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MORAL ENHANCEMENT AND THE REDUCTION OF EVIL: HOW CAN WE CREATE A BETTER WORLD?

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Abstract

In an attempt to widen the perspective on the issue of moral enhancement, this paper raises the question of what kind of evil could we eliminate by morally enhancing ourselves, i.e. what kind of evil would we still have to live with. Due to the complexity and diversity of philosophical analysis of evil, this study will be narrowed in scope by conforming to an implicit understanding of evil by some of the most prominent advocates of biomedical (moral) enhancement. We will compare two perspectives on evil: evil as a component of human nature – radical evil (Immanuel Kant), and “depersonalized” evil – the banality of evil (Hannah Arendt), together with an implicit consideration of evil by Thomas Douglas, Julian Savulescu, Ingmar Persson, and John Harris. Furthermore, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s “Theodicy” will be used in the analysis of the necessity of the reduction of evil, in order to emphasise that human beings have limited knowledge, which is why we should take into consideration the principle of caution and the fragility of balance between good and evil. In the conclusion, we offer an answer to the question “What is a better world?” by taking into consideration often neglected tradition of moral philosophy in the works of Immanuel Kant and Hannah Arendt.

Key words: moral enhancement, evil, Immanuel Kant, Hannah Arendt, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

1. INTRODUCTION: HOW DID THE QUESTION OF MORAL ENHANCEMENT BECOME ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT TOPICS IN THE HUMAN ENHANCEMENT DEBATE?

The idea of human enhancement encourages the usage of biomedical means in order to “improve” human nature. Transhumanists, one of its most prominent supporters, suggest our current, rather poor “condition” is just an early stage of our development. We can reach the stage of utopia (Bostrom, 2008) only if we direct techno-scientific progress towards increasing our existing capacities. Opponents of biomedical enhancement, often called bioconservatives, see this as a dangerous path which could, broadly speaking, lead to the “destruction” of human nature, or at least of its most valuable components. Their worry

is that human enhancement technologies might be “dehumanizing” (Bostrom, 2005:203-204). Following this “bioconservative” line, Jürgen Habermas, in *The Future of Human Nature*, suggests that the fact that someone has interfered with our genes (for example, our parents with the help of advanced reproductive technologies) could affect our “moral capacities” (Habermas, 2003:64-66). According to Habermas, knowing that someone has intervened in our “natural” history could change our understanding of ourselves as responsible political subjects, ones that are able to have independent moral judgement (Habermas, 2003:25). It is precisely the problem of the possible jeopardising of morality which serves as one of the most important, maybe even the last, “defending line” of biomedical enhancement technologies adoption, or at least that was the case until recently. For this reason, several years ago, promoters of human enhancement came up with the “perfect” solution. They exposed the gap between different kinds of enhancements (i.e. cognitive enhancement, mood enhancement, physical enhancement, etc.) and our moral capacity, which is a precondition of the creation of a better world.

Indeed, would the world be a better place to live in if we all had IQs of over 200 or could run 100 m in just a matter of seconds? Not necessarily. So what we really need to do is to enhance our morality. Why not do it with biomedical means? To that end, Thomas Douglas introduces the idea of biomedical moral enhancement in order to question the fundamental bioconservative objection that the biotechnological modification of human nature for the sake of enhancement would be morally impermissible (Douglas, 2011:467). If it is possible to prove that the use of modern biotechnology could somehow improve our morality so that we all become virtuous human beings, then there should not be any dispute about biomedical enhancement in general. Fukuyama’s concerns regarding the disintegration of human dignity, or *Factor X* (Fukuyama, 2002:149), and Habermas’ worry about our ability to be responsible members of the community would then become irrelevant.

The aim of this paper is an attempt to widen perspectives regarding the problem of moral enhancement by investigating the tradition of moral philosophy.¹ Hence, it is necessary to emphasise that the question of morality is inseparable from the “big” basic notions of good and evil. If we could enhance our morality, we would be able to eliminate or reduce bad actions which should result in a “better” world. Thus, the next question which imposes itself in this discussion is what kind of evil can we eliminate by morally enhancing ourselves and what kind of evil would we still have to live with?

