

Extended Mental Integrity

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By drawing on *Wooley v. Maynard*, (430 U.S. 705), Blitz (2010, 2) considers that the right to freedom of speech might be a “component” of the more fundamental right to freedom of mind or thought. So far, of course, it has only been necessary to worry about the freedom of expressing our minds, rather than protecting minds themselves, because nature has made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for others to interfere with the contents of our skulls, providing mind and thought absolute protection, and making the need for additional measures redundant. This assumption, however, may no longer hold true: If the Extended Mind Thesis (Clark and Chalmers 1998) is likely to be (or become) true, this attitude of complacency may now be ill-advised. If thoughts and mental processes can be partly realised outside biological organisms, then no more do they receive the natural protection they have so far entertained. In this talk, I focus on a specific aspect of the right to freedom of thought: the right to mental integrity—i.e., the right to being free from having the detailed contents of our minds nefariously manipulated by third parties (Allegre 2017, Ienca and Andorno 2017, Blitz 2021). However, since not all mental manipulations are problematic (education and conversation are legitimate ways of changing others’ minds), I argue that the real concern is with direct mental manipulations. After clarifying what it means to directly manipulate the detailed contents of one’s mind, I argue that if mental integrity is valued, then so should extended mental integrity—i.e., the integrity of mental contents that might be externally stored. Finally, I consider various means for protecting the right to extended mental integrity and I explore reasons that could motivate individuals to safeguard this important aspect of both their onboard and extended minds.

References

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