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生命技術的倫理反思
Ethical Reflections on Biomedical Technologies

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新興人體胚胎研究技術、十四天規則和胚胎的特殊地位

馬修斯、洛伊、伊爾蒂斯

摘要

胚胎研究的“十四天規則”已經在國際上實施了幾十年。當前，很多科學家正在挑戰這一限制，因為技術進步使得人類胚胎和胚胎的細胞模型可以培養到其早期發育階段的後期。一些學者質疑人們長期以來持有的胚胎研究應該受到限制的信念，即超過十四天的胚胎研究是不道德的，他們開始提出替代性指導方針。本文通過回顧“十四天規則”的歷史和受這一規則影響的新興研究領域的情況，審查一項新的關於人類胚胎和類胚胎的指南。我們表明社會和政治哲學、形而上學和倫理學所關注的問題對於解釋和應用新的建議或開發替代方案具有核心作用。至關重要的是，科學家在突破十四天的限制去做任何研究之前，應該制訂明確的、深思熟慮的、且有文化敏感性的指導方針，包括具體限制和監督程式，以確保科學能夠適當地回應社會的需求和價值判斷。

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沒有民主治理原則的廣泛公眾支持：批判性回應

鄧文韜

摘要

新興的人類胚胎研究技術中，14天限制是一個避免公眾爭議的政治決定。伊爾蒂斯 (Ana S. Iltis)、馬修斯 (Kirstin R.W. Matthews) 和洛伊 (Sam Lowe) 質疑國際幹細胞學會 (ISSCR) 2021年新推的指引取消14天限制。這更改既未得到廣泛公眾支持，又未能顯示對人類胚胎研究各方觀點的尊重。故其政治合法性成疑。本評論反駁，新推的指引開設了若干會議和討論會，尊重各持分者的觀點。更重要的是，從儒家的賢能政治的觀點而言，廣泛公眾支持不等同於民主管治中的強共識，故伊爾蒂斯等人受限於民主原則，對廣泛公眾支持的定義過嚴。

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摘要

隨著高科技操縱人類生命的潛力日益明顯，超人類主義運動也愈加受到學界重視，相關研究飛速增長，但尚缺乏一種基於儒家視角的系統研究。本文試圖表明儒家視角對反思超人類主義具有不可替代的重要性，不僅因為它可以幫助我們更清晰、更深刻地把握超人類主義的影響和風險，而且因為它可以在超人類主義的技術主義圖景之外，提供想像和監管我們後人類未來的另一種可能性。具體而言，本研究致力於在一種隱含比較視域下展開儒家的批判性視角，從儒家“天人合一”觀念出發，闡釋儒家為什麼不能接受超人類主義，並嘗試探索儒家反對超人類主義的倫理理由與西方生物保守主義的同異之處。由此，本文嘗試將不同文化來源的思想帶入對話中，既是通過它們分歧之處，更是要通過它們共同關懷的議題，來更好地思考，超人類主義計劃對人類社會、對人類未來意味著什麼，並回答“如何監管我們的後人類未來”這一至關重要的問題。

Emerging Human Embryo Research Technologies, the 14-day Rule, and the Special Status of the Embryo

Kirstin R.W. Matthews, Sam Lowe and Ana S. Iltis

Abstract

After 40 years of abiding by an international guideline that barred human embryo research beyond day 14 of embryonic development, many scientists are now challenging this limit due to technological advances suggesting that embryos and cell-based models of embryos can be cultured to later points in early development. Some scholars have questioned the long-held belief that research beyond 14 days is unethical and have begun proposing alternative guidelines for research. In this paper, we examine a proposal for new human embryo and embryoid guidelines by reviewing the history of the 14-day limit and emerging areas of research that are impacted by these guidelines. We then show how social and political philosophy, metaphysics, and ethics are central to interpreting and applying these new recommendations or developing alternatives. Before conducting any research beyond day 14, scientists must develop clear, thoughtful, and culturally sensitive guidelines that include limitations and oversight procedures to ensure that science responds to societal needs and values.

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On the Moral Status of Embryos: Perspective of Confucian Ethics

Shen Xiuqin and Pan Feng

Abstract

For 40 years, international rules have limited human embryo research to the first 14 days of embryonic development. On May 26, 2021, in its latest guidelines for stem cell research and its medical applications, the International Society for Stem Cell Research eased the 14-day restriction. This raises myriad ethical issues. At their core is the debate over the moral status of embryos, which exposes ethical conflicts between cultural perspectives. This article discusses the moral status of embryos and argues from the perspective of Confucian ethics that the 14-day limit should not be waived at the present moment.