1 The paper starts from a “bioconservative” standpoint, accepting the concerns about biomedical enhancement raised by Francis Fukuyama and Jürgen Habermas. Thus, we will not investigate the differences between technological and non-technological interventions in human nature further in this paper. A more detailed overview of this was already given in the book *Ljudska priroda i nova epoha* (Selak, 2013). The investigation of the possibility of the reduction of evil will rather be narrowed down to three classical names: Kant, Arendt and, finally, Leibniz because their understanding of evil can serve as an answer to the treatment of the problem of evil in the work of Thomas Douglas, Julian Savulescu, Ingmar Persson, and John Harris.

Due to the complexity and diversity of the philosophical analysis of evil, in order to propose an answer to this question we shall narrow our investigation. Consequently, our research on evil will be adjusted to conform to the implicit understanding of evil as suggested by some of the most prominent promoters of biomedical (moral) enhancement (Thomas Douglas, Julian Savulescu, Ingmar Persson and John Harris). Therefore, we consider two understandings of evil: evil as a component of human nature – *radical evil* (Kant), and “depersonalized” evil – *the banality of evil* (Arendt), which are taken as suitable theories for the purpose of this investigation.

Finally, the intention of Douglas’ investigation was to encourage the idea of human enhancement by introducing the possibility of moral enhancement. Thus, in this paper we will use Kant’s and Arendt’s understandings of evil to try to show the contrary: that the suggestion of biomedical moral enhancement exposes crucial contradictions of the idea of human enhancement in general.

2. THE NATURALISATION OF EVIL ACCORDING TO DOUGLAS, PERSSON AND SAVULESCU

In *Moral Enhancement*, Thomas Douglas, one of the pioneers of the idea of moral enhancement, does not define morality, but rather identifies certain psychological changes which could count as moral enhancement. Clearly, these emotions ought to be essential for our morality, otherwise we would not be able to count their enhancement as moral enhancement. The emotions which Douglas emphasises as ones that are “bad” or incompatible with moral behaviour are the “aversion to members of certain racial groups, and impulse towards violent aggression” (Douglas, 2011:470). His “weakly consequentialist” position suggests that “we have good reasons to expectably bring about any good consequences” (Douglas, 2011:474). Thus, what would be regarded as moral enhancement is if a person “alters herself in a way that may reasonably be expected to result in her having morally better future motives, taken in sum, than she would otherwise have had” (Douglas, 2011:468).

Similarly, Ingmar Persson and Julian Savulescu claim that human beings are to an insufficient degree psychologically and morally adapted to the new “technological” environment, which represents a threat to the very survival of human civilisation (Persson and Savulescu, 2011:486). Human beings compete over a deficit in natural resources, which implies that we are “condemned” to act in an evil manner. Today, we have become a danger to ourselves so we should improve our motivation to act in a good manner with biotechnological means. Persson and Savulescu also refer to a great deal of research which shows that our behaviour is biologically conditioned at least in part. They reveal the biological base of altruism, a sense of justice and aggressive behaviour (Persson and Savulescu, 2012:109-112).

Therefore, they indicate altruism (as empathy and sympathetic concern) and a sense of justice as the key moral dispositions that should be the first object of biomedical moral enhancement (Persson and Savulescu, 2012:108).

Douglas, Persson and Savulescu emphasise a view that suggests that our ability to act in both a good and bad way is an intrinsic part of our biological nature. Evil is therefore *naturalised* as an existing component of the human biological misbalance. This suggests that if we could somehow change the “chemistry” of our brain to have better motives, i.e. to have better intentions towards other human beings, we could “save” the world, or, at least, make a step in that direction.²

3. REDUCTION OF EVIL BY IMPROVEMENT OF OUR MOTIVATION – THE KANTIAN ARGUMENT

Douglas, Persson and Savulescu see the improvement of our motivation to act in a good manner as crucial for our moral enhancement. Hence, Douglas emphasises a decrease in aversion both towards members of certain racial groups and in the impulse towards violent aggressive behaviour, and Persson and Savulescu focus on an increase in altruism and a sense of justice. The necessity of the “enhancement” of our motivation to act in accordance with the moral law can be seen as Kant’s standpoint on the question of the existence and the reduction of evil.

