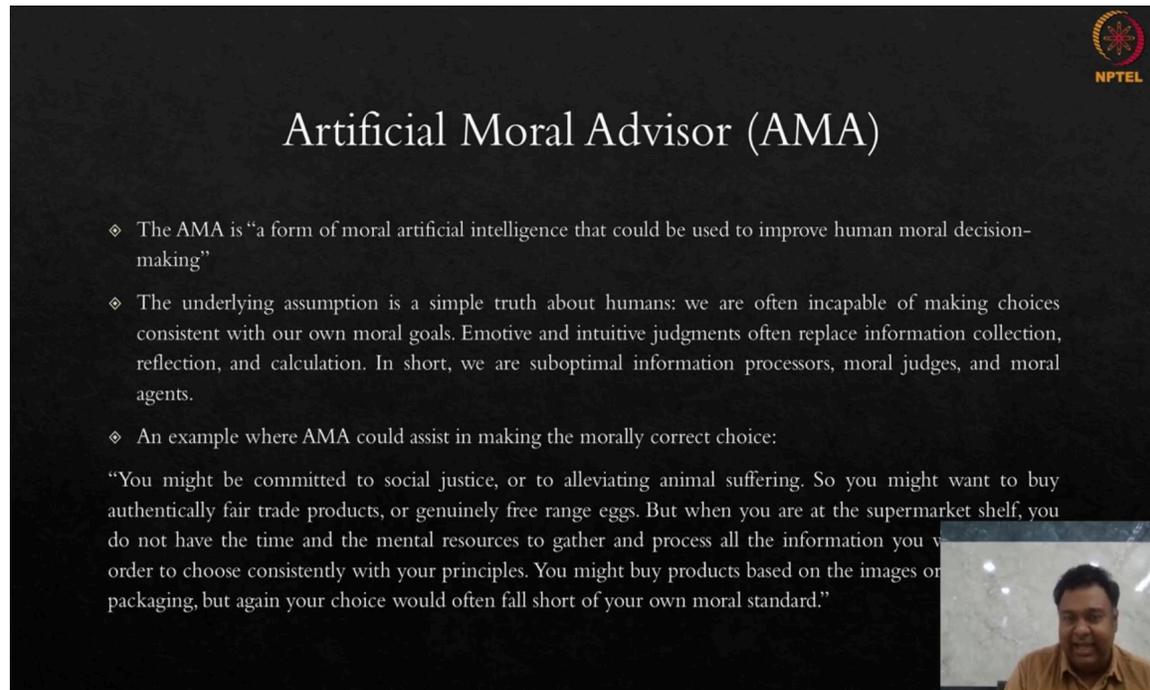
We become parents to those to-be-extinct species. We think about extinction very seriously. We think about preservation. And this is not a kind of anthropological preservation. This is not a kind of anthropocentric, human-centric preservation, but it is a kind of interlinked assemblage, a kind of cyborged

togetherness, a kind of inter-kingdom where everyone has the right to live with dignity, to exist with dignity, which is not based on exploitation of other species, of non-human others, of the environment for human needs. And of course, versus transhuman immortality, which we have been discussing for the last 20-25 minutes, that it dreams of creating this race, it dreams of creating this unnatural human race perhaps, which will go on existing, which will perhaps not even need oxygen, I don't know. Are we looking at, if the entire ecology is in crisis, how do the transhumanists uh people who would be mortal dream of living would they not need oxygen will that be will that also have will be will we uh have artificial masks which would which would meet which would make breathing possible uh so this is again an open debate and there's a two very distinct sides of development the two very distinct debates surrounding post-humanism what we really need

What is the call of the hour, right? Because we are facing the sixth mass extinction. We should be aware of that. Therefore, do we look for ways out of it? Do we plunge into it more and more and more and more?

Or do we think of an escape via the machine? That is perhaps very clear. And of course, there is, for example, something called AMA, artificial moral advisor. So the AMA is a form of moral artificial intelligence, a device that could be used to improve human moral decision making. So the underlying assumption is a simple truth about humans.

