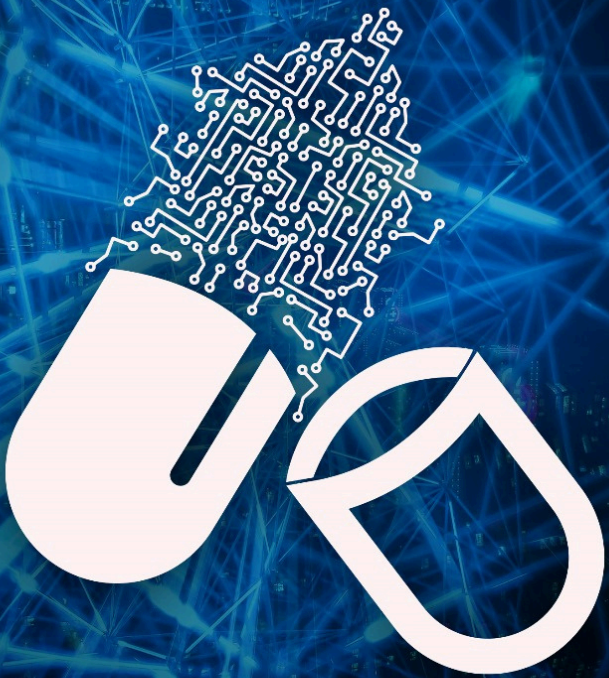
THE MORALITY PILL: THE ETHICS OF MORAL ENHANCEMENT



MATTEO GALLETTI

TRIVENT

The Morality Pill

The Ethics of Moral Enhancement

Matteo Galletti

Translated by
Steven Umbrello

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TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

Steven Umbrello

I have been asked numerous times, given that this is not the first monograph I have taken upon myself to translate, "Why would you take the time to translate a book? It seems like so much work". It certainly is true that the translation of any work from its original language is a burdensome task; not only is the translator looking to remain faithful to the author's intent but stylistic changes will almost certainly be made to ensure that nothing is lost in translation. This is particularly true for philosophical treatises like the present volume. Philosophical nuance is predicated on the minutiae of language; thus, one must ensure that such is not painted over.

Given the work it takes, the real question is the "why" of translating a book. I met the author of this book, Matteo Galletti, at the Turin International Book Fair in the Spring of 2022, where Fandango, the original publisher of his volume, presented the first two books in their new *Icaro* book series. The first book, published by Maurizio Balistreri, explored the ethical issues of children's genome editing, a challenging and controversial topic. The second presented book was that of Galletti. The books in this *Icaro* series are intended to provide introductory and easily approachable philosophical issues to a general audience. Galletti's work, which explores moral bio-enhancement and the ethical issues surrounding it, has been widely disseminated in the anglophone world, albeit mainly at an academic level, making the rich philosophical debate hard to access by even interested novices. Galletti takes a wholly different approach to presenting the topic.

Written in an accessible and flowing style, Galletti presents the reader with timely and speculative examples of the world we live in and the one we may be heading to concerning augmenting our moral sensitivities with technology. The volume gives not only a foundational introduction to the ethical issues relating to these technologies and their applications but

also a primer on moral theory as well, taking a look at the traditional ideas of utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics. Interested readers on the topic need not approach the book with the requisite knowledge at hand; Galletti provides the philosophical and conceptual tools that any reader will need to broach this otherwise complex subject.

Bringing what is otherwise an engaging, approachable, and important topic to a general audience is no unimportant task. Given the absence of similar work in the English language, it was a no-brainer to take up the task of translating Galletti's work into the volume you now hold.

INTRODUCTION

Dilemmas. How to Morally Augment Humanity

"Violence is a horrible thing, you know? Furthermore, he is learning it. He learns it like this."

Alex is lying on a bed talking to a doctor: he is amazed that, for the first time, he feels nauseous when he violently watches violent videos. In the past, when he was an accomplice to violence, or even a direct perpetrator, he did not feel as bad as now. The doctor replies that this discomfort indicates an improvement in Alex's condition. In a healthy person, the normal response to violence is to feel nauseous and anxious. Alex's treatment is paying off, and the criminal is on the road to recovery.

It is a famous scene from Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), in which Alex and his group of companions move to England in an unknown future. The "droogs", as they call themselves, commit all kinds of violence: they steal, beat, rape and kill. Alex, however, is arrested and, after a period in prison, subjected to a radical re-education programme, the "Ludovico Technique", in which the subject is forced to take drugs and watch videos of violent scenes while tied to an armchair while an ophthalmic speculum is placed on his head to force him to keep his eyes open. The treatment aims to make Alex feel nauseous, painful, uncomfortable and disgusted by the violence in order to change his attitudes and behaviour. The effect of the substances administered, combined with graphic violence, is intended to 'correct' Alex's future actions and inhibit the urge to commit atrocities.

The themes of choice and freedom recur frequently in the film scenes. Part of the treatment protocol involves Alex listening to the works of Ludwig van Beethoven, his favourite musician, during sessions. Alex