In *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* Kant discusses the problem of radical evil in human nature. Kant’s distinction between legality and morality from the *Critique of Practical Reason* is essential for his distinction between good and bad actions:

Therefore the concept of duty demands *objectively* – in the action – agreement with the law, and *subjectively* – in the maxim of the action – respect for the law, as the sole way of determining the will by the law. And thereon rests the distinction between the consciousness of having acted *in conformity with duty* and *from duty*, i.e. from respect for the law. The first of these (legality) is possible even if only inclinations were to have been the determining bases of the will; but the second (*morality*), moral worth, must be posited solely in this, that the action is done from duty, i.e. only on account of the law (Kant, 2002:81). Thus, in order to characterise one’s action as good or evil we should observe one’s motivation. A person is not necessarily good if a result of their action is good. If such a person has had impure motivation to commit this act of good, they can also be characterised as an evil person. For example, if one has done something to gain something for oneself, e.g. to deserve the respect of the community, one’s action is not good even if the life of a stranger is saved or if one gives all of one’s savings to charity.

According to Kant, a human being is evil because “he is conscious of the moral law and yet he has incorporated into his maxim the (occasional) deviation from it” (Kant, 1998:32). The problem for Kant lies in the fact that we are by our nature condemned to have impure motivations. Although our intrinsic moral predisposition enables us to be good, we also have a natural predisposition that is related to our senses and the subjective principle of self-love. Hence, evil is radical because it corrupts the ground of

² To investigate similar concepts further, see evolutionary psychology and, for example, Steven Pinker’s book *How the Mind Works*.

all maxims while as a natural inclination it cannot be removed solely by human forces. “Yet it must equally be possible to overcome this evil, for it is found in the human being as acting freely” (Kant, 1998:37).

Therefore, what characterises our doing good or evil is not in the material of the maxim (the different impulses we feel), but rather in the form of the maxim (the question of subordination; which of these impulses are conditions for others) (Kant, 1998:36).

The victory of the good principle over the evil principle (Kant, 1998:93) and the new establishment of the intrinsic predisposition for good (meaning creating its purity) demands a “revolution in the disposition of the human being” (Kant, 1998:47) which is possible since “for the moral law commands that we ought to be better human beings now, it inescapably follows that we must be capable of being better human beings” (Kant, 1998:50). This is partially in correlation with the requests of Douglas, Persson and Savulescu for the improvement of our motivation as a step towards moral enhancement. But, even if their argumentation was consistent with Kant’s, not all evil comes from our motivation. Enhanced motivation would not necessarily mean that we would have a safer and therefore a better world. The world is often in danger due to immoral actions that are the result of stupidity or indolence. Furthermore, new diseases, climate changes, etc., also threaten our existence. Following this argument, John Harris, one of the opponents of the idea of moral enhancement, and also a supporter of the idea of cognitive enhancement, criticises Savulescu and Persson. Harris perceives moral enhancement as a threat to freedom (Harris, 2011:103-105), and uses the example of the decrease in racism over the last hundred years, which is the result of adequate public education, to advocate for cognitive enhancement instead of moral enhancement (Harris, 2011:105). Hence, the next question is could we decrease evil if we expanded our cognitive capacities?

4. REDUCTION OF EVIL BY IMPROVEMENT OF OUR COGNITION – THE ARENDTIAN ARGUMENT

John Harris suggests that cognitive enhancement will lead us to moral enhancement. If we know better, we will act better. The Socratic relation between knowledge and good is a key point of maybe the most famous 20th century definition of evil – that of Hannah Arendt. In her research on the origin of evil, Hannah Arendt studied the politics of totalitarian systems (Hitler’s Nazi system and Stalin’s Bolshevik one) and discovered that “ideological” crimes, crimes that happen in the name of ideology, take place for the reason that an individual is deprived of the ability to think. This ensues when one refuses, or is not able, to engage with oneself in a vivid Socratic dialogue. Solitude is “the mode of existence present in this silent dialogue of myself with myself” (Arendt, 2003:98). This is essential for not committing an act of evil, since no one would be able to live with themselves aware of the fact that they are a “criminal”. Therefore, Socratic morality is the only efficient morality in borderline situations, at times of crises and emergencies (Arendt, 2003:106). The rejection of inner dialogue occurs because totalitarian practice, step by step, annihilates personality and converts human beings into the obedient followers of the given orders.