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Increasing and Improving Public Participation for the Development of a Chinese Scientific Research Ethics Regulation System

Yu Lian

Abstract

It is an inspiring idea that public participation should be the key factor for determining the human embryo research policy. However, public participation is missing from the Chinese government's vision of an ethics regulation system for scientific research. This article argues that to develop human embryo research policy for China and a new regulation system globally, the most important tasks may be to set rules for public participation and to understand the views on human embryo and cell-based embryo research ethics held by different stakeholders and the Chinese public.

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A Response to “Emerging Human Embryo Research Technologies, the 14-day Rule, and the Special Status of the Embryo”

Guo Yuyu and Zhang Xueying

Abstract

This paper responds to “Emerging Human Embryo Research Technologies, the 14-Day Rule, and the Special Status of the Embryo” by analyzing the moral status of the embryo. We hold that the embryo has a limited moral status that is influenced by local ethical and cultural factors. The moral status of the embryo can be evaluated according to its potential value to and relationship with society within the specific ethical and cultural context. On whether the embryo should be used in research, we recommend that researchers follow the principle of permission, i.e., seek consent from the agents who best represent the interests of the embryo (usually the parents).

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Changing the “14-day Rule”: Rebalancing Bioethics and Public Engagement

Tang Jian

Abstract

This article argues that the ISSCR's changes to the 14-day rule should be welcomed. In the future of human embryo research oversight in China, bioethics and public engagement should be fully balanced. This is essential to safeguard the public's trust in science.

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On the Legitimacy of Amending the “Soft Law” of Human Embryo Research

Ding Chunyan

Abstract

This commentary briefly discusses the substantive and procedural justifications for amending the longstanding 14-day rule, a soft-law limitation on the culturing of human embryos. The 14-day rule was established on the basis of general recognition of the human embryo’s special status, accompanied by widespread public conversation and engagement. In principle, amending this rule would require the same substantive and procedural justifications. However, such justifications were absent prior to the lifting of the rule by the ISSCR in its 2021 guidelines. This article also discusses the value and importance of the 14-day rule to the development of human embryo research in the last three decades. Discarding the rule without the proper substantive and procedural justifications is likely to damage public trust and confidence in future human embryo research.

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An Argument against the Abandonment of the 14-day Limit on Human Embryo Research

Zhang Xinqing

Abstract

This article explores prominent arguments in favor of and against extending the current 14-day statutory limit on the maintenance of human embryos. I discuss the history of the 14-day limit and the reasons behind the decision to opt for a compromise between competing moral views. I then argue that the ISSCR’s guidelines for extending the 14-day limit are not a valuable tool, despite their potential to contribute scientific knowledge. The importance of respecting the 14-day rule should be acknowledged by ethics committees in the current research ethics climate of mainland China.

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Policy Formulation for Human Embryo Research from the Perspective of Good Governance

Nie Ye

Abstract

In the article “Emerging Human Embryo Research Technologies, the 14-day Rule, and the Special Status of the Embryo,” one of the authors’ core aims is to encourage scientists to look at human embryo research policy from the perspective of promoting good governance. Starting with the characteristics of good governance, this paper responds to Iltis et al. by discussing how to realize good governance in the formulation of human embryo research policy.

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Should the 14-day Restriction be Revoked for Emerging Human Embryo Research?

Wang Hongqi

Abstract

Developments in research have made culturing human embryos beyond the 14-day limit seem technologically feasible. In the article “Emerging Human Embryo Research Technologies, the 14-day Rule, and the Special Status of the Embryo,” the authors examine a proposal for new human embryo and embryoid research guidelines by reviewing the history of the 14-day limit and emerging areas of research that are impacted by these guidelines. However, as noted by the authors, changes in science policy should not be developed solely by scientists. Instead, policy development should reflect the reality of science as a public endeavor. After 40 years of consensus, any attempts to revoke the 14-day limit on the in vitro culturing of human embryos should rely on public and stakeholder engagement.

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A Confucian Reflection on Transhumanism: How to Regulate our Posthuman Future?

Wang Jue

Abstract

As the potential of high technology to manipulate human life becomes increasingly evident, the transhumanist movement is receiving greater scholarly attention, and the number of related research projects is growing exponentially. However, systematic research from a Confucian perspective is still lacking. This paper attempts to demonstrate the unique value of a Confucian perspective in reflecting on transhumanism. Confucian thought can not only help us grasp the implications and risks of transhumanism with clarity and depth but also offer alternative possibilities for imagining as well as regulating our posthuman future beyond the technocratic picture of transhumanism. Specifically, this paper develops a critical Confucian perspective in an implicitly comparative context to explain why Confucianism cannot accept transhumanism (due to the Confucian notion of “the unity of heaven and man” (天人合一) and to explore the similarities and differences between Confucian and bio-conservative perspectives on transhumanism. I thereby bring ideas from different cultural sources into dialogue to form a better understanding of what transhumanism means for human society and its future, and to answer the crucial question of how to regulate our posthuman future.