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The slide features the NPTEL logo in the top right corner. The title "Artificial Moral Advisor (AMA)" is centered at the top. Below the title are three bullet points. The first bullet point defines the AMA. The second bullet point discusses the underlying assumption about human decision-making. The third bullet point provides an example of an AMA's role in a supermarket. A small video inset in the bottom right corner shows a man speaking.

Artificial Moral Advisor (AMA)

- ◆ The AMA is “a form of moral artificial intelligence that could be used to improve human moral decision-making”
- ◆ The underlying assumption is a simple truth about humans: we are often incapable of making choices consistent with our own moral goals. Emotive and intuitive judgments often replace information collection, reflection, and calculation. In short, we are suboptimal information processors, moral judges, and moral agents.
- ◆ An example where AMA could assist in making the morally correct choice:
“You might be committed to social justice, or to alleviating animal suffering. So you might want to buy authentically fair trade products, or genuinely free range eggs. But when you are at the supermarket shelf, you do not have the time and the mental resources to gather and process all the information you would need in order to choose consistently with your principles. You might buy products based on the images on the packaging, but again your choice would often fall short of your own moral standard.”

We are often incapable of making choices consistent with our own moral goals. Emotional and intuitive judgments often replace information collection, reflection, and calculation. In short, we are suboptimal information processors, moral judges, and moral agents. So this is an example of a very interesting example that I gathered from one of the books I was reading. A reading on moral enhancement.

It says that you might be committed to social justice or to alleviating animal suffering. So you might want to buy authentically fair-trade products or genuinely free-range eggs. But when you are at the supermarket shelf, you do not have the time or mental resources to gather and process all the information. And therefore, the AMA would help you choose. Based on images, scanning, and packaging, it will help you make the right choice according to the set moral standard.

It will tell you to choose morally. It will tell you to choose authentically. It will tell you to choose according to the standard. So that's AMA for you. And, of course, this last slide is about criticism of moral bioenhancement.

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Criticism of MBE

- ◆ Morality is not something to be injected or operationally implanted/modified
- ◆ Morality is dynamic and context-specific. It is biologically and culturally mediated
- ◆ Inner freedom is non-negotiable
- ◆ Gives rise to Automaton/ Bioreduction of morality cancels personal agency
- ◆ Carries the risk of rejecting weaker people, the entire disabled population, and non-human others
- ◆ The choice is between lifelong medication or brain surgery/brain stimulation
- ◆ Human nature is all about openness and malleability
- ◆ We need certain 'negative' attitudes to react to injustice and violence
- ◆ It is not compatible with egalitarian and liberal principles of democracy



And this is, I think, very, very important to acknowledge that this is impossible. And this is exactly why this is impossible, I think, at least. And we can, of course, engage in further debates regarding this, because morality is not something to be injected or operationally implanted or modified. Morality is dynamic and context-specific. It is biologically and culturally mediated.

Inner freedom is non-negotiable. You cannot have people external to you implanting the notion of freedom inside you, implanting the notion of ethics and morality inside you. Of course, it gives rise to automatons. Bioreduction of morality cancels personal agency. You don't have agency anymore.

You are nothing but a machine, just a domesticated machine, domesticated by the state, of course. And it carries the risk of rejecting weaker people, the entire disabled population, and non-human others. So you are basically suggesting that we cancel a significant population, a substantial number of people, maybe more than half the world, who can't afford it, who are disabled. And, of course, animals who are non-human you're suggesting that morality is so linked with language, perhaps, that animals shouldn't even be considered. So it would be okay for a morally superior person to even think of killing all animals for their own needs or experimenting on them. for any kind of medicine because animals are basically non-human.

They don't have morality, and anything that doesn't carry morality is detrimental and harmful for the state, right? So the choices between lifelong medication, brain surgery, or brain stimulation you have to choose. Are you going to take pills all your life, or will you go for brain surgery or brain stimulation? And I don't think I'll opt for any of the choices. Human nature is all about openness and malleability.

It's about your fluid nature. It shows that you can change. There are possibilities. There are probabilities all around you. That is exactly what makes human life so precious.