Following the tradition of moral philosophy, Arendt stresses that for humans it is impossible to do wicked things intentionally, to do evil for evil's sake (Arendt, 2003:72). The connection between thinking and remembering is of special importance for Arendt (Arendt, 2003:94-97). Having no memory means that one has not thought about one's action at all, therefore the biggest criminals are those who do not remember. Since they do not remember they do not have roots in this world and for Arendt this is how the greatest evil operates. Having no roots enables such evil to be extreme and spread across the world (Arendt, 2003:95). Arendt sees each individual as capable of going deep into morality, but is often led by circumstances to stay on the surface.³ Hence, the real danger Arendt finds is in indifference, in a refusal to judge at all and that is "the horror and the banality of evil" (Arendt, 2003:146).

There is the possibility that an enlargement of our cognition would enable us to see subtle shades of our actions better. But, are the smartest people necessarily the best ones? Or is the case just the opposite? We can find numerous examples, even starting from the field of philosophy, of vague morality and an excellent mind, from J. J. Rousseau and further. Harris indeed shares a rather optimistic position: he assumes that humanity is by nature good, just not well-educated. On the other hand, he is right that a proper education in the 20th century has led to a decrease in prejudices, although if we would take a "morality pill" to prevent us from being aggressive and to make us altruistic, what we think or know would no longer be important.

Starting from Socrates, the connection between knowing and acting morally is recognised as important. Knowing better is a precondition of acting morally, but that is only the starting point. For example, having the ability to run fast is worth nothing if you do not run. Similarly, we could agree that the purpose of cognition is thinking about what is good and from such knowing acting in a good manner. Knowing better, as a precondition of not blindly following our selfish impulses, suggests that the idea of moral education indeed has a certain intrinsic value which could mean that cognitive enhancement has priority over or enables moral enhancement. Would we then be able to eliminate evil by enhancing our cognition so that we learn about and consequentially understand more different things, which would enable us to better recognise evil and therefore prevent it?

5. TOWARDS A CONCLUSION: IS THE REDUCTION OF EVIL REALLY NECESSARY? – THE LEIBNIZIAN ARGUMENT

When we think about evil we usually start with the idea that it should be reduced, which explains the need for moral enhancement. But do we really mean that? In our everyday lives we work more on the justification of evil than on its reduction, i.e. we tend to rationalise something bad that has happened to us as a road to a greater good.

³ A further investigation should include the way in which socioeconomic, cultural and political circumstances affect our moral "capacity".

For instance, we can justify the fact that someone has broken our leg by emphasising the positive consequences of the fact that we were in bed for a month. It enabled us to read ten books and appreciate walking more. We do not just excuse the bad things that happen to us, we also tend to rationalise our own bad behaviour by, perhaps, thinking that we have actually done someone a favour (e.g. stealing a friend's boyfriend would actually help them get rid of an "idiot"). This is what Kant calls "a certain perfidy on the part of the human heart (*dolus malus*) in deceiving itself as regards its own good or evil disposition" which is "the foul stain of our species" (Kant, 1998:38).

If there is some good in the bad things that happen, or if we can find some kind of sense in them, do we then need to work on moral enhancement?

This can be called the implementation of Leibniz's argument.⁴ When something really bad happens to us, we tend to fall under Leibniz's "umbrella" by explaining that for some reason it had to happen that way.⁵ In his *Theodicy*⁶ Leibniz puts God on trial and tries to defend the coexistence of God as an absolute good and the existence of evil. For Leibniz evil is a part of God's big plan. This world is the "best of all possible worlds" which means that God was led by his wisdom when he created evil (Leibniz, 2007:69). Evil often causes good that otherwise would not happen (Leibniz, 2007:10). The reason why we do not always see this is that we have limited knowledge. Leibniz states that human beings are selected not by their virtues but in their accordance with God's plan. He makes a comparison by using a stone of lesser quality while building because it is "a particular one for filling a certain gap" (Leibniz, 2007:105). Furthermore, to show a different perspective on a problem Leibniz shares his surprise not by the fact that humans get sick, but by the fact they do not get sick more often since they have such a weak body (Leibniz, 2007:14). While trying to comprehend good and bad we unavoidably face the problem of perception and the perspective human being, by nature, is able to have only a very narrow perspective.