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Rethinking Transhumanism from Zhuangzi's Idea of Harmony between Man and Nature

Zhang Wanqiang

Abstract

Professor Wang Jue reflects on transhumanism through the Confucian idea of harmony between man and nature and proposes from a Confucian perspective that we should supervise the formation of our posthuman future. I agree with this suggestion. Here, I discuss transhumanism using Zhuangzi's idea of "Harmony between Man and Nature" and the concept of immortality. My conclusion is that from Zhuangzi's point of view, it would be wrong to use technology solely to plan and control the future of mankind; however, this does not mean that Zhuangzi is an anti-technologist. I think Zhuangzi's ideas offer limited support for the Confucian suggestion that we should supervise the formation of our post-human future.

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Reconsidering the Confucian Attitude toward Transhumanism

Chen Zhiwei

Abstract

Superhumanism or posthumanism has become our reality. To deal with the resulting humanitarian dilemma, we can consult the abundant theoretical resources provided by Confucianism. Confucius's "The Gentleman is No Vessel", Zengzi's important concept of filial piety, and Mencius' understanding of human nature contribute valuable theoretical perspectives for reflection on the real-world consequences of transhumanism.

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How should Human Beings Exist?— Some Criticisms of Transhumanism

Liu Tao

Abstract

Transhumanism banishes the body from being, which leads to the separation of technology and virtue. In the Confucian view, the body is the symbiosis of technology and virtue, human relations and politics. We can use the notions of "benevolence" and Tao in Confucian ethics to criticize transhumanism. The fundamental problem involved in the debate between Confucianism and transhumanism concerns how human beings define themselves. Confucianists believe that human beings cannot and should not violate certain fundamental restrictions and principles presented by the universe. We should continue to think about what these fundamental restrictions and principles should be, and whether they are likely to be breached with technological progress.

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Should we Use Technology to Transform the Human Body?

Liu Yue-shu

Abstract

Human beings always try to transcend their limitations. Emerging technologies provide a set of powerful tools that promise to significantly improve human performance, stimulating the desire of some technical experts to transform the human body. Against this backdrop, superhumanism has come into being in today's society and is flourishing. Superhumanism has been criticized by some Chinese scholars on the basis of traditional Chinese thought. Their criticism of superhumanism is a difficult task that involves multi-level reflection on human nature, technology, and value. I argue that for the issue of superhumanism, theoretical innovation is more important than continuing to invoke traditional thought.

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Transhumanism as a New Form of Subject Metaphysics

Shi Xianming

Abstract

Transhumanism is a contemporary form of Western "subject metaphysics" that combines the dual elements of Cartesianism and Nietzsche's "metaphysics of will." The essence of Eros is the human desire for totality, which is interlinked with the secret desire for today's "human enhancement" technology. The Confucian idea of "the unity of heaven and man" (天人合一) can solve many problems in the debate between biological conservatism and bioprogressivism. The ideological foundation of this idea in Laozi's and Zhuangzi's thought should be taken seriously. Recognition of human limitations is an important aspect of traditional Confucian-Taoist wisdom, but human enhancement technology is in essence a tool for "excessive reduction".

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Attitude, Principle and Method: The Possible Contribution of Confucianism to the Supervision of Posthuman Future

Pan Xinli

Abstract

Human beings are facing problems entailed by the development and application of human enhancement technology. Confucianism and transhumanism respond to these problems in fundamentally different ways. Confucianism calls for a "careful attitude", makes use of an "adaptable method", and bases on the principle that technology is a tool for human continuity and development. Such an attitude, principle and method may represent the contribution of Confucianism to our supervision of Posthuman future.

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Abstract

The concept of human enhancement is a key to understanding transhumanism. According to Confucian ethics, the supervision of human enhancement technology is vital because we are facing the reasonable expectation of achieving “the unity of heaven and man.” (The idea of harmony between man and nature is not exclusive to Confucianism; it can be found in other schools of thought in the pre-Qin dynasty period, especially the philosophy of Taoism. However, the idea is uniquely expressed and developed in Confucianism.) Furthermore, human enhancement makes people unable to “settle in their place.” Therefore, Confucianism cannot accept it.

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