Not that it's finite, but also that it can change at any moment. It can be tragic. It can be something... Full of love, full of blossoming but that uncertainty is also what makes life worth living, isn't it? So we need certain negative attitudes to react to injustice and violence. Imagine, imagine you witness... you witness someone... you witness some kind of molestation, perhaps let's say, on the street and your morality says, your moral brain says, you should not hit someone else.

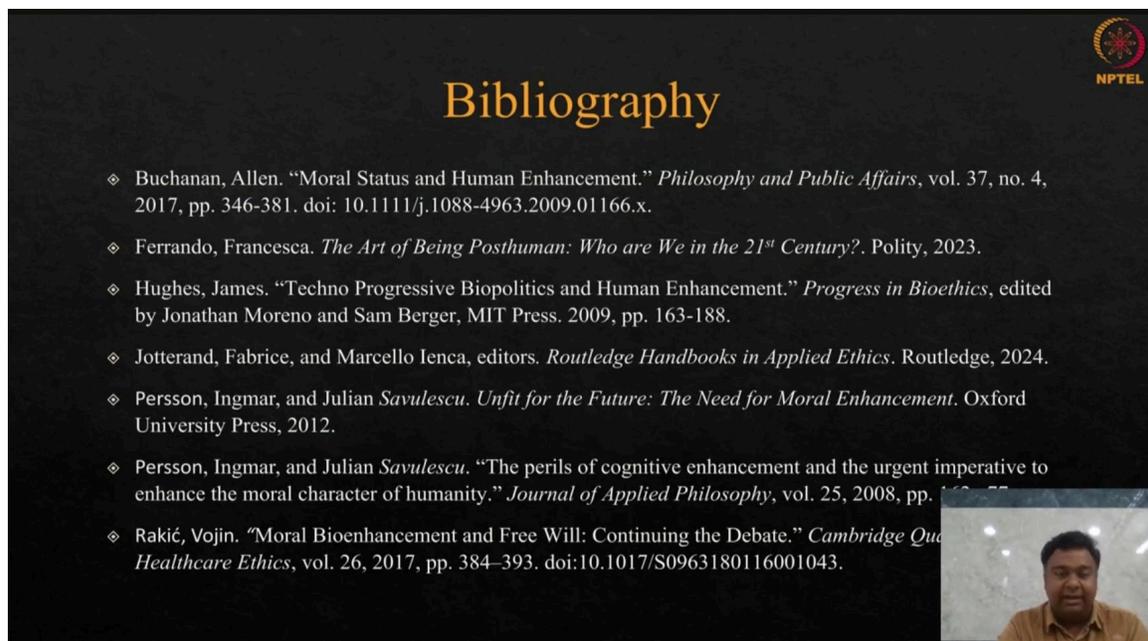
Your moral brain says, at least you are not doing it, and it is a work off. Is it the ethical response then? Of course not. But the moral brain can act like that, isn't it? That you stay away from violence.

Oh, that's violence. Your brain reads it as violence and you stay away from it because that's what your moral brain says and you walk off. Right. So it is not compatible with egalitarian and liberal principles of democracy. Of course, it's close to fascist.

It's close to fascism. It's close to fascist principles. It has nothing to do with democracy, which talks of individual rights, which talks of individual decisions, which talks of individual right to exist with dignity, right? And definitely it is not compatible with ideas of what we have always understood the human to be. A species which

undergoes one fundamental thing, which is change, which is a kind of upgrade. But that upgrade is their own choice, is their own reaction to any circumstance. And I don't think any kind of technology should be allowed to take that fundamental quality that makes us human away from us. So that is what I had to share about moral enhancement. And here are a few books and articles.

(Refer slide Time 42:51)



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Of course, you can consult them. And thank you so much for your patience. And you can definitely go on to read James Hughes and Alan Buchanan and, of course, Francesca Minerva and Vojin Rakic. Lastly, you can say Vojin Rakic is the one who talks about moral enhancement and free will.

He is one of the main proponents of voluntary moral enhancement. And you can go on to read his articles. Okay. Thank you so much.