Therefore, Leibniz finds the origin of evil in the genuine imperfection of the human being. Since we descend from God we inevitably have to have a lower level of perfection. That is what makes us limited in a way. We cannot know everything and we can make mistakes. Leibniz calls this kind of evil metaphysical evil (Leibniz, 2007:21). Unlike physical and moral evil, metaphysical evil is inherent to human beings and cannot be eliminated. The metaphysical possibility of sin is given with freedom when it is created and it enables humans to cooperate in the creating activity of God since we conform to the will of God with our free decisions.

4 We can find a similar thesis in the philosophies of Plato, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, but Leibniz has made this argument central to his investigation of the origin of evil. Therefore, for the purpose of this paper we have decided to use his theodicy as an example.

5 Odo Marquard extends this justification to the foundation of philosophical anthropology where the weakness of our "biological" nature is seen as an advantage. We compensate for our biological weakness with the creation of culture and institutions (Marquard, 1991).

6 Due to the comprehensiveness of his theodicy, Svendsen calls Leibniz's theodicy the "totality theodicy" (Svendsen, 2010:55).

This, of course, does not mean that we should not do anything as God already has a finished plan for us. Leibniz dedicated a large part of his *Theodicy* to fight against the *Fatum mahometanum* in order to defeat “lazy reason” (Leibniz, 2007:55) and to emphasise the importance of the causes which lead to the realisation of an action. What we do is also a part of what will happen. Therefore, only after doing all we could in the right direction are we entitled to accept the good and the bad as the result of our actions.

The importance of Leibniz’s argument for the moral enhancement debate is in the fact that Leibniz reminds us that human beings have only limited knowledge. We are not able to comprehend all the consequences of our actions. Therefore, we should act cautiously. Following Persson and Savulescu’s explanation of the world being in danger, we must ask the question of how did this happen? Persson and Savulescu give a plausible explanation:

We are inclined to believe that at the time, half a century ago or so, when scientific technology provided us with means of causing Ultimate Harm, technological development reached a stage at which it became worse all things considered for us to have the current means of scientific technology, given that we are not capable of handling them in a moral responsible way (Persson and Savulescu, 2012:127).

Even more, this “world being in danger” serves as an explanation of the need for moral enhancement. But we should also ask why did this happen. Did it happen because a strange force called “scientific technology” came out of space and gave us a destructive weapon, or had we created it and used it, which therefore makes us responsible for pursuing techno-scientific progress without paying attention to the consequences of our actions?

Furthermore, how can the very same thing that has caused the problem (the alliance of advanced techno-science and not-so progressive human morality) be its solution? How can the ideas of a techno-scientific realisation of Bacon’s philosophy (the idea that nature should be at the disposal of human beings), and recently the exposure of human life to being at the mercy of a biotechnical revolution, correct the problems that arise from their implementation?

6. CONCLUSION. WHAT IS A BETTER WORLD?

The debate on the origin and existence of evil is one of the oldest in philosophy. If we position the standpoints of Douglas, Persson, Savulescu and Harris regarding this classical discussion we can perceive that each one seems to be able to eliminate one possible source of evil, but is left without a solution to the others. Furthermore, if we investigate their positions more thoroughly we can see that by imposing biomedical means as a solution to the problem of evil they fail even in the removal of the sort of evil that appears as their target area.

Douglas, Persson and Savulescu fail to “follow” Kant’s direction because the question of motivation is inseparable from the free will to act in accordance with moral law. Kant would never agree to taking a biomedical shortcut as a mediator between our free will

and the moral law. A duty to follow the moral law in a Kantian sense requires practicing choice, which would not be possible if we would take a “morality pill” and then be inclined to make the “better” choice:

But lest anyone be immediately scandalized by the expression *nature*, which would stand in direct contradiction to the predicates *morally* good or *morally* evil if taken to mean (as it usually does) the opposite of the ground of actions (arising) from *freedom*, let it be noted that by “the nature of a human being” we only understand here the subjective ground wherever it may lie – of the exercise of the human being’s freedom in general (under objective moral laws) antecedent to every deed that falls within the scope of the senses. But this subjective ground must, in turn, itself always be a deed of freedom (for otherwise the use or abuse of the human being’s power of choice with respect to the moral law could not be imputed to him, nor could the good or evil in him be called “moral”). Hence the ground of evil cannot lie in any object *determining* the power of choice through inclination, not in any natural impulses, but only in a rule that the power of choice itself produces for the exercise of its freedom, i.e. in a maxim (Kant, 1998:21). Furthermore, Harris has an advantage over the promoters of moral enhancement because he suggests that there is some work to be done in order to act morally. It is bad and dangerous just to take a pill and become better, for the reason that it could undermine our freedom. Hence, in Harris’ recognition of what we have called an Arendtian explanation of evil reduction, he emphasises the importance of gradualism. First you have to know better, then you will be able to act well. Also, you have to think yourself, and use your free will to decide on a good or bad action. The only “problem” is that this is actually an argument in favour of bioconservative thought, since it, even better, includes a couple of steps more. Following this line of argumentation, the more effort you invest, the better you are. So, to morally enhance yourself you need to have some knowledge, but to have some knowledge you must study hard; no shortcuts allowed – no pill for morality also means no pill for cognition. This is how Harris falls into a contradiction: when he wants to reject biomedical moral enhancement with the argument that we actually need cognitive enhancement, which will then lead to moral enhancement, the same claim of gradualism also appears destructive for his very own position. Biomedical cognitive enhancement, from Arendt’s perspective, would undermine the gradualism necessary for an inner dialogue which would bring it close to totalitarian practice. Finally, Leibniz, in his search for “balance”, reminds us that good and evil are not as opposite as they can appear at first sight. This balance is fragile and its violation could have dangerous consequences about which we should have already had learned something in the past. As human knowledge is limited, when a human being ignores the caution which arises from the fact that one possesses only particular knowledge, the other side of newly liberated destructive power is revealed where it is not possible to predict the consequences of its usage and to take responsibility for them.

Kant’s, Arendt’s and Leibniz’s understanding of evil are complementary. As Kant put it: people act badly because they have impure motivation – they put their self-interest before common interest. As Arendt further explained: they are able to do so, to live with

the “criminal”, because they refuse (or are disabled) to encounter themselves, to think about their actions. And, as Leibnitz has concluded: even when having a good motivation and thinking about our actions we are still not able to eliminate evil because we actually have no idea what we are really doing – we do not completely comprehend the consequences of our actions. Similarly, the promotion of Douglas, Persson, Savulescu and Harris of (moral or cognitive) biomedical enhancement cannot be separated because in their proposals of different kinds of enhancements as the means for reducing evil, they all share the same weak spot – the need for biomedical enhancement. Regarding this, the idea of moral enhancement does not show that the fundamental bioconservative objection of the moral impermissibility of biomedical enhancement in general is ungrounded. One could argue that it shows just the opposite. By putting morality, which is inseparable from the notion of freedom, at the centre of the human enhancement discussion, it reveals crucial unresolved contradictions in the idea of human enhancement in general. The questions which remain unanswered by the promoters of human enhancement are exactly those which are at the centre of Kant’s, Arendt’s and Leibniz’s philosophical work: what is actually good and evil and what can / should we do about it. That is the reason why it is important to come back and to take into consideration this often neglected philosophical tradition. The tradition of moral philosophy used in this paper reminds us how dangerous the consequences of allowing human beings to become experimental objects of their own research using the “moral blackmail” argument of the better world creation could be, if we at the same time undermine the inseparability of the most important components of morality. This same tradition also hides the answer to the question posed in the title of this paper: “How can a world become a better place?”.

In *Responsibility and Judgement* Hannah Arendt emphasised Kant’s statement that we can defeat egoism by using plurality as the framework for a kind of thinking in which the self, instead of dealing with itself as if it were the whole world, sees itself as a citizen of the world (Arendt, 2003:143). In *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* Kant further explained that:

A juridico-civil (political) state is the relation of human beings to each other inasmuch as they stand jointly under public juridical laws (which are all coercive laws). An ethico-civil state is one in which they are united under laws without being coerced, i.e. under laws of virtue alone (Kant, 1998:95).

If we really want to create this better world as an ethico-civil state, it is important to emphasise Kant’s point once more from *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* that we already have all the ingredients necessary (Kant, 1998:50), so there is no need for new risky inventions. We just have to mix them together in the right way. Yes, that is the trick, and the problem, but it is also where all the fun starts: discovering the “banality” of the paradox of having all we need but not knowing (comprehending) what we have.

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MORALNO POBOLJŠANJE I REDUKCIJA ZLA: JE LI BOLJI SVIJET MOGUĆ?

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Sažetak

U cilju davanja što šire slike vezano za temu moralnog poboljšanja, u radu se pitamo koje je oblike zla moguće eliminirati kroz moralno poboljšanje, odnosno koji bi oblici zla i dalje opstali. S obzirom na složenost i raznolikost filozofskih analiza zla, naš će fokus biti nešto uži, pa ćemo se baviti implicitnim razumijevanjem zla nekolicine najistaknutijih zagovornika biomedicinskog (moralnog) poboljšanja. Usporedit ćemo dvije perspektive zla: zlo kao sastavni aspekt ljudske prirode – radikalno zlo (Immanuel Kant) i „depersonalizirano“ zlo – banalnost zla (Hannah Arendt), kao i implicitna razmatranja zla u radovima Thomasa Douglasa, Juliana Savulescu, Ingmara Perssona i Johna Harris. Nadalje, koristit ćemo „Teodiceju“ Gottfrieda Wilhelma Leibniza u analizi nužnosti redukcije zla, kako bismo naglasili činjenicu da je ljudsko znanje ograničeno, što svakako trebamo uzeti u obzir pri razmatranju principa opreza i lomljive ravnoteže između dobra i zla. U zaključku pokušavamo podati odgovor na pitanje: „Što je to bolji svijet?“, uzimajući u obzir često zanemarenu tradiciju moralne filozofije u djelima Immanuela Kanta i Hanne Arendt.

Ključne riječi: moralno poboljšanje, zlo, Immanuel Kant, Hannah Arendt, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

MORALISCHE VERBESSERUNG ODER ÜBELREDUKTION: IST EINE BESSERE WELT MÖGLICH?

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Zusammenfassung

Um ein möglichst umfangreiches Bild zum Thema moralische Verbesserung zu geben, fragen wir uns in dieser Arbeit danach, welche Formen des Übels man durch eine moralische Verbesserung eliminieren kann, bzw. welche Formen des Übels auch weiterhin bestehen würden. Hinsichtlich der Komplexität und der Verschiedenartigkeit von philosophischen Analysen des Übels, werden wir uns darauf enger fokussieren und uns mit dem impliziten Verständnis des Übels einiger der eminentesten Befürworter der biomedizinischen (moralischen) Verbesserung befassen. Wir werden zwei Perspektiven des Übels vergleichen: das Übel als ein Bestandsaspekt der menschlichen Natur – radikales Übel (Immanuel Kant) und „depersonalisiertes“ Übel – die Banalität des Übels (Hannah Arendt), sowie die impliziten Betrachtungen des Übels in den Werken von Thomas Douglas, Julian Savulescu, Ingmar Persson und John Harris. Weiterhin werden wir uns der Theodizee von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz bei der Analyse der Notwendigkeit der Übelreduktion bedienen, um die Tatsache zu betonen, dass das menschliche Wissen beschränkt ist, was wir bei der Betrachtung der Vorsichtsprinzipien und des zerbrechlichen Gleichgewichts zwischen Gut und Übel unbedingt berücksichtigen müssen. Zum Schluß versuchen wir, die Frage zu beantworten: „Eine bessere Welt? – Was ist das“, indem wir die oft vernachlässigte Tradition der Moralphilosophie in den Werken von Immanuel Kant und Hannah Arendt in Rücksicht nehmen.

Schlüsselwörter: Moralische Verbesserung, Übel, Immanuel Kant, Hannah Arendt